

narrow
your
focus to
expand
your
appeal

Business Profile of
Lakefront Living Realty
and Lakefront Living
International

LAKEFRONTLIVING^{COM}
REALTY

LakefrontLiving.com

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INTERNATIONAL

LakefrontFranchise.com

Company **Snapshot**



LakefrontLiving.com

Founded in 2003, Lakefront Living Realty, LLC is a full-service real estate brokerage that passionately unites buyers and sellers of lakefront property. Lakefront Living Realty's unique business model solves three critical lakefront buyer problems: Finding only direct lakefront homes, finding specific details of the lakes, and finding a local lakefront specialty agent. One of the hallmarks of their success is their consumer-facing listing site, LakefrontLiving.com. The website is a one-stop-shop for every direct lakefront property for sale (not only their listings, but the entire MLS) and attracts nearly 100,000 lake specific visitors every month.



LakefrontFranchise.com

The Lakefront Living Realty team recognized the opportunity to expand their successful business model to other regions of the country. In 2014, Lakefront Living International, LLC was established as a national real estate franchise company and is the only lake-focused real estate franchise in the United States. Franchised brokers can immediately channel their lakefront passion into a dynamic business venture by creating a competitive advantage in their local lakefront market utilizing a proven, packaged business model. Each franchise is independently owned and operated.

LEADERSHIP

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Q&A with Founders

Scott R. Freerksen, CEO & Christine A. Mosier, COO



What was your early vision for the company?

SF: Our vision was to solve 3 problems we noticed in the marketplace: 1. Create a simple website that focused only on direct lakefront property (taking a 3-hr search down to 30 seconds); 2. Provide the details of every lake in the states we cover (size, quality, recreation, access, links, etc.) because people are not just buying a house, they are buying a lake and lifestyle; and 3. Provide knowledgeable, passionate lakefront specialists (real estate agents) to coach clients through their lakefront purchase or sale. How? Use the power of niche marketing to narrow our focus and expand our appeal.

I knew if this worked in New England, it would work in any lake market in the country. So, the idea of franchising was always in the works.

“CREATE YOUR BUSINESS LIKE
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MORE JUST LIKE IT.”

What were some of the first steps you took toward your vision?

SF: It started with a crude website in 2004, MassLakes.com that focused on 25 lakes around me in Massachusetts. Each property had to be entered manually. I hired my first agent (a former corporate world colleague), and we were off and running. The website quickly got noticed and we had a lot of raving fans. That led to more agent hires and the addition of RI, NH, and CT. In 2009, LakefrontLiving.com and Lakefront Living Realty was created.

From the start, I focused on repeatable systems. I remember reading in the book *The E-Myth* that you should “create your business like there’s going to be 10,000 more just like it.”

As you look back, what are some of your earliest success stories?

CM: It always amazed me how many people were using the site, and not just for finding lakefront property. When you specialize in something, you are sought out for your opinion. Location scouts were contacting us to find lakeside locations for locally filmed Hollywood movies. Our first find was for Scorsese’s *Shutter Island* with Leonardo DiCaprio. HGTV took notice of our niche and recruited us for *Lakefront Bargain Hunt* episodes (we’ve done 9 of them now). *Chronicle* did a “What’s Not to Lake?” episode that focused heavily on our company. These kinds of opportunities would not happen if we were the same as everyone else.

As we began to add franchisees over the last few years, it was such an incredible source of pride to see others talk about and use our systems, logo, and name.

What do you feel has primarily contributed to the company's growth over the years?

CM: Without a doubt, it was our decision for narrow our focus. Other companies are trying to be all things to all people. But as the internet becomes all-encompassing, we find our clients appreciate a knowledgeable focus in one area. It's like if someone needed brain surgery...would you want to hire your general practitioner? Of course not, you want a person who eats, sleeps, and breathes brain surgery. It's all they do. So right from the beginning, your assumption is that they must be good at it. That's the power of niche marketing. You get to build trust with clients before they even meet you.

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What differentiates Lakefront Living brokers from other real estate brokers?

SF: Lakefront Living brokers are local, on-the-ground experts who provide critical community details for prospective buyers that include specific shoreline conditions, neighborhood characteristics, zoning regulations, lake management operations and lakeside events, and even offer boat tours of properties. These amplified points of connection are invaluable when attempting to stand out in a crowded marketplace, creating a true differentiator for Lakefront Living in the real estate space.

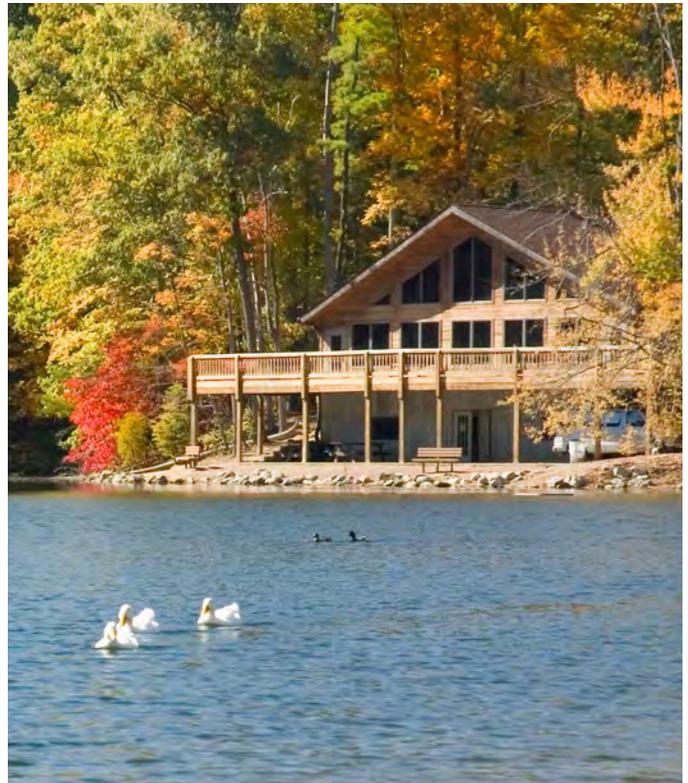
What are some of the lessons you've learned along the way?

