Open houses lacking impact? How 4 agents got creative.

First impressions are also lasting impressions. That’s why it’s so important for agents to think outside the box when it comes to open houses. From promotion to presentation, you need to make an impact on prospective buyers that resonates long after they leave.

So for inspiration for making your next open house one-of-a-kind, look no further than these four agents who succeeded by getting creative and having a great time.

Norma E. Bonilla

I find that themed open houses tend to be a hit! In my 12 years in real estate, I’ve done everything from Valentine’s Day to Ice Cream to Cinco de Mayo. I advertise through various social media platforms and channels, and send email blasts about my upcoming open houses at least 10 days prior to the actual event. This has generated lots of interest and I’ve received many new clients — both buyers and sellers. What better way to create buzz for my seller’s home? Not to mention, you have a better chance of receiving offers quickly when you gather people together at one time. For my Cinco de Mayo theme, I treated guests to chips with salsa and guacamole, sangria with fresh fruit, themed décor, and lots of festive flowers. In a single afternoon, I had 76 attendees and one over-asking offer on the spot, which is scheduled to close next month.

— Norma E. Bonilla, Sales Associate, Prominent Properties Sotheby’s International Realty

Jon Weinstein

I was representing an open house in Barrington, Rhode Island, when a couple came in “just looking” because they were thinking of perhaps moving to Barrington. However, they were reluctant to put their phone number on the sign-in sheet, as buyers sometimes are — they fear they’ll be haunted by an annoying salesperson. As they were leaving, they asked for lunch recommendations, and I suggested a place in Warren on the water. I then called the restaurant and paid for their meal over the phone. Never haunted them, never emailed them. I just knew that if they did end up landing on Barrington, they’d call me. Sure enough, a year later, I got their call and have been their agent ever since. We even get together socially.

— Jonathan Weinstein, Broker Associate, Mott & Chace Sotheby’s International Realty

Bob Bedbury & Kathryn Bedbury

For us, premier open houses are an extension of our hospitality. Gourmet food, live bands, casual mingling, and total enjoyment of a home conveys value. One of our best experiences involved a home that had zero street parking and was situated on a blind corner. We hired a valet company to set up in a school parking lot at the bottom of the hill and take buyers up to the home in golf carts. Once they reached the home, we greeted them with a live band and a local gelato company serving treats on the amazing deck overlooking the San Francisco Bay. People absolutely loved it and we had multiple offers that week. Even if a home doesn't sell as a direct result of an event, it makes an impression on every person who attends, and sends a message to current and future clients that we are completely invested in marketing their home. Plus, not one person mentioned the property's lack of parking.

— Bob Bedbury, Broker Associate, and Kathryn Bedbury, Sales Associate, Today Sotheby's International Realty

Eileen Campbell

I had a listing that was a unique architectural style uncommon in the area, and I knew the property would require a special approach. I researched the architect and the design, and found a group of fans who ardently followed both. I contacted them and invited them to have their annual meeting at the house. They were excited and actively shared their excitement online. We had a great reception on a Sunday afternoon, I met lots of wonderful people, and the house sold to someone who had seen the photos on the group's website. I had a fantastic time with the fans and I still adore them!

— Eileen Campbell, Broker Associate, Jameson Sotheby's International Realty

A memorable open house not only markets a property; it also markets you as an agent that buyers and sellers recognize, trust, and want to work with. There's no room for indifference or mediocrity in luxury real estate, so make sure you impress your clients with a one-of-a-kind experience as soon as they walk through that door. It's worth the investment.

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