



PLAN FOR SUCCESS!

GUIDE TO ORGANIZING A
NEW HOMES MONTH CAMPAIGN
IN YOUR LOCAL HBA



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HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

This guide has been prepared to help local Home Builders' Associations (HBAs) and their members benefit as much as possible from New Homes Month (NHM).

The guide presents a blueprint for success. The step-by-step directions make it easy for HBAs with little or no prior NHM participation to plan and carry out an exciting and rewarding campaign. Experienced HBAs will find lots of information to help them broaden and fine-tune their activities. The following pages will:

- Discuss the benefits of participating in New Homes Month.
- Outline how to get started.
- Suggest activities.
- Suggest timelines.
- Describe the materials available from CHBA.
- Offer advice on how individual new home builders can get the most from participating.

Finally, the guide will also discuss the year-round use of the NHM materials, beyond the campaign.

INTRODUCTION

A Brief Background

New Homes Month is the premier new homes marketing initiative by the home building industry in Canada—an annual marketing and consumer information campaign that is national in scope, and organized and carried out at the local community level.

New Homes Month presents a unique opportunity for Association members to take part in a high-profile, cooperative campaign that puts them and their products in the spotlight.

New Homes Month is well established as an annual event and the single most important new homes marketing initiative for many local HBAs across the country. Each April, local organizing committees put on an array of activities to generate traffic, publicity and media attention, and promote the industry’s commitment to excellence, quality and service.

Since its launch in 1989, New Homes Month has enhanced the image of the building industry. It has increased public awareness of the Canadian Home Builders’ Association and its importance as “the voice of the home building industry”. And it has created a greater awareness and appreciation of the many professionals in the housing industry who contribute to keeping Canadians the best-housed people in the world.

Objectives of New Homes Month

- To provide valuable and helpful information about new homes and the buying process to consumers.
- To help home buyers recognize the benefits of buying new.
- To position home ownership as a wise investment.
- To encourage home buyers to buy from a professional new home builder—a member of the Canadian Home Builders’ Association.
- To increase public awareness of the Association as a resource for homebuyers, at all levels.

Participants at the Local HBA Level

In each community, the New Homes Month campaign is organized by the local HBA.

Within each HBA, new home builders should be taking a leading role in NHM. However, the campaign is well suited for a broad cooperative marketing approach. Ideally, all segments of the association will be engaged in, and committed to, the campaign, including:

- Manufacturers and suppliers
- Financial institutions
- Mortgage insurers
- New home warranty programs
- Utility companies
- Real estate companies
- Local media
- Municipal government representatives
- Interior designers
- ... and any other group that can contribute to and benefit from being part of the campaign.

If any of these groups are not represented in the association membership, New Homes Month is a great vehicle for recruiting them!

Overview of Activities

The activities that make up New Homes Month can vary greatly from one community to another, depending on such factors as the size of the local HBA, the number of possible participants, and the types of marketing efforts that work best in each market area.

Ideally, a consumer information and marketing campaign consists of a number of elements. However, a smaller, more modest NHM campaign can still be very successful, if well done.

■ **Events**

Events serve as focal points for New Homes Month. Where possible, consider more than one event. *Consumer-oriented events* such as consumer seminars and open houses to bring NHM message to the home buying public, *industry events* support and compliment the campaign, and *charity events* demonstrate the industry's commitment to the community.

These activities can be either stand-alone events or tied in with other undertakings.

■ **Media Campaign**

New Homes Month is news, a community event and a consumer information program.

- > *Traditional media* can play an important role in promoting the NHM campaign through printed stories, newspaper tabloids, radio talk shows and public service announcements.
- > *Social media*, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, complement the traditional media approach and expand your reach. It is easy and inexpensive to create an online campaign to promote your events, offer information and get engaged with the public.

■ **Consumer Handouts**

Handouts such as brochures, pamphlets and other printed information reinforce the NHM message and should be readily available at all public events, and upon request to the HBA. While the Internet has had a big impact on communication and how people seek and use information, new home buyers still desire printed information that they can take home and read at their leisure.

■ **Online information**

The HBA website is a natural venue for promoting NHM to both internal and external audiences, and providing consumer information on new homes and home buying, as well as contact information for new home builder members.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Planning and executing a New Homes Month campaign requires time, work and resources, but the effort is well worth it. There are many benefits for participants, both for the short and the long term.

