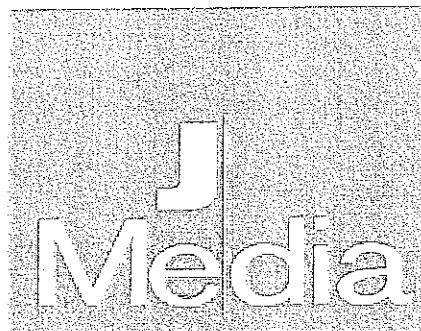


**Century Homes – The Home of Timber Frame**

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**The Client:** Century Homes

**Consultant:** JMedia, Jack Murray

**The Entry:** Century Homes – The Home of Timber Frame

**The Category:** Best Corporate PR Campaign

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## Century Homes – The Home of Timber Frame

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### **Background**

JMedia has handled public relations for Century Homes since October 2003. The consultancy has played a key role in positioning Century Homes as the world's most dynamic timber frame home manufacturer.

### **The Brief**

The brief is still ongoing but for the purposes of this submission the time frame is from February 2004 to April 6<sup>th</sup> 2005. The brief was to position Century Homes as the industry leader and most dynamic company in Irish home manufacturing, to highlight to the construction industry and to home buyers the importance of energy efficiency in Irish homes.

In addition JMedia had the role of supporting marketing efforts, providing communications support and increasing the profile of the company to help the company achieve it's aim to become the largest offsite construction company in the world.

### **Objectives**

- Position Century Homes in the public mind as Europe's largest timber frame manufacturer.
  - Increase the share of Century Homes in the new build home market through effective PR
  - Educate and explain the benefits of timber frame to construction companies and to new house buyers.
  - Highlight the energy efficiencies of timber frame over masonry construction.
  - Communicate the company's objective to be the largest off site construction company in the World.
  - Increase and maintain the profile of Century Homes and its Chief Executive in the media,
  - Highlight the unfair regulatory regime that exists in Ireland towards timber frame manufacturing.
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## Century Homes – The Home of Timber Frame

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### Programme Planning and Strategy

The main emphasis behind the 2004 -2005 campaign was to highlight the advantages of purchasing a timber frame home and to position Century Homes as the most dynamic company to provide that home.

In the Western World today 70% of all new homes are made from timber frame –this includes over 90% of all new homes in North America and over 65% in our nearest neighbour Scotland. The story in the Irish home market is different. When Century Homes opened its doors for business in 1990 just 1% of 18,000 houses in Ireland were timber frame, today that figure stands at 27%.

Despite the impressive growth of timber frame in recent years there is still resistance from policy makers at government level, the concrete industry who are fighting market change tooth and nail, and from people who have been steeped for decades in a sector dominated by concrete products.

Research and government memos show that Irish home buyers have been conned for years, and in particular during the recent boom, into buying substandard energy inefficient homes. Irish home buyers need to consider the option of warm, comfortable, highly engineered, energy-efficient home, built in a factory environment. Century Homes was set up in 1990 as the first customer focused timber frame company in Ireland, and is the company best placed to fill that role.

The public relations strategy was developed to strengthen the Century Homes brand and the image of the timber frame, and promote the company as the most customer focused and innovative home manufacturer in the market.

The most important publics for the campaign were:

- Builders and construction companies.
- Individual home buyers
- Property editors and correspondents
- Business journalists
- Local journalists in key areas where Century Homes has plants.
- Politicians, policy makers and opinion formers.

The key messages of the campaign are:

- A Century Homes home is the most comfortable family home and it is energy efficient and affordable.
  - Century Homes is the most dynamic home manufacturer in the world.
  - Timber frame housing is the most energy efficient available on the market
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## Century Homes – The Home of Timber Frame

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### Programme Highlights

**February 2004**

#### **Launch of the Eco House at the Spring Home and Garden Show**

Century Homes are building the Eco House, one of the most environmentally friendly houses ever built in Ireland, at the Spring Home and Garden Show in the RDS. JMedia commence the PR drive to highlight the energy efficient and environmentally friendliness of the Eco House by sending out a press and picture release to the regional media. JMedia also organise a series of local radio competition giving away luxury weekend for two in Dublin to visit the show and a personal tour of the Eco House.

#### **Actions:**

- Regional media release
- Regional media photo release
- Local radio Competition of luxury weekends away to see Eco House

**March 2004**

#### **Marian Finucane Show RTE 1**

John Goulding the architect who designed the Eco House talks about energy efficiency and environmental advantages of the Eco House.

**March 2004**

#### **“In the frame”**

The lead feature in the Sunday Business Post Property Supplement features is Century Homes Chief Executive Gerry McCaughey and Century Homes customer Pat Ward.

