

Scott Stroud: This is episode 102 of Selling More Homes, the Monday morning sales meeting. This week, we feature discussions with Ed Doss and Jerry Rouleau, and you're listening to the Selling More Homes Media Network.

Welcome to Selling More Homes, the Monday morning sales meeting. For Jerry Rouleau, I'm Scott Stroud. Every week, we bring you interviews with sales and marketing professionals to help you find more buyers, close more sales, and earn more money in this challenging housing market. Whether you're a realtor, Builder, sales or marketing manager, or new home specialist, this program has been designed just for you.

Selling More Homes, the Monday morning sales meeting is a production of the Selling More Homes Media Network. So get ready to listen, take notes, and enjoy this week's program.

Jerry Rouleau: Welcome to Selling More Homes Media Network. I'm Jerry Rouleau.

Scott Stroud: I'm Scott Stroud.

Jerry Rouleau: Hey, Scott. Welcome back from Vegas. How was your convention out there?

Scott Stroud: It was a fun convention. Again, a convention of real estate bloggers, people involved in our industry, as well as others. It was in conjunction with a larger show, but I learned a lot and didn't do any gambling.

I promised my grandfather before he died that I would never gamble, and I haven't.

Jerry Rouleau: Well, remind us of the story. I've heard this before.

Scott Stroud: Well, he was a gambler. He ran a game. He ran a game. For his whole life. Put my father through dental school and my uncle through college playing blackjack, and you're running a game, and he made me promise he was on his deathbed, and he called me over to his side, and he says, boy, if you ever feel like gambling, make sure that you're the house because the house always wins and since I don't like to lose, I have never, and I can't be the house. That's it.

Jerry Rouleau: So you couldn't be the house in Vegas?

Scott Stroud: Nope. Can't be the house there. And if they're gonna win, I'll let them win somebody else's money.

Jerry Rouleau: You know, and being the house in Vegas, you can see the big buildings, all the lights, and all the trappings of the benefits of being the house.

Scott Stroud: They call it the house that greed built.

Jerry Rouleau: Well, listen, I'm heading off to New Hampshire this week to do a meeting for the New Hampshire Home Builders annual meeting. And then I'm off this weekend as well as you, Scott, and we're gonna catch up in Florida at Marco Island. We're going to a trade show there for the Building Systems Council.

Scott Stroud: Yeah, Jerry, we get to see each other in person, what, two or three times a year, so I'm looking forward to this.

Jerry Rouleau: Yeah. Same here. Well, listen, this week we have an interview with Ed Doss, who is with newhomedirectory.com and buildermatrix.com, and what we're gonna do a little bit different this week is he's been for several months, been we've been trying to connect for him to do an interview with me or his group on LinkedIn, which is what they interview consultants and stuff and post a blog somewhat similar to what we do, but, you know, from a different standpoint.

And I've had him on my list for a long time, so we're gonna do a double interview here. I'm gonna interview him and give you an interview me. We'll have some fun with it.

Scott Stroud: Hmm, that should be interesting.

Jerry Rouleau: Yeah, let's figure we do something different.

Scott Stroud: Good.

Jerry Rouleau: So let's get Ed on the line here. Ed, good morning to ya.

Ed Doss: Good morning, Jerry. How are you?

Jerry Rouleau: I'm doing great. You know, Ed, we've wanted to get you on the air here for some time. And you and I have communicated by email a few times regarding your New Home Professional Network, which is a group on LinkedIn. You know, you wanted to interview me for your program, for your blog there.

So, you know, you know, I thought what'd be fun today, Ed, is if you don't mind is why don't we do it both ways? And put it on our program.

Ed Doss: Epic. Great idea. I really like it, I'm looking forward to that.

Jerry Rouleau: You know? So you know, I'd love to chat about what you do and especially the social media and the you know, the portal side of newhomedirectory.com and the thing that you're doing with the builder metric.

It all ties in with the internet and technology. At the same time, we will split this up, and I'll let you do your interview of me. So, do we flip a coin to see who starts?

Ed Doss: Why don't you go ahead and start?

Jerry Rouleau: Okay, so I start with you?

Ed Doss: Sure. Okay.

Jerry Rouleau: Well, Ed, you know, I don't know how long it's been here, but probably a couple years.

Been watching newhomedirectory.com, and, to my understanding, that's a portal site for builders, right?

Ed Doss: Yes, it's basically a social networking platform for the Are you talking about the directory?

Jerry Rouleau: I'm talking about the directory first, yeah.

Ed Doss: Okay, yeah, the directory is basically an online directory of new home communities nationwide.