NEW HOME BUILDERS

- Greater visibility in the community
- Recognition as an association member
- Closer cooperation with suppliers and manufacturers
- Recognition from the media
- Improved working relationships with local government officials
- Opportunity to be active in local association affairs
- Opportunity to display product
- Opportunity to generate traffic
- Opportunity to conduct market research
- ... all of which can result in more sales!

LOCAL HBAS

- Increased public awareness of the association and its members
- Increased recognition of the association logo
- Strengthened relations with local media
- Improved relations with municipal government officials
- Increased service to existing members
- Opportunity to enlist new members—builders, suppliers, etc.
- ... all of which can result in stronger and more effective associations!

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, MANUFACTURERS, SUPPLIERS, UTILITIES AND OTHER PARTNERS

- Increased public recognition
- Closer working relationships with builders
- Opportunity to become more active in local association affairs
- Opportunity to display products and services
- Opportunity to interact with buying public
- Opportunity to conduct market research
- ... all of which can result in more business!

And so on... For each participating organization or company, there is a wide range of benefits, from increased public recognition, to improved working relationships with others in the housing industry, to the potential for increasing sales and fulfilling organizational goals.

ORGANIZING STEP BY STEP

Getting involved in New Homes Month is as easy as one-two-three. An early start is crucial to a successful campaign, and ample lead-time should be built into the organization of the campaign. (See suggested timelines and meeting agendas on the following pages.)

Traditionally, April is designated New Homes Month; however, not all HBAs may wish to, or be able to, adhere to that timeframe. There may be reasons why your HBA prefers to choose another month for your campaign, whether related to weather conditions or to piggyback onto other association activities, for instance. The important thing is to organize a successful campaign, no matter what month you proclaim as New Homes Month in your community.

STEP ONE

The first step is to formalize the committee that will be responsible for planning and carrying out the campaign. A special New Homes Month Committee can be established, or the local HBA Sales and Marketing Committee can assume the job.

■ **Committee Mandate**

A number of tasks will fall to the committee, including:

- > Directing the planning and implementation of the campaign
- > Deciding on the activities
- > Budgeting
- > Enlisting participation
- > Enlisting local partnership
- > Delegating tasks
- > Managing all phases of the campaign
- > Evaluating the campaign

■ **Committee Make-up**

Members of the local HBA form the core of each committee. Ideally, the committee will reflect the diversity of membership, with new home builders playing a key role.

In addition, representatives of other organizations and groups can also be invited to sit on the committee. This will:

- > give significant local groups a voice in decision-making, thereby providing additional motivation for participation.

- > ease the workload of individual committee members.
- > strengthen the working relationship among various participants, both during and following New Homes Month.
- > provide opportunities for recruiting new members.

SUGGESTED TIMELINES FOR ORGANIZING NEW HOMES MONTH

TASK	NOV.	DEC.	JAN.	FEB.	MARCH	APRIL
Set up committee	—————		—	—	—	
Decide on major events	—————			—	—	
Enlist local partners	—————					
CHBA materials available			—————			
Begin media relations (for supplement)		—————			—	—
Produce/collect marketing materials (brochures, posters, etc.)		—————				
Firm up all plans					—————	
Initiate promotional campaign/events					—————	
Launch NHM						—————
Evaluate your NHM campaign						—————→

AGENDA

NEW HOMES MONTH COMMITTEE OF

_____, 201 ____

Items

- 1. Introductory remarks by convener of meeting**
- 2. Briefing on New Homes Month by convener**
- 3. Selection of committee chairperson**
- 4. Discussion of key events**
 - public, industry and charity
 - tie-in with existing events—for instance, home shows
- 5. Identification of other individuals, groups and organizations for potential participation**
- 6. Discussion and assignment of roles and responsibilities**
 - enlisting new home builder participation
 - enlisting local partners
 - preparation of preliminary budget
 - preparation of planning schedule
 - media liaison
 - on-site coordinator(s)
- 7. Identifying other sources of promotion and information materials**
- 8. Decisions on how the committee will operate**
 - meeting how often and where
 - preparation and distribution of agenda
 - preparation and distribution of minutes
 - communication between meetings
 - communication with Board of Directors and membership

