

‘Branding Diva’ Karen Post finds true calling as Home Frosting founder

Why Karen is a big deal:

Karen began her career in visual merchandising working with top luxury retailers and lifestyle fashion labels. She started her first business at age 22, a Houston ad agency named Farb & Post that she led for 20 years. She also built a legal communication firm. Karen relocated to Tampa in 2000, expanding her reach as an author, branding expert (the “Branding Diva”) and professional speaker on a global stage. In 2016, she was ready to reduce travel and build a local business. Home Frosting is a real estate staging company focused on helping sell properties, especially in the luxury market. Recent clients include Tampa Bay Lightning GM Steve Yzerman and Casey Gonzmart of the Columbia Restaurant Group.



Karen Post, founder, president and CCO of Home Frosting.

Her team includes movers, interior designers, stagers, craftsmen and women, and logistical and operational experts. As a home stager, she plans each space with a balance of color, placement, scale and flow. The company is nearly profitable. She still gives a handful of speeches on branding and now is doing several projects that combine interior design and branding. She lives in Palma Ceia with her husband and their dog, Lincoln.

How did the pivot to Home Frosting happen?

I got married a couple of years ago. When I was single, traveling was great. My husband is a banker and he really is a part of his local community. I just felt like there was a gap between my international world and my local world. I’ve always loved Tampa. I had a condo on Bayshore and was thinking about selling it and a Realtor friend said I ought to think about staging it. I was aware of staging but never really looked at it as an industry or how you make money with it. I ended up not selling my unit but I did stage my unit myself and I got 35 percent higher rental on my condo when I staged it. I was like, wow, this really works and it’s a natural talent I have, and I bring an extra level of marketing and branding insight. Then I started looking into the industry and it’s very interesting. The staging part is really a furniture rental business model. I buy the assets. I have a big warehouse and a fleet of trucks.



This home was for a builder Jeff Undorf, his company is called First Florida Construction. He built this for himself and then decided to sell it. It stayed on the market for a couple months. After we staged it, he had a contract in 2 weeks.

The home below is another property for Undorf that had similar success.



Do you have local competitors?

There are some players grounded in the market. When I looked at how they were staging and how they were selling, I thought there was opportunity in the luxury space, just like when you shop at Sears or [Nordstrom](#). We really strive for the Nordstrom look. When you are selling a million-dollar house, you want furniture and design that looks like a million-dollar house and that's where we're strong. There's a learning curve whenever you do a new business. But we're much more efficient than we were a year ago. Lower-end stagers have conditioned the marketplace to cheap pricing so we have to continue to sell value. We will get you results, but we're not the least expensive. If you want to sell your house and if you look at the carrying costs, we're not more expensive.

How do you want to grow as a leader?

I've been leading businesses for 35 years and I really feel like I am the best leader I've been right now. I think it's because I'm really loving what I am doing. I loved the ad agency world. But this is really my calling.

Are you concerned about real estate cycle?

We are excited about a real estate downturn because it will be even more competitive. There are realtors who absolutely love staging. It helps them sell faster and get the highest price. There are other old school realtors who say, the market is so hot, why do we need to spend money? Many properties haven't been updated in years and that's a lot of what we do. We are cleaning, painting, and redoing floors and it makes a huge difference. The digital age is critical in selling real estate. It used to be that people would drive around. Now they sit on their smart phone and they look for houses. So much of selling is done well before they walk in the house, so the images online are huge.

Closer look

- **Name, title:** [Karen Post](#), founder, president, and chief creative officer, Home Frosting
- **Grew up:** Buffalo, New York
- **Education:** Bauder College, studied fashion design and visual merchandising
- **Early work:** She designed window and store displays. Clients included Neiman Marcus, [Abercrombie & Fitch](#) and the Gap
- **First window display:** Atlas Office Supply in Houston
- **In the media:** A regular branding commentator on FOX-TV; featured on NBC, Bloomberg TV, [CBS's](#) Early Show, and the New York Times
- **Community:** Advisory board member, University of Tampa Entrepreneurship Center, UT Board of Fellows
- **Barrier broken:** The first American woman to address the Saudi Arabian Airlines national conference.
- **Downtime:** Plays tennis and exercises at Life Time Athletic at International Plaza
- **Cost of staging:** Usually 1 percent of the list price

For more information on Karen and Home Frosting visit Homefrosting.com or call 813-250-1730.