

# *The Million-Dollar Rolodex* Don't Call it a Comeback

*"It's been working for years."*



*Luxury Real Estate International Symposium – Valencia, Spain*



*Rob Thomson with Barbara Corcoran in Nashville, Tennessee*

*Over the last thirty years, Thomson's Rolodex, or its equivalent, is thought to have powered more sales in the million-plus range of real estate than any other single agent in the local area.*

*By Bella Group*

True. The Internet is one of modern real estate's single greatest tools, bringing sellers and buyers together in unprecedented ways. Waterfront Properties and Club Communities should know. The company invests well over one million dollars each year underwriting its dedicated Internet marketing team. Record sales volume over nearly 30 years has only increased over the last decade, due in large part to the Internet.

Still, another tool has equal and often greater potential. The personal Rolodex continues to fuel large numbers of transactions. "The Rolodex is a metaphor. My contacts don't sit in a card file. They're in my iPhone, backed up to a network. The power of these contacts is extremely valuable to sellers and buyers alike," commented Rob Thomson, Waterfront Properties' managing partner.

## The million-plus market

Over the last 30 years, Thomson's "Rolodex" is thought to have powered more sales in the million-plus range of real estate than any other single agent in the local area. "It's not a case of dialing for deals," Thomson says. "These are friends and associates. We do life together." Nearly a Florida native, Thomson was brought to Florida when he was three-months old, his diverse mix of friends includes relationships that go back more than four decades. "Our community is tightknit. Add the common denominators of the waterfront and luxury lifestyles and it can be a hard space to break into." But Thomson and his team at Waterfront Properties have been here for years.

## The PBS effect

The real estate market has a virtual public broadcast system that is impossible to manufacture. "People know when someone is looking to buy. They know where. They also know what I do for a living," Thomson says. "The Internet side of our business and the personal network side are very different." Everyone knows, "money can't buy friends." But lots of money and time can buy the framework of a substantial Internet marketing function. On the other hand, it's hard to over value an authentic sphere of influence. A network nearly 50 years in the making would take at least that much time to replicate.

"Circle of influence deals are done every day," Thomson says. "The more exclusive the real estate, the greater the chance the deal gets done through relationships."

## The world is still flat

If you're thinking Thomson's "Rolodex" is just a group of local boys made good, you're wrong. As a leading international broker, for decades Thomson has capitalized on a worldwide network of top international brokers. Florida is the most desirable state in the country for international buyers. "Our local area is one of the state's most desirable."

A two-decade member and holder of the Top Referring Luxury Broker distinction from Luxury Real Estate International (LRE), Thomson leverages the group's singular reach to the benefit of local sellers. LRE is comprised of 130,000 luxury real estate brokers, representing 85 countries and combined annual sales in excess of \$190 billion. "Reach equals sales. The more qualified eyes we bring to a property, the better the chances our seller makes the sale at the right price."

## No man is an island

Waterfront Properties doesn't rely on Thomson's network alone. The entire team follows the same philosophy. "It's not hard to get agents on board in cultivating and managing their network in much the same way I do. To some extent, we all learned from Joan." Joan is Thomson's mother, who at 84 still comes to work every day and was the original architect of what has become widely known as the Waterfront Way. Rob continued, "Agents see fellow

agents' success and they recognize that what we are teaching and doing works."

## Back to the future

Firm believers in training and process, Waterfront Properties is steadfast in its stance on agent freedom. That freedom is a byproduct of Waterfront's award winning Internet marketing team. "Our Internet presence means our agents don't spend time hunting leads. With tens of thousands of visitors to multiple Waterfront websites, there's no shortage of business to be done." Agents are free to concentrate on fundamentally quality relationships. Thomson said, "Quality business relationships often turn into quality friendships. That's the big idea. People share information with people they know and like. Friends help friends and friends of friends. And, people like to do business with individuals with whom they feel a kinship."

To some, Rolodexes and relationships can sound like antiquated technologies. Rob Thomson sees it differently. "Success is never out of season."



*Unmatched global exposure.*

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