CM: As an emerging franchisor, it's tempting to accept anyone with a check in their hand. Part of that is ego, and partly the desire to succeed faster. But we said from the beginning, we are cultivating a family atmosphere. In fact, I dislike the words "franchisee" and "franchisor". It suggests a hierarchy, so we call them all PARTNERS...we can't succeed without each other. Therefore, growth will be slower, but so much more meaningful when you wait for the right fit.

I'm one of those people that believe things happen exactly when they are supposed to. Everyone that has come on board has truly become our family. They are people that we love to hang out with (one of the most important qualities) and overall, just good-hearted folks. There's also a sense of responsibility that we have to our previous partners by bringing on people that are cut from the same cloth. We're all here to help each other succeed.

When it comes to onboarding franchisees, how do you set them up for success?

SF: I come from 17 years in the corporate world in roles such as documentation, engineering, and quality control. Therefore, I'm a strong believer in the "keep it simple" movement. Our operations manual flows logically and makes our partners stronger as they move through our systems. Each step of our "10 Keys to Lakefront Domination" process builds on the last. Once they are all in place, brokers will have more freedom than they ever had before. We believe in working *on* the business and not *in* it. We believe in letting the systems run the business and letting people run the systems.





What was the idea behind your “Feed for Leads” program which supports the real estate industry beyond Lakefront Living partners?

SF: Our first thought every morning is: “How do we help our partners succeed today?” Driving organic traffic (lakefront buyers) to our site is always a high priority. The more quality leads we produce, the more our partners succeed. As we add states to the site, we also add visitors. That’s where our “Feed for Leads” program was born. Instead of waiting for a new franchisee to add a state to our site, we partner with existing brokers in key markets. In exchange for access to their MLS feed, we provide them all the leads generated in that territory for a standard referral fee. It’s a true win-win.

The real estate industry is experiencing many unique challenges, such as keeping up with demand during the pandemic housing boom. How is Lakefront Living seeing their way through these extraordinary times?

SF: There’s an old saying in real estate: “Listings are king.” And although that’s still true, we always believed in capturing both the lakefront seller AND buyer market. Our website generates tens of thousands of registered lakefront buyers. Therefore, when lake listings are thin (like our current market), we are the ones bringing the buyers. It also means that we sell our own listings a strong percentage of the time. Like we tell sellers: “We sold your lake home long before you decided to list it.” Also, our registered buyers get first dibs on new lakefront listings; this helps them be competitive in these crazy times. I’m proud our partners have grown – in fact, excelled – no matter the market conditions.

As you think about your most successful partners, what sets them apart from the others?

CM: Our most successful partners fully embrace the notion of “lakefront specialists” in everything they do. Every interaction with another human being – personal meetings, marketing materials, social media, personal conversations, and PR efforts – must clearly communicate their USP (Unique Selling Position) to their ideal customer. That’s true in any business, but especially true in our niche market.

What are your thoughts on the real estate industry, post-pandemic?

CM: The future of real estate is in lifestyle sales. It’s no longer about *where* people want to live, but *how* they want to live. We’ve been talking about lifestyle sales for 10 years, but it has never been truer than during the pandemic. Millions of people learned they could work from home. So why not be where you can live, work, and play? Also, in a world full of social media, people are seeking a life that is worthy of sharing.

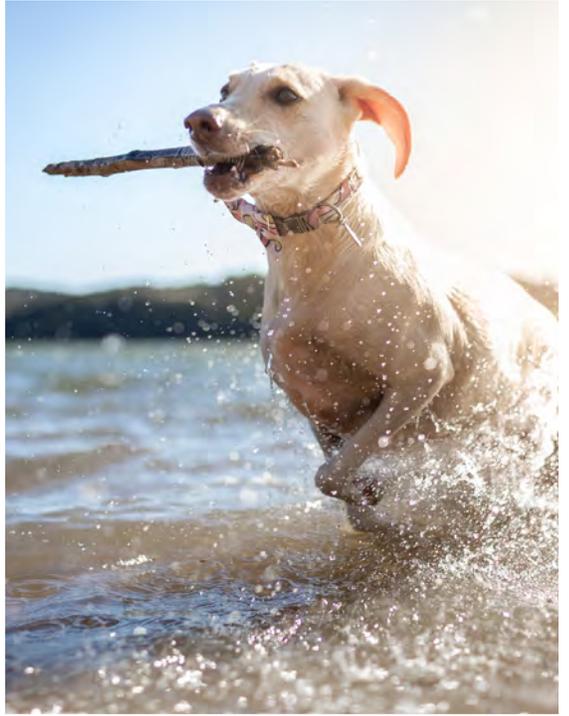
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Are there creative things you do that allow the franchises to share in the overall success of the company?

SF: I don’t think you are ever done innovating. I had a mentor tell me: “The moment you think you’ve finally made it, is the exact moment in time you start going backwards.” Innovation brings constant change, and communication of that change is vital to our company. We learn as much from our partners as they learn from us. What’s unique about us is we all have the same mindset. We’re passionate about changing people’s lives, one lake house at a time...and it shows in everything we do.

MEDIA INQUIRIES

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