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### We want to hear from you!

We are constantly working to provide content that is timely and relevant to your world. What topics would you like to see covered in future issues of *The Sales Strategy Journal*?

Email [kara@shoreselect.com](mailto:kara@shoreselect.com) to submit your story ideas.

## Training Focus: Learning from Trials in Real Time

*Jeff Shore, Founder & CEO of ShoreSelect*

I once got a ticket for going 38 mph in a 25 zone, right in front of a Winchell's donut shop. Lesson learned: don't speed (especially near places where cops hang out). I got in serious trouble for setting on fire the grass catcher to a gasoline-powered lawn mower. Lesson learned: don't play with matches. I bruised my tailbone learning how to snowboard a couple of years ago. Lesson learned: I'm too old for that stuff!

Nietzsche said, "That which does not kill us makes us stronger." I put it this way: There are lessons to be learned in times of adversity that cannot be learned in times of prosperity. Tough markets make us better sales professionals, and they make us stronger people, *IF* we choose to learn the lessons.

I'm sure when you look back on your life and your career that you can come up with all kinds of examples of how hardships made you a better, stronger, tougher person. Our character grows in times of stress much more than in times of ease; more in times of want than in times of plenty.

Just look at your own sales career. When you think about it, the bulk of the "training" you received was through the most effective teacher of all: trial-and-error. When we make a mistake and (hopefully) learn a lesson from it, we are better prepared for the next occurrence.

I can't say that I have enjoyed the trials I have faced in life. More often I endured such difficult times waiting for them to pass so that I could enjoy better days. I do have to admit, however, that if the trials of the past have shaped who I am today, I wouldn't go back and change a thing. I know that I have learned valuable lessons by looking back at those tough days.

*Continued on Page 2 ...*

### Jeff Shore

*Founder & CEO, ShoreSelect*

A self-proclaimed new home sales "junkie," Jeff delivers quick-witted, hard-hitting seminars that electrify sales teams with passion, discipline, and relentless positivity. Jeff's fine-tuned sales technique and 20 years of experience make him the "go-to" guru for the most difficult markets.

The former National Sales Director for Kaufman and Broad (now KBHome), Jeff began his homebuilding career as a sales representative in Northern California in 1987. Thriving in a tough market, Jeff honed his craft as a salesperson and sold in excess of 500 homes. He quickly moved up to Vice President of Sales and Marketing for a 1000+ unit homebuilding division, where he oversaw a staff of 35. Later he served in a corporate position, creating training programs, coaching managers, and directing sales strategy.

Jeff is the author of three books, including *Outstanding Sales Meetings* and *Deal With It! Mastering 21 Tough Sales Office Situations*, which has sold more than 5000 copies. His most recent book, *Tough Market New Home Sales*, is the indispensable guide for thriving in a challenging market. Jeff is also the co-creator of Leadership Selling® and Leadership Selling® for Sales Coaches.

But what if I could teach myself to learn the lesson *in the midst* of the trial? What if I could determine, in *real time*, that which would benefit me for the rest of my days? Would I not gain the most valuable lessons with such a mindset? Would I not maximize the learning?

So, here's the scenario. It's 2015. You've been asked to mentor a brand new salesperson who is entering the new home sales business in a booming market. This newbie wisely states, "You were there in 2009 when the market was tough. What lessons did you learn in that market that have made you a better sales professional in 2015?"

How will you answer? What will you say? Do you need several years for those lessons to sink in? Or perhaps you can consider right now how valuable the tough times can be. Use the following exercise to help you and your team to discover how to learn from 2009 in real time.

## Sales Meeting Exercise: Learning from Trials in Real Time

### 1. Introduce the following scenario for the brainstorming session.

"Sometimes when we're in the midst of a trial, it helps to think towards the future, and to envision how the current trial will change and strengthen you. Who will you become as a result of enduring this current economy and housing market? I want you to imagine that it's 2015. You've been asked to mentor a brand new salesperson who is entering the new home sales business in a booming market. This newbie wisely states, 'You were there in 2009 when the market was tough. What lessons did you learn in that market that have made you a better sales professional in 2015?'"

"Please get with a partner, and spend the next three to five minutes brainstorming the lessons that you're learning in 2009. Then, use those lessons to come up with at least three pieces of advice that you would give to this newbie. Based on what you've learned, how can you help them to be a better sales professional in 2015? How can they learn from your experience? Both you and your partner need to make a list of this advice so that you have your own copy. After you finish brainstorming, we'll come back together and share our answers."