Jerry Rouleau: And so so what, and again as, you know, not just your particular site there, but you know, hundreds of various portal sites that builders can, because it's not always people who are in the local market who are looking for a builder. They're coming from out of state, and they want to know who's in Tennessee and this area.

And your portal site, in essence, does that.

Ed Doss: Yeah, that's the great thing about the directory. It's been around almost 10 years now. It's well known in the industry. Jim Adams, the owner and CEO, has done a masterful job of making sure that his site is found when people sit down at their computer and they do a search for new homes, like in Nashville, or Atlanta, or Dallas.

You know, they do a search for new homes Dallas or new homes Seattle, which by, according to research, that is the most prominent search keywords for new homes. He makes sure that. The directory is found on that first page. Generally, it's on the top five organic results.

Jerry Rouleau: And you know what, what I liked about it is the various maps that you have there—satellite maps, maps of the U.S. The flag that popped up. And then, you know, I went into a specific state in the city, and then I saw the listings of the particular builders or developments that were available on that. So, how would a builder take advantage of a portal site like that?

Ed Doss: Well, it's simple.

It would just be a phone call to the directory. The great thing about the directory is that it's a pay-per-click model in that the directory only charges the builder for what they deliver. Okay? So there's no upfront fee or cost. The builder has a chance to be listed on the directory in alphabetical order.

It's a completely non-competitive site. Today, challenges in a lot of directories like that are that some of the big builders get to pay more money and have a better presence. But on the directory, everything's done alphabetically and on a single page.

You know, how consumers are when it comes to looking for something. They don't like to, you know, you're on the search engine, they won't get past page two. But then, when they land on the directory like the newhomedirectory.com. They don't want to be paging through that, either. And so you know, every builder has a first page presence in the directory.

And it's super user friendly, and it's very clean and very easy on the eyes. And so it's a very popular directory for builders because, you know, sometimes you land on a directory like that and it's very convoluted, you know, the consumer has nowhere even, they don't have any idea even where to start but on a directory it's just very easy. Clear, quick, and to the point.

Jerry Rouleau: And, you know, for the builder itself, it's just another place that he's listed. And I would think that being listed there would also help in their individual search engine optimization. Would not that not be the case?

Ed Doss: Yeah, sure, that's definitely the case.

I mean, the real estate, so to speak, the online real estate for the search terms new home. super competitive. And for any builder to break into that space, it would take years of searching and optimization just to get on that first page. Most builders just don't have the time or resources to devote to that type of dedicated searching and optimization.

The alternative option is to find someone who's already there. That's right. Like newhomedirectory.com, and list on them. So, in essence, they are in that space. It may not be their company listed, you know, organically in that space, but once they click on the directory, they're on the builder page within two clicks. So that's just like being on the first page. Yeah.

Jerry Rouleau: You know, we posted a report several weeks ago that I kind of random, and I'm sure I've got some missing on there, but I have a list of over 50 places that builders can, you know, post their homes on the internet, and a lot of them are portal sites. I think, as you know, as part of this interview, we'll make that report available to our listeners.

But you know, I want to take this one step further, Ed is you've created a, you know, the whole world here of social networking, and you know, I'm on LinkedIn, and I'm sure you are on

LinkedIn. I have over a thousand contacts on my LinkedIn account, but you started a group on LinkedIn called New Homes, Professional Network, and your member group there, right? I think you have what over 1,300 members.

Ed Doss: Yeah, I'm getting up there. You know, about gosh, a year and a half ago, I was messing around on LinkedIn and checking out the groups, and it just dawned on me that the building industry, in particular, didn't have any type of social network they could call their own.

I mean, realtors had one in active reign. Right. And others like it. But there just really wasn't any place that builders could call their social network, where they could engage one another and talk about the issues at hand. And so Jim and I discussed this, and we just said, Hey, you know what, let's kick one off here and see what we can do.

We called it the New Homes Professional Network. All we had at the time was just the LinkedIn page. And I tell you what, it just started taking off, and you know, it was no short time. We had 200 members, and when we had 200 members, Jim said, you know what, we need to build a website for this where they can actually talk to one another.

And so Jim and his IT team put together the actual New Homes Professional Network site called And then once we started linking people to that from the network, it just exploded. And you know, you can see on there the number of times that people just get on and check it for the daily news of the day, or, you know, they get involved in a topic at hand, or you know, one thing that's really taken off is the featured member interviews, which is what we're kind of doing now which is just a testimony to social media in and of itself.

