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A CASE STUDY RITZ CARLTON

Ritz-Carlton doesn't advertise. Why? Ritz-Carlton's reputation represents "brand equity that has built up over the years, obviously," says Bruce Himmelstein, the company's vice president of marketing in an article written by Dale Buss posted on the website Brand Channel (www.brandchannel.com)

"We mandate to our employees that they provide the finest personal service," he continues. "Each person is responsible for finding and recording the preferences of individual guests, for example, so that they can get things before the guest even knows they need it. And each employee is empowered to break away from whatever they're doing if a guest needs something. When you've built up that kind of culture over the years, it all starts to stick."

"We teach them to think of themselves not only as attendants to our guests but also as actors in spreading our brand; the feeling they get after they go through our orientation and are involved in our ongoing training is that they are the brand," says Himmelstein.

Ritz-Carlton even has formulized its approach to service in basic rules that employees are to use in their dealings with a guest. The Three Steps of Service, for example, are: Proffer a warm and sincere greeting, using the guest's name; anticipate and comply with all of the guest's needs; and offer a fond farewell, again using the guest's name, "so that they feel they've left your home, not just the lobby of a hotel," Himmelstein explains.

A CASE STUDY IN LUXURY HOME SUCCESS

Rick Miner, Seattle Waterfront Specialist

- Coldwell Banker's #1 Listing and Sales Associate in Seattle, WA
- A member of Forum 22, an exclusive group of 22 Realtors in the Seattle area.
Membership is by special invitation only.

Rick Miner is one of the most recognizable names in real estate in Seattle, WA and has gained national exposure using unconventional marketing to sell high end Seattle waterfront properties. His success has led him to close over 30 million dollars a year in sales, easily placing him as one of the most successful agents in the country.

After 20 years as a successful Hollywood producer, Miner decided to make a change during the 1988 writer's strike. Eventually Rick found a home on the Seattle waterfront and soon began selling real estate. Using his creative skills, he began marketing his listings using highly produced "Video Open Houses." Two things he learned early on were to be creative and invest in himself.

When the internet craze began to surface, Miner again saw an opportunity to be creative. Already among the top 10 agents in Seattle he created a website called www.duckin.com.

The hook to the website and Miner's trademark is the yellow rubber duck that adorns every aspect of his marketing.

Today, Rick and his wife Joyce, also a licensed agent, along with their licensed assistant have continued to work hard while enjoying the success the duck has brought them. Each drive a yellow car emblazoned with the www.duckin.com logo. they cruise in a small yellow boat and at each open house they have an eight foot inflatable duck mascot.

What does it mean to live a luxury lifestyle? For those fortunate affluent households who are able to enjoy a luxury lifestyle it often simply means having the power to enjoy the best life has to offer.

This expectation of receiving the best often permeates every decision they make. From vacations to vehicles, jewelry to boats, they demand the highest quality available. To tap into the luxury mindset visit: www.robbreport.com & www.luxurylifestyle.com.

THE PRINCIPLE OF KAIZEN

Many eastern and western companies now embrace the principle of Kaizen which when translated means continuous, incremental improvement.

Many clients point to the defining factors of a luxury lifestyle as having the freedom to experience new and exciting things, great service and quality products. From a marketing standpoint then, great real estate agents must manage the customer's experience by having a good CRM strategy. CRM stands for having a Customer Relationship Management system in place.

Consider the last time you went to a theme park, an expensive dinner, or an upscale hotel. Those companies that wish to earn your repeat and referral business must find ways to manage your customer experience. To do this they must think like the customer and build their business around immersing the customer in a positive experience that they will want to repeat or recommend.

Walt Disney World, for example, employs the use of wireless handheld PDA's to survey their guests as they leave restaurants and theme park rides. Why? They want to have a real time viewpoint of what their guests are experiencing. They want to instantly adapt or change their business to the needs of the consumer. In today's fast paced world, true business leaders accept that rapid change is a requisite for success

CRM – SELF ASSESSMENT

- Do I provide a consistent, intentional level of high quality service to every client?
- Is every interaction I have with clients and customers a good representation of my brand?
- Do my clients become advocates? Do they tell their friends, neighbors and family about the experience they had with my brand?
- What systems can I put into place to create a phenomenal customer experience?

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