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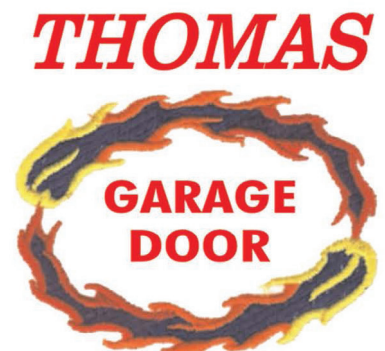
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Giselle Bernard
Publisher

Dear Readers:

As some of you already know, this magazine is a boutique publication and just a tiny part of an all-encompassing business model created specifically to serve both the builder and their vendors – my advertisers. I interview at least four builders per month before choosing the builder I'll feature in the upcoming issue. In addition, I choose an interior designer to interview for the publication. They too, are referred.

In receiving feedback from both the builders and the vendors that I represent and have represented, the business model along with the publication evolves. I try to make it a point to ask and receive feedback from my customers throughout the year, so that I can add something new in the line of product and services each year.

As mentioned before, the publication is now being mailed directly to the builders and interior designers, along with just a handful of advertising vendors. I am reaching all of my customers, and my advertisers are reaching theirs. I am mailing directly to this group to keep the marketing, advertising and service costs down. Non-advertising vendors will no longer receive a hard copy of the magazine. However, anyone can access the publication on line at www.themetropolitanbuilder.com. I am sending monthly notifications letting all know when the publication has been uploaded.

I am already gearing up for the changes that will be made in 2018. I can't wait to map it out and let you know. If you have suggestions or feedback, please feel free to contact me. I am here to serve.

Giselle Bernard, *Owner/Publisher*



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Location Defines Oppidan Homes' Projects

By **Kathy Bowen Stolz**

It's all about location for Oppidan Homes, but not just any location. That location must be inside the 610 Loop where the premium home builder focuses on luxury town homes and single family estates with its in-fill projects.

One of the larger town home builders in Houston, according to Managing Director Rick Clark, Oppidan Homes builds on properties where it can place from two to 36 units. Finding those properties is one of Clark's responsibilities. "All of our acquisitions are in-fill, and there's no standard size," he said. "I look for properties that are going to appeal to our target market."

That target market may be a millennial-age buyer or an empty nester or someone new to Houston. But almost all of Oppidan's customers want to be closer to downtown to avoid the "horrific" traffic flow that helps define Houston's growth.

Oppidan means "urban" in Latin, he explained, which fits the company's focus as inner city developers. However, the company plans to change its name to Oracle in 2017 to fit better with its parent company's branding.

Clark said he seeks upcoming neighborhoods that are likely to be redeveloped and repositioned to appeal

to homebuyers. While the company has projects all over Houston, Clark said his focus is currently on the established neighborhoods of East Houston, Montrose, The Heights and Bellaire, where the company has its office.

Although the company has enough lots in its inventory for the next two or three years of projects, he expects to expand to other areas to find available properties based on demographics, demand and inventory supply.

Typically the company buys a half dozen houses, tears them down, and builds two- or three-story town homes designed to blend with the neighborhood. "Generally speaking, our goal is to enhance the neighborhood with our projects," Clark said.

"We focus on curb appeal. All of our properties are single family, detached housing with parking based on city requirements. Most have garages with guest parking availability. All come with installed security features."

No two projects are alike because they are customized to fit the space and the neighborhood, but they often fall in the \$320,000 to \$550,000 range with 1,950 to 3,000 sq. ft. Floor plans vary to fit the site.

"Our goal is to deliver around 65 units this year but to



push that to 100 units a year consistently,” Clark said. “It’s also our goal to be in and out of a project from start to finish in 9 to 12 months for a 12-unit project.”

Oppidan works with multiple architects and designers and follows real estate trends and market analyses to determine what will appeal to the broadest segment of the population as possible. Clark said the goal is to provide a high quality product with features most buyers expect. He said he doesn’t impose his personal taste. “I let the designers design.”

Oaks on Caroline, a six-story, 28-unit condominium project in the Museum District, is nearing completion. These one- and two-bedroom luxury units feature seven different floor plans within their 1,100- to 1,500-sq.-ft. sizes.