AGENDA

NEW HOMES MONTH COMMITTEE OF

_____, 201 ____

Items

1. **Progress reports**
 - events coordination
 - media campaign
 - promotional tools (handouts)
2. **Local partners participation update**
 - contributions (financial and in-kind)
 - recognition and visibility
3. **Confirmation/adjustment of schedule**
4. **Budget update**
5. **Other business**

Sample Agenda (*final planning meeting*)

AGENDA

NEW HOMES MONTH COMMITTEE OF

_____, 201 ____

Items

1. **Updates on all responsibility areas**
2. **Confirmation of events and schedules**
3. **Verification of human resources for all planned activities**
4. **Verification of support materials (brochures, signs, etc.)**

AGENDA

NEW HOMES MONTH COMMITTEE OF

_____, 201 ____

Items

1. **Feedback and evaluation by committee members**
2. **Report on the campaign by activities and events**
3. **Thank-you letters to partners**

STEP TWO

The next step is to start planning the campaign. The earlier you start, the better the result. Past experience shows that most successful committees begin planning at least six months in advance.

Decide on Your Plan

As mentioned, activities vary greatly from one community to the next, and what is highly successful in one area may not work as well in another. However, committees are well on their way to an effective campaign if they keep the following in mind:

- The list of the public's favourite NHM activities includes consumer seminars (particularly first-time home buyer seminars), home shows, open houses, parades of homes, and newspaper supplements.
- While the emphasis of New Homes Month is on reaching the public and more specifically new home buyers, don't omit scheduling at least one event aimed directly at the industry.
- Linking NHM with a local charity organization demonstrates the building industry's commitment to the community and to corporate social responsibility.
- Don't be afraid to try new ideas.
- It is better to do a few things well than to spread your efforts too thin.
- Set reasonable goals for each event and activity, and make sure that participants and partners have realistic expectations. (See sidebar, page 15.)

The *Campaign Activities* section, page 16, offers ideas and suggestions for various NHM activities.

Determine Your Resources

It is important to determine the resources available for NHM as early as possible. These can be financial or in-kind contributions.

Financial Resources

These can come from a number of different sources. For instance:

- Local committees may undertake internal fundraisers for NHM, such as auctions.
- Participants may be asked to contribute an entry fee to home tours or parades, e.g. builders pay a certain amount for each home they enter in a parade. The pool of fees can be used for advertising, signage, handouts, and so on.
- Industry and community partners can be asked for a financial contribution.

In-Kind Contributions

Lack of financial resources should not be a deterrent to engaging in NHM. The campaign is an ideal showcase for industry and community cooperation, and the organizing committee should not miss this opportunity to enlist the involvement of partners who can contribute in many other ways, such as:

- Participation in the committee.
- Provision of committee "tools" (e.g. meeting room, telephone line, secretarial services).
- Consumer handouts (financial institutions, manufacturers, suppliers, utilities, among others).

- Display boards, banners and other promotional materials.
- Advertising (print, radio and television, independent or cooperative).
- Links and information on their websites.
- Special advertising (e.g. bill stuffers with utility bills).
- Space for public events (e.g. seminars at municipal hall).
- Participation in events (speaker at seminars, staffing display booth, swinging a hammer at a charity building project).
- Preferred rates for the campaign (e.g. graphic design, printing, advertising, building materials).

Enlist Partners

Industry partners should be approached and enlisted in the early stages of planning.

Steps include:

- Make a list of possible partners, from major utilities to subcontractors.
- Prepare a partnership letter, outlining the campaign and the opportunities available to participants.
- Distribute the letter.
- Follow up, with a phone call, personal visit, invitation to a NHM committee meeting, and so on.

When talking with potential partners and presenting the benefits of participation, keep in mind that they are looking for three things:

- Recognition.
- Opportunity to provide input to the campaign, and for some, opportunities to participate in events.
- Feedback, so they can assess the return on their investment, whether financial or in-kind contributions. Partners are interested in learning about the public's response to particular events, home buying intentions, concerns, and so on...any information that is collected in the course of the campaign that provides insight into the marketplace and home buyers.

Look at Your Communications Tools

Each year, New Homes Month materials are developed by CHBA for use by local HBAs in their campaigns: a graphic image for print or online purposes as well as backgrounders, public service announcements and more. (See page 21 for a detailed description.)

These materials form a great beginning for your media campaign and handouts. In addition, you will likely want to use your own materials as well, or develop some that specifically address your own HBA and your local circumstances.

