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density with
privacy.

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speaks about
WL Homes.

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GREAT WORKPLACES

Highlighting best
practices in the
industry.

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Professional Builder's Benchmark Conference

September 27-29, 2006

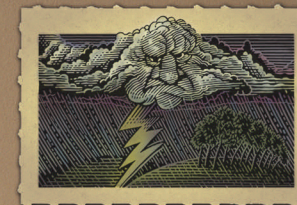
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(see inside for more details)



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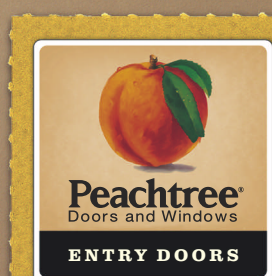
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Emerging Issues

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Take one last look. You won't be coming back.



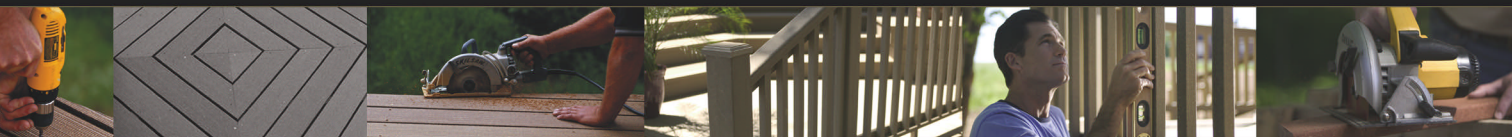
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Energy Buzz

Zeroing in on energy's past

I'm writing in response to May's article about Zero Energy Homes ("A Zero Energy Home for the Rest of Us").

This is a nicely written article; however the headline is wrong. During the last energy crisis in the 70s dozens of zero energy (and some closed cycle) houses were built under \$200,000 all over the country. Most State departments of Energy have documentation about these houses and most are still zero-energy today, which is very impressive as these houses need extensive maintenance to stay functioning. While of course material costs are more expensive now than in the 70s, technology costs have gone down.

It would be nice to see some documentation of the history of zero energy houses. And again, closed-cycle houses are even more impressive through time — and the zero energy house numbers produced correlated to energy prices.

Please pay attention — there are lots of us builders who did this in the mid-70s who are still building today. This is a "been-there, done that" for all of us, not a first for Mr. McKown. He certainly did a nice job, no question, and a valuable service. It's just not a first.

KRICKET SMITH-GARY
Lawrenceburg, Ky.

Focusing on energy's future

Anthony Trella of Deerfield Beach, Fla., makes use of several facts (Letters, May 2006) supposedly concerning development in the U.S. that may or may not be correct.

He and the development industry at large seem to have been blindsided by the emerging fact: a future of higher energy costs.

Energy costs are going to inflate exponentially over the coming months and years. This is going to fundamentally change the lifestyle and land-use patterns of our country and the world. Builders and developers who realize this will have a step ahead of the competition.

Author and social critic James Howard Kunstler recently wrote: "One day soon, America will wake up from its



infotainment-fueled sleepwalk and start desperately looking for answers to the predicament it finds itself in. A lot of that will revolve around the basic question of where we live and how things in it are arranged."

Trella may wish he had followed the New Urbanists development design when this new reality sets in. Kunstler said: "When that wake-up occurs, the New Urbanists will be ready, reliable, confident and congenial as always — something like our country used to be."

Good luck. We are going to need it for what is coming.

STEVE BLACKHAM
Centerville, Utah

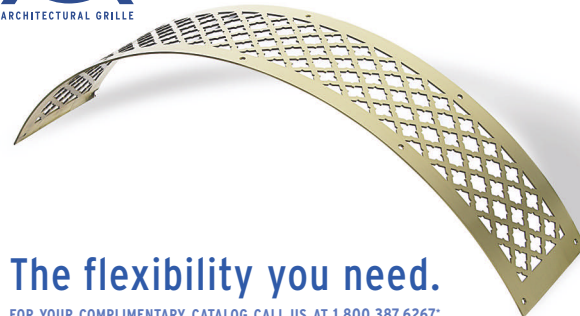
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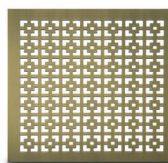
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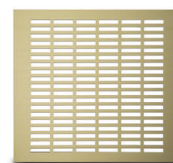
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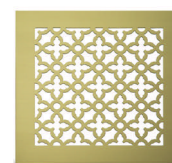
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More Land

In the March issue of Professional Builders, under the title "Development and Discounts," I read an article by David McKown.

I don't usually take the time to respond to an article that appeared in the March issue of Professional Builders, but I am writing to you now because I am so impressed with the article that I am writing to you now.

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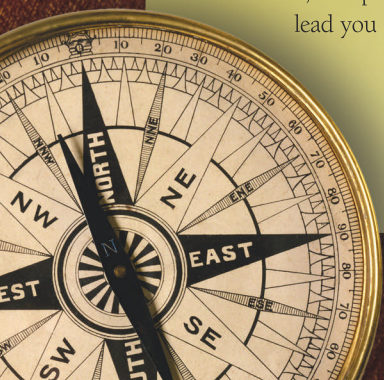
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STAFF VOL 71 NO 7

Details

One of the great things about home builders is the amount of information they share. In some industries, that would be viewed as corporate madness, but builders view it as a way of doing business.

This year, the *Professional Builder* Benchmark conference digs into the details of the best systems for operating a quality home-building company.

The conference kicks off with a dynamic presentation on leadership from Patrick Lencioni. His best-selling books are leadership fables that address team dysfunctions, CEO temptations and meeting overload.

Keith Harrell, our second-day keynote speaker, takes a more personal and less structural approach to success. He has a unique ability to get people focused on what's most important.

Professional Builder's Benchmark conference focuses on the foundations of success. For more information, go to www.ProBuilder.com

Every good conference has strong keynote speakers, of course, but Benchmark has a tradition of digging into the details. Following the National Housing Quality Award's process, we have divided the conference into six operational areas. Each of those areas will feature an overview by an industry leader followed by a breakout session with members of the speaker's company. You'll get a top line view and the specifics on why the company excels.

- **Leadership.** Larry Webb, CEO of John Laing Homes, will address the topic of leadership and how his company executes a culture of leadership.
- **Strategic Planning.** Mark Hodges, senior vice president of corporate operations for K. Hovnanian Companies Northeast, will demonstrate how strategic planning can drive improvement.



- **Human Resources.** Mark Upton, executive vice president of the western region for Technical Olympic USA, has a plan that puts people at the center of any successful growth strategy.
- **Trade Relations.** Bryan Binney, vice president of operations for Shea Homes, worked with his team to develop dynamic trade relations.

- **Performance Management.** Bill Saint, CFO and director of Simonini Builders, delivers a superb level of performance, which helped the company become PB's 2006 Builder of the Year.
- **Construction Quality.** Charlie Scott, executive vice president of The Estridge Companies, helps direct a company known for benchmark levels of customer satisfaction. A linchpin to that is the consistency the company delivers construction quality.

Add a housing tour, golf, team-building exercises, National Housing Quality Award Dinner and an NRS Customer Satisfaction Award Lunch, and the plate will be full at the 2006 Benchmark Conference. **PB**

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"We've found that James Hardie products enable us to successfully introduce more vibrant exterior colors than what we'd typically offer with stucco homes."

DAVID KITNICK, PRESIDENT, ASHTON WOODS HOMES



CREATING BETTER PLACES TO LIVE

More than simply a financial investment, our homes are the stage upon which we live our lives. Which is why professionals charged with building communities – developers, builders, architects and city officials – are looking at ways to create not only houses but whole neighborhoods that put people first.

This return to traditional neighborhood planning is proving a magnet for homeshoppers who appreciate the attention given to elements such as:

- Walkability
- A sense of place
- Sustainability
- Connectedness
- Interesting architecture

In Arizona, the use of James Hardie® exterior siding in the Verrado community is proving a welcome change from stucco. Verrado's director of Community Design JT Elbracht believes that enduring neighborhoods are an artful collection of different types of houses, styles, colors and materials.

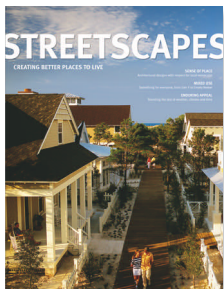
"Homes should ideally reflect the variety of the personalities of the people who live there. This is why the opportunities for color, texture and pattern through the use of siding supports the harmonious quality of our town-like concept."

To register for more information about New Urbanism, Sustainability and Creating Better Places to Live, visit www.jameshardie.com/subscribe.



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New Partnerships

I am delighted to announce that *Professional Builder* has formed an alliance with DesignLens.com, which in the last six years has become a beacon point for the housing industry in identifying and memorializing the finest achievements in residential home building.

DesignLens is a fee-based subscription resource, and its users include builders, developers, architects, interior designers and suppliers. These subscribers gain awareness and knowledge of the most influential design trends affecting our industry. DesignLens users testify that this strategic Web-based tool assists them in formulating market strategies and ensuring their communities and products adhere to the highest standards of architecture and merchandising.

Professional Builder's mission is to

provide professional solutions to our readers and advertisers. We believe subscribers who use this innovative product will elevate and improve their market performance in what is bound to be, at least in the short term, a more challenging marketplace.

Each month on DesignLens, subscribers have access to model home and master plan tours of innovative communities. The Web site also contains one of the industry's most comprehensive libraries of images, floor plans, site plans and ideas. *Professional Builder* will share insightful features

“Subscribers who use this innovative product will elevate and improve their market performance in what is bound to be, at least in the short term, a more challenging marketplace.”



DESIGNLENS

from DesignLens on HousingZone.com and also expand the DesignLens Web site's depth of coverage and scope of information.

Professional Builder seeks to grow this publication into a thriving and robust forum of ideas. Our association with DesignLens advances this core objective and integrates into the *Professional Builder* portfolio a resource to assist our readership in creating powerful product inspired by great architecture and beautifully executed merchandising environments. Our hope is that DesignLens will act as the housing industry's design library, a multi-dimensional warehouse of ideas that inspires, guides and instructs our readership. Ultimately, DesignLens chronicles the amazing achievements of one of America's great industries.

The *Professional Builder* team is committed to joining with the DesignLens staff to intensify the reach and power of this unique resource. We're confident the existing DesignLens program will become even

more illuminating and powerful when married to the technical ingenuity residing at *Professional Builder*.

In the next couple of years, builders and developers will encounter a more discriminating and tentative consumer who will defer a purchase unless our homes are captivating. That truth references all product types, ranging from entry-level homes to luxury estates, from traditional townhouses to urban high-rises. The visionary builders and developers combine entrepreneurial spirits with knowledge and information platforms to ensure that their house designs leave an impact, are current and are well-conceived. DesignLens symbolizes that platform. The *Professional Builder* team is excited to meld this tool and service into our portfolio. **PB**

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>> BY SARA ZAILSKAS, STAFF WRITER

School District, Developers Collaborate

Texans team up to prepare for kids in new community

2,500 acres. 8,000 homes. Seven public schools. Heartland, a Dallas-area development that kicked off construction spring 2005, is a rural master planned community preparing for an estimated 25,000 residents — including roughly 3,600 kids.

Instead of butting heads with local schools, developers Hillwood Residential and Mabrey & Partners, both of Dallas, partnered with the local district. James Mabrey says he knew building more than 400 homes a year meant growth could negatively affect Crandall, the local independent school district.

As plans for the Kaufman County, Texas, development took shape in 2003, Mabrey had an informal chat with the superintendent at the time, Jerry Morgan. “I told him, I want to learn about your business, and I want you to learn about mine. We’re defacto partners in this whether we like it or not,” Mabrey says. He recalls Morgan’s willingness — and relief — to collaborate.

The partnership means swapping enrollment information and permit counts to prepare for growth. From a design standpoint, kids will benefit from traffic-calming devices like roundabouts and curves forcing cars to slow near

schools, and all students will live close enough to walk to class. And financially, Crandall will receive ½ percent of all home sales to offset the stress of growth on programs, facilities and staff; the district gets money upfront to build schools; and students could earn scholarships.

“It’s important to protect the quality of schools, but it’s not just benevolence. It’s good for me, too,” says Mabrey. “If I have high-quality districts, home values go up.”

Families have already begun moving in, and construction on the first school is set for spring 2007.

“The key is to go in and have an open dialogue in the beginning rather than just building or finding a site [for the school] after-the-fact,” Mabrey says. “The closer people live to school, the more active they are in after-school programs, PTAs. You feel like you’re in a neighborhood, and it becomes neighborhood premium.”

SCHOOLS SIT IN THE MIDDLE OF NEIGHBORHOODS

in Heartland. The master planned community in Texas will have 400 acres of open space, including a 35-acre stocked lake.

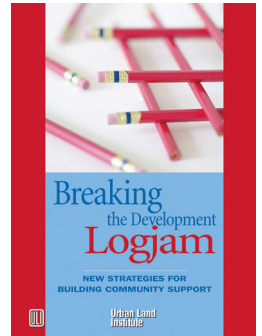


>> BY FELICIA OLIVER, SENIOR EDITOR

New Book Helps Development Approvals

COMMUNITY SUPPORT IS CRITICAL FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. But neighbors often greet plans with suspicion.

“Even projects notable for their attention to civic consciousness, environmental sensitivity and innovative design have been treated with a slash-and-burn mentality,” says Douglas R. Porter, author of “Breaking the Development Logjam: New Strategies for Building Community Support,” published by the Urban Land Institute.



The book offers strategies for tipping the scales toward success by providing neighbors with opportunities to learn about the proposed project and contribute to decisions on its plan and design.

It suggests that an effective engagement strategy can be crafted based on answers to these three questions:

- What outcome am I looking for?
- What might arise from site conditions, and how might the project affect the area?
- Who are the people who need to be involved?

The book also encourages use of visualization tools to help a community understand what a project will actually look like. But it cautions against high-powered sales presentations that extol the virtues of the project without properly addressing potential negative effects.

“Breaking the Development Logjam” is available at Amazon.com, www.bookstore.uli.org, or by calling the Urban Land Institute at 800/321-5011.