They come with washers and dryers, wine coolers, stainless steel appliances, natural stone countertops, wood and tile floors and frameless glass showers. They also feature open floor plans and balconies with fabulous views to take advantage of “city living in the heart of it all.”

Clark also expects the parking garage, affordable HOA fees and modern exterior of the Oaks on Caroline to appeal to buyers.

Clark also expects the company’s move to more integrated technology will appeal to many of its buyers who want a “smart” home.

Demand is strong for its products because of their locations within the Loop, he said. The trend toward more neighborhood restaurants, bars and grocery stores make those areas just as desirable as the suburban areas for their target markets.

However, Oppidan also may enter the stand-alone, single family quasi-custom home market in the \$1-1.5 million range, Clark said. The company is also trying to do more pre-sells where buyers get to choose paint colors, although most buyers want to move in as soon as they purchase a unit.

Oppidan Homes’ history is unusual by Houston standards. Adi Reisner, a native of Israel, enjoyed the

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NAHB: Regulatory and Supply-Side Challenges Inhibit More Robust Housing Growth

Although employment and home price levels have returned to or exceeded normal levels of activity, new-home construction during the fourth quarter of 2016 remained tepid in many markets due to regulatory and supply-side constraints, according to the National Association of Home Builders/First American Leading Markets Index (LMI) released in early February.

The index's nationwide score inched up to .99, meaning that based on current permit, price and employment data, the nationwide average is running at 99 percent of normal economic and housing activity. However, when breaking down the three major components of the index, single-family permits are running at just 52 percent of normal activity, while employment is at 98 percent and home prices are well above normal at 147 percent.

Part of the reason why home prices have jumped in many metro areas is directly related to the paucity of permits, creating an imbalance between supply and demand.

"Though rising, single-family permits continue to lag behind the other components of the LMI," said NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz. "This is due to a number of factors, including regulatory hurdles and supply-side headwinds such as persistent shortages of lots and labor in many markets. As we address these challenges, we should see an

additional increase in housing production."

"While housing continues to gradually mend, regulatory constraints are preventing builders from meeting demand in many markets," said NAHB Chairman Granger MacDonald, a home builder and developer from Kerrville, Texas. "We expect further improvement in the year ahead as we work with the new Trump administration and Congress to implement regulatory relief that help small businesses and the housing sector."

A recent survey of NAHB members found that their top two concerns this year are the cost and availability of labor and developed lots.

Richard Van Osten, executive vice president of the Builders League of South Jersey, summed up the problem succinctly: "It's been more difficult to find lots to build on."

Despite these challenges, the housing market continues to make gradual gains. The LMI shows that markets in 174 of the approximately 340 metro areas nationwide returned to or exceeded their last normal levels of economic and housing activity in the fourth quarter of 2016. This represents a year-over-year net gain of 60 markets. Moreover, 86 percent of markets have shown an improvement year over year.

"More than 250 markets, or 75 percent of all metro areas nationwide, now stand at or above 90 percent on this quarter's Leading Market Index," said Kurt Pfothenauer, vice chairman of First American Title Insurance



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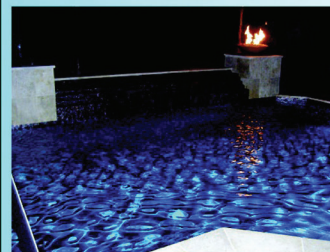
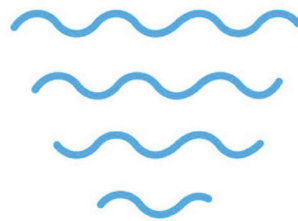
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Company, which co-sponsors the LMI report. “This shows that the overall housing market continues to improve at a moderate pace.”

Baton Rouge, La., continues to top the list of major metros on the LMI, with a score of 1.73 — or 73 percent better than its last normal market level. Other major metros leading the group include Austin, Texas; Honolulu; Provo, Utah; and San Jose, Calif. Rounding out the top 10 are Spokane, Wash.; Nashville, Tenn.; Charleston, S.C.; Los Angeles; and Salt Lake City.