*Allow 3-5 minutes for brainstorming. When you're ready to move on, give them a 30-second or 1-minute warning. Then, continue.*

### 2. Share responses.

"OK, let's share what we came up with. Pick a spokesperson to share your list, and we can just go around the room and take turns reading through our lists. While you're talking, I'm going to be writing your responses on the board (or flip chart) so that we can have a master list. And if you hear any advice that isn't on your own list, please write it down. You need to have your own copy of this master list. Who would like to get us started?"

*Allow 3-5 seconds for someone to answer. If no one answers, call on a salesperson to get the ball rolling. Continue until a representative*

*from each pair has had an opportunity to speak. Make sure they are taking notes.*

### 3. Challenge and Application

"OK, now I need you to go back through our master list, and circle everything that you're *not* doing right now. Take about 20 seconds to do that."

*Allow them enough time to complete this step.*

"Next, I want you to choose two of the things that you circled, and make a commitment to start working on these things today. I'll give you a few seconds to choose your items."

*Allow about 5 or 10 seconds for them to choose.*

"Now, I want each of you to share the two things you're going to work on. Someone get us started, and then we'll just go around the room. Who would like to go first?"

*Allow 3-5 seconds for someone to answer. If no one answers, call on a salesperson to get the ball rolling. Continue until everyone has shared.*

### 4. End on a positive, encouraging note.

Example: "Great job, everyone. You accomplished something big today. You learned lessons from 2009 in *real time*. You didn't wait until 2010 to look back in hindsight. Instead, you identified ways that you could start overcoming the challenges of 2009 *today*. And as we move forward, I challenge you to take advantage of every teachable moment that you encounter. Conclude each day by asking yourself, 'What did I learn today that will make me a better salesperson tomorrow? Six months from now? Six years from now?' If you can survive and thrive in today's market, imagine how successful you will be when the market picks up! Again, great job, and I look forward to seeing how you're impacted by what you accomplished here today."

# Are You Wasting Your Very Important Marketing Dollars?

Jason Forrest, President of ShoreSelect

Recently I teamed up with a sales manager to coach one of his salespeople, who we'll call George. Our goal that day was to coach George towards overcoming his yielding tendency. Just to give you a little background information, yielding occurs when a salesperson fears that he or she will come across as too pushy. This fear causes the salesperson to yield their position of strength to the customer. Prior to our coaching session, George had already taken our assessment test, which determined that he had a high yielding tendency — he often hands control over to the customer. Our next step was to conduct our post-test coaching session with him, in which we get him to buy into the results and the underlying reasons behind them, and help him to chart a plan for his improvement.

After asking several questions to build a foundation of trust between us, I decided to ask George to describe his sales process to me. **His response revealed that yielding to a customer costs a company more than sales.**

*Jason Forrest: "Describe your sales process to me."*

*George: "Well, I start off by trying to see if they're interested in being left alone, or having me tour the homes with them. If they don't want me to go with them, then I stand in a central location, trying to warm up to them as they move from room to room."*

*Jason Forrest: "How do you know if they don't want you to give them a tour?"*

*George: "You can tell by their body language. If their body language shows me that they're not interested in a sales presentation, then I leave them alone."*

*Jason Forrest: "How many people do you see per month?"*

*George: "Forty."*

*Jason Forrest: "Of those 40, how many of those customers give you body language that tells you they want to be left alone?"*

*George: "Twenty."*

I went on to give him some advice on how to overcome his yielding tendency, but that is not the point that I am trying to make in this article. I want to show you one of the repercussions that his yielding has had upon the company. **During the month I coached George, his company had spent \$5200 on marketing and advertising to bring in those 40 people.**

So, each prospect he met was worth \$130. He left 20 of those customers alone, and 20 times \$130 is \$2600. That's a total of \$2600 in marketing costs that were completely wasted. **George allowed \$2600 to walk right out the door because he didn't want to come across as pushy.**

The purpose of marketing and advertising is to generate prospects who will come in and spend time with a salesperson in order to determine if there is a home and community that meets their admitted needs. The problem is, if you're not spending time with the customer, then you're not finding out what their needs are, and you're not showing them how your home and community could fulfill those needs. So, here is the message, and it is an important one: The next time you spend money to bring in more prospects, you must ensure that you are executing the other side of the equation, which is to execute the sale and provide a solid sales experience for those prospects. If this doesn't happen, it's like throwing your money away.