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SEPTEMBER 27 - 29, 2006**

KEYNOTES: TEAMWORK AND LEADERSHIP



Patrick Lencioni

Patrick Lencioni is the founder and president of The Table Group, Inc., a specialized management-consulting firm focused on executive team-building and organizational health. He has been described by the One-Minute Manager's Ken Blanchard as "fast defining the next generation of business thinkers." Pat's passion for organizations and teams is reflected in his writing, speaking and consulting. He is the author of five business books, including *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, which was on the New York Times best-seller list. His new book, *Silos, Politics and Turf Wars*, came out in March 2006. Pat consults to executives and speaks to world-class organizations, addressing thousands of leaders. Prior to founding his firm, Pat worked for Sybase, Oracle and Bain & Company. He also served on the National Board of Directors for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America from 2000-2003.



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Known for his energetic, innovative presentations, Keith Harrell is a dynamic life coach who specializes in changing behaviors through a positive attitude. While growing up in Seattle, he aspired to become a professional basketball player. Although he never realized that dream, The Wall Street Journal says, "What sets him apart . . . is driving ambition and an attitude that refuses to flag." Through his company, Harrell Performance Systems and his book *Attitude is Everything: Ten Life Changing Steps to Turning Attitude into Action*, Keith specializes in helping companies achieve and maintain their goals. Harrell spent 14 years at IBM, where he was recognized as one of the top sales and training instructors. He is widely regarded as one of the country's best speakers.



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LESSONS LEARNED

Where the Money Is

Do you have the guts to go after it?

In my April column, “Your Choice in Cost Control,” I challenged the traditional builder mentality of slashing overhead first whenever margins tighten. I asked where you would go if you need a lot of money — 7-Eleven or the Bank of America — and made parallels to home building: slashing overhead or finding creative ways to cover costs. The answer was obvious given that the combination of house cost and variable land development cost amounts to 12-15 times the overhead line for the average builder.

But there was a catch. Going after the Bank of America requires time, planning, people and considerable risk, whereas in contrast, almost any local bad-boy can knock off the 7-Eleven on a whim. Although builders claim they want the big bucks, observation says otherwise. As we continue to watch the housing market slow, the convenience store mentality prevails; overheads are the first to go.

I’ll refer to a quote from Willie Sutton, often recognized as the world’s greatest bank robber. As an old man, finishing up his days in federal prison, a reporter asked why he robbed banks. “‘Cause that’s where the money is!” he said.

That is why you should be going after house cost and variable land development cost instead of overhead, and many of you agree. Since that column I have given several presentations on the subject, and through e-mails, phone

calls and conversations, a pattern has emerged. About half of those I hear from are CEO/COO types who want to know how to get through to their field operations and focus them on finding “the real money.” The other half comprises members from these very same field operations, asking for help in getting the CEOs and COOs to understand where that same money is!

Once again we confront a problem that people seem to grasp conceptually yet have a hard time solving. Hammering the overhead line shows immediate results and impresses the boss or the board — and shows you are a serious operator. Deciding to maintain the overhead or even spend more money to go after the big prize ... that’s just too much risk for most of us to bear.

Yet, some of you have convinced me you are ready to give it shot and have asked for my list of favorite targets, so I



PHOTOGRAPH: THE IMAGE BANK

will give it up.

So here are “Sedam’s Strategies – Where the Money is,” where I know that you can find \$5 bucks for every \$1 you cut in overhead.

1. Product Strategy. Resolve to stop letting your tail wag the dog. Unless you are one of the top five builders in most markets (and many of those build way more product lines than they need), you do not have to build every-

thing for everybody or be driven by every piece of land that walks in the door. Consider three factors: What are you technically great at (good doesn't count)? What do you make the most money building? What do you enjoy building? If you have an intersection of those three, then build it and become recognized as absolutely the best at that product in your market. If you don't have an intersection, make some choices and create one. Not having a clear product strategy is costing you.

2. Land Selection. Buy only parcels of land that enable you to build what you do best. You will be sorely tempted, but hold the line and, as Nancy Reagan said, "Just say no!" For every one deal that might have made you real money, you'll avoid two white elephants.

3. Advertising. At least 50 percent is total waste – probably more like 80 percent. The answer is to do something different, something intelligent, something strategic that drives people to your projects in a different way than broadcasting to millions in hopes that a few hundred show up.

4. Startup process. More money is being bled out on the ground here than any other single place in home building. Fixing it requires a focused process, a committed team, painstaking hard work and unfailing discipline – and few builders have the attention span and guts to see it through. But it can be done, and seven-figure money is waiting.

5. Trade selection. How many of you really fight for the best suppliers and trades as measured on a total cost and total value basis? There is a lot of good intention out there, but when I ask builders to prove it to me, few can.

Remember, it's not just the best trades, it's the best crews from the best trades and that can make all the difference in the world in schedule, quality, cost and profit.

6. Plans & Specs. I see it everywhere I go: out of date plans, red lines on top of redlines, the same plan and material errors showing up at site after site. Whatever you think you save by not having the internal staff or external resources to keep your plans and

specs up-to-date is a nasty and expensive trick on yourself.

7. Options & Selections. Here are your choices: you can either (a) have an extremely simple product and selections or (b) offer a lot of options and variation with truly bulletproof systems or (c) lose your shorts. The problem is, most builders who think they have bulletproof systems don't, and when measured on a total cost basis, much of the profit is illusory.

8. Schedule. If you are taking anything more than 60 days to build a starter home, 80 days to build a move-up and 120 days to build a semi-custom, you are ripping up thousand-dollar bills. The best builders beat the snot out of even those numbers. Again, you have to think total cost and the impact on your suppliers and trades as well as your own systems and people.

9. Turnover. Ask your controller or CFO, "What's the cost of losing one good person?" That's the total cost of what you invested in him or her, the value of what they are leaving with and what they might do for a competitor and what it will cost to recruit, train and get a new person up to speed and


pay for their mistakes the first year. Seriously. Demand an answer. Once you understand this your entire world will change.

10. Prevention mentality. This requires a culture of continual improvement. I have asked group after group, how many people – given the time, tools and authority – could eliminate just \$1,000 of wasted expense from the company, and nearly 100 percent raise their hands. When I up it to \$5,000 I get 50 percent. At \$10,000, I still get more than 20 percent. OK, so you eliminate those who are deluding themselves and those who are duplicating the same dollars.

Still don't think there is six-figure money out there? Bet on it. I said from this list I can guarantee \$5 for each \$1 you cut in overhead, but \$10 is very doable, and I have seen much more. And here's the no-added-cost bonus — you will also save yourself the considerable damage you were about to do by cutting salary increases, bonuses, training, perks, special events, charitable contributions and the big and little things that make your company a special place to work.

Is there a catch? Absolutely. Although cutting overhead will produce immediate results on paper, it typically takes 90-180 days to see significant dollars in the 10 areas cited above, depending on your culture and how much preparation you have to do. Many companies, however, have found big money in 30-60 days. No matter what your horizon is, do the math, and you will find the return rate to be well worth a little patience and some hard work. **PB**

Scott Sedam is President of TrueNorth Development, a nationwide consulting and training firm focused on quality, process improvement and organizational development. He can be reached at scott@truen.com.

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31 Flavors of Leadership

Advice from building industry leaders

There seems to be no shortage of books and articles on leadership these days. The field is populated with some impressive authors: Rudy Guiliani, Ram Charan, Ken Blanchard, John Wooden, Colin Powell and Jack Welch, to name a few. And, like at Baskin Robbins, you can order a subject in a variety of flavors.

A quick search for “leadership” on Amazon.com produced the following:

- “Heroic Leadership: Best Practices From a 450-year-old Company That Changed the World,” by Chris Lowney. (Gee, didn’t know they had best practices back then.)
- “Small Unit Leadership: A Commonsense Approach,” by Dandridge M. Malone. (Might come in handy following the next downsizing.)
- “The Tao of Leadership: Lao Tzu’s Tao Te Ching Adapted for A New Age,” by John Heider. (For the Zen Master in us all. Green tea not included.)

With so many choices one would think that by now someone in our industry had penned something on building-industry leadership. If something’s out there, it isn’t easy to find. A search on Amazon.com produced almost zilch, as did the NAHB Web site. What to do?

We decided to go to the sources: more than 20 senior level executives in the home-building and real-estate development industries. From own-

ers of single-market building companies to executives with the national players in the \$4 billion-plus a year category, we posed the following question: what does leadership look like and how do you recognize it in people? Granted, our informal e-mail survey was more grass roots than Gallup, but you get the idea.

As you might guess, responses fell across the board. No two were alike; however, some common threads began to stand out along with a few surprises. We were certain vision would be one the top two attributes. Wrong. Turns out the ability to inspire/influence was the top-ranked attribute by almost 3 to 1 over the ability to communicate/direct, which came in a distant second. That was followed by vision, strategic planning/analysis and teaching/mentoring.

Another thing we noticed was how often inspire and communicate were joined at the hip in many answers and surfaced as the top two attributes. And what about vision? It makes sense that without the ability to communicate and



PHOTOGRAPH: PHOTOGRAPHER'S CHOICE



If a person can be comfortable with a laborer, a customer, a banker and an owner at the same time ... you have found a leader.

inspire, even the best vision will die on the vine. Here’s what some of you told us:

What is leadership?

- “Leadership at its core consists of two interdependent components: listening and learning from those being led, while simultaneously teaching and guiding. It bears the distinct mark of confident curiosity. To the observer, leadership appears effortless and feels inspiring. Leadership that must be overtly stated is not authentic.”
- “Leadership is a relationship between someone who says ‘follow me’ and someone else who says ‘I will.’ It looks

like people following. If there is no following, no one is leading.

- “Leadership is establishing a direction, aligning people and keeping them motivated. It is influencing people to make productive choices of their own free will. ... Leaders inspire people to do more than they thought possible. When I look for the leader in a group, I look for the person who is teaching others, encouraging others, helping each group member to get to the next level. I look for the person who is appealing to the heart, who is arousing passion and emotion in others. I look for the person who is focused not only on winning, but who is trying to get the whole team across the finish line.”
- “Effective leadership is the catalyst for achieving results. It’s not only doing the right things, it’s doing them well — consistently executing a plan over time.
- “Leadership is piecing together a complete car in the middle of a salvage yard.”
- “Leadership is always value driven. It is about gaining commitment from others who buy into the values and goals and want to support the leadership. Just as important and often missed is the leader’s role in empowering and trusting those around him/her. Most often, we have managers and not leaders. It’s not the same.”
- “Leadership is the art of asking questions rather than giving direction. Greatness in business is sustainable only when the leader is humble enough to understand he/she cannot command results. Truly significant results occur when the leader behaves with consistent values and knows that they must inspire the results via the actions of others.”
- “Leadership, to me, is the ability to get



others to do what you want them to do, but they believe that they are the ones that are in fact deciding what to do on their own. It is the ability to paint a common picture of what needs to be done and under what conditions and standards should be accomplished. The ability to relate to a broad spectrum of people and paint that common picture so that all understand where ‘north’ is can be seen in how individuals comport themselves around others. If a person can be comfortable with a laborer, a customer, a banker and an owner at the same time and have the confidence and ability to communicate that common direction and have the courage to stand up and defend that direction openly, you have found a leader.”

What does good leadership look like?

- “I recognize [a leader] when I see the following characteristics: they are always trying to improve the organization as well as themselves on a daily basis; they are able to communicate their ideas in such a way that others understand and buy into their ideas 100 percent; they have the ability to evaluate an individual’s talents so that the best person is in place to implement the ideas and have the greatest chance for success.”
- “Leaders have vision, can articulate that vision, galvanize support for it, and inspire stakeholders to make “their” contribution to the realization of the vision. Sometimes out in front, sometimes from behind, leaders are always moving their organizations forward in a positive manner. Leaders always possess humility. They have high moral and ethical standards and the organization embraces and reflects those standards.”
- “Leadership looks cultural; it’s not just


one person’s vision but the ability to communicate a vision that allows and causes their group to succeed. I believe it’s only recognizable in positive results. Anything short of positive results is philosophical rather than true leadership.”

- “Leadership is the ability to keep everyone energized and on course even as the business and marketplace changes. Leaders can be recognized by their seemingly eternal optimism and drive. They are people who not only have great results but can articulate those results to others.”
- “When I see an organization excited about a common goal and people working together to achieve it, then I know I’m looking at leadership. I recognize my leaders when I see people that lead by example and inspire others to find new ways to grow and improve. My formula is to set a compelling vision, confirm shared values, establish a coherent strategy, set aggressive goals and execute with inspired, bright people. The challenge is to bring all these elements together so that your customers, shareholders and associates are happy with the results.”
- “Leadership consists of the ability to enroll people into a vision or plan; the ability to engage them in purposeful action toward common goals; the ability to build morale and overcome resistance to change and possessing the ability to communicate through problems and possible breakdowns.”

There you have it — leadership, as defined by leaders in our industry. **PB**

Rodney Hall is a senior partner with The Talon Group, a leading executive search firm specializing in the real-estate development and home-building industries. He can be reached at rodney@thetalongroup.com.

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 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Maximizing Referrals

How to turn customer information into sales

With housing starts on the decline, home builders need to hustle just to stay even with last year's sales. Sure, advertising and marketing are still crucial for attracting new customers. But what if I told you there is a way to significantly increase your conversion rate of prospects into actual home buyers — and it doesn't involve a single advertising dollar?

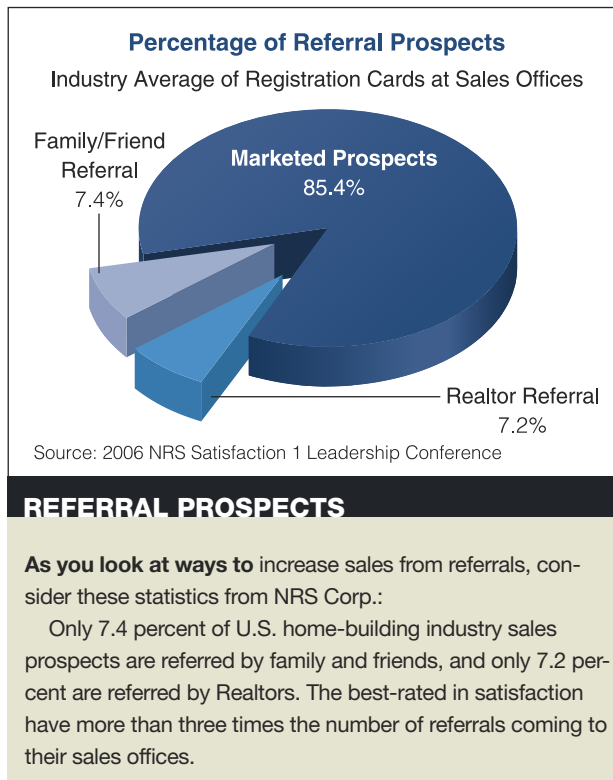
Though it may sound too good to be true, it really isn't. In fact, the best builders in the industry are already cashing in on the strategies and techniques I'm about to explain. As easy as this system may sound, it will require some serious effort by you and your staff to better track referrals, screen potential customers and refocus your sales team.