Jerry Rouleau: Yeah, I've noticed you know, you've interviewed on a regular basis. I don't know; is it a weekly basis? On a regular basis, like Myers Barnes and Kerry Mulcrone and Meredith Oliver and a lot of the people that you know, we've interviewed on our radio program, and then you post it as, as a blog on that site, which I think is just awesome.

Ed Doss: Yeah. Well, we really felt, Jim, it was really Jim's idea to make sure that the people that we interviewed were notables, so to speak, in the industry who had something to say that would benefit the readers. And so we, you know, we chose people very carefully based on their skills, the things that they're doing, and the things that they're teaching.

The great thing about this is a lot of people in our industry have heard names like Terry McCrone or Kimberly Mackey or Meredith Oliver, and Mike Lyon. But they didn't really, you know, they may not have really known who they are. An interview like this helps people see the personality behind the brand.

And when you can get in and actually learn little details about people's lives and who they are and what their personalities are, it builds a lot of trust. And so, you know, to get in one of these interviews and read something about people—Meredith Oliver being a beauty queen—it kind of builds trust in that individual just learning those kind of details.

I think that's why it's so popular—because that's what social media is all about, after all. It's about understanding the person behind the brand, behind the company logo, behind the executive presence, and that's what people want to understand more than anything else.

Jerry Rouleau: So, our listeners, if they want to find out more about the New Home Professional Network, first of all, if you're a member of LinkedIn, which you should be on if you're in the business world, housing, realtor, and so forth.

But what you do is go to groups. Look up New Home Professional Network Group join that particular group, and see what Ed is, is talking about here on this network. But Ed, I got one other thing to hit you with before we reverse the pages here. That you also have a company you've started, it's called TheBuilderMetric.com. Is that that, did I say that right?

Ed Doss: TheBuilderMatrix.com. Yes. It's brand new. Yes. I appreciate you asking me about that. In my years of working with builder professionals, as it pertains to their presence online, our conversations inevitably turned to their websites and their social media presence.

And, you know, I was constantly getting asked my thoughts and opinions on their websites. These were generally small, mid-sized builders that were questions about the quality of their website and the quality of their social media presence, if any. And so I was actually encouraged by several people in the industry to do this, to start this company, so to speak, because really what we decided to do is help small to mid-sized builders, especially those in the custom building field, to not only have a phenomenal internet presence and a great website, but a social media ready website. Jerry, everything is going to social media. If you haven't heard that yet, you need to understand that everything is headed to social media. And it's not enough these days just to have a couple of icons on your website that says follow me here.

That's just the tip of the iceberg. The building industry really needs to embrace social media in a way that's not been seen before, and that's really what we're trying to do with the Builder Matrix. We're trying to help builders have a great website that is also completely social media-ready.

One that interacts with the client in more ways than they can fathom. And so we're actually in the middle of building our first such a website for a client here. And so we're going to be excited to kind of fill that out in, in the social media venues and let people take a look at it and see the differences.

But these are my talents. And so that's really what I'm excited about the most: just being able to do that live.

Jerry Rouleau: Well, you know, for our listeners again, to again, how they can use this social networking phenomenon that's out there is to go to facebook.com and look up builder Matrix, M-A-T-R-I-X, and become a fan of buildermatrix.com.

You can see what's going on there and start communicating with other builders from around the country. So I think maybe we'll turn the tides here on the interview.

Ed Doss: Absolutely. You know, normally, I'm taking notes feverishly when I interview people, but this is going to be recorded.

And so I'm just going to have fun asking the questions.

Jerry Rouleau: Okay.

Ed Doss: You know, Jerry, I'll let me start just by saying that you're a social media rock star.

Jerry Rouleau: How do you figure that?

Ed Doss: Well, you're just everywhere. I mean, you know, every person I connect to in the building industry is somehow connected to you.

And like you said, you know, you've got a thousand people that you're connected to on LinkedIn. And so you're very well known. I kind of feel like I'm interviewing somebody that most people already know. Like, what the heck, you know, I'm going to have fun. You're kind of learning a little bit more about yourself.

Why don't you tell people how you got started in this industry and how you embrace social media?

Jerry Rouleau: Well, there are two distinct things here. I got started in the housing business in the 1970s when interest rates to buy a home were 17%, which a lot of the new people out there can't even imagine or fathom that somebody would ever buy a house at 15, 16, and 17%.

I've been around a while. I don't want to put my age, but I've been around a while in the housing industry, all of it in sales, marketing, and public relations. You know, I am not a builder. I'd be the last person you'd want to have redo your plans or make fixes on a construction site.

For the past thirty-plus years, I've focused strictly on housing, sales, marketing, and public relations. And you know, one thing has led to another over the years to where I am today.

