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Playing in The City

A company's vision to take resort living where they haven't gone before



Steve Laver • Playground Photograph: Jonathan Chaz

Playground President Steve Laver has first hand experience with his product. He was a buyer of a Playground project when purchasing two fractional shares in Storied Places' first offering in Whistler, BC in 2003.

When he became President of Storied Places in 2004, Intrawest's private residence club division, he was a client of Playground's sales and marketing services.

Now, after his first year as President of Playground, the marketing arm of Intrawest, he is leading the resort development marketing company around the world and into new territory.

With a history in real estate, Laver started as a full-commissioned real estate sales agent and then as a national partner at Trammell Crow Company in Tampa,

Florida. In his 13 years with Trammell, Laver was responsible for sales to development to corporate restructuring. Building his expertise led him to become President of Brookfield Management Services in 1996 and then Chief Operating Officer and founding partner at Bentall Capital. When he was President of Storied Places, the company became the second largest in the private residence club industry, with one of the highest brand loyalty ratings in the business.

Laver has a bold new vision for Playground – to help its clients take resort development where its parent company hasn't gone before: the city. Known primarily for its resort developments, Intrawest has always used "The Playground Way™" approach to marketing – to connect people with the ultimate places to play. Laver's vision is to take the resort model to an urban context

BIG JOB: Playground plans on taking resort living into the city.

– to create large-scale developments with a resort flavour. Laver says that many people are facing selling challenges and are looking for new approaches to deal with an increasingly North American savvy buyer group. Selling requires an aggressive strategic approach, and "The Playground Way™" is the perfect solution.

When asked about its green building techniques, Laver says "it's a major commitment of Playground, and Intrawest. It's almost a requirement for development in North America." And in the marketing world, that's what buyers want to see. Therefore, for Playground, it's an expected part of the story.

So what does Laver think of "playing in the city"? "It's a fun culture," he says. "It's great to be selling lifestyles."