STEP THREE

With an active, dedicated committee and a well-defined plan in place, the next step is simple: setting the plan in motion.

This means following the time schedule set out in earlier meetings, making sure that all the necessary steps for each activity are taken at the appropriate time, fine-tuning event plans and trouble-shooting when required.

With all of the careful planning behind you, you will be ready for April!

STEP FOUR

But there is still work to be done! An important part of NHM is monitoring and keeping track of events. Without a record of what actually took place during NHM, it is difficult for participants to assess the relative success and effectiveness of the campaign. The committee will want to keep track of such items as:

- Attendance at seminars, open houses, mall displays, and other events.
- Public response to event(s). Whenever possible, ask the public to fill out a brief survey to find out where they heard about the event, what brought them to the event, and what general comments they may have.
- Media coverage (in detail: how often, what type, number of people reached, general tone).
- Website traffic, and social media reach and responses.
- Distribution of handouts (quantity, kinds, public response).
- Advertising.

STEP FIVE

Once April is over, a few last tasks remain, namely the evaluation of your campaign and the preparation of a results report. No matter how small the campaign, it is important for the committee to get feedback from the participants, and to evaluate individual activities, with a view to repeats and improvements for the following year.

If other partners have been involved in the campaign, the committee should send a thank-you letter to each one. Ideally, include a copy of the results report, or prepare a summary for partners. This will help them to assess their own participation, and the merits of continued involvement in future campaigns.

AND FINALLY . . .

Take a well-deserved break from event organization for a few months, enjoy the summer, and then begin planning for the next New Homes Month!

SETTING GOALS FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

When enlisting participants and partners, it is a good idea to discuss expectations upfront—what can the campaign achieve, what can everyone expect to get out of it?

New Homes Month provides a unique marketing opportunity that can play a role in increasing sales and market share, and meeting other corporate objectives for the participants. Within this broad framework, there are a number of specific goals that can drive the planning of NHM, including:

CREATING VISIBILITY FOR ASSOCIATION MEMBERS AND THEIR PRODUCTS

NHM marketing means putting the spotlight on participating companies/organizations and their products, to build familiarity and confidence, to differentiate participants from others, and to highlight their professionalism and the quality of their services and products.

Many different activities can serve to achieve this goal. Their success can be assessed in terms of media coverage, the numbers of people stopping at a NHM booth or attending a parade of homes, and even the number of handouts distributed.

INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF THE LOCAL HBA

This goal can be accomplished through media relations and public events combined with greater use of the logo and online communication. Results may be evident by more phone calls to the association from both the media and consumers. Also, individual builders may also get more questions by homebuyers about the association.

PROVIDING HOME BUYING INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC

“An informed consumer is a better and more satisfied consumer”. Activities such as consumer seminars or a newspaper supplement devoted to NHM provide valuable advice and knowledge that help home buyers make wise purchasing decisions and have a more enjoyable buying experience. The success in reaching this goal can at least in part be determined by the number of people attending a seminar, for instance, receiving a supplement or looking at backgrounders on the website.

CREATING SALES OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPANTS

Ultimately, the objective of any marketing effort is to increase sales. Activities must be designed to create sales opportunities for participants (builders, financial institutions, suppliers, and so on). As with any other marketing effort, the effectiveness of NHM in increasing sales must be gauged over an extended period of time, and in conjunction with other marketing and public relations activities undertaken by individual companies and organizations.

INCREASING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE LOCAL HBA

This goal can be achieved through specific industry-oriented NHM activities, and through the success of the overall campaign. The greater the value media and consumers put on association membership, the more builders and other industry members will want to join.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

Public Events

Consumer Seminars

Home buyer seminars, particularly those aimed at first-time home buyers, are a very effective way of providing valuable information to people who can most benefit from it—i.e. those who are in the market for a new home, whether they are actively looking or still “thinking about it”.

It is also a good opportunity to enlist the participation of individuals and companies from many different areas of the industry to speak about their area of expertise. Topics can include:

- The Advantages of Buying New
- Finding the Right Builder
- Financing Information
- New Home Warranties
- Energy Efficiency
- Environmentally Friendly Options for Your Home
- Legal Aspects of a Home Purchase
- ... and much more

Ideas:

- > Rent tabletop display space to new home builders, manufacturers, suppliers and other members, so people can meet, talk and consult with your members after the seminar.
- > Hold a draw of prizes donated by partners.
- > Collect donations for your designated charity.