Yielding is not the only thing that will prevent a salesperson from winning a sale, but it is a major culprit. If you are wondering if your salespeople have yielding tendencies, please contact me at [jasonforrest@shoresselect.com](mailto:jasonforrest@shoresselect.com) for information on our testing to determine if your marketing dollars are not being maximized. Salespeople with a high tendency to yield are not beyond help. Proper coaching can transform them into confident salespeople who serve their customers to the best of their ability, and who turn your marketing dollars into sales.

Jason Forrest

President, ShoreSelect

Jason Forrest is an accomplished sales trainer, consultant and author whose passion is transforming homebuilders into high-performance sales teams, and their sales representatives into high-performance sales athletes. He believes that true sales training changes not only companies, but also people's lives as they learn how to reach their full potential. Jason's vision for ShoreSelect is to partner with homebuilding organizations who are tired of market circumstances affecting their short- and long-term sales goals.

The former National Director of Sales Development for MDC Holdings/Richmond American Homes, Jason has extensive experience in new home sales and sales management. He holds an MBA in marketing, a degree in psychology, and holds a 'Certified New Home Sales Professional' designation from the NAHB — a perfect combination for dealing with the tough housing market he knows so well.

Jason is the author of *Creating Urgency in a Non-Urgent Housing Market*. Together with Jeff Shore, he is the co-creator of Leadership Selling® and Leadership Selling® for Coaches, a 33 week blended-learning training curriculum for new home sales.

# Should I Train Them, Or Should I Replace Them?

Jason Forrest, President of ShoreSelect

“Do I keep this person and invest training dollars on them, or do I replace them with somebody else?” I’ve been hearing this question quite often from sales managers across the country. First, I want to say that this is the right question to ask. However, I see way too many builders who are frozen in their decision between these options. It’s important that you learn how to take action so that you don’t remain paralyzed at this crossroads, and you don’t make a poor decision based upon stress and impulse. Here is how to process through this decision so that you can move forward in the direction that is best for you.

There are three management questions that I use every time I am evaluating a salesperson. These are questions that I learned from the Behavioral Science Research Institute of Dallas:

1. How much potential does the salesperson have?
2. How soon will they reach their potential?
3. How much will it cost me to reach their potential?

These questions are designed to help you compare apples to apples. That is, when you’re comparing a current salesperson to a possible new hire, these questions will help you to base your decision upon facts, and to avoid making a decision based upon impulse. Often, when a manager is under pressure, the prospect of starting fresh can be tempting. They think to themselves, “If I can just start over with a new person, we can get it right this time.” However, the grass isn’t always greener on the other side of the fence. Quite often you will find that an investment in training can be the better solution for the long-term, even though it requires more effort and cost in the short-term.

Answering the three questions above will help you to determine the best course of action for your company — whether you should invest in a salesperson so that they can reach their greatest potential, or whether you should replace them. Here is how to process through your answers.

## 1. How much potential does the salesperson have?

In other words, when a salesperson reaches their maximum sales potential after all of the training and coaching that one can endure, what is the best that they can become? I like to quantify this in terms of homes sold per month. Are they a 1-every-two-months salesperson? Do they typically sell 1 per month, 2 per month, 4 per month, etc.?

It’s important that you learn how to take action so that you don’t remain paralyzed at this crossroads, and don’t make a poor decision based upon stress and impulse.

To determine potential, it is best if you first calculate how much someone is currently selling in the context of his or her existing circumstances each month. What is their potential based upon the number of prospects they see per week, the price of your homes, and the economic climate? Once you have taken those factors into consideration, then you’ve developed a more accurate picture of their potential.

The three questions I’ve shared with you are designed to help you develop the most educated predictions possible. As you make your predictions, stay grounded and focus on what you know. If you make impulsive guesses based upon the pressure of the situation, without considering all the know-

able facts, your assessment will be less accurate. Use all available information to help you evaluate someone’s potential, whether they’re an existing team member or a potential hire.

If you believe that a person’s potential in a given set of circumstances is 2 homes per month, and you need 3 per month to turn a profit in that community, then you have three options: 1) train and coach them to reach their potential; 2) replace that salesperson with someone who has the potential to sell 3 per month; or 3) hire an

additional salesperson for the community. The next two questions on this list will help you to measure the costs and benefits of your options.