Among smaller metros, Odessa, Texas, has an LMI score of 2.10, meaning that it is now at more than double its market strength prior to the recession. Also at the top of that list are Midland, Texas; Ithaca, N.Y.; Walla Walla, Wash.; and Florence, Ala.

The LMI examines metro areas to identify those that are now approaching and exceeding their previous normal levels of economic and housing activity. Approximately 340 metro areas are scored by taking their average permit, price and employment levels for the past 12 months and dividing each by their annual average over the last period of normal growth.

For permits and employment, both the 12-month average and the annual average during the last period of normal growth are also adjusted for the underlying population count. For single-family permits and home prices, 2000-2003 is used as the last normal period, and for employment, 2007 is the base comparison. The three components are then averaged to provide an overall score for each market; a national score is calculated based on national measures of the three metrics. An index value above one indicates that a market has advanced beyond its previous normal level of economic activity.



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2014 Pinnacle Award Winner



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diversity of the Houston metro area when he visited in 2006. He saw opportunity to expand his construction and development business to the United States. A builder of mid-rise condominiums in Israel, he purchased land and apartments at that time and moved into the single family home business in 2011.

Reisner asked Clark, who had been the company's banker for many years, to join the company as managing director in December 2016. Clark explained that his background in commercial mortgage banking and retail banking, as well as serving as a banker for single family developments, fits the job well. Not only does he oversee all operations and find properties, but he works with multiple banks to secure financing for all projects.

He said he finds building to be interesting and more fast-paced than banking. He also likes the obvious impact on the community that comes with building. Banking's impact is not as tangible, he noted.

The company is growing, just as Houston is growing. At this time Oppidan has 10 full-time employees, which include two field superintendents, a development manager and support staff. The company is also completing construction of its new corporate headquarters at 6502 Alder Drive in Bellaire.

When you see luxury town homes inside the Loop in the future, expect Oppidan (and soon to be Oracle) to be the developer. It's ready for the challenge.





You may contact Oppidan Homes at RZ Enterprises, Inc., 5909 W. Loop South, Suite 580, Bellaire, TX 77401 or at info@rz-inc.com or 832-649-5600. You may also visit the company's website at www.rz-inc.com.



Dialogue with a Designer

Kathy Anderson, Principal Designer/Owner, Eklktik Interiors

Customer service and product quality have always been the top priorities at Lighting Inc. Their second generation, family-owned business' belief is that through hard work and dedication, they can be second to none when it comes to lighting options.

They understand that the top design professionals in the Houston market are committed to creating individualized and functional designs to meet the lifestyles of their clients' families. It's why they diligently work with the area's top interior designers and design firms in order to assure their clients' gratification when it comes to realizing their dreams, reality and inspirations in making their house a home.

With more than 100 years of employee experience at Lighting Inc., they aspire to stand out in the industry in assisting to find the perfect lighting fixtures for their customers' needs. Their passion for lighting, home décor and customer service has been the driving force behind their business since 1959, and they are eager to serve. Please contact Jeff Fee at 713-623-6500 for more details.

This month Lighting Inc. talks with Kathy Anderson, principal designer and owner of Eklktik Interiors, who brings a broad perspective and exclusiveness to her interior designs. Inspired by her world travels, Kathy focuses on creating a personal design that is timeless.

With extensive residential as well as commercial experience, Kathy has found that a vital key to truly successful interior design projects is communication. She believes the design process should be an enjoyable one. By helping her clients better understand the process, the experience becomes less intimidating for them. Her ability to read her clients is a strength that helps her to create that "signature" environment for each space. Kathy received a degree in interior design from Brigham Young University and is a licensed and registered interior designer.

Lighting Inc.: *How can an experienced interior designer help a custom home builder or a remodeling contractor with their building or remodeling projects?*

Kathy Anderson: I believe the best projects happen when builder and designer have an open exchange of ideas. Designers look at a project not only aesthetically but also functionally. We have been a design/build firm and have done numerous remodels, but I realized that each job has its own skill set. I am really a designer first. I joined the Greater Houston Builders Association to get to know quality builders and remodelers because I got into the build part because I couldn't find someone I trusted with our design.