Open Houses, Home Tours and Parades

For home buyers wanting to know about new homes and what's available in the marketplace, nothing beats the hands-on experience of visiting display homes. NHM open houses, home tours or parades can be held over a weekend, or longer, depending on what works best in your community. The events can also be themed, such as an R-2000 parade or a "Green Homes Tour", for instance.

Ideas:

- > Have builders and partner representatives on site to talk with visitors.
- > In each home, display a copy of a signed municipal proclamation (see page 23).
- > In each home, have a map of other show homes, as relevant.
- > Have lots of printed information on hand: NHM backgrounders, association brochures, a list of new home builder members, partner literature, and so on.
- > Collect donations for your designated charity.
- > Conduct surveys on home buyer intentions, needs and more.
- > Have a BBQ at a display home, offer free hotdogs and hamburgers to visitors.
- > Have a draw of prizes, with a ballot box in each show home. Prizes can include:
 - backyard composters and other environmentally friendly products
 - appliances
 - landscaping services.

Tie-in with Home Shows

A home show is a great venue for reaching large numbers of people in the community who may be in the market for a new home.

Ideas:

- > Set up a New Homes Month booth, or devote a section of the association booth to NHM.
- > Display NHM posters.
- > Use selected backgrounders as handouts, and distribute association brochures, lists of new home builder members, and other printed materials. (To keep costs down, you may want to limit the amount of handouts at the booth, and instead refer people to your HBA's website.)
- > Make sure that advertising for the home show mentions the booth.
- > Display your association's new home awards finalists and winners.
- > Conduct consumer surveys on buying intentions and preferences.
- > Conduct consumer seminars on timely topics, such as "green homes", energy efficiency, and how to buy a new home.
- > Consider a draw or raffle for a prize, e.g. consultation sessions with a landscaping company or a "declutter" expert, patio furniture or BBQ. Direct people to go to your website to find out the results of the draw.
- > Most important of all, the booth must be staffed at all times, by new home builders, HBA staff and/or partner representatives. All must be knowledgeable, professional and prepared to talk about new homes and the benefit of choosing to buy from an association member, instead of simply promoting their own company (individual member companies can also rent their own separate booth at the show).

Displays

A NHM display/information centre in a local shopping mall or other busy public area can be an alternative to seminars, open houses and home shows, where those are not possible. Or, it can be an addition to other events in order to increase the reach of your campaign.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that you need to have a strong and distinct presence, and give people a reason to stop at the display.

Ideas:

- > Use your HBA's booth and/or display materials to create a professional display, or find out if your partners have equipment you can use.
- > Hang NHM posters in the display area.
- > Use photographs of homes to draw passers-by to the display; if relevant, use submissions to your HBA's housing awards.
- > Have lots of printed information on hand.
- > Ideally, the display should be staffed at all times. If this is not possible, aim to have someone present during the hours when people are most likely to stop and talk.

Charity events

Participation in charities gives the association and members an opportunity to give back to the community. It shows your concern and commitment to the well-being of your community, while at the same time increasing your profile and credibility.

Ideas:

- > Collect funds for a designated charity at both public and association events during New Homes Month.
- > Tie your fundraising to a raffle—for instance, for children's playhouses built by association members, with the proceeds going to a local charity.
- > Create a “working bee”—have members donate time and materials to a community project during New Homes Month.
- > Initiate a larger construction project for a community charity with a groundbreaking ceremony during New Homes Month.

No matter what your HBA chooses to do, it is a good news story that should be brought to the attention of the media and consumers. Send out news releases, take photos and post stories on your website and through social media. Get people interested and involved.

Industry Events and Activities

Industry events are organized to support the public New Homes Month activities, as well as to encourage networking and collaboration among members and other participants. They also offer an ideal opportunity to recruit new association members.

Ideas:

- > Send out NHM notices to your members. Tell them about the campaign plans, the benefits and opportunities, and invite them to be a participant or partner.
- > Discuss NHM in your newsletter, on your website and/or in member emails, and keep members up-to-date on progress and results.