## 2. How soon will they reach their potential?

This is straightforward. Based upon what you know about a salesperson, will it take him or her three months, six months, one year, or longer to reach their full potential? Once you have this answer, then you need to think about cost.

## 3. How much will it cost me to reach their potential?

Cost is determined by factors such as training cost (licenses and consultant fees), your time per hour, support staff time per hour, and opportunity cost (meaning, as you wait for this person to reach their potential, how many sales are you losing during those months, theoretically?) Also, determine how much time it would take each week for you to hold your salesperson accountable to performing at the new level.

## Comparing Apples to Apples

Potential. Time. Cost. These are the factors you must evaluate when determining if a salesperson is worth the investment of training. Here is an example of what your evaluation would look like.

# Should I Train Them, Or Should I Replace Them?

## Example: Salesperson A

Current Sales Pace		1 / month
1. Sales potential?		2 / month
2. How soon?		3 months
3. What cost?		
	Training Cost	\$4200
	Coaching Time: 2 hrs/week for 12 wks @ \$62/hr*	\$1488
	Support Staff Time: 1 hr/week for 12 wks @ \$15/hr	\$180
	Estimated Opportunity Cost: 3 months (# of months before they reach their potential) × 1-per-month (Sales Potential – Current Sales Pace) × \$200,000 per home (Average Cost Per Home) = \$600,000	\$600,000
	<b>Total Initial Cost</b>	<b>\$605,868</b>
Maintenance Cost	Coaching Time: .5 hour/wk for 4 wks @ \$62/hr	\$124/month

\*\$120,000 divided by 1928 hours of work in a year = \$62 hour.

Once you've completed an evaluation for a current salesperson, you can compare apples to apples. You can evaluate the potential of a new hire by completing the same evaluation and answering the same three questions. By keeping a level head and basing your decision upon the data at hand, you will avoid making decisions based upon impulse and feeling.

"Do I keep this person and invest training dollars on them, or do I replace them with somebody else?" Finding the answer to this question is not easy. You need to do the homework, and use the following evaluation to compare your current salespeople to the candidates you're interviewing. Then, make the decision that is the most strategic and makes the most sense. Whatever you choose, the important thing is that you make a strategic decision today and **act!** The longer you remain paralyzed in indecision, the less time you have to conquer the circumstances of a tough housing market.

*Begin to take action today — make copies of the following form, and use it to evaluate three of your salespeople. You can also contact me directly to request a 'standalone' version of this form (pdf): [jasonforrest@shoreselect.com](mailto:jasonforrest@shoreselect.com)*

## Salesperson Evaluation Form

Salesperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Sales Pace		___ homes/month
1. Sales potential?		___ homes/month
2. How soon?		___ month(s)
3. What cost?		
	Training Cost (Licenses and consultant fees)	\$ _____
	Coaching Time: coaching hours per week: _____ × number of weeks (until they reach their potential): _____ × your hourly rate: \$_____/hr	\$ _____
	Support Staff Time: hours per week: _____ × number of weeks (until they reach their potential): _____ × hourly rate: \$_____/hr	\$ _____
	Estimated Opportunity Cost: How soon? _____ (# of months before they reach their potential) × Lost Sales: _____ (Sales Potential – Current Sales Pace) × Avg. Cost Per Home: \$ _____	\$ _____
	<b>Total Initial Cost</b>	\$ _____
Maintenance Cost (Cost of helping them maintain their potential after training.)	Coaching Time: coaching hours per week: _____ × 4 weeks × your hourly rate: \$_____/hr	about \$ _____ per month

## Quick Thought: Managing vs. Coaching

*Jason Forrest, President of ShoreSelect*

The difference between coaching and managing is this: managing is what you do *to* somebody, and coaching is what you do *for* somebody.

Managing requires constant prodding to get people to achieve the minimum expectations that are needed to get the job done. Coaching holds people accountable to being the best version of themselves.

Managing is trying to encourage people to maintain the minimum standards. Coaching is getting people to reach their personal goals in life in order to surpass the minimum standards given to them.

Managing is exhausting as you try to find ways to get people to get the job done. Coaching is fulfilling because you know you are helping people achieve more than they could accomplish by themselves.

So, there you have it. Are you a coach, or are you a manager?