Ed Doss: So, how did you get your start? What was your first entry into the industry?

Jerry Rouleau: My company was looking for a sales and marketing position. At that point, it was in Connecticut, and it was looking for somebody to help train their salespeople. I had a little bit of a sales training background prior. They were trying to set up a distribution network with other builders to market their product. It was kind of a system-built home.

So I became their sales and marketing person and started working with builders all over the country, you know, promoting this system build product. And so you know what happened at that point is because of all the traveling that I did, you know I'm just a rat pack when it comes to taking notes and, and collecting information and, you know, started working with builders all over the country and started to see what works and what doesn't work and, You know, working home shows and doing new home planning seminars and you know, and all of a sudden, you know, I'm becoming a wealth of information.

Not that I've developed it, but I'm picking this up, from the best and also the worst. And in fact, as time went on, that's how some of my books developed because it's all the stuff that I learned from the pros that are out there, you know, across the country.

Ed Doss: Yeah. And when you say a wealth of information, you're not kidding.

You started the BuilderRadio.com, the Selling More Homes Media Networks, and when you check out that site, it's just [www. BuilderRadio.com](http://www.BuilderRadio.com), there is no question it there is a plethora of resources here for people in the building industry. What made you decide to build a site like this that works? Where it is just so rich in information and resources, and I mean, you're doing podcasts and seminars and webinars What was behind it? What drove you to do it?

Jerry Rouleau: Well, interesting, and you know, one of the questions you asked there, as far as you know, was about the internet and social networking and so forth. You know, I firmly believe anybody in the housing industry right now can take everything you've known other than your sales skills and so forth.

But from a marketing standpoint, you could take everything that you've known seven years in prior. You can actually throw that out the window. Because that's how different this industry has changed. The way people buy, the way people market, the internet, the webpages, email marketing, social networking, blogs, you know, et cetera, et cetera.

It's just an ever-changing world, and if we don't adapt to it, our customers are adapting to it. You know, we're getting left out there, you know, in the shuffle. So probably it's been about two and a half years, three years since I started with an earlier program before the Builder Radio, and it was expert on the issues, and we'd interview people, and we'd sold some CDs, and I guess I got connected through iTunes initially and started listening to podcasts on technology because I wanted to find out more about technology because I knew that's where things were going.

And the more I listened to other types of technology podcasts that had nothing to do with our industry, I said, wow, you know, I could do this or the industry needs to do this and, and started talking with Scott Stroud, who is the co-producer and also on the line here listening and recording our interview today here.

And I said, Scott, you know, we need to do a podcast. And Scott, what did you say to me, Scott?

Scott Stroud: My comment was, a what? What's a podcast?

Jerry Rouleau: What's a podcast? So we embraced the technology, and the reason for this here is that there are so many small builders out there. There aren't large and small.

They're left there all alone. If you're all there, you can't afford people like Bob Schultz and Robert August just to come in for a morning sales meeting because it's, you know, Myers, Barnes or what have you. It's expensive, you know, just to travel alone.

And, and I know that if, if these people have a wealth of information, if I can package it in small little bits and pieces and, and produce it as a podcast and, and then. Let them call up their Monday morning sales meeting and these are all free. They can listen to it any time during the week. 25, 30, 35 minutes sometimes.

And they can listen to it and say, Well, what did we learn from this? You know, how can we apply it to our business? You know, I've got to tell you, Ed, that Scott and I, you know, the past two and a half years that we've been doing this year, have learned more in the past two years than I have in the prior 30 years being in the business.

And the reason is, is, you know, I get to talk to, you know, people who are pros in what they do. And then the 20, 30 minutes, they're giving me their best shot. So how could I not learn from it, from it all?

Ed Doss: Yeah. And you know, one of my typical questions for my interviewees, Jerry, is what makes your company different.

Off the top of my head, I can't think of a single website. That does what you do, you know, for the building industry, which is a huge thing. I mean, you kind of stand-alone. I mean, everyone offers resources to a certain degree on their website, but to come here and just see what you have available is really amazing.

So let me ask you another question. Social media is the rage of the day. It's what everyone's talking about. Some people are buying into it. Some people think it's a fad. Some people believe it's changing the building industry forever. Some people are sticking to their roots when it comes to their marketing endeavors and how they market.

How would you say that the social media phenomenon has changed you and your company, and it's changing the building industry overall?

Jerry Rouleau: Well, in both ways, I think the answer is going to be the same. The social media thing is a networking source, and we know in the housing industry, networking is also important.

Who do you know that knows someone? And, you know, and getting connected and having people, you know, geez, I need this here, can you help me? And they're going to help you if

you've been connected with them. It's also the second thing about it that's important is the public relations effect of it, of getting your brand name out there.