- > Hold a kick-off breakfast/luncheon/dinner, and use it as a fundraiser for your NHM activities, or to raise funds for your designated NHM charity. Invite “special guests”, such as municipal elected officials, media persons, housing experts, other high-profile individuals, and so on.
- > Hold a builder workshop or seminar on a timely topic (e.g. building codes, safety standards) under the auspices of NHM.
- > Organize an information seminar for salespeople who will be staffing display homes.
- > Kick off your parade of homes or home tour with a reception for media and invited guests, a ribbon cutting ceremony with dignitaries, and a formal tour of the display homes.
- > Designate April as your membership recruitment month, and use NHM to demonstrate one of the many benefits of belonging to the association.
- > Hold a grand finale breakfast/luncheon/dinner.

Media Campaign

Home is close to the hearts of most people, and there is always a demand for more information about housing, be it financing, the latest trends, or profiles of local builders.

Traditional media—print, radio and television—should have no hesitancy in covering New Homes Month, given the interest of their audiences in the topic. Many HBAs have a well-established relationship with their local media (many are also members of the association), and will have little trouble getting stories, articles and notices published. Alternatively, NHM provides an opportunity to create a relationship with the media.

Your local newspaper, as well as radio and community television station, may be looking for good ideas and content. The CHBA campaign materials are ready for use, with no or few changes. See the section on page 21 for a detailed discussion on how to make these materials an important part of your media campaign.

In brief, there are several approaches to consider:

- A **tabloid**, which is a self-contained supplement to the newspaper, devoted to articles and other information about NHM. Tabloids take time to develop, so decisions have to be made early on in the planning process.
One of the advantages of a tabloid is that it tends to have a longer lifespan, i.e. interested readers keep it around the house for a while. Also, ask the newspapers to print extra copies to distribute at both public and industry events, and to include in partner packages.
- **Other print coverage**, ideally spread out over the duration of your campaign—articles, announcement and coverage of events, and so on. In addition to the CHBA material, provide your own news releases, information on your HBA, details on the local housing market, trends, and more.
- **Radio and television** stations should all be approached. They may be interested in promoting the campaign through local and community news programs, as well as discussing it (or an interesting, timely aspect of new homes) on consumer programs and talk shows. Make sure your HBA or the NHM committee appoints someone to be the media representative, willing to go on air and be interviewed.

- **Public service announcements (PSAs)** are notices with information of interest to the general public, that both print and electronic media provide free of charge. Using PSAs is a good way to complement other media coverage as well as any paid advertising for NHM that your HBA may undertake. Talk with your media representatives and find out what they can do for your campaign.
- **Social media** adds another dimension to your media efforts. Whether your HBA is already using Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other social media or not, think about mounting a NMH campaign online as well. It is up to you to decide just how active you want to be on social media, but it's easy to get the basic information out, along with a link to your website. Promote your events online and invite people to participate. Post as-it-is-happening pictures and brief comments on events and activities. Add information after events (pictures and comments) and post YouTube clips.

Consumer Handouts

Notwithstanding the use of the Internet as a primary source of information, it is still a good idea to have printed information, brochures, pamphlets, and other handouts available at all public NHM events. Printed information reinforces the NHM message, introduces people to the industry, new home builders and their partners in their community, and provides information for easy perusal later.

- Use the **CHBA campaign materials**, as is or tailored to your marketplace and circumstances, to create inexpensive information sheets. Simply photocopy, or change the format if you like. Add the NMH graphic design and tagline, along with your own HBA logo and contact information.
- Use **existing Association materials**—from your own HBA, as well as suitable materials from the provincial and national levels.
- Include **materials from partners and other participants**. Review to determine that they provide timely and suitable information.
- Give out **materials from other important and credible sources**, such as Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), and provincial and municipal governments.

Online Information

Local HBAs should make full use of their website to create awareness of NHM, promote events and activities, and provide information on new homes and home buying—i.e. the number one resource for both internal and external audiences.

This entails both posting materials on your site, and having links to other sites, particularly CHBA and partners of the campaign.

- The CHBA campaign materials are a great starting point—tagline, graphics, news release, backgrounders and public service announcements.
- Add the CHBA icon and link to the national site, which contains a wide variety of information of interest to home buyers.
- You may also want to have links to CMHC and NRCan's energy efficiency section, as well as other appropriate government departments and agencies at the municipal, provincial and federal levels.