## Lessons From the Hudson

*Jeff Shore, Founder & CEO of ShoreSelect*

By now you've heard and read quite a bit about the heroic landing of a U.S. Airways plane on the Hudson River. It is truly an amazing story, coming at a time when Americans really need a hero.

Much has been said about the outstanding work of the veteran pilot, Chesley Sullenberger, and his life-saving maneuvers. People have (appropriately) commented on his calmness under pressure, his split-second decision-making, and his total ownership of a disastrous situation. But here's what I've heard very little about: his training.

A good friend of mine is a Captain for a major airline; he flies 747's to Asia and Australia. He is regularly at the company's training facility in practice simulations. In fact, he is required to be re-certified every six months. In those simulations, what do you suppose he is working on?

An overwhelming amount of pilot training is centered around dealing with trauma — what you do in the event of engine failure, terrorist attacks, medical emergencies, collisions, etc.? These are things that pilots may never experience in their entire career, yet they are an integral part of the training.

Why all the emphasis on training for things that the pilots may never encounter? If you answered, "So that they'll be prepared in the off chance that they do come across something extreme," you're right, but it goes deeper than that. It's not about training just so that you'll know what to do — that's head knowledge. It's about training so rigorously and for so long that the process of handling a difficult situation becomes *instinctual*.

Captain Sullenberger did not have time to pull out his training manual, or even to sit there and assess his options based upon what he learned from his instructors. He looked over his situation and quickly applied the option that his instincts told him was correct. He didn't need to panic because his instincts took over.

That's an extreme example, but it is highly relevant to the new home sales business. How deeply ingrained are the principles that will make or break a sale when your salesperson hits adversity? When they think they've got someone ready to purchase, and the prospect tells them they're going to think about it, can your salesperson rely on instincts for a second or third approach? When someone tells your sales representative that they need to cough up another ten grand in incentives, or they're walking to the builder down the street, do instincts keep your performers calm enough to talk that prospect back down?

Effective sales is not just about knowing the right things to say. It's about practicing so diligently that one's responses are instinctual. Great salespeople don't make up their presentation on the fly — it is well-crafted, well-rehearsed, and eventually rooted in their instinctive nature.

Do you have work to do? Do you need to get outside your comfort zone and get some good, solid practice time in with your salespeople? Do that right now. . . and you'll change someone's world!

# What Kind of American Idol Judge Are You?

Jason Forrest, President of ShoreSelect

Every Tuesday and Wednesday night, I watch the greatest show on television right now. You guessed it: American Idol.

The other night, as I fast-forwarded through Paula Abdul's comments so that I could hear Simon's, I came to a realization: most people aren't concerned with what Paula has to say. Why is that? Most of her comments consist of generic praise (e.g. "All you can do is the best you can do"). The advice she gives the contestants will not make them better. (The same can be said of Randy. He may say that someone's performance was 'pitchy,' but rarely is his advice constructive or helpful.)

Not only do many home viewers tune out Paula, but the contestants seem to wish they had a fast-forward button, too. They stand and nod politely while Paula speaks, but they're more concerned with what Simon Cowell is about to say. Simon is the one who will give them specific advice that will improve them. His entire goal is to shoot straight with them. The contestants know that if they listen to Simon, and take his advice seriously, they will probably have the best shot of advancing to the next week. His opinion is the one that carries the most weight, and it's the one that determines their fate in the competition.

If you could only coach like Simon, or only coach like Paula, whom would you choose as your model? I know what you might be thinking. "But Jason, Simon is so mean, and I can't imagine myself belittling people like that." I agree that Simon is harsh. His stinging, degrading comments have driven many auditioners and contestants to tears. As a coach, it's not a good strategy to act like Simon and make people cry. At the same time, you shouldn't be a "Paula-style" coach who just tells people that they're doing great, when you know in your heart that they aren't going to survive the next round of layoffs with their current performance. Your job as a coach is to help people achieve their goals in life, and the only way to do that is to give them advice on how to become better. Now, if Simon's coaching style is too harsh, and Paula's style is too gracious, whose style should you model? Neither one. I say, be like Kara.