Each project we approach is with the mindset that it should be better than our last job. Working with quality

builders and remodelers has been a gamechanger for us. WE have more time to design fabulous projects, and we can focus on that, not the build part. We have contractors we work with that like to think outside the box with us, and we have a great relationship with all of them because we understand and value their skill set. They value us to bring a different skill set to their project that sets them apart as well. When that relationship of trust and respect is solid, magic can happen.

Lighting Inc.: *What sets you apart from other designers?*

Kathy Anderson: I think that fact that I have done remodeling myself over the last 35+ years sets me apart. Designing is one thing; building it is quite another. It does make a huge difference. WE approach each job as if we were building it. It pays to think it through in the design process to know how feasible it will be and at what costs.

I am a practical designer. I look for the ultimate functional design. I have seen houses that are beautiful but just don't function very well. The design wasn't thought out. I think that happens when people get in a hurry and just want to "churn and burn" projects. We as a firm take the time to lay out multiple options, to understand how our clients live, entertain, work, relax. It is so important. It's not just about finishes, etc. It's about EXCEPTIONAL LIVING.

Lighting Inc.: *What are some common mistakes made by builders and homeowners?*

Kathy Anderson: I think some builders can get in a rut. They build the same thing over and over. I understand that to some degree...they are busy. That is why I think that the best builders liaison with an interior designer to help their homes become unique and memorable. I know that we in our firm literally travel the world looking at the latest and greatest in building materials, lighting, furniture, design, anything to stay current and relevant. It's our passion!

Homeowners make the mistake by not protecting their investment and getting the most out of their dollar by not consulting a professional. Even if they want to "do it themselves," they still need to consult a professional to make sure it all ends as planned. Even just having another set of eyes on your project will ensure things don't get missed.

Lighting Inc.: *Speaking about staying current, how do you keep yourself up to date with all the design trends happening in the industry today?*

Kathy Anderson: As previously stated, I spend a lot of money traveling to markets, shows, parade of homes, all over the world. I attend at least six to eight markets and trade shows a year all over the country and Europe.



I attend Parade of Home shows all over the U.S. as well. I love to travel, and it brings a great perspective to our designs. We don't carbon copy anything. Our designs are unique to our clients because each of our clients are unique. It would be a disservice to them to not give them our best and our best for THEM!

Lighting Inc.: *What fascinates you and how have you incorporated that into your designs?*

Kathy Anderson: Interesting that you ask that. My favorite aspect of design might just be lighting! I LOVE LIGHTING!

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Discover Excellence.



Continued from page 11

I am obsessed! Lighting can make or break a space. It is the one single element that I think is overlooked most of the time. Obviously, decorative lighting is big and can add major impact, but I think it is so important to have layers of lighting in your space. It creates a mood. Immediately! Washing of walls, spot-lighting a major piece of art, back-lighting a mirror, accent-lighting a ceiling, or up-lighting a corner can create an ambience like no other.

Lighting Inc.: *How would you characterize your personal style?*

Kathy Anderson: I am definitely eclectic! I love design. All of it. It feeds my soul. My personal style is comfortable and casual. My home is kid friendly (I have six grandchildren). A place to relax, visit and nurture the soul. I have a big family and lots of friends. My home is a revolving door. It is a welcoming place for all, and I cherish that.

Lighting Inc.: *How do you begin the materials selection process when working with builders' and remodelers' clients?*

Kathy Anderson: BUDGET! That's the first thing that has to be discussed. Let's face it, no one wants to go over budget! Secondly, we would discuss the overall feel and direction of the design, and, if there is a client, then that is discussed as a team. We all need to be on the same page. As in any design process, communication is key.

Lighting Inc.: *Last thoughts?*

Kathy Anderson: Houston is a great city! WE are a very eclectic society of different peoples and cultures. I love that. We have a great opportunity as a "building community" to hold ourselves to a very high standard



to make our city a leader in quality construction and design. I feel we are doing that. There are great builders and remodelers out there doing beautiful quality work. Houston is home to some of the most talented designers in the industry today. I feel blessed and excited to get be a part of this great city and industry!