ASK MEMBERS TO CHECK THAT THEIR COMPANY'S LISTING ON THE LOCAL HBA WEBSITE AS WELL AS THE CHBA WEBSITE IS ACCURATE AND UP TO DATE, AND INCLUDES A LINK TO THEIR OWN SITE.

CHBA NEW HOMES MONTH MATERIALS IN DETAIL

Each year, the CHBA national office prepares a range of materials for use by local HBAs in their NHM campaigns. Individual pieces may be revised and updated from year to year, and new materials are created as required to maintain a fresh approach and provide new, timely information.

The materials can be downloaded from the Members Area of the CHBA website, under Tools for HBAs and Tools for Members.

Graphic Artwork and Tagline

The CHBA creates a new graphic image and tagline every year to give each campaign a distinct theme and look. Downloadable in various formats, the image can be used for tabloid front covers, advertisements, flyers, brochures and other print pieces. As well, it can be applied to the HBA website to promote New Homes Month, and individual members can be encouraged to use it on their own sites or materials.

The tagline is a simple statement of a few words designed to capture the theme and the message of the campaign each year. The tagline is usually reflected in a number of the written materials.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

- > Whether you create your own ads to promote your events, or you have someone else (newspaper, graphic designer) do it, use the tagline as your headline and the NHM image as the main graphic image.
- > For the text (in addition to possible event-specific local information) adapt one of the public service announcements or use an excerpt from a backgrounder. For a large ad, consider using a copy of the signed NHM proclamation (see page 23).

News Release

The news release is the announcement of New Homes Month, designed to inform the media about the initiative and stimulate interest. The committee may wish to alter it by adding information of local interest such as the time, place and nature of the activities in your community, or the name of your current president.

Backgrounders

A number of background information pieces, or consumer articles, are developed each year by the CHBA. They are all designed to help consumers become more familiar with new homes, with the home building industry and with the home buying process.

Use the backgrounders as is, or you can tailor them to your own circumstances and add local information. If you make significant changes to the CHBA materials, make sure to check your facts before making them public.

Also, consider writing your own backgrounders about your HBA's involvement in the community, individual participating members, the local new homes market, and so on.

The backgrounders have multiple uses:

- Send them to the media, as part of a New Homes Month media kit. They provide the contents for a tabloid, or for a series of articles or other coverage. Often, the media will use the information exactly as presented. Or, they may use the backgrounders as reference material to create their own articles and reports.
- Copy and distribute the backgrounders at consumer seminars and home shows, or use as point-of-sale materials during open houses and home tours. Add your HBA logo and contact information.
- Post them on your HBA's website.
- Encourage builder members to make use of the backgrounders with their own customers—as information handouts or posted online.
- Encourage other campaign participants and partners to post the backgrounders on their site.
- Use the backgrounders, in full or in part, as ads, or advertorials, in newspapers and magazines.
- Include backgrounders with mailings to potential new members as part of your membership recruitment drive, as an example of your association's activities to benefit members and consumers alike. Alternatively, mention that the backgrounders can be found on your HBA website.

New Homes Month Proclamation

An official proclamation by your premier, mayor or other government official enhances the credibility of your campaign. The actual signing of it presents an ideal opportunity for media coverage.

Contact the appropriate government officials and make sure they are well informed about New Homes Month and willing to support it. Work closely with them to select the best time and format for the signing of the proclamation. Suggested formats include:

- Press conference
- Ribbon-cutting ceremony
- Project opening
- Association luncheon (or other event)

The committee can use the text provided by the CHBA, or adapt it to suit local practices. **Include only copies of a signed proclamation in your media kits.**

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

- > Take your own photos of the proclamation signing and send to the media along with a brief news release (if the media doesn't show up at the event).
- > Similarly, if no suitable event is possible, arrange to take pictures in the mayor's office when the proclamation is signed. Then issue a news release with a photo.
- > In all cases, post the news release and/or proclamation and photo on your HBA's website, and use social media to spread the word and generate traffic to the website.
- > Incorporate signed copies in your NHM ads (get permission from the mayor's office first) or direct mail flyers.
- > Display copies at open houses, parades, and so on.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Contact your local radio and television stations as well as newspapers to find out how you can take advantage of free airtime and print space that media are obliged to provide for messages of public interest.

Complete the prepared text for the PSAs provided by CHBA by adding the pertinent information about your own events and contact information. You can also create your own PSAs from scratch.