**March 2004**

#### **Launch of the Eco House to the National Media**

In advance of the opening of the show Gerry McCaughey gives a detailed tour of the Eco House to the national media.

#### **Actions:**

- Photocall to national and local media
- Media release
- Briefing to national media.

**March 2004**

#### **“State facing ‘multi-billion euro fine’ over emissions”**

Shane Coleman interviewed Gerry McCaughey about how he has discovered through Freedom of Information that the Department of the Environment has allowed 250,000 masonry houses to be built to inefficient energy standards.

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## Century Homes – The Home of Timber Frame

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**March 2004**

**“House of the future here today”**

The lead story of the Sunday Tribune Property Supplement outlines the benefits of the Eco House to the Irish home buyers, focusing on comfort, energy efficiency and the adaptability of the building.

**April 2004**

**Donation of the Eco House to the Christina Noble Foundation**

A decision is made by all the parties involved to donate the Eco House to the Christina Noble foundation as a children’s centre in Tallaght.

**Actions:**

- Regional media release
- Regional media photo release

**May 2004**

**“He’s seen the future – it’s timber-framed.”**

Daire O’Brien talks to Gerry McCaughey for The Sunday Times Business Profile about the success of Century Homes and the reasons behind the growth of timber frame manufacturing.

**June 2004**

**Century Homes bids €120 million for the Brook Group**

Century Homes signal their ambitious plans for the Irish market when it is announced that they have bid €120 million for the builder’s providers group Brooks. This sends a signal out to the construction industry that Century Homes is a strong position with a hunger for growth.

**July 2004**

**Century Homes join national network to promote energy efficiency and reduce heating costs in Irish Homes**

Century Homes join SEBnet, a national network of companies to promote energy efficiency and reduce Co2 emissions and heating bills in Irish homes. JMedia uses this as an opportunity send a release to remind house buyers that a timber frame house can save you €20,000 on heating bills over the life time of your mortgage.

**Actions:**

- Regional media release

**August 2004**

**“McCaughey accuses Minister of Environmental Schizophrenia”**

JMedia uses the annual publishing of Ireland’s C02 emissions results to criticise the Government for allowing Irish homes to be built to energy inefficient standards.

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## Century Homes – The Home of Timber Frame

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### **Actions:**

- National Media Release
- Regional media Release

**August 2004**

### **Saturday View RTE Radio 1**

Century Homes Chief Executive Gerry McCaughey takes part in a panel discussion with Environment Minister Martin Cullen and asks him why the government has failed to deliver energy efficient houses to thousands of Irish home owners.

**September 2004**

### **Century Homes Expands in the UK**

Century homes becomes the largest timber frame house manufacturer in Europe with the purchase of Timber Frame Solutions in the North of England. Century Homes now have a foot hold in three countries, Ireland, Wales and England and are poised to make dynamic changes in the English home construction market where only 15% of new homes are timber frame.

### **Actions:**

- National Media Release
- Briefing of business journalists
- Regional media Release
- Construction trade press release

**September 2004**

### **A wooden heartland**

The lead story in the Commercial Property supplement of the Sunday Tribune features the growth of Century Homes and what the company has to offer builders.

**October 2004**

### **The Sunday Show, RTE Radio 1**

Gerry McCaughey appears on the Sunday show to discuss the changes in living in urban and rural Ireland over the last ten years.

**November 2004**

### **Century Homes calls on Government only to build environmentally friendly social housing**

JMedia issued a release calling on the Department of the Environment to set an example by only investing their mutli-million euro social housing budget in homes that meet strict environmental and energy efficiency standards.

### **Action:**

- Press release
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## Century Homes – The Home of Timber Frame

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November 2004

### Questions and Answers

Gerry McCaughey appears on the panel on Questions and Answers to discuss competition in the Irish Economy.

November 2003

### “Timber housing puts McCaughey in the frame”

Peter Cluskey interviews Gerry McCaughey about his career and what motivated him to build Century Homes into the biggest timber frame manufacturing company in Europe

December 2004

### Century Homes plans expansion in North America

To announce Century Homes intention to expand into the North American home market JMedia arranged a trip three Irish journalists to the Construct Canada show in Toronto, where the company have a stand. The journalists who travel are:

Jack Fagan Commercial Property Editor, The Irish Times

Helen Roger, Property Editor, The Sunday Tribune

Ros Drinkwater, Freelance Property Writer, The Sunday Business Post

The purpose of the trip is to outline how Century Homes highly developed manufacturing technology will succeed in the North American market where over 90% of the 2 million new homes each year are built on site from timber.