Feel free to contact Eklektik Interiors with any questions you have regarding Eklektik Interiors or your personal design queries. We will connect you with our friendly and competent staff and designers. We'd be ecstatic to work with you and customize an interior design plan unique to you!

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Whether you or your customer lean toward classic beauty, modern masterpieces or anything in between, RangeCraft will work with you to design a range hood that fits the unique style you are looking for, thanks to more than 25 product categories that can be outfitted in various shapes, sizes and finishes. The variety of choice is ideal for seamlessly pulling together the look of a kitchen or creating a decorative focal point that stands out and draws in the eye.

Included in RangeCraft’s line is a wide array of copper, brass and stainless steel hood styles—such as the Aspen, Baroque, Miami, Madison, Kotler, Convex, Boxhood, Broadway, Rococo and Visor. If you’re looking for that added touch, the company can make custom variations of the metals to achieve a one-of-a-kind vision. If copper in particular is your thing, RangeCraft’s copper models can be acid-washed to truly showcase the material’s natural luster or hammered and outfitted with decorative rivets for an old-world appearance. Other popular finishes include blackened steel, antique brass, brushed stainless steel and non-directional stainless steel.

Additional elements available include rounded corners for seamless kitchen integration as well as contrasting metal bands, buttons and other ornamental elements such as pot racks.

More Than Meets the Eye

Since RangeCraft knows the truth behind being more than just a pretty face, it has differentiated itself in the marketplace by backing up its enviable exteriors with technology aimed at keeping the kitchen free of unwanted smells, grease and grime.

“Most range hoods are mass-manufactured and use inferior mechanical components from Asia that function

improperly,” stated David Ryan, director of marketing for RangeCraft. “To the contrary, RangeCraft custom designs its hoods and sets higher standards using high-caliber materials and parts, including top-notch fan motors that are whisper-quiet. RangeCraft utilizes a state-of-the-art computerized system in its manufacturing process.”



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“The fan’s powerful airflow also helps eliminate strong

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Schaub & Company's cabinet hardware is designed and crafted with passion by expert artisans from around the world – from Italy to the South Pacific islands. Every piece is rich in design and detail that make a home truly stand apart from the rest. Collections like Symphony are unlike anything else in the market with precious inlays made from the most stunning materials on earth, such as mother-of-pearl and Imperial Shell. They still use the

centuries' old methods that Peter Faberge used to create the famous Faberge Eggs for the Russian royal family. Schaub's full catalog offers pulls in an array of exquisite styles, from sleek contemporary to ornate and luxurious.

Schaub & Company was founded in 1998 by Bob and Marcia Schaub in Grand Rapids, Mich. The husband-and-wife team built years of experience in the cabinet



hardware industry before starting their own company. It was from that experience that they saw a need for a different kind of company, one based on three values as its foundation: service, quality and distinctive designs.

It began with a small family of employees who knew every product in detail and could ably assist every custom home builder and interior designer. Over the years their striking designs grew in number, and so did the company, but the customer experience remains the same. People receive their orders with a quick turnaround from order, to shipping and delivery. Schaub & Company remains a tight-knit community with knowledge and experience; everybody receives the highest standard of service.

In 2010, Schaub & Company partnered with ASSA ABLOY, the global leader in door opening solutions. The partnership was a natural step and Schaub & Company continues to strive to create the best products for its clients. ASSA ABLOY is headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, and has extensive operations worldwide.

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Showcase Kitchens, New York

Continued from page 14

odors from foods like fish, garlic and onions that otherwise may linger,” said Ramona Panus, president of RangeCraft Manufacturing. “It’s much nicer to recall what you had for dinner the night before by finding the leftovers in the fridge rather than smelling them when you come down the stairs in the morning.” In addition to enhancing the kitchen’s cleanliness, a well-crafted hood makes cooking a breeze by adding a high-quality light source to the workspace, making cooking safer and easier. “Typically, an ultra-bright halogen bulb will illuminate your cooking surface and brighten the room,” said Panus.