Many home builders ask prospects how they heard of them. Typically, this information is used to determine the effectiveness of various advertising media, such as newspapers, billboards, radio, TV and even Internet search engines. When a prospect says he or she was referred by a friend or family member, that fact might be recorded, but it often dies there. Yet that is some of the most important information a sales team can have.

It seems obvious, but it's important to remember: not every prospect has the same likelihood of buying. For example, someone who has already been to a builder's Web site and knows about the types of homes the company builds and the industry awards it has received is partially sold before he or she sits down with the sales rep. Someone who hasn't done this homework may be at a much earlier point in the buying cycle and require a different sales approach.

The prospects who are most likely to buy from you are the ones whose family and friends back your business. Because of this third-party endorsement, referral-generated home buyers are the most cost-efficient, profitable and loyal sources of new business. Not only do they tend to buy quicker, they tend to negotiate less, purchase upgrades and refer more business to you.

Referral business clearly delivers the highest return on your investment by dramatically reducing sales expenses and shortening the sales cycle. According to NRS Corp.'s research, referral prospects are twice as likely to make a purchase within six months than a marketed prospect. The conversion rate can be much higher, too. Oakwood Homes' Denver Division reports a conversion rate three times higher for its referred customers.



Tom Hopkins, a sales trainer and author of "Sales Prospecting for Dummies," maintains that your closing ratio for non-qualified leads is 10 percent versus 60 percent with referred leads. So it makes sense for your team to spend less time with cold prospects and more time identifying and servicing referred prospects. That doesn't mean ignoring prospects who are not pre-qualified; rather, it means realigning your resources to get the biggest return on your investment.

The best in satisfaction are focusing hard on these referral customers and experiencing higher conversions because of this focus. It's as simple as 1-2-3.

Step One: Identification

The first step is to institute a good tracking system for referrals. Not only do you want to know which prospects were referred to you, you also want to know who referred them and when the referral took place.

So many builders today have sales center tracking cards but fail to diligently record and utilize the information gathered. Start with reviewing your card. Does it have clear questions geared toward gathering the right information about the referral? What happens to the card after the customer fills it out? Who compiles the data and what happens next in your organization? As the saying goes, “The devil is in the details,” and the same goes for realizing the full ROI from your referral customers.

Most companies do a below-average job in gathering, compiling and reacting to this type of information. A key indicator of a failed program is the length of time from the card was completed to reaction by the sales team. I know of companies that wait up to a month before they compile the results from their sales information card — not a good time frame for making use of the information. If your system is in need of some work, get some assistance fast, because you are letting hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars of sales go unrealized.

Step Two: Sales Strategy

After establishing a good tracking system, you need a clear plan for dealing with these high-priority prospects. This strategy will be different than the one used for other prospects because you are already starting from a position of knowledge and trust. Remember, the referral prospect came in the door because someone close — a relative or friend — sent him or her to you. This means you can move into personalizing your communications more quickly. Ideally, you’ll want to bring the referrer into the conversation as soon as possible, because that person is the main reason you’re even talking with the prospect. For example, I would say, “So I hear you are friends with Mr. Jones who bought a house with us a year ago. We are really glad he is telling everyone about his home.” With referred prospects, you can lead into a

deeper conversation by saying something like, “Are you looking for the same style of house as Mr. Jones? Or do you have something else in mind?” This is an easy way to build upon something you both have in common — Mr. Jones — and establish a deeper level of trust.

We often hear that it’s not what you know, but whom you know. Yet, how many times have your sales reps capitalized on referral information like that? Chances are they don’t if this information is not well-tracked and there’s no sales training on working with this information.

Not all referred prospects will generate immediate business, but they do have potential. Remember, a referred prospect is twice as likely to buy a home as a regular prospect. So why don’t we spend more time with referral prospects? Even though they represent a small percentage of your total prospects, referrals should be getting more of your staff’s time because they have a higher probability of buying. Referral prospects are gold and should be treated that way at your sales centers. Ask your team if they are.

Step Three: Increasing Referral Traffic

Once you have resolved what to do with the sales traffic, you need a way to increase the amount of referrals coming in the door. I like to think of this in terms of an on-ramp and an off-ramp. The off-ramp involves programs designed to increase the likelihood that existing home buyers will make referrals to friends and relatives. The on-ramp involves programs designed to receive



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the friends and family members who were referred to your company. Both of these types of programs are necessary, but there are state laws that affect what you can and can’t do. In some states, a builder can give away \$500 for a referred customer. But there are more effective and less costly ways to encourage existing customers to talk to prospects. Pull your marketing team together to explore ways to develop the off-ramp for your company. Be creative and make it meaningful to receive.

On-ramp programs are designed to welcome and encourage the referral prospects to visit with the sales team. This is the first big step for some prospects, and they need a good reason for crossing that threshold. Your job is to make that decision much easier. The simplest way is to offer an incentive to the referred customer for coming in. This can be in the form of a discount or design center credit.

The housing market has been so hot for so long, home builders haven’t had to struggle to find home buyers. But times are changing.

To meet the economic challenges of tomorrow, businesses need to start preparing today. A top priority is having a customer satisfaction program in place that delivers delight to every customer. After all, without a battalion of satisfied customers in the community, there’s no one to make those referrals that are so important to every builder’s success. **PB**

Paul Cardis is CEO of NRS Corp., a leading research and consulting firm specializing in customer satisfaction for the home-building industry. He can be reached at pacardis@nrscorp.com.



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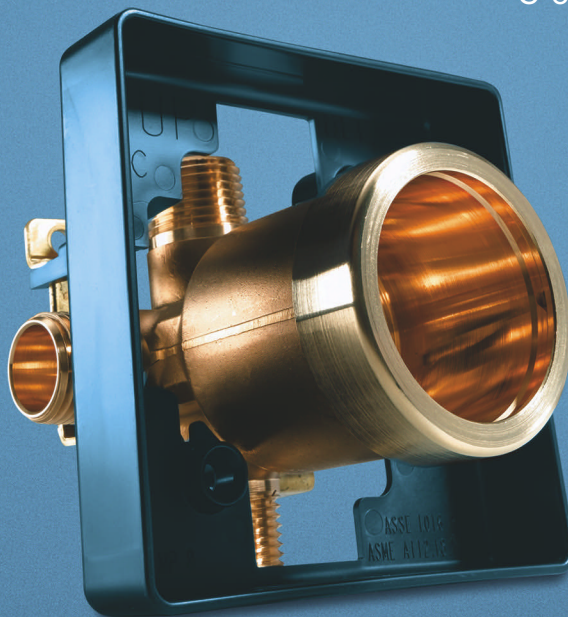


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NEW HOME KNOWLEDGE

Understanding Buyer Motivations

John Rymer

Customers do not always tell us about key underlying motivations for purchasing a new home. For example, I know that many people decide to purchase a home based on the perceived prestige of a community or location, yet I can not think of a case where a customer said to me, "Prestige ranks very high in my decision." For some buyers it's security; for others it may be convenience; while for others it may be the investment potential. Is it important to know a customer's underlying motivations, and if so, how do you uncover this underlying impetus for purchasing?



LOG ON For this and other topics related to new home sales, visit us online at www.ProBuilder.com/bestpractices

Carmine Shine

Large Builder in California

Annual sales: \$25 million; 60 units

WE OFTEN BEGIN THE DISCOVERY PROCESS by asking the typical questions, such as "How many bedrooms and baths are you looking for?" or "What size home did you have in mind?" While this is great information to have, to sell most people a home you really need to understand the emotional issues that are driving them. Is it security? Is it convenience? Is it family? Until you have their emotional attachment to the home, you're not in their buying mode. Once you understand the underlying motivation, you can focus the rest of your presentation around how it affects their true emotional needs.

Mary Ann Malloway

Mid-Size Builder in Atlanta

Annual sales: \$19 million; 62 units

NO ONE EVER COMES OUT AND TELLS YOU THEY ARE A PRESTIGE BUYER, yet you know a lot of folks are looking for the most prestige they can afford. I think the best way to uncover underlying motivations is to really listen to what a customer is saying. When do they get really excited and listen to you intently? If it's when you discuss schools, then you want to focus on the family aspects of the community and home. If they are analytical, then you focus on the value per square foot, price or included features in the home. While you don't want to come across as fake, I think it is important to make a customer feel that you share some of the same values they have. When I have a prestige buyer I'll often say, "I think it's great to know that you're just three blocks away from a community that has homes in excess of \$1 million." It helps build rapport with the customer and gets them to open up.

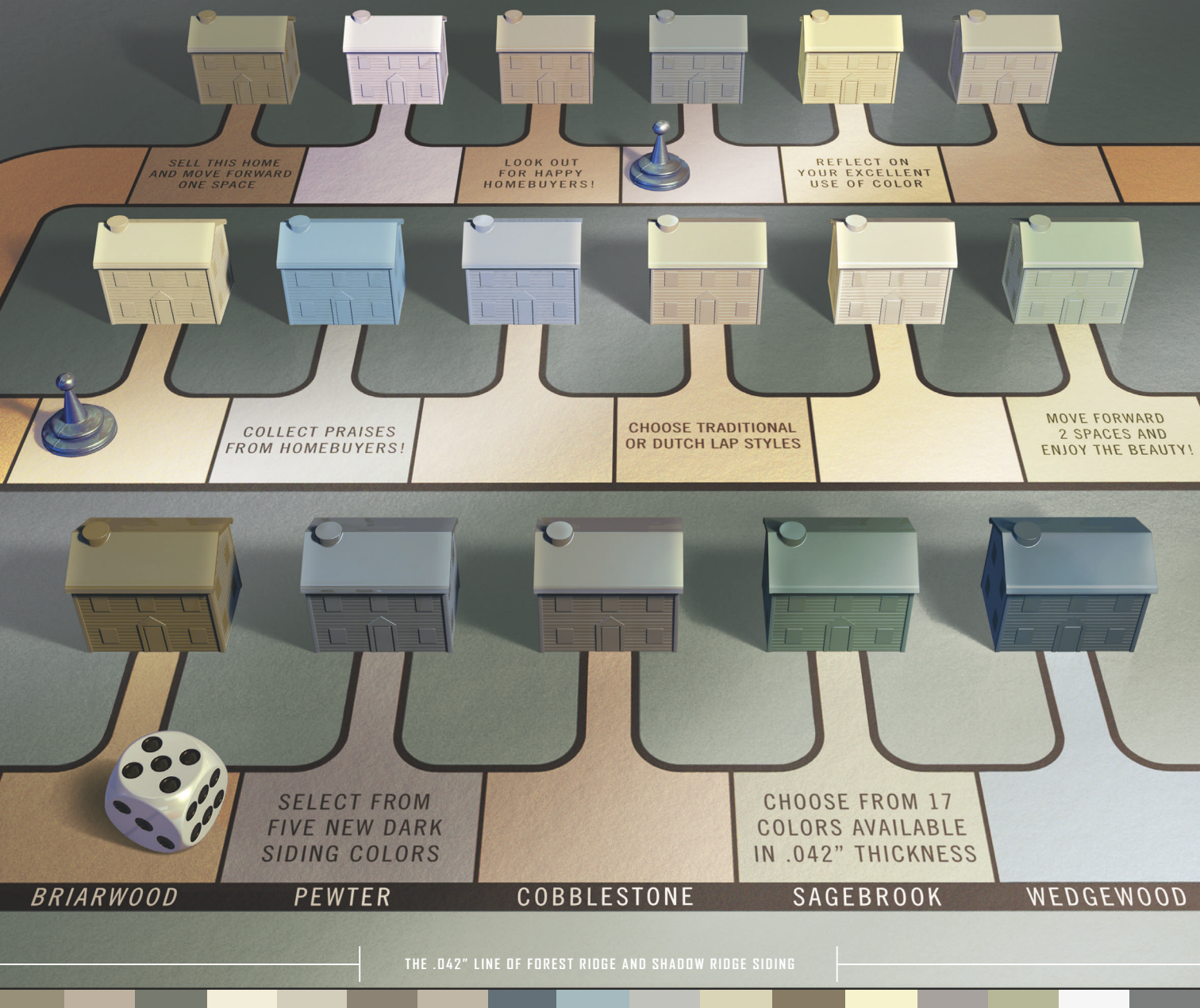
Marty Jones

Large Builder in Arizona

Annual sales: \$49 million; 55 units

IT'S REALLY ABOUT THE DISCOVERY PROCESS. Whether it is their career, the safety of their family, convenience — which really means more time to do other things — or investment, you need to ask the right questions. Buyer motivations are really about learning how to ask questions that allow the customer to open up. When that happens, the stuff that began as being below the surface will flip-up and become the stuff they like to talk about the most.

I compete with communities that often have a shorter commute. When I'm asked about commute times, I try to understand if what the customer really wants to know is the convenience of the community rather than the shortest commute. So I may ask, "So what I hear you saying is that your time is really valuable and having free time is really important ... and part of having more free time is to minimize your commute. We're lucky to having outstanding shopping, restaurants, health and fitness facilities all within five minutes of our community. If free time is the issue, it seems to be that our location should be worth the extra few minutes of your commute!"



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Proactive Solutions

>> BY BILL LURZ, SENIOR EDITOR, BUSINESS

New Player, New Court?

Emaar Properties' cash deal for California Giant WL Homes thrusts a different — and hungry — animal into the market.

Expect to see John Laing signs pop up on A-rated home building sites in your market within a year, if they are not there already.

Armed with Middle Eastern oil money, Larry Webb's growth plans for WL Homes (*Professional Builder's* 2004 Builder of the Year that markets under the name John Laing Homes) just took a quantum leap into the league where public Giants play after Dubai-based Emaar Properties' \$1 billion-plus cash acquisition of the company.