Gerry McCaughey also gives each journalist an extensive briefing on how the Department of the Environment has knowingly allowed 250,000 Irish homes to be built to energy inefficient standards, which could cost up to €600 per year more to heat. JMedia also release a press release to the construction trade media and the local media where Century Homes has plants.

January 2005

### Century Homes criticises Government failure to reduce CO2 emissions

On the announcement that the Government will be paying €185 million to compensate for CO2 pollution by big business. JMedia issues a statement from Century Homes criticising the lack of action from the government on the energy efficiency of houses.

#### Action:

- National press release
- Local pre release

January 2005

### Century Homes wins €5.5 million affordable housing contract in north of England

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## **Century Homes – The Home of Timber Frame**

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Century Homes won a major contract to build over 300 homes for an alliance of nine housing associations. To mark the announcement there is a photocall at the Angel of the North statue in Newcastle and press release which indicates the growth of Century Homes in England and how housing associations are switching to timber frame

### **Actions:**

- Photocall at Angel of the North statue in Newcastle
- National press release in Ireland and UK
- Construction trade press release
- Local pre release

### **February 2005**

#### **Questions and Answers**

On February 28<sup>th</sup> Gerry McCaughey appears as a panellist on Questions and Answers.

### **March 2005**

#### **Launch of the ultimate second home at Spring Home and Garden Show**

Century Homes are building the ultimate second home at the Spring Home and Garden Show in the RDS. JMedia issues a press release and photographs to promote the advanced timber frame structure which was first developed in the Japanese home market. JMedia also organise a series of local radio competitions giving away luxury weekend for two in Dublin to visit the show and a personal tour of the house.

### **Actions:**

- Photocall to national and local media
  - Media release
-

## Century Homes – The Home of Timber Frame

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**March 2005**

### **Century Homes sold to Kingspan for €98 million**

To fulfil their stated objective of becoming the largest timber frame manufacturing company in the World the directors at the company decided to sell to their near neighbours the Kingspan Group. JMedia issued a press release focusing on the deal as a signal of the strength of the timber frame market. It also focused on the massive potential for growth and predicting that 50% of all new Irish houses in Ireland would

#### **Actions:**

- Photocall to national and local media
- Media release to Irish and UK national titles
- Media release to international press agencies
- Media release and briefing of construction trade press.
- Briefing of key business journalists.

**April 2005**

### **Century Homes appear before Joint Oireachtas Committee on Environment and Local Government**

The appearance of Century Homes Chief Executive Gerry McCaughey before the joint Oireachtas Committee on the Environment and Local Government is extensively publicised by JMedia highlighting how the Department of the Environment knowingly allowed 250,000 houses to be built to inefficient energy standards and how timber frame homes have a much better energy performance than masonry homes.

#### **Actions:**

- Media release to Irish and UK national titles
  - Media release and briefing of construction trade press.
  - Media release to local media.
-

## Century Homes – The Home of Timber Frame

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### The Measurement Stage

- The print media generated by the campaign included national print coverage in the Irish Times, Irish Independent, Irish Examiner, Star, Irish Sun, Irish Mirror, Sunday Times, Sunday Independent, Sunday Business Post, and the Sunday Tribune. National radio coverage included RTE Radio 1 and Today FM. The company also received extensive coverage from all the local newspapers titles in Monaghan, Longford, and Waterford where it has plants, and in Tullamore where it will open in 2005.
  - There were two appearances by Gerry McCaughey on Questions & Answers as well as a feature on the Eco house on Duncan Stewart's Eco Eye and a feature on the ultimate second home on Nationwide.
  - Positive media coverage secured by Century Homes included:
    - 73 national articles in general news, features and business pages
    - 79 local newspaper reports
    - 29 trade articles
    - 10 national radio pieces
    - 4 television pieces.
  - In the last 12 months sales enquiries to Century Homes Sales Representatives have doubled.
  - Century Homes posted record profits in 2004 and based on sales to date are well on progress to do the same in 2005.
  - Profiling of Century Homes Chief Executive Gerry McCaughey has resulted in him regularly being asked to participate in high profile media programmes like Questions and Answers and Morning Ireland to comment on a range of housing and business issues. He also is regularly asked to address major Irish business and industry events.
  - Century Homes is regularly asked to feature in property feature on energy efficiency and dynamic construction methods.
  - Profiling has resulted in Century Homes regularly being referred to in the media as Europe's leading manufacturer of timber frame homes.
  - Century Homes was sold for €98 million – the largest price ever paid for an off site construction company in Ireland.
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## Century Homes – The Home of Timber Frame

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### **Budget**

- The total cost of the campaign was €65,000.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1            Sample Press Releases
- Appendix 2            Sample Coverage

