

# Builder

THE  
DEMAND  
ISSUE

## Invent Desire

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS THAT SPARK DEMAND



# Show and Tell

THE NEW HOME CO., ALISO VIEJO, CALIF.

**Though The New Home Co. was** founded only five years ago, it's already lived up to its name by staying on the forefront of what buyers want with innovative and award-winning homes and communities. In fact, the company, which went public in 2014, has received more than 100 awards in the past five years.

"We always test ourselves. It's not that we're consumed with being trendsetters. We're consumed with figuring out the next great thing," says Joan Marcus-Colvin, senior vice president of sales, marketing, and design.

The company is known for merging indoor and outdoor spaces, particularly in the kitchen. Though outdoor living has always been important to the company's California location and lifestyle, Marcus-Colvin says a set of French doors just doesn't cut it anymore.

Buyers want their indoor and outdoor spaces to fuse together, meaning large accordion-style doors that fold away an entire wall for maximum open space to the outside patio and garden. It's also ideal for al fresco entertaining, adds Marcus-Colvin.

The firm also emphasizes the concept of a "family office," a place where parents as well as children can access computers and tablets to check email, pay bills, do homework, and play games. Marcus-Colvin describes this family work space as an area between the garage and the kitchen—located where the mudroom usually is—outfitted with a large island and plenty of cabinetry for storage of projects, backpacks, sports equipment, and crafts.

The concept of the family office is a case study in how trends are discovered and vetted at the New Home Co. The space was first created for a client's custom home and was then adapted into a concept floor plan and tested in focus groups, which Marcus-Colvin says is one of the best methods for gaining knowledge. With a lot of positive feedback, the firm has now adapted the family office concept in its homes and communities at all price points.

"That room easily could be a super laundry room, but I did super laundry rooms 15 years ago. There's nothing new about that," says Marcus-Colvin. "Our responsibility is to figure out how families are living today. Everyone being on their tablets or phones at the same time—that wasn't the case five or 10 years ago."

To show off these new trends, there's nothing more important than merchandising, according to Marcus-Colvin, and the company has won many awards specifically for its merchandising and interior design.

"The merchandising is so critical and so much an extension of our marketing that we spend an inordinate amount of time on our interior design and merchandising. It's much more than just merchandising," says Marcus-Colvin.

The New Home Co.'s interior design firm, Meridian Interiors, plays an active role in all aspects of building the homes from floor plan design to the finishing touches. By being included at all levels, the interior designer can help define a space and its function rather than having to tailor the function to the space after the home is built.

However, when promoting their latest offerings, simply marketing to potential buyers isn't enough. The New Home Co. is adept at reaching out to the entire building industry so that more builders and designers think about these new innovative spaces. And the best way to reach industry insiders is through strong public relations, says Marcus-Colvin. She makes it her job to interact with journalists, bloggers, and other industry pros, unlike some home building firms that take a "no comment" approach to media inquiries.

"If we can get newspapers and magazines and anyone out there who is interested in home product design to take a look and be inspired to write about us," says Marcus-Colvin, "that is worth a heck of a lot more than any paid advertising."—K.D.



Michael Kelley



**Modern Spaces** The New Home Co. meets consumer demand by offering fresh designs that evolve with buyers' changing lifestyles. For example, the firm markets innovative spaces such as large indoor/outdoor living areas and family offices that give everyone in the home a dedicated work place.