"They'd like us to be a \$10 billion company in the next five years," Webb says of Emaar Properties, a publicly traded firm led by chairman Mohamed Ali Alabbar, who is also director general of the Department of Economic Development of Dubai. Emaar is already one of the largest real-estate developers in the world and has begun construction of "Burj Dubai Downtown," which will include the world's tallest building when completed in 2008. The firm has already built and sold 13,000 homes. Last year, its housing revenues totaled \$2.2 billion. Newport Beach, Calif.-based Laing closed 2,891 homes in 2005 for \$1.63 billion in revenue, to rank No. 20 on *PB's* Giant 400 list of American home builders.

What Will Change

The deal changes a lot. Laing will grow fast, both organically and by acquisition.

And it comes at a time when public builders face tough sledding, with sales and share prices tumbling, in widespread market downturns. Look for Webb to spring into the void left as the public builders walk away from land deals in many markets. And Laing will be a tough competitor on the mergers and acquisitions front. Many private builders will prefer Laing's quiet cash to Wall Street's public scrutiny and strings-attached deals.

Webb and his senior management team are under contract for five years. "We had a handshake deal with the Emaar folks

in December," Larry says, "with two contingencies: they wanted a guarantee that (Laing CFO) Wayne Stelmar and I would stay with the company, and I wanted to go to Dubai, walk their houses and feel good about who these people are. That happened in mid-February.

"I spent a week there," Webb says. "I saw more growth in Dubai than I have ever seen in the U.S. And these are

very progressive people. All of Emaar's senior managers were educated in the U.S. or England. I asked tough questions about relations with Israel and the role of women in the workforce. They have a better record than we do on promoting women. The most important aspect is that we will be able to keep our culture."

Webb says nothing will change at Laing. "No one's leaving. I gave them my word that all 41 of our former employee owners will stay in place. Everyone [has the same incentives] exactly as in the past. We'll develop a stock option plan within six months," he says.

Laing is working on a strategic growth plan. "We'll spend eight weeks studying where we want to be and how to get there," Webb says. "We're looking at Georgia, Florida, Texas, Arizona, and we might want to move up the (west) coast into Portland and Seattle. But first, we want to grow our existing divisions by 150 houses a year in every market."

Emaar says it wants its John Laing subsidiary to be the largest private builder in the U.S., but who says it will stop there? That building in Dubai is not the second tallest in the world. And what about the potential for more Middle Eastern oil entrepreneurs to buy American home builders? All that oil money has to be looking for a roost.

"It's possible," says Wall Street housing stock analyst Ivy Zelman of Credit Suisse. "It was a surprise to me that Dubai would go from buying ports to

real estate, but I guess it makes sense. Emaar is the kind of company that looks for the best quality player in a market. They certainly got one in Laing."



Emaar Properties, led by chairman Mohamed Ali Alabbar, is already one of the largest real estate developers in the world.



"No one's leaving. I gave them my word that all 41 of our former employee owners will stay in place."

-Larry Webb

GRAB LIFE BY THE HORNS



DODGE

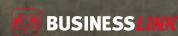


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Professional Builder® Great Workplaces 2006



Building companies
that make customer and
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>> BY **FELICIA OLIVER**, SENIOR EDITOR

THE JUDGES

Erik Froelich, chief operating officer, Cambridge Isenhour Homes in Winston-Salem, N.C., 2005 NRS Award Winner

Chuck Graham, principal of Newton Graham Consultants, a Charlotte, N.C.-based management consulting firm for the home building industry, and a Professional Builder contributing editor.

Hire, train and retain

This mantra kept WCI Communities' retention numbers up amid change and acquisition



Our business development team and Jerry Starkey, our CEO, do an outstanding job in identifying potential acquisitions that fit our particular business niche.”
— Paul Appolonia

Recruitment and Retention

In spite of rapid growth through acquisition and the expansion of existing businesses, WCI claims a 78 percent retention rate, quite remarkable when you consider that a large proportion of mergers fail because of a breakdown that often occurs when mixing two disparate cultures.

“We’re very pleased about that, and it’s not by accident,” says Paul Appolonia, senior vice president of human resources.

In fact, WCI reports that its retention rate has drastically improved over the past four years.

“Our business development team and Jerry Starkey, our CEO, do an outstanding job in identifying potential acquisitions that fit our particular business niche,” Appolonia says. “There is a lot of due diligence that goes into the process. We’ve passed on some acquisitions where we don’t think it’s the right fit.”

In 2004, WCI made its first acquisition outside Florida when it purchased Spectrum Communities, an established builder serving the active-adult market and high-end luxury home market. In 2005, WCI acquired Renaissance Housing Corp., a wholly owned subsidiary serving the affluent home-building market.

Turnover has been minimal in companies WCI acquired.

“Sometimes people who work for a small company of less than 200 that’s acquired by a company

of more than 4,000 feel like they’re going to get lost,” says Appolonia. “But we’ve allowed them to maintain their sense of where they came from. Then they gradually learn what is expected of them from WCI.”

Appolonia also credits the high retention rate to effective recruiting. WCI conducts multiple behavioral interviews for both cultural and technical fit. Each candidate must complete multiple assessments that provide insight on the candidates’ decision-making, communication and leadership skills.

WCI also provides employee training through the WCI Learning Institute, a university-style development program that addresses every level of employee in every business unit. The WCI-LI’s goal is to unify multiple development programs that stretch across diverse disciplines to develop and prepare employees for leadership roles within WCI.

“At times we were a very good recruiting ground for other companies,” says Appolonia. “We have such an emphasis on training and development that larger companies were coming in and hiring away people. We determined that we were going to push even harder for recruiting and development, and retention.

“The rallying cry for our HR department is very simple. We’re going to hire, train and retain. Hire, train and retain in all cases.”

WCI Communities

Jerry Starkey, President/CEO
Bonita Springs, Fla.
www.wcicomunities.com

Employees: 3,905

2005 revenues: \$2.6 billion

2005 units closed: 2,909

WCI Communities is a publicly traded company that serves three key markets: primary move-up, second home/luxury and active adult buyers in Florida, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland and Virginia. The company creates amenity-rich, lifestyle-oriented master planned communities as well as mid- and high-rise residential towers.

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Judge's comments:

“

[I'm impressed with] the success WCI has had with retention considering the high number of acquisitions. They must have a good post-merger integration construct that they are working with there.”



— Erik Froelich

NON-TRADITIONAL BENEFITS

The Girlz of Summer is an eight-week golf program that gives female employees at WCI Communities an opportunity to learn golf and network. The program averages about 30 participants per lesson and includes an awards ceremony and a “Play with the Golf Professionals Tournament” at the end of the program.

“We have beautiful golf accommodations for members and the communities,” says Paul Appolonia, senior vice president of human resources, “and we allow our employees to take advantage of that at any level. You can play golf in any one of our courses for the cost of a golf cart.”

Pulte's 'Top Guns' create a legacy of leadership excellence

Mentors develop top talent, promote them and 'build more'



We did a human resource inventory of who we had out there, what they were doing and what we could do to move the talent pipeline forward."

— Kari Lawry

Training and Leadership Development

Ranked No. 1 on *Professional Builder's* Giant 400 list and honored as the first public national builder to win the NHQ Award in 2004 — Pulte certainly has the experience and resources to be a phenomenal place to work. And it doesn't waste them.

Pulte stands out for its commitment to training and leadership development. Twice a year the company goes through a human resource planning process. Each division evaluates its growth plans over the next three years, determines its organizational needs and identifies current employees with the potential to fill projected openings.

"We did a human resource inventory of who we had out there, what they were doing and what we could do to move the talent pipeline forward," says Kari Lawry, national director of diversity and college recruiting. "It evolved from there to getting some common structure, common leadership characteristics, and taking a look at how we are designed organizationally.

"If you're a market that builds 500 homes, ideally you should look like this organizational chart. Now, let's take a look at you, Kansas City, and see what's going on."

Another innovative idea is Pulte's "Top Gun" program. It was designed to train high-potential, front-line employees to become successful mentors to new hires. Mentoring has been an effective

way to combat high turnover and losing good people who often faltered and left because they felt they had little support.

The Top Gun designation is considered one of the highest honors among employees. Once recommended and selected, Top Guns participate in a weeklong training session. They then return to their divisions to mentor, lead training sessions and become more involved in decision making as members of Top Gun Councils.

"The single fundamental difference between Pulte and anyone else that I've worked for," says Veronica Perez, vice president of sales and marketing for Pulte's Raleigh division, "is that I never doubt for a moment that they are concerned, careful and cognizant about my personal development. It builds such incredible loyalty."

Perez is a Top Gun who has also had an opportunity to be a trainer for the program.

She calls the Top Gun program key to Pulte's culture of mentorship and support.

"I tell my team all the time, 'I'm here for you,'" she says. "Others may say, 'I don't want to promote X, because then I don't have a backfield.' I've promoted my backfield three times."

"When my performance is reviewed, I know that it's looked upon positively," she adds. "Give them to 'V' [her nickname]. She's going to train them. She's going to develop them. She's got a carrel full of talent, and she's not afraid to share them.' I always tell them, 'Take them. I'll build more.'"

Pulte Homes

Richard J. Dugas Jr., President/CEO
Bloomfield Hills, Mich.
www.pulte.com

Employees: Approximately 13,000

2005 revenues: \$14.3 million

2005 units closed: 45,630

Pulte Homes is a Fortune 150 company with operations in 53 markets and 27 states. During its 56-year history, the company has constructed more than 450,000 homes. Under its Del Webb brand, Pulte is the nation's largest builder of active-adult communities.





Judge's comments:



"In addition to [traditional areas like] recruitment, training and compensation, Pulte's application focused on what might be called the counterpoint to these three: consensus, unity and intimacy."



– Chuck Graham

AN AUSPICIOUS START

Even before Pulte new-hires start, the company wants them to feel special. One example: a surprise. The Atlanta division conveyed offer letters to their newest group of college recruits, who thought they were coming in for another interview and lunch. When they arrived at a very nice restaurant, tuxedo clad waiters carried in a tray with offer letters tucked into fine stemware delivered to each candidate.

The Little Red Book that Could

Six Sigma and ‘The Pardee Way’ create a distinctive culture of excellence



“Culturally, we have kind of a two-part mantra around decision making. First, we want to continually improve in everything we do. And second, all decisions should be fact-based.”

— Mike McGee

Cohesive workplace culture and social responsibility

Pardee Homes has implemented Six Sigma, a painstaking methodology that uses data and statistical analysis to measure and improve a company’s operational performance. Former General Electric head Jack Welch popularized the process. To date, 280 Pardee employees have completed training, 28 employees are Green Belt certified, and 13 current employees have completed Black Belt training.

“We recognized from a series of employee surveys that there was a request for more training that would enable them to do their jobs better,” says Mike McGee, president and CEO. “They were looking for analytical tools — how to problem solve, how to qualify their judgments to be sure that they are making the right kinds of decisions.

“Six Sigma seemed to satisfy part of that need,” McGee adds. “Culturally, we have kind of a two-part mantra around decision making. First, we want to continually improve in everything we do. And second, all decisions should be fact-based.”

The goal was to encourage a disciplined approach to decision making throughout the company and help employees feel more secure and supported in making decisions because they were based on objective standards and empirical evidence.

Pardee has also had great success institutionalizing its workplace culture through production and distribution of a simple, little red book. “The Pardee Way: Seven Cultural Principles that Guide and Inspire Us,” enumerates principles that center on customers; employees; teamwork and cooperation; performance management and accountability; business ethics and decision-making; innovation; and the bottom line. The Pardee Way encapsulates a distinct company culture that existed before the actual book did.

“We would hear things just anecdotally in the hall,” says McGee. “People tell stories: ‘I remember 10 years ago such and such happened.’ Or ‘When Mr. Pardee was here, we used to do it like this.’ People who were well-tenured in the organization had a real connection to a feeling associated with that story. And that feeling translated into a behavior and an approach to the business and the customer. That led us to one day say, ‘We need to capture those feelings somewhere so that it survives all the successions in management that will take place over time. Because it is still the Pardee name on the door, and although Weyerhaeuser Company owns us, we need to honor the legacy of the Pardee name every day.’”

Pardee Homes

Michael McGee, President /CEO
Los Angeles, Calif.
www.pardeehomes.com

Employees: 806

2005 revenues: \$1 billion

2005 units closed: 2,900

Pardee Homes is a multi-regional builder and developer of new homes and master planned communities. Pardee is the largest wholly owned subsidiary of Weyerhaeuser Real Estate Company, a division of Weyerhaeuser. Pardee Homes has regional offices in San Diego; Orange County, Calif.; Corona, Calif.; Sacramento, Calif.; and Las Vegas.



Judge's comments:



The application of Six Sigma principles speaks to a rigorous approach to building quality into all aspects of their operations. ...The fact that they are certifying Green Belts, Black Belts, etc., shows that this quality initiative is more than lip service. It is culturally integrated."



– Erik Froelich

CULTURE CLUB

A CULTURE OF CHARITY AND PERSONAL MOTIVATION

Pardee Homes has a history of philanthropy that dates back to founder George Pardee's support for the Boy Scouts of America — a relationship that continues to this day. Pardee's current charitable efforts, particularly in its grassroots giving in the health-related arena, often begin as a memorial tribute or are born out of concern for a fellow employee.

"For eight or nine years we have been doing the Revlon Run/Walk for Women because we lost an employee to breast cancer," says Sandra Kitashima, Pardee communications coordinator. "We also do the multiple sclerosis 50-mile Challenge Walk, and we rally around a woman named Judi Bruner in our marketing department who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis about eight years ago."

Choosing Great Workplaces

The judges' criteria —and what you can learn from entrants

Judges selected the featured companies from among 55 entries based on the following:

- Innovative recruitment and retention practices
- Professional development, education and training
- Social and corporate responsibility
- Workplace culture and environment
- Compensation and benefits

Aspiring Great Workplaces, Take Note!

We selected three companies to highlight as Great Workplaces, but there are best practices to be gleaned from several entrants. Attracting and keeping great employees is key to providing excellent product and customer service to your clients. Happy, productive employees make a direct contribution to the bottom line.

What are you doing to make sure your employees feel supported in and rewarded for the work they do, and how are you encouraging them to go above and beyond to turn clients into “raving fans” and increase referrals?

Consider the following concepts, and see which ones can best be applied within your organization:

■ **COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE:** Grayson Homes of Ellicott City, Md., has consistently implemented process improvements that eventually led to its 2006 Gold NHQ recognition.

