



CASE STUDY

Sunset San Francisco Idea House – One of the World’s 12 Greenest Homes

SITUATION

Robin Wilson, President and General Contractor of Meridian Builder & Developers, a San Francisco-based construction company, contacted Block Consulting to help her plan and launch a direct mail campaign. Robin wanted to generate qualified business leads. After reviewing her work, I recognized the organization’s extraordinary design-and-build talents.

ACTIVITIES

Instead of settling on direct mail lead generation tactics, I proposed a much broader and bolder strategy to strengthen the company's brand and increase sales – i.e., pitch Meridian's talents to *Sunset* Magazine, an iconic publication about “Living in the West” (circulation >1M).

Every year [Sunset](#) constructs one or more Idea Houses to showcase the latest in home design, furnishings, efficient and low-cost materials, and energy and space-saving new home and remodel ideas. After touring the Menlo Park Idea House, I asked a *Sunset* marketing rep for her business card and researched the names of the publication’s decision-makers.

While competing with dozens of multi-billion dollar builders that typically partner with *Sunset* (Turner, McGraw, Webcor, etc.), our positive outreach, constructive meetings, and diligent follow-up with *Sunset*’s editorial team, along with presentation of Robin’s exceptional portfolio, resulted in Block securing a \$2M joint venture with the magazine.

RESULTS

Sunset selected Meridian to build their first urban and magazine re-launching [San Francisco Idea House](#) – ranked one of the world's 12 greenest homes. Our business development activities included securing >\$750M in-kind or at cost donations from industry material and service suppliers. We also achieved broad and deep exposure and significant PR coverage for Meridian – e.g., two *Sunset* [cover stories](#), thousands of Idea House visitors over 10 weeks of tours, “[Living Green!](#)” on Ch. 7 KGO’s *View from the Bay*, and online presence through a [Green Building](#) and [Marketing Best Practices](#) videotaping by AllBusiness.com, now featured on YouTube.

The [San Francisco Idea House](#) had an amazing impact on the city of San Francisco. I approached former Mayor Gavin Newsom’s office and garnered his interest. While [touring](#) “La Case Verde,” the home’s 45-foot wind turbine inspired the Mayor to launch a San Francisco Urban Wind Task Force and leverage the city’s natural energy-producing winds. The Mayor announced Urban Wind Task Force results at a City Hall [press conference](#).

In addition to benefiting Meridian, *Sunset* Magazine, and hundreds of material and service suppliers contracted to help build the house, this game-changing joint venture has had a lasting and positive influence on the city and its inhabitants.

This case study illustrates that innovation and community giving can go hand-in-hand. Creative thinking and collaboration benefit everyone.