

# Minding Your Business



## 5 Keys to Building a Successful Business

By Kerrie Gilbert and Betsy Sheppard

Women-owned home building companies or women-owned marketing firms were rare when we started our careers.

It was (and still is) common for us to be the only females on the team when discussing plans to develop and market a new home community. Our goal has always been to create marketing solutions that speak directly to the home buying decision makers – usually women – while gaining the trust and respect of the men around the table. Here are five keys we have found that are essential to building a successful business.

### Focus on your passion

We are passionate about communicating the options to help adults safely enjoy the lifestyle they choose in their later years. Both of us helped our aging parents navigate difficult housing choices. These deeply personal experiences fueled a passion for learning about and marketing senior living options. Our clients range from active adult communities and continuing care develop-

ments to single-family home builders that incorporate universal design features.

### Gather talent

To best serve our clients, we assembled a team of talented professionals who share our customer-focused philosophy of delivering more than what's expected. Everyone on our team knows that our client's success comes first. It doesn't matter how creative or clever the marketing piece if our work doesn't generate results for the client.

### Sustain trust and respect

Our business philosophy is focused on helping others succeed, not on our own personal gain. We've built long-term client relationships with consistent customer service and attention to detail. It may seem old-fashioned or intuitive, but our formula is: Consistently do what you say you're going to do. Do it well, on time, and on budget. And remember: Good enough seldom is.

### Stay relevant

We are constantly learning and paying at-

tention to the pace of change in both home buyer trends and marketing technology. We study data and follow industry-related news sources to keep up with the ever-changing best practices for internet marketing and lead generation, and we participate in educational opportunities to stay sharp and informed. Doing so enables everything we do for our clients to be not only innovative, but also results-driven and reliable.

### Achieve balance

We know that life is not supposed to be all work and no play. Because we love what we do, it's easy to let it take over our daily lives. To keep a healthy balance, we follow an unwritten rule: No shop talk before coffee or after wine. **BW**



Kerrie Gilbert and Betsy Sheppard, principals of the Georgia-based marketing firm Gilbert & Sheppard Group, have been creating opportunities and raising the profile of women in the housing industry and in the marketing industry for more than 20 years.