■ **DIVERSITY OF PERSPECTIVE:** Pulte Homes of Bloomfield Hills, Mich., demonstrates a strong commitment to hiring and promoting women and minorities. It has made a conscious commitment to deepening its “pools of search for talent” and “creating a more inclusive environment that values the diversity of what people bring to the table,” says Kari Lawry, Pulte’s national director of diversity and college recruiting. A testimony to this is the development of the annual women and diversity summits, held separately, as well as the creation of the Women’s Leadership and Diversity Leadership Council. These programs have support and participation from senior management. Women are assigned men as mentors and minorities are assigned to majority staff members, which encourages “reverse mentoring.”

■ **CULTIVATE AND VALUE NEW IDEAS:** Capital Pacific of Newport Beach, Calif., encourages employees by way of its “Think Value” initiative to suggest changes to improve the way the company does business. Employees can submit their ideas to an online database and track the outcome. They can review ideas that have been submitted company-wide and see which ones have been implemented, which are under development, and which have been tabled. Since its inception in 2004, the

“Think Value” idea has generated 1,011 ideas, 41 percent of which have been implemented.

■ **ENCOURAGE OWNERSHIP THROUGH OPENNESS:** When employees know what’s going on financially with the company, they can understand the impact their contributions make to the bottom line. Woodmeister Corp. in Worcester, Mass., has adopted an open-book management policy that gives employees access to financial performance data for the organization. Each year a goal is established, and monthly meetings keep everyone informed and up to date on how well the company is meeting its goals. Profits above what are needed to keep the organization solvent and growing are shared with everyone.

■ **CULTIVATE INITIATIVE:** Pulte gives employees the freedom to implement customer satisfaction solutions and add a personal touch as they see fit. For example, one employee prints the name of a new homeowner on a golf ball and presents it to him or her, saying, “I promise to be on the ball if you ever need me!”

■ **EMPLOYEE BONUSES AND PROFIT SHARING:** Timberlake Homes in Annapolis, Md., gives employees who are not eligible for field bonuses or sales commissions an annual bonus, distributed at the discretion of the company and based on the previous year’s profitability. The bonus pool is distributed first by division, then by individuals based on a pre-set formula.

■ **EMPHASIS ON TRAINING AND EDUCATION:** John Laing Homes in Newport Beach, Calif., offers employees training through a business objective-based education program called the John Laing University program. Its education emphasis isn’t surprising; CEO Larry Webb and vice president of sales and marketing are both former teachers.

■ **EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK:** Wayne Homes (a division of Centex) in Uniontown, Ohio, takes quarterly department surveys. An action plan is formed based on the feedback, and senior management approves the plan for implementation in the following quarter.

■ **REWARDS FOR PERFORMANCE:** Wayne Homes tabulates a monthly Key Metric Performance report that measures everything from the top new home consultants to which field manager achieved the lowest variance number per house. **PB**



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KEYNOTES: TEAMWORK AND LEADERSHIP



Patrick Lencioni

Patrick Lencioni is the founder and president of The Table Group, Inc., a specialized management consulting firm focused on executive team-building and organizational health. He has been described by the One-Minute Manager's Ken Blanchard as "fast defining the next generation of business thinkers." Pat's passion for organizations and teams is reflected in his writing, speaking and consulting. He is the author of five business books, including *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, which was on the New York Times best-seller list. His new book, *Silos, Politics and Turf Wars*, came out in March 2006. Pat consults to executives and speaks to world-class organizations, addressing thousands of leaders. Prior to founding his firm, Pat worked for Sybase, Oracle and Bain & Company. He also served on the National Board of Directors for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America from 2000-2003.



Keith Harrell

Known for his energetic, innovative presentations, Keith Harrell is a dynamic life coach who specializes in changing behaviors through a positive attitude. While growing up in Seattle, he aspired to become a professional basketball player. Although he never realized that dream, *The Wall Street Journal* says, "What sets him apart . . . is driving ambition and an attitude that refuses to flag." Through his company, Harrell Performance Systems and his book *Attitude is Everything: Ten Life Changing Steps to Turning Attitude into Action*, Keith specializes in helping companies achieve and maintain their goals. Harrell spent 14 years at IBM, where he was recognized as one of the top sales and training instructors. He is widely regarded as one of the country's best speakers.



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>> BY LAURA BUTALLA, SENIOR EDITOR

Roofing-Tile Rebound

Although roofing tile is hard to come by, relief is on the way.

Since hurricanes Charley and Ivan struck Florida at the end of 2004, roofing tile has been in short supply. Hurricane repairs are primarily to blame, and manufacturers can't keep up with the supply and demand. Hurricane Katrina's striking New Orleans last August didn't help the problem.

The demand of roofing tiles also stems from new residence construction in Florida. "All the new communities want tile roofs," says Steve Munnell, executive director for Florida Roofing, Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors Association. "That's the new upscale for homes."

Despite the demand, in recent months, "manufacturers have been able to step up production," says Munnell. "We're starting to make a dent in some of the hurricane work, and that has helped too."

Relief in the supply and demand of tile has also come from tile manufacturers' opening up new locations to increase the production levels, as Charlotte, N.C.-based Hanson Brick & Tile Company and Stuart, Fla.-based Entegra Roof Tile Corporation did.

"That will help," says Munnell, "but it's still going to take time, assuming we don't have anymore hurricanes in 2006. Assuming we don't, it would still be another year before the supply caught up with the demand."

And whenever supply and demand increase, so does the price. In Southern Florida, near the end of 2004 the price of tile per 100 square feet priced out at \$600. Today's price has reached over \$1,000 per 100 square feet. That price includes tearing off the existing roof and putting on new tiles.

>> BY RHONDA JACKSON, STAFF WRITER

PATH, HUD partner to showcase concept homes

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR ADVANCED HOUSING TECHNOLOGY has partnered with HUD and several private sector businesses to build two concept homes that transform and grow with the changing lifestyles and needs of its inhabitants.

The Concept Homes will focus on flexible design and improved time-saving production processes. The homes will feature movable walls, which enable homeowners to create an extra room or enlarge a small room by adding or removing a wall, and organized, accessible utilities. Highlighted production processes will focus on building quality homes in shorter time frames by manufacturing prefabricated panels and fully panelized envelope systems through integrated software design. The production processes will also integrate green building products and processes, universal design and affordability.

This is the third phase of the Concept Home program. The first two phases provided the market research, outreach and development of the building plans.

The first home will be a single family home and the second an urban townhouse project. Lincoln, Neb.-based Brighton Construction will build the first concept home. Fernando Pages, the principal of Brighton Construction, has been applying innovative building practices to build affordable housing. This first home will be an infill project in Omaha, Neb.

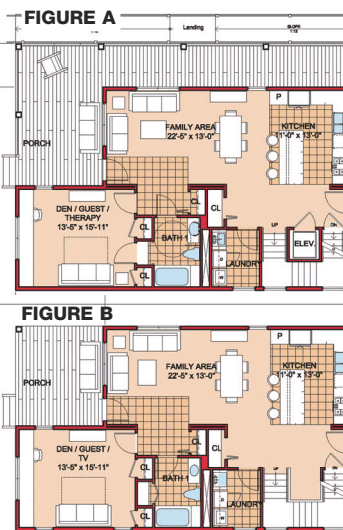
PATH officials hope the concept homes will provide floor plan designs that can be customized based upon the site and climate and refined for particular areas of the country.

The homes are scheduled to break ground late this summer.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TILE ROOFING INSTITUTE

THE CONCEPT HOMES demonstrate flexible floor plans. Both schematics show the same floor plan. Figure A features a porch and staircase while Figure B shows a driveway and an elevator.





Winner on the Water

These rear-loaded townhouses excite buyers with vaulted spaces and ground-floor master suites.

Tampa, Fla.-based builder Mike Morris grabbed a plumb when he got hold of the site for Anchor Cove at MiraBay. Then he made sure the product was as special as the site.

Newland Communities' MiraBay is a 750-acre boating community with direct access to the open waters of Tampa Bay. It has 928 sites for detached, semi-custom homes, many of them with boat docks on a network of freshwater lagoons and canals. Next to the clubhouse and pool, Newland carved a pie-shaped, 5.3-acre site the developer planned for a maintenance-free, attached product aimed at

empty nesters and young professionals. Buyers would be able to walk to all the recreational facilities, and the higher-density attached homes would have the lowest prices in MiraBay.

Morris' Bayfair Properties is building luxury detached homes at MiraBay, but the builder also has a long history in townhouse development in Atlanta and Florida. "We were able to say to

Newland, 'Hey, guys, we can do this.' We showed them a concept for fee-simple, pedestrian-friendly, TND (Traditional Neighborhood Design) townhouses, and they gave us a shot at it," Morris says.

Bayfair turned to Atlanta-based architects Niles Bolton Associates to design the neighborhood, which comprises wide and shallow, two-story townhouses using one dog-leg-shaped floor plan that allows rows of townhouses to follow the streets' edge.

"We use a wide-and-shallow concept that allows us to get the master suite on the ground floor in three of the four



THE 2,526 SQUARE-FOOT BAYSIDE END UNIT, shown here and on following pages, makes good use of the home's 40-foot width to create a single-family home feeling inside and out.

VITAL STATS

Anchor Cove

- Master planned community:** MiraBay
- Location:** Tampa Bay, Fla.
- Developer:** Newland Communities, San Diego, Calif.
- Builder:** Bayfair Properties, Tampa, Fla.
- Neighborhood size:** 36 units on 5.3 acres
- Architect:** Niles Bolton Associates, Atlanta
- Interior designer:** Kay Green Design, Orlando, Fla.
- Models open:** February 2006
- Sales:** 33
- Home type:** Rear-loaded, two-story townhouses
- Square footage:** Four plans at 2,378-2,832
- Prices:** \$336,900 to \$699,900
- Buyer profile:** Empty nesters, young professionals



FLORIDA-BASED INTERIOR DESIGNER KAY GREEN decorated the models in light colors and wood floors to accentuate Anchor Cove's nautical theme. Vaulted ceilings in major living spaces and high clerestory glass bring lots of natural light into Bayside kitchen.



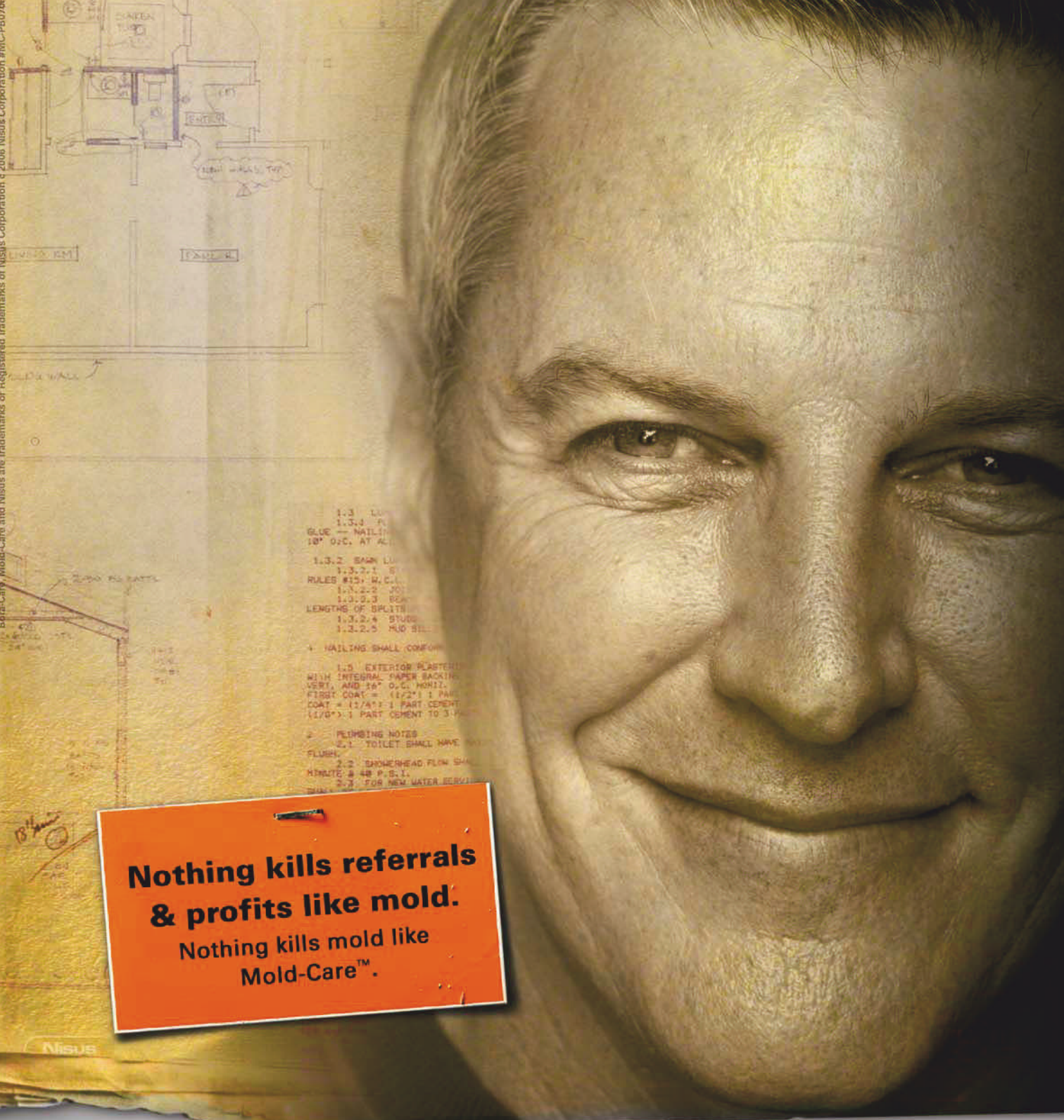
INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURENCE TAYLOR

floor plans," says architect Bill VonHedemann, vice president of Niles Bolton Associates. "That's a key advantage to appeal to empty nesters, who are an important part of the target market. And it also allows us to get a lot of light penetration inside and enhances the single-family feel of the homes.

"The coastal exteriors, with metal roofs and a mix of stucco and lap siding, fit the architecture style Newland chose for all of MiraBay," VonHedemann explains. "But we've done similar product for Bayfair elsewhere using more traditional exterior architectural styles. Mike Morris is right in his comfort zone doing this product."

The 2,526 square-foot Bayside end unit illustrates how Bayfair's designs marry sophisticated exterior architecture to floor plans to attract both active empty nesters and younger professionals.

