



2015 JESSE H. NEAL
AWARD WINNER



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Talk of **the Town**

This month we profile winners of the 2016 Nationals, a competition sponsored by the NAHB's National Sales & Marketing Council, which salutes excellence in sales and marketing in home building. Winners were announced last month at a gala in Las Vegas held during the International Builders' Show. As you'll see starting on page 36, the top entries are a varied mix. A master planned community in Northern California that capitalizes on its hometown's status as a world-renowned agricultural hub. A luxury home builder in Atlanta that uses compelling imagery to speak to buyers' highest aspirations. An appealing welcome center near Dallas that packs a soft sell irresistible to buyers.

Fashion and home building are unlikely bedfellows, but we profile one development in which the combination worked magic. Art Shoppe Lofts + Condos, in Toronto, partnered with couturier Karl Lagerfeld to crack that city's competitive condo market with a social media campaign that hit a bullseye with target buyers and raised the building's profile. Lagerfeld is nothing if not a quirky presence (his Siamese cat, Choupette, has her own Wikipedia page, plus 49,000 followers on Twitter and 77,000 followers on Instagram @ChoupettesDiary). The Lagerfeld alliance was leveraged with an invitation-only opening bash for which the designer made his first-ever visit to Canada. Art Shoppe Lofts + Condos became a trending topic on Twitter (#lobbiesbykarl), generating more than 1,000 tagged photos, 1.5 million impressions, and buzz that persisted long after the last selfies were snapped. In other words, it was the talk of the town.

Whether you follow fashion or don't give a fig about it doesn't matter. More important is this: Whether you use social media or find it a nuisance, it's the modern mode of hearing it through the grapevine. Like it or not, the pass-it-on nature of Tweets, Instagram shots, and Facebook posts is a testament to the enduring power of word of mouth.

While reaching some markets demands hip and trendy, touching others calls for maximizing warm and friendly. As winners of the 2016 Nationals Sales and Marketing Awards show, it's a matter of knowing your audience, refining your message, getting it out there—and delivering homes that buyers crave.

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CONVERSATION, THERE'S UNDENIABLE
POWER IN WORD OF MOUTH