Finding the Right Fit

Once customers have lovingly and meticulously chosen the hood style that is right for their kitchen, they must know that installation is as important as initial selection for getting the full benefits a RangeCraft range hood can provide. Some of the biggest mistakes seen are placing the hood too high above the stove or choosing a hood that isn’t adequately wide enough to cover the cooking surface. RangeCraft suggests mounting range hoods approximately 30 inches above the stove and choosing a hood that covers a 3-inch area on either side of the cooking area.

“Our products have a European flair but are designed and manufactured with pride in the United States, built to provide many years of lasting performance and enjoyment,” Panus said. “Every hood we make is designed to reflect the unique character of the kitchen it serves, along with the tastes and personality of the homeowner that chooses it.”

And that, in a nutshell, is why the discerning are in the market for creatively customized, cleverly crafted range hoods look to RangeCraft.

To learn more about this brand and view its full line of range hood offerings, visit www.rangecraft.com.



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How to Get More Done by LOCKing in Your Time

By Burk Moreland



One of the keys to any person or company growing is the ability to get more done. Consultants like me get paid big bucks to come in and show companies and their teams how to get more done and be more efficient. Well, here are a few easy-to-implement ideas (free with no consulting fees) that can help move you towards efficiency in the form of LOCKing down your time.

Limit Distractions

Any efficiency conversation has to start here. In the connected world that we live in, I am amazed at how much some people actually get done. The only problem is that the tasks are not always tied to the goal. They are just tasks. People are so busy being busy that they miss the importance of certain items that they should focus on. Limit your distractions. Include “phone-free” or “social-media-free” blocks on your calendar. Multitasking is really just jumping back and forth between tasks and can be extremely inefficient. Yes, you can get multiple things done in a day, but simultaneous task management is not the most efficient method.

Organize Your Day

A calendar, if used properly, is the centerpiece of any efficiency effort. You might say, “But I like my to-do list!” That’s great! Use that with a calendar to schedule and create deadlines for those tasks. When writing your to-do list first, decide a duration for each task, then actually put time in the calendar to do those things.

Example:

- 8-8:30: Answer emails from the night before.
- 8:30-9:00: Create reports for 10:00 meeting.
- 9:00-9:30: Review reports for presentation.
- 9:30-10:00: Slack time in case something goes wrong.
If nothing goes wrong, move on to shelved tasks list.

Just by forcing yourself to write it all down on a time frame, you will get more done. You remove the anxiety over what item to do and the wasted thought time.

Create Focus Points

Have you ever had that moment where you said, “Now where was I?” Along the lines of limiting multi-tasking, a great method I have seen used is to have a reminder of what you are supposed to be working on. An example might be a sticky note with the task at hand written in

big letters that is stuck to your computer monitor. This way, if you get sidetracked, it takes much less time to remember where you were. To-do lists are also good, but having multiple tasks in your field of vision takes away from the focus effort. Write one on a note away from the others as you work on it. You also get the satisfaction of wadding it up and throwing it away when it is done!

Keep Track of Time

I can’t tell you how many times I have sat at my computer and started thinking about another task or daydreaming about my vacation coming up. If not held in check, this daydreaming can make time fly by as I get caught up on the “interwebs”. And when I finally realize how much the clock just moved, I am in a panic because I didn’t get as much done as I should have.

To limit this, keep track of time. My favorite method for this is by using technology. My computer will announce the hour every hour. It functions like a wake-up call. That way, worst case scenario, is that I lose an hour. And, because I caught myself, I will really focus for the next hour.

LOCKing down your time will allow you to be much more efficient. It will create opportunities for growth, and it will allow you to separate your work life from your relaxing life that you deserve.

So get out your cuckoo clocks and your sticky pads, get rid of your time suckers and get to work!

An accomplished executive, entrepreneur, author, speaker and trainer, Burk Moreland gets results. If pushing your people and organization to new heights is a goal, then you need a rainmaker with decades of experience in the construction industry to drive you towards it. Burk will help you map out the course, attack the goals and, most importantly, enjoy the ride. For more information regarding how he can help you, contact us today at burk@burkmoreland.com or 832-356-4585.



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