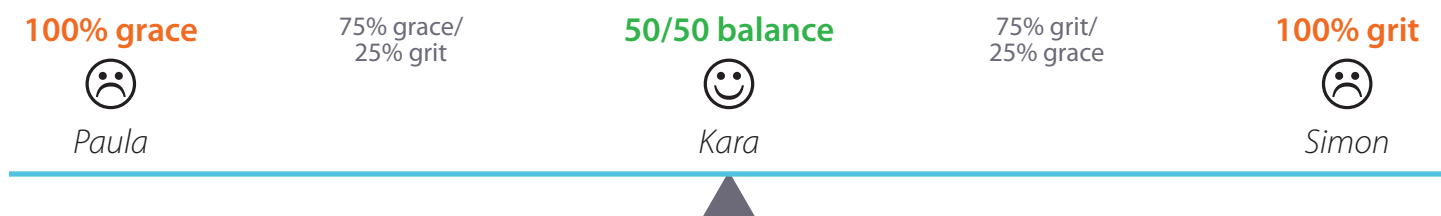
Kara DioGuardi is the new addition to American Idol's judging panel. She's not a perfect coach, but she is a very strong one — one of the strongest I have seen. Even if you are not a fan of American Idol, or a fan of Kara, I challenge you to tune in next week and observe the way she critiques the contestants. Notice how she gives the contestants specific praise, not general praise. Notice how she gives them specific advice on how to improve, and does so without belittling them. More often than not, she is the judge who provides honest, useful criticism without tearing someone down. That is the healthy way to motivate someone, and to build a productive, effective coaching relationship based upon mutual respect.

## Strike a Balance Between Grit and Grace

To coach like Kara, you must achieve a balance between the amount of toughness, or grit, that you exhibit, and the amount of grace you give. Coaches with too much grit will tend to coach like Simon. Motivating with fear may work with some salespeople, but it doesn't lay the foundation for a healthy long-term relationship with your team. On the flip side, if a coach gives too much grace, he or she will end up coaching like Paula. Being everyone's cheerleader may help you to make friends, but it won't challenge your team or create consistent results. Successful coaches are the ones who learn to achieve a balance between grit and grace. When you achieve this balance, you will increase the probability that your salespeople:

- Will respect you.
- Will want to listen to you.
- Will have the desire to follow your advice and improve.

On the diagram below, draw an 'X' on the blue line to represent your current balance of grit to grace in your coaching style.



Continued on Page 8 ...



A special promotion from ShoreSelect



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*the*  
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Leadership Selling® is the most in-depth training curriculum in new home sales, hinging upon the principle that customers want a strong leader to guide them through the buying process. More than tips and techniques, Leadership Selling® changes lives, produces more sales, and dramatically shortens the buying cycle.

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Jason Forrest, *President* | [jasonforrest@shoresselect.com](mailto:jasonforrest@shoresselect.com)

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## Sign up your team for the Creating Urgency Sales Blitz!

The *Creating Urgency Sales Blitz* is an activity-based sales event that empowers your salespeople to schedule appointments with qualified prospects on the day of training, resulting in a pipeline filled with new opportunities by the day's end. This day will be spent exclusively with Jason Forrest, author of the **NAHB Sales and Marketing Ideas Magazine recommended read, *Creating Urgency in a Non-Urgent Housing Market* (July/August 2008)**. Jason Forrest will personally coach your salespeople on handling current prospects and creating emotional urgency.

"In over 13 years of attending sales training events, the *Creating Urgency Sales Blitz* is the **ONLY** one-day training event that has given us immediate crystal-clear results from the training event to the bottom-line. **We had an unbelievable 117 appointments created during the day.** I had never seen my salespeople so excited and ready to practice what they had learned."

—**JANIS JACKSON, National VP of Sales, Hometown America**

**Jason has LIMITED DATES available.  
Contact us today to book your spot!**

**Client Services | 817.886.0018 | [michelle@shoresselect.com](mailto:michelle@shoresselect.com)**

## Remember:

If you read this Journal, and choose not to apply what you've learned, then you will be no different from those who have not read it.

We cannot complain about the market if we are not doing everything possible to improve our chances of winning sales.



ShoreSelect is committed to more than just delivering a training message. We provide real, powerful and lasting solutions to companies who are serious about the development of their sales staff and who wish to stand apart from the homebuilding crowd. We specialize in building true differentiation into your sales process to maximize every market opportunity.

Whether you need assistance in achieving short- or long-term goals, ShoreSelect can tailor a training solution for you. For more information about our products and services, please visit us at [www.shoresselect.com](http://www.shoresselect.com), or contact:

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