"Rear loading keeps cars and traffic in back, away from the sidewalks and foot paths that allow pedestrians to move freely through the neighborhood and to the clubhouse and pool beyond," VonHedemann says. "And this unit actually faces the street with a single-story. The second floor is set back to give more of a single-family feel to the street scene. Inside, that setback enables us to get a two-story vault into the major living space, which



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has light streaming in from two sides.”

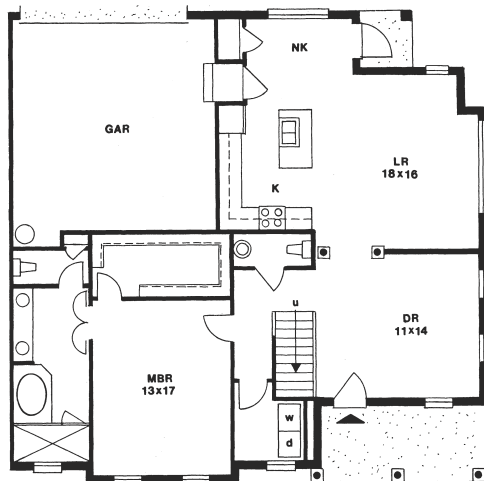
Morris says the width of the plans is the real secret to the single-family home feel. “If I blindfolded you and carried you inside, you’d swear you were in a detached home when the blindfold came off,” he says. Morris credits 40-foot-wide plans that include granite countertops, semi-custom cabinets and molding details with reinforcing the single-family detached-home appearance.

The irregular-shaped site faces a lagoon. “But Newland wanted our product to face the water from across the street, so they could put a boardwalk along it,” Morris explains. “It’s important for our townhouses to face the street on all sides. Everybody that drives into MiraBay sees this site first. It’s the first housing product you encounter. In a community of homes priced mostly above \$500,000, we have to look good, and we do.”

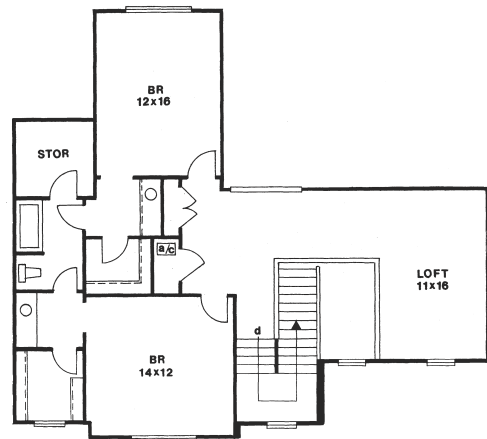
Anchor Cove’s 36 townhouses don’t seem crammed on the 5.3-acre site, but that’s a gross density of 6.79 units per acre.

Bayfair began pre-sales in December 2004, with each townhouse priced individually because some have water views. The pricing started at \$336,900

THE TOWNHOUSES’ WIDTH AT ANCHOR COVE creates long interior sightlines that add to the single-family-home feel of these attached homes. At right, Bayside’s floor plan.



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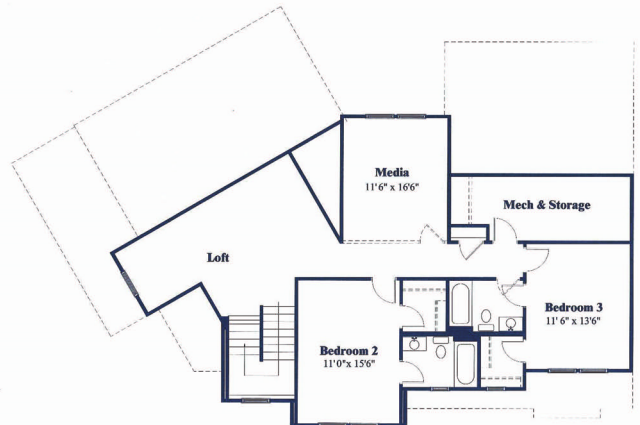
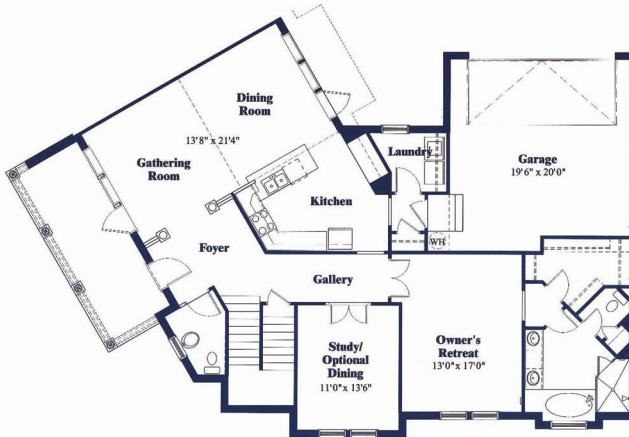


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THE COUNTERTOP IN BAYSIDE MASTER BATHROOM (right) is an example of the high level of standard appointments at Anchor Cove.



to \$415,900 for the smallest plan, the Admiral, which is 2,378 square feet. The largest plan is the 2,832 square-foot Schooner corner unit, the sales center. But only one Schooner exists; Morris plans to sell it for \$699,900. The next largest is the dog-leg-shaped Cutter, a 2,806 square-foot residence (shown above). There are three of these, all that sold starting at \$459,900 each. The 2,526 square-foot Bayside has sold for \$367,900 to \$429,900.

When the models opened in February, all the townhouses were sold except the two models and the Schooner sales center. Morris is using these to sell Compass Point, a follow-up townhouse development across the street that will have 95 units in four phases.

Morris admits that many of the earliest Anchor

Cove buyers were investors, most who are now long gone. "Probably half our buyers were investors," he says. "We had a lot of re-sales last fall and winter, but fortunately, this community has a very strong appeal for the people who really want to live here. Only a few are still on the resale market."

Bayfair built the Anchor Cove townhouses for \$110 a square foot in hard construction costs. Its finished lot costs varied between \$80,000 and \$85,000 each for lots averaging 41 feet by 50 feet. **PB**

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Transforming community

How an Oregon builder developed high-density living within the limits of a retirement community.

King City is a retirement community built more than 40 years ago along the Tualatin River in Oregon. Years after development, the community became a city, allowing residents to control taxes. Unfortunately, tax limitation measurements were too low for the city to deliver sufficient services from taxes.

An Oregon builder, however, has helped turn the situation around while balancing tricky state density codes. Portland-based Legend Homes' parent company, Matrix Development, purchased 35 acres in 2005 outside Portland that abut King

City, hoping the community would annex the land – a move that would increase its tax base, add diversity to its population and revitalize the community. King City agreed, and Legend Homes developed EdgeWater on the Tualatin.

Opportunity

According to a housing market study Legend conducted, several housing niches in the surrounding areas of King City weren't being met. "Most homes in the area were being built for families with 2.3 children and a dog," says Jim Chapman, president of Legend Homes. "While there's definitely a need for that in the area, there was also a very solid chunk of the empty nester market that didn't have a home." Legend took advantage of the opportunity by offering mod-



EDGEWATER ON THE TUALATIN'S BEST SELLER, the Brighton, features a side entry. The courtyard adds an expansive feel to the home while increasing the outdoor living space.

VITAL STATS

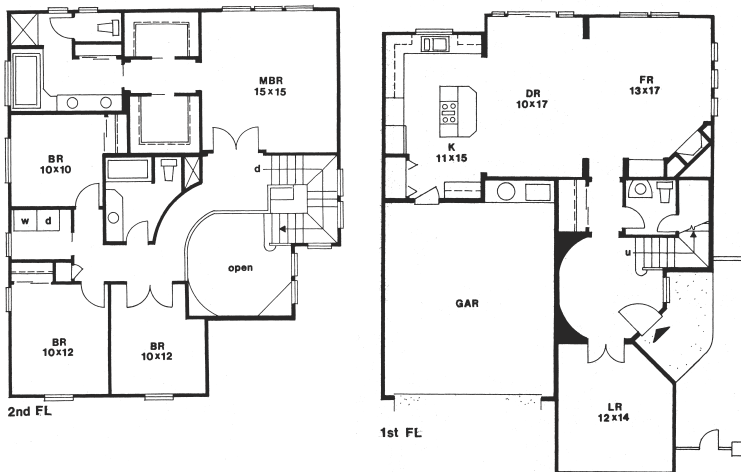
EdgeWater on the Tualatin

- Location:** King City, Ore.
- Neighborhood:** EdgeWater on the Tualatin
- Builder/Architect:** Legend Homes, Portland, Ore.
- Interior Designer:** Interior Expressions, Portland, Ore.
- Developer:** Tigard, Ore.-based Matrix Development, parent company of Legend Homes
- Models open:** May 2005
- Home type:** European Style, single-family detached
- Sales to date:** 98 of 182 lots sold
- Community size:** 35 acres
- Square footage:** Brighton plan: 2,216 to 2,227
- Price:** Brighton Plan: \$436,900
- Hard cost:** \$78 per square foot, not including land
- Buyer profile:** Move-up, empty nester, singles





THE DRAMATIC ENTRY SHOWS OFF the vaulted ceiling and winding staircase.



els appealing to the empty nester as well as families.

Legend's market study also showed most buyers want a one-level home, but the state of Oregon has specific density requirements. "We have to achieve a net of 10 per acre," says Chapman. "That means lot sizes are very small. We try to do things to overcome that lot size, but building one-level homes isn't one of those things that's going to happen unless you want to eliminate garages and living rooms."

The trick was to create a high-density product within EdgeWater that buyers would be drawn to

without offering a one-level home. Legend Homes' solution: design a line of courtyard, alley-loaded homes, each with a private patio in the middle of the house. The sides of the house adjoining the courtyard either lack windows or have obscured windows for privacy from neighbors.

Best seller, smallest plan

Although high density requirements limit lot size and square footage, buyers still want expensive elements. With that in mind, Legend Homes offers buyers a plethora of standard amenities while its competitors offer similar amenities as upgrades only. Standard Legend Homes features include:

- Whirlpool kitchen appliances in black, white or stainless steel/black
- Granite slab kitchen island
- Ceramic tile or white or red oak floors in entry, main hallway, kitchen/nook and powder room
- Obscured glass windows for privacy varied per lot, plan and location
- Rounded drywall corners on walls and windows
- Complete security system with a keypad, a motion sensor, three door sensors, a siren and a hard-wired smoke alarm
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"All that comes with the price. A lot of people are shocked because a lot of builders have \$50,000 to \$100,000 in upgrades," Krista Boyd, director of marketing and communications for Legend, says.

EdgeWater offers eight floor plans, with the Brighton as the smallest floor plan. "It's the most popular, hands down," Chapman says. "I've never had a project before where the smallest house is the most popular."

To many people, the Brighton seems larger than it actually is, a main reason it's popular. Legend Homes' architects put the entry on the side of the house to project a parlor room toward the street, giving the home a longer lot approach. The courtyard at the entry gives an expansive feel along the side of the house as well as increased outdoor living space, which is meant to extend the indoor living space.

Legend also used angles and curves in the architecture of the Brighton. Upon entry, the entrance angles at 45-degrees. Across from the door, curved walls frame a winding staircase, which leads to a rounded balcony overlooking the entry.

Vaulted ceilings and arches add to the architectural design of the floor plan. "I think we succeeded in making it feel bigger than it really is," says Chapman.

Outcome

EdgeWater on the Tualatin continues to be a successful community, says Chapman: "It's been phenomenal. The demand is so high regardless of plans and product types that we have.

"If we put out 12 to 16 homes, they'll all sell on Saturday and 6 or 8 weeks later, we do another press release," says Chapman. "It's been going like that for a year now."

In phase one, 182 lots are available. To date, 98 lots have been sold; 87 of them were sold in 2005. **PB**



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Privacy, Please!

Two design concepts deliver high-density living and keep prices low — without compromising privacy.



In many markets across the country, land and construction costs are pushing home builders toward higher density housing forms to keep home prices affordable for entry-level buyers. But the townhouses and duplexes that achieve densities above seven units to the acre often cram residents together so closely that privacy — and even security — are compromised.

We asked two of the nation's top practitioners of high-density design — Colorado land planner David Clinger and Scott R. Adams, senior principal of Southern California's Bassenian/Lagoni Architects — how to create townhouse and duplex neighborhoods that achieve both affordable pricing and privacy protection. Here's what they showed us.

'Un-Plex' Traditional Neighborhoods

Denver-based land planner David Clinger points out that housing development never happens in

a perfect world where builders produce what the market demands. Local politicians, planners and neighbors are involved.

"Right now, planners and politicians are in love with Traditional Neighborhood Design," Clinger says, "but it's hard to get densities up and prices down in rear-loaded TND neighborhoods. Moreover, when the garage is at the back of the home, it's hard to fashion a back yard that's big enough to be useable or relates well to the adjacent interior spaces. And the front and side yards are anything but private."



Clinger came up with what he calls an “un-plex” to marry higher density to lower prices in TND homes that each have three useable, private outdoor spaces that make the adjacent indoor spaces in the home more pleasant and more functional.

“The un-plex is a detached home when viewed from the public street in a rear-loaded, traditional design community,” Clinger says, “but it becomes a duplex — and qualifies for duplex zoning — by attaching the garages at the rear of the homes. This solves a big privacy problem common to duplexes. There’s no shared wall in a living space, so there’s no sound transmission. The residents experience living in detached homes. And by pushing the two garages together at the back of the homes, we create larger back yards, concentrating that space where it relates well to the adjacent interior space — and using the mass of the house and garage to

screen it from neighbors’ view on two sides.”

Although the lot line runs along the common wall of the garages and down the middle of the 10-foot space between the sides of the duplex, Clinger turns that space into a private side courtyard.

Every home in Clinger’s concept has one blank wall and one that opens with windows and sliding glass doors to a private side courtyard that expands the indoor space visually and functionally. At the front of the home, Clinger uses the standard design element for TND communities — a 6-foot-deep front porch that is both a semi-private, social space relating conversationally to the front sidewalk and a privacy buffer for the interior living space behind it, at the front of the home. Wrought iron fencing with a gate and landscaping shield the side yards from the street in front.

Clinger says un-plexes can be built to densities ranging from seven to nine units per acre. “The

VARIED ROOFLINES, PORCHES AND BALCONIES

disguise the three-story nature of Centex’s Citrus Commons townhouses in Chino, Calif. The development has 18 units per acre.