Social media can kill your company if you have bad press because everybody is going to talk about it, and people are going to listen to more what's on the social media than they are going to listen to anything an ad in the newspaper or whatever. So here's your chance with social media to create a brand presence and embody a brand presence.

You know, promoting the things that you're doing, the customer service and the warranties, showing pictures of your homes, and so forth. And thirdly, I think what's important also is by far, it also helps with search engine optimization. You know, type in Ed Doss and type in Jerry Rouleau, and you'll see some of the things that they've done, but you'll also see their LinkedIn account and their Facebook account. So, It's the way to go.

Ed Doss: Yeah, there's no question, you know, I think we all know that it's the social media phenomenon. As it is today, it's safe to say it got its start with sites like, you know, myspace.com, and a lot of people thought it was just a teenager, you know, fad. Yeah, right, right, right, right. You know, but as so many other people have said, the new generation of home buyers All those kids who are accustomed to, you know, learning about their, the businesses that they do business with via the internet.

And so, you know, a lot of what you talked about was just online reputation management, which I think is a huge deal, too. So Jerry, any other words or

Jerry Rouleau: Yeah, I'd like to get Scott's feedback here also, but in today's marketing of new home sales and real estate, people are selling existing homes.

It is by far easier and less expensive to target market than it has ever been. In the past, it was really expensive, today, it's pretty inexpensive, and I did a program in Charlotte recently, and my comment was, I don't care. How big your company is, or how small, how long you've been in business, how much money you have, how many employees you have, you know, I firmly believe if you become proactive, you can run circles around your competition in any market, I don't care who your competitors are, if you just understand target marketing, the social networking, the internet and technology and, you know, using portal sites.

You know, a big company, you're all on equal playing fields.

Ed Doss: That's right.

Jerry Rouleau: Scott, would you like to add anything there?

Scott Stroud: You mentioned a couple of things that I think are worth repeating. Number one is that the new buyer generation grew up on Facebook. I saw a statistic that by the end of 2010, the generation X and Yers will outnumber the baby boomers.

So that's where we are right now, and everything's moving that way. Those people expect information instantaneously, and social media helps you to do that. The other thing is that social media is not only a place to ensure that you've enacted some reputation management by making sure that what's out there on the internet is what you want to be out there.

So, being proactive with that is important, but it's also the place to listen to and understand what your buyers are looking for. We make a big deal about being involved in social media, but it's also getting out there and listening to and understanding your buyers and seeing what they have to say, and then positioning yourself through your marketing and through your interaction to engage those people on their level.

So when we look at social media and the new website design web 2.0, if you will, that's really the opportunity that's there and those that are not taking advantage of that. are missing that entire market, I believe.

Jerry Rouleau: Well, great. Thank you, Scott.

Ed Doss: Let me finish up just by saying that I'll finish how I started.

Jerry is a social media rock star, and if you want to follow him more closely, then all you have to do is search for him on LinkedIn. You saw his last name, R O U L E A U. Do a search for him on Facebook, connect to him, and check out his website at builderradio.com. Jerry, thanks so much for the interview.

Jerry Rouleau: Thank you, Ed. And, you know, I, I thank you. I thought this, in fact, was fun since we both have wanted to interview each other for a while here. This is awesome. This is the first time we did a multi-interview. So, thanks a million, Ed. I appreciate it.

Ed Doss: Hey, I feel privileged and honored to be to be a part of that groundbreaking interview today.

Jerry Rouleau: That's awesome.

Ed Doss: Great. Thank you. Have a good one. Okay. Take care.

Jerry Rouleau: You know, again, the portal sites and so forth for listing your houses and a little bit of background information on Jerry Rouleau.

Scott Stroud: Yeah, that was very interesting. I had a chance earlier. I've been following Ed on LinkedIn and the New Home Directory for several months, and I noticed how he talks about people as well as topics.

Well, it was nice to learn a little bit about you and how you got started. Also, to learn about the online activities that he's got.

Jerry Rouleau: Yeah, so, so it's great. So, another great, great interview here. And I think I'm actually, other than my two trips this week and then Marco Island. I have a busy schedule coming up here.

Scott Stroud: Mm, hmm. Good. Well, busy is good. I hope that all of our listeners are saying the same thing: that they've got a busy schedule coming up.

Jerry Rouleau: Great. Well, until next week, I'm Gerry Rouleau.

Scott Stroud: I'm Scott Stroud.

Jerry Rouleau: And thanks for listening to the Selling More Homes Media Network.