Most of the PSAs use the tagline line created for the campaign. Some are also suitable for use in advertisements, on flyers and other promotional materials.

Creating Your Media Kit

The media—both printed and electronic—play an important role in promoting the campaign in your community.

In addition to being an important vehicle for new homes advertising, daily and weekly newspapers can cover your campaign activities as news stories, feature items, and listings of events.

Stand-alone newspaper supplements (also referred to as tabloids) can be particularly effective in promoting NHM and providing information to consumers. As a rule, it is necessary to purchase advertising in proportion to editorial content; however, in the past, many committees have been successful in negotiating good terms with their local papers.

Radio and television news programs, consumer information programs and talk shows are all great tools for publicizing your events and for presenting valuable consumer information.

In smaller markets, television advertising can be very reasonably priced and may therefore be a viable alternative to other forms of advertising.

Your committee should contact the editors of the local media and invite them to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the campaign.

Present each with a media kit in print, electronically, or both. Make sure that you allow plenty of lead-time, especially if you are asking newspapers to produce a supplement.

Create New Homes Month media kits using the following materials:

- News release
- Backgrounders
- Proclamation
- Public service announcements
- NHM graphic image and tagline
- Local association literature
- Profiles of participating builders
- Information on NHM partners

ADVICE TO INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

New Homes Month is a membership service, with many benefits for individual new home builder members, as noted earlier (see page 5).

An important role for your HBA is to help your members get as much out of the campaign as possible, to make sure they know what's available and encourage them to take full advantage of all possible opportunities.

CHBA Tools for Members

In addition to the New Homes Month materials, members have access to a number of other CHBA tools to help them market their company, promote their professionalism and provide important information to customers—during the New Homes Month campaign and throughout the year.

- Members should check that their company information in the *Find a Member* search engine on the CHBA's website is up-to-date, and that their website is linked to it.
- Members should be encouraged to use the CHBA member logo on all their printed materials and online.
- A link to the CHBA website can be embedded on members' own websites for direct access to a lot of valuable information on new homes and home buying (there is a ready-to-install "button" on CHBA's website, Members Area, Tools for Members).
- The Tools section also contains consumer brochures that members can download and print, or order through the CHBA office.
- The *Get it in Writing!* website is a great source of third-party information on the importance of hiring a professional contractor. While particularly helpful in relation to home renovations, the site can also be pertinent to homebuyers. Members can also download and print a brochure to hand out to potential customers.
- *Solution Providers*, the website of the CHBA Manufacturers' Council, offers lots of valuable product information, including downloadable consumer handouts, as well as access to both technical and marketing assistance.
- Participation in the CHBA National SAM Awards is an opportunity for members to set themselves apart and gain extra visibility and credibility. Finalists and winners are featured on the CHBA's website.

BEYOND NEW HOMES MONTH

New Homes Month offers a strong focus on the new home sector at a particular time during the year, but for local HBAs and new home builder members, promoting the benefits of new homes and the advantages of buying from a professional, reputable member company is an ongoing activity.

The materials developed for New Homes Month can be used year-round, to help in this effort.

Backgrounders

The backgrounders provide solid valuable consumer information that is not quickly dated or obsolescent.

- They can be posted on your HBA's website anytime and left up for some time without concern that they are no longer timely. As new backgrounders become available from the CHBA, you can review existing backgrounders and determine which ones you wish to leave up for a while longer.
- The backgrounders can also be given to the media for year-round use. Magazines and newspapers regularly publish articles on new home construction, products, features and much more through the year.

The backgrounders enable your HBA to be proactive with the media in your community who may be grateful to receive ready-to-publish information. The result is a good working relationship with the media, and greater visibility and credibility for the association and its members.

Graphic Image

Similarly, the graphic image for the campaign can be used year-round—on your HBA website, brochures or flyers, display boards, ads and so on. Or, you may want to print posters that you can display at home shows or other public events, or hang in your office—your members may want copies for their own offices or events.

Web Links

There is a lot of good information online that is helpful to home buyers anytime of the year.

- Put a link to CHBA on your HBA website to give visitors easy access to a wide range of information about new homes and the purchasing process, CHBA SAM awards, and more.
- Encourage your members to do the same—they can use the icons in the CHBA Members Area in the Tools section.
- Also encourage your members to check the CHBA website regularly for new publications and other tools that can help them be more effective and successful with their customers.



NOTES

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