'UN-PLEX' RANCH PLANS, shown above mixed with more conventional two-story homes, are attached only at rear garages.

lots in a suburban location would be 40 feet by 100 feet, with two parking spaces behind each garage," he says. "On high-priced, infill sites, we might eliminate the parking behind the garage and rely on the public street out front for guest parking. That would reduce lot size to 40 feet by 80 feet and boost the density to nine units per acre.

"At densities in this range, the biggest privacy compromises usually occur rear-to-rear," Clinger notes. "But with each side of a 20-foot alley right-of-way buffered by two-car garages ... distance is the best privacy protector."

The un-plex concept is now underway in eight projects around the country.

Solving a California Quandary

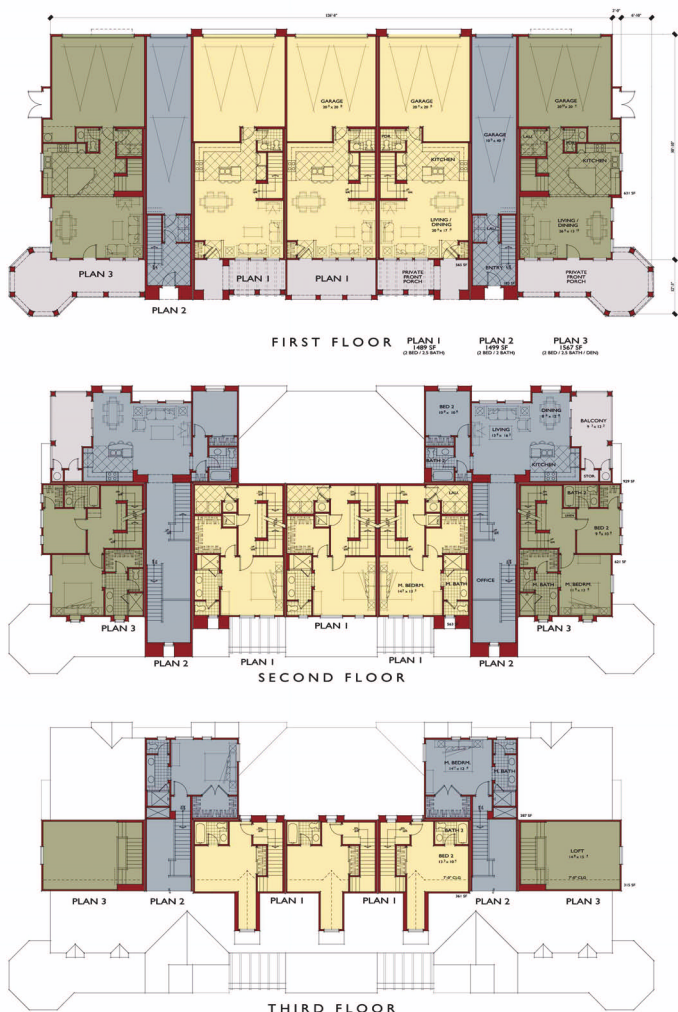
California politicians and planners want rear-loaded townhouses with front doors facing the public street. That's a tough nut in a state where the car is king and the public street may be a collector with 50 mph traffic and no pedestrians. But the Left Coast is also home to many of America's top housing designers — who are proving they're up to the challenge.

Density specialists Bassenian/Lagoni lead the way. Adams, who heads that firm's land planning

operations, says a skyward movement of bedrooms in Orange County and the Inland Empire is actually promoting privacy in the latest generation of Southern California townhouses.

"Many builders are taking their housing forms vertical to get more square footage in a smaller footprint," Adams notes. "We even see it in detached homes, but especially in attached — so a two-story townhouse becomes three stories, or even four. But that's actually creating some privacy benefits because those third stories are usually bedroom space, and that verticality actually creates more isolation for a bedroom. But if you really want rear-loaded townhouses at 18 to the acre that don't have privacy problems, you have to be careful not only with the relationship of one building to the next, but with the way window patterns relate to each other — and even the way individual rooms relate to others in the same building."

As an example of this new generation of more vertical townhouses, Adams offers Citrus Commons, an 118-unit, rear-loaded, three-story townhouse community of five- and seven-plex buildings that Bassenian/Lagoni designed for a 6.64-acre site in the Inland Empire. Centex Homes opened models in February this year. It's



in the master-planned community of The Preserve at Chino, just outside Orange County. Young couples are snapping them up. Even in the midst of a widespread slowdown in sales, this product sells at a rate of two to three a week (gross), at prices ranging from \$375,228 to \$431,900 for two-bedroom townhouses between 1,530 and 1,603 square feet.

"If you look at the three levels of these townhouse buildings, you see that the first level is fairly busy," Adams notes. Every home has a private entry and private garage access, and the upper floors have more carve-away niches for porches and more partial roof areas.

The most interesting plan of three carved into the seven-plex buildings is Plan 2, which is only 12 feet, 8 inches wide on the first floor – just wide enough for a private entry foyer and laundry room in front and a tandem two-car garage at the back. But at the second floor, this plan widens at the back of the building into spaces located above the first-floor garages of Plans 1 and 3. That main living level also has a private, outdoor balcony on the corner of the building, above the garage of Plan 3. The master suite is on the third floor, far above the mad world below.

It should not surprise that this is the best-sell-

ing plan at Citrus Commons because it carries the lowest price tag, starting at \$375,228 for 1,530 square feet. But Centex vice president of sales Carola Cherief says buyers also love the youthful, urban, loft-like feel of the plan, and they are especially responsive to the private balcony.

Adams also points to the way buildings are situated in Citrus Commons, noting a pedestrian 'paseo' between buildings in the center of the development. This pedestrian walkway leads through the development to a school site behind. Adams' vision is that residents may one day walk their children to school. The paseo separates interior buildings.

Builders across America should pay attention to this trend toward verticality in townhouses that is just beginning on the West Coast. Adams sees four stories on the horizon in California.

"We are now seeing more and more use of private residential elevators," Adams notes. They're expensive, he says, but on pricey infill sites, where townhouses may be targeted to empty nesters, an elevator could make very private spaces in the sky a hot seller. **PB**

THE PEDESTRIAN PASSEO, above right, at the center of the Citrus Commons site plan allows interior buildings to face an active, social setting. The building plan for the townhouses, above left, shows how Plan 2, shown in blue, turns a 12-foot width at grade into a three-story best seller. Density at Citrus Commons is 18 units per acre.



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KEYNOTES: TEAMWORK AND LEADERSHIP



Patrick Lencioni

Patrick Lencioni is the founder and president of The Table Group, Inc., a specialized management-consulting firm focused on executive team-building and organizational health. He has been described by the One-Minute Manager's Ken Blanchard as "fast defining the next generation of business thinkers." Pat's passion for organizations and teams is reflected in his writing, speaking and consulting. He is the author of five business books, including *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, which was on the New York Times best-seller list. His new book, *Silos, Politics and Turf Wars*, came out in March 2006. Pat consults to executives and speaks to world-class organizations, addressing thousands of leaders. Prior to founding his firm, Pat worked for Sybase, Oracle and Bain & Company. He also served on the National Board of Directors for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America from 2000-2003.



Keith Harrell

Known for his energetic, innovative presentations, Keith Harrell is a dynamic life coach who specializes in changing behaviors through a positive attitude. While growing up in Seattle, he aspired to become a professional basketball player. Although he never realized that dream, *The Wall Street Journal* says, "What sets him apart . . . is driving ambition and an attitude that refuses to flag." Through his company, Harrell Performance Systems and his book *Attitude is Everything: Ten Life Changing Steps to Turning Attitude into Action*, Keith specializes in helping companies achieve and maintain their goals. Harrell spent 14 years at IBM, where he was recognized as one of the top sales and training instructors. He is widely regarded as one of the country's best speakers.



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>> BY JENNIFER HEYNS, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Tips to Be Square

How to battle out-of-square windows and bad flashing.

Improper installation of windows and doors is the No. 1 problem in the construction industry right now, says Cordell Burton, Installation Engineering Manager for Pella Corp – and being out of square tops the list. He says lack of training or experience among contractors, windows that are installed out of square or with insufficient or improper flashings, and barriers are to blame.

“Training is the biggest gap today,” says Burton, “There are a lot of new contractors untrained and out in the field.”

In an attempt to bridge that gap, Pella offers a training program on the proper way to install a window. The company holds seminars around the country at Lowe’s Home Improvement stores and other businesses.

Windows that are inoperable after installation are usually out of square — an easy problem to fix during installation but very difficult after an exterior finish is applied, says Dave Modtland, a senior engineer for Pella. He suggests builders test each window after installation to ensure that they open and close properly.

“The easiest way to tell if a window is not square is to look at the reveal line around the sash,” says Modtland. Both Burton and Anthony Grisolia, builder services manager of Pittsburgh-based Ibacos, agree that it is important to work from the bottom up when installing windows, starting before the windows enter the picture.

“House wrap material should be installed before the windows,” says Grisolia, “and should be cut at the windows and folded into the openings to keep water from entering.” The bottom of the window should be shimmed;

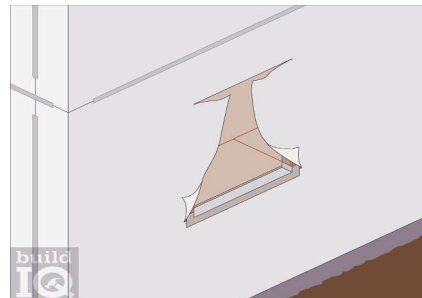
Burton warns that even if shims aren’t necessary to help level the window, they should be installed to create a channel for any water that leaks in to get back out.

Next, the sill pan flashing should be put in at the base of each window opening. Marvin Windows and Doors’ new sill pan system, SillGuard, is a three-piece sill pan made from a recycled, non-corrosive and thermally non-conductive material that features sloping drainage channels and support ribs that drain moisture away from the interior wall, says Marvin spokesman John Kirchner.

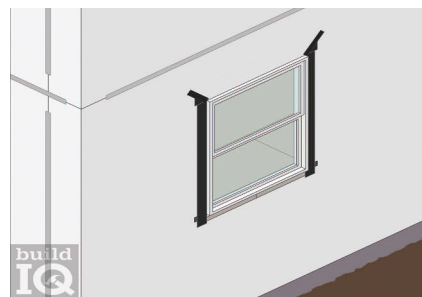
The window is then placed, and Grisolia suggests installing a jamb flashing, a self-stick material that bridges the gap between the window and drainage plane. Burton says this is a good point to check if the window is square.

Head flashing will then need to be installed under the drainage plane. The plane — cut away from the window prior to installation — should then be lapped back over the flashing. “This helps to shed water,” says Grisolia.

Modtland stresses the importance of using a good sealant to prevent water from seeping in through cuts and joints after the window has been installed. “Contractors should use a high quality sealant with high elasticity,” said



INSTALL THE SILL PAN FLASHING behind the house wrap. The vertical sides of the flashing should be tucked behind the house wrap, and the front face of the flashing should overlap the house wrap shingle style.



WHEN FINISHING THE INSTALLATION, fold the house wrap down over the header flange and tape the 45 degree cuts with flashing tape.

Modtland. “If one step of window installation is done incorrectly,” warns Grisolia, “it could cause moisture to get in and ultimately cause mold to grow or wood to rot.”

And with material and transportation costs still on the rise in the U.S., the last thing a builder needs is a higher liability insurance expense.

“Liability insurance is harder to get right now,” says Burton, “and it typically doesn’t cover water and moisture damage. The best insurance is doing the job properly.” **PB**

Jennifer Heyns is a Virginia-based writer.



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APPLICATIONS

Shopping Software

Why researching the many building-related software options on the market now will save you time and money later.

Off-the-shelf software sounds easy to use, but anyone will tell you it's anything but plug and play. These preconfigured systems undertake a range of key activities and generally interface with a variety of other business applications. But they're not a complete solution, so don't set your sights too high.

Follow these steps when considering an off-the-shelf software package:

Step 1: Make a list of key functions

"Determine what's most important to you, what you need to make your business more profitable, and what other people in the office need," says Leslie Shiner, senior industry advisor at Intuit Construction Business Solutions in Santa Rosa, Calif. "But also understand the difference between needs and wants."

Consider ways a new system can save you time and money. "We use Builder MT scheduling module to flag when there's a construction loan draw or homeowner payment due," says Dan Martin, head of purchasing for Grand Blanc, Mich.-based Sunrise Homes, which builds 200 homes per year. He also uses the software to calculate the profitability of base house costs, track variances and check if contractors are meeting deadlines.

What about your gross

margin of options? "Before the Internet, builders would mark up items such as a ceiling fan," explains Stuart Siegel, principal of G2 Technology, a Memphis consulting company. "Today, customers know they can go to Home Depot and buy the same fan themselves for much less, so builders have to charge less for these options. How much are you actually making on your options? Does your system tell you what your real markup is?"

Customer relationship management is another important function. Most builders have a list of buyers in their system but don't use it to the fullest extent. "I have a client who sends his buyers a Christmas card every year," says Siegel. "He invites them to tour his new communities in the hopes that they will consider a move up and to his design center in case they want to update their flooring, for example."

Plan for the future. Jim Waldrop, founder and CEO of HomeSphere software company, warns against buying for



Determine what's most important to you, what you need to make your business more profitable, and what other people in the office need."

— Leslie Shiner, Intuit Construction Business Solutions

now, which could lead to replacing the system a few years later — and additional costs, staff training and software redeployment. "Define your business needs for the next five years, then look for a system that will meet these needs for that time period," he says.

Step 2: Determine which applications need software

Generally, individual off-the-shelf systems are available for back office; sales and marketing; scheduling; customer relations management; estimating; and CAD. While some systems cover multiple categories, you won't find one that covers them all, and that can cause some efficiency problems down the road.

Erica Grganto, controller of Lakemont Homes in Roseville,



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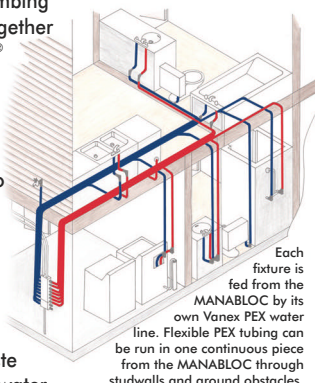
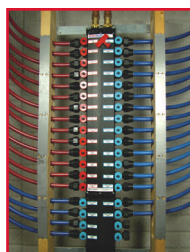
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Innovations

>> APPLICATIONS

Calif., agrees. Her company produces 800 homes a year. "Originally we had separate accounting and purchasing software, and it was very convoluted. ... [With Newstar] the info goes in once, and all departments generate reports from it."

Step 3: Do the research

Ask peers about their system and check NAHB.org for a list of software products. Popular ones include HomeSphere's Builder 360 and BuildSoft; Constellation's Fast and Newstar; TOM Systems; Mark Systems; Builder MT; Intuit's newly released Easy Estimating; QuickBooks Premier Contractor; QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions Contractor Edition; and MasterBuilder. Many have relationships with third-party developers to augment their offerings.

Overall, software is created for a particular size builder. "Builder MT is good for 50 to 100 homes, but not 200 to 500; Fast and Newstar for 250 to 1,000," Siegel says. Waldrop recommends his company's Builder 360 for larger builders and BuildSoft for smaller ones.

"Have a preliminary discussion with the vendor to see if the software does the functions you require, then identify the programs that would best suit your needs," Waldrop says. Then get a whole-package quote for the software itself plus tech support, training and implementation. Some systems charge per user, such as QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions, which costs \$3,000 for five simultaneous users (including a full support plan), \$4,500 for 10, and \$6,000 for 15. MasterBuilder offers more simultaneous users (each for an additional fee) plus more construction and project management features. Marketing manager John Rogovich says Mark Systems' Integrated Homebuilder Management System costs \$100 each for the first 25 homes, \$75 each for 26 to 50, and so on, allowing the builder to buy house starts as needed and not commit money upfront. There's an implementation fee for on-site training.

Step 4: Make it happen

It's not just about picking the software. At the onset, Waldrop recommends involving all parts of the organization in the selection decision to understand staffing implications, determine training needs and develop an implementation schedule with realistic expectations and deliverables. **PB**

Jennifer Block Martin is a San Francisco-based writer.



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 PATH REPORT

Modular and Green

How a North Carolina modular builder found his niche.

David Bennert is co-founder of Innova Homes, a small building company in Asheville, N.C., that builds about six homes a year. His style: modular. His reasons: speed of construction, pricing and quality control. But he has a new specialty: being green.

Modular homes are built in a factory and shipped to the job site, where they are fastened to the foundation and each other. A project might take only a few months, making cash flow more manageable and reducing financing costs. A simple home made from two modular pieces can be done in 30-45 days and a Cape Cod in 45-90, Bennert notes, adding that because the factory work is completed at a fixed price, there's less room for budget errors.

"The homes are also better-sealed and less prone to mold since they're constructed in a dry environment with well-stored and well-maintained materials," says Bennert. They generate less construction waste, too.

Innova Homes began working with green modular homes in 2005, when a developer approached Bennert to build an environmentally friendly spec home. Bennert decided to go one step further and created a niche market by building green modular homes.

To get a stamp of approval that would resonate with cus-

tomers, he decided to build to the standards of North Carolina HealthyBuilt Homes, which



provides a certificate for North Carolina homes that use less energy and water, have healthy indoor air and protect the land where the home is built.

Bennert and his partner discovered that building a modular home gave them a



significant head start toward certification.

Bonus Points

Building a modular home versus a standard home makes green certification easier, Bennert found.

"In all, the modular process takes care of about 10 percent of the points toward certifica-

WORKING WITH MODULAR

HOMES made green certification easier, says David Bennert of Innova Homes. Workers guide a second-story module, above, into place with the help of a crane.

tion, which put us ahead of the curve compared to a site builder," he says.

"By nature, modular homes are generally better-sealed, so that puts you ahead. Also, the modular process itself minimizes waste. They receive

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much of their wood pre-cut to length and then have programs for recycling the extra, which also earned us points.”

Because certification requirements vary by program, Bennert’s partner, Tanya Williams, advises other builders to do their homework up front to determine which features of the modular construction will apply. It isn’t always immediately apparent.

“A lot of the materials that the modular manufacturer is already using are green, even though they aren’t necessarily marketed that way,” says Williams. The company used gypsum, which comprises recycled materials; oriented strand board, which comes from fast-

wood; engineered wood floors; and Low-VOC paints. The builder can also do site work to earn points, such as recycling waste, mulching trees and implementing a tree preservation plan.

Bennert’s first green home included these features, as well as a precast concrete foundation; smart zoning controls; HVAC equipment and ducts in conditioned space; insulation 20 percent above code; Low-E windows; Energy Star qualified appliances; fluorescent lighting; recycled-content carpet and padding; and xeriscaping practices for landscaping.

Communication

Innova Homes worked with the modular home factory to make sure the home met green certification requirements. One challenge came, for example, when Innova Homes asked for the building process or standards to change to meet specific green requirements.

“When a company is putting out two or four homes a day and you tell them that you want your home built with finger-jointed studs or an alternative to OSB, it’s difficult for them to bring in material for that specific home,” Bennert says. “Sometimes it’s impossible because they are often locked in with specific products’ distributors. Even when it is possible, the administrative, handling, storage and transportation issues are difficult to handle in a production environment.

“Still, there remain a lot of opportunities that the modular companies could bring to the market and to GCs like me without a whole lot of effort,” Bennert says.



Once [builders] realize that there is a market for these upgrades, I think they will be more receptive because it will allow them to differentiate their product in the market.

- David Bennert,
Innova Homes

Simple construction changes he recommends include using insulated headers, engineered lumber, additional air sealant and better insulating procedures.

“Once they realize that there is a market for these upgrades, I think they will be more receptive because it will allow them to differentiate their product in the market.”

The Nitty Gritty

Building green modular homes proved to be a bit of an experiment.

“We didn’t know how much going green would cost us; we didn’t know which green items would be easiest to implement; we didn’t understand what the documentation requirements would ultimately be.”

As a newcomer to the process, he documented thoroughly, talked with manufacturers and energy specialists, and attended trainings on

green building. The result was a comprehensive understanding of what it takes to build green that Bennert says will help him in all upcoming projects.

“The first time around, it cost us about \$10,000 in administrative costs to make the modular home green, including all the time spent on research, documentation and certification,” Bennert says. “This was our up-front investment in going green, although I did more than most people have to. We expect that the basic green certification in the future will cost only \$2,000 to \$3,000. This would include upgrades that get the house up to Energy Star standards.”



MODULAR MANUFACTURERS may not realize many of the materials they already use are green.

growth forests; and formaldehyde-free fiberglass insulation – all point-earning steps. “That was a pleasant surprise,” he says.

Although the modular can make certification easier, the general contractor and the client still need to decide how they will get the house to the finish line. Modular manufacturers typically don’t provide the HVAC system, which leaves room to improve indoor air quality and HVAC performance, says Bennert. He recommends other steps toward green certification as well: low-flow aerators as an easy retrofit; low-flow toilets; Hardiplank instead of vinyl siding or



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The homeowner can quickly recoup these costs through lower utility bills. An energy model indicated that the home would save \$437 in heating and

cooling costs a year, and Bennert estimates another \$200 to \$250 in lighting and appliances, for a pay-back of only 3 to 5 years.

Reaping the Rewards

Bennert says his payoff was worth the extra cost and planning for the green building certificate.

"It was a very successful experiment. It has given us a huge amount of exposure and a niche market, which is where we want to be," Bennert says.

The local newspaper covered the project — the first green modular home certified by North Carolina HealthyBuilt Homes — which generated a lot of interest in the home.

Bennert sold the home only three weeks into advertising, while similarly priced and less expensive homes in the neighborhood were still on the market more than three months later. A couple in New York purchased the house over the Internet. Interestingly, they didn't know anything about the green elements. Instead, they were sold on Bennert's attention to detail, the economics of the Energy Star certification, and the low-maintenance features.

"A major benefit of earning a green certification is that it demonstrates the attention to detail you put into the home. You can't get a HealthyBuilt Home certification without attention to detail, because a home is certified through a series of third-party inspections," Bennert says.

"The certification will obviously attract people who are looking for a green home, but it is also a powerful marketing tool to target consumers that are simply looking for what we all want — a quality home." **PB**

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Tuesday	7	1/2	3:30	"	"	8
Wednesday	7	1/2	4	"	"	8 1/2
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	12:41 PM	3:22 PM	Framing	2:41 hours 7:38 hours
Tue 8/15	7:12 AM	12:07 PM	Framing	4:55 hours
	12:43 PM	3:23 PM	Framing	2:40 hours 7:35 hours
Wed 8/16	7:12 AM	12:02 PM	Framing	4:50 hours
	12:46 PM	3:49 PM	Framing	3:03 hours 7:53 hours
Thu 8/17	7:17 AM	12:19 PM	Drywall	5:02 hours
	12:50 PM	3:46 PM	Drywall	2:56 hours 7:58 hours
Fri 8/18	7:13 AM	12:07 PM	Drywall	4:54 hours
	12:44 PM	3:39 PM	Drywall	2:55 hours 7:49 hours
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In My Own Words

"From a marketing perspective, these windows have great perceived value. Milgard is one of the five largest window manufacturers in the country, which gives buyers assurance that this supplier will be around if there is a problem. Milgard offers the highest quality for the price, and their products also have a lifetime guarantee. The company's Positive Action system automatically locks the window once shut rather than the homeowner having to turn the locks manually."

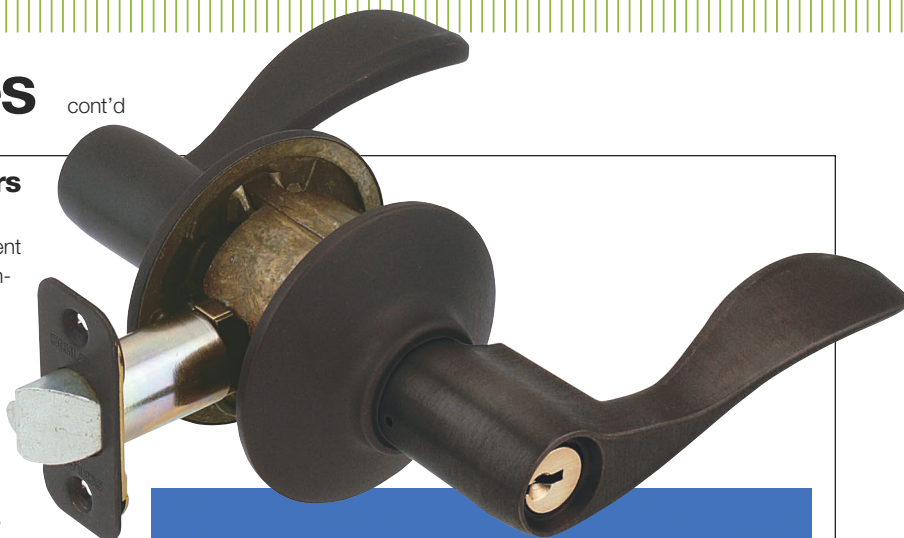
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In My Own Words

"Home buyers recognize Hardie siding as a far superior product to vinyl. It has a high perceived value because of its durability. Home buyers think of it as equal to cedar siding but without the upkeep."

In My Own Words

"This GE Profile oven/range has a nice sleek appearance for our urban loft product. It is an easy upgrade for home buyers to rationalize making because it has many noticeable feature upgrades, such as the warming drawer and griddle oven top."



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Bathroom Fixtures

▼ American Standard

The Cascada Furniture Collection from American Standard provides stylish bathroom storage. This contemporary vanity sports three large drawers and a birch solid and veneer exterior. The vanity is offered in 30- and 21-inch sizes with either a tobacco or maple finish. The collection includes matching mirror, stool, wastebasket and floating shelf. The Cascada vanity is designed to house American Standard's Newbern integral clay sink and countertop.

Circle 130 or go to <http://pb.ims.ca/5144-130>



▲ Moen

Moen introduces custom showers with the Exact-Temp Thermostatic Valve. The ExactTemp is a flexible shower system with individual temperature, force and flow controls for the shower head, body sprays and hand shower. This flexible shower system can be installed on one, two or three walls. The trim comes separately in chrome, oil-rubbed bronze, brushed nickel, pewter, wrought iron and antique nickel. A 7-inch rainshower head is also available.

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▼ Vitra

Vitra introduces the ADA Corina V³ toilet for projects requiring American Disabilities Act compliance. An addition to Vitra's V³ line, the ADA Corina V³ toilet seat sits 17 inches above the floor. This two-piece, gravity-fed toilet has a 3-inch flush valve with V³ technology: vortex, velocity and vacuum.

Circle 136 or go to <http://pb.ims.ca/5144-136>





▼ Rohl

Italian design meets country in Rohl's Country Bath Collection AKIT36 shower trim package. This complete trim set includes four massaging body sprays, a hand shower set, an 8-inch shower rose plus a thermostatic valve and individual volume control. The luxury fixture is ideal for upgrades and can be combined with matching lavatory faucets, Roman tub fillers and accessories. The metal finish options include polished and satin chrome, nickel and brass. **Circle 132 or go to <http://pb.ims.ca/5144-132>**

▼ Kohler

Kohler's Memoirs Suite offers an acrylic shower receptor with an integral seat. Designed for an alcove installation, this built-in seat can be fitted for a left or right-handed installation and has a parallel drain hole. This one-piece unit is constructed from acrylic with reinforced fiberglass and is either 48 inches or 60 inches wide. Colors include shades of green, grey, red, blue and neutrals with chrome or brass accessories.

Circle 133 or go to <http://pb.ims.ca/5144-133>



▲ Motiv

Motiv has expanded its London Terrace line with shower baskets to accommodate homeowners' personal toiletries, towels and other bath items. The six styles have an urban flair with design options including round corner baskets, a washcloth bar and special hooks for holding a razor. The baskets are solid forged brass with hand finishing in oil-rubbed bronze; polished chrome; polished brass and nickel; and concealed mounting hardware.

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▲ Kwikset/PricePfister

Architecturally Inspired Collections, a partnership between Kwikset and PricePfister, provides continuity of hardware and fixture design for the whole house. This new line has two collections: The Ashfield Collection for a country design style and The Avalon Collection for a coastal flair. Each includes new designs for faucets, shower heads, door hardware and bathroom accessories. Finish options include polished chrome, satin nickel, rustic pewter, rustic bronze and Tuscan bronze.

Circle 135 or go to <http://pb.ims.ca/5144-135>





► **Eljer**

The new Titan Triangle toilet by Eljer brings design and space flexibility to bathrooms. The triangle-shaped bowl can save space, making the most of the layout of the bathroom. This gravity-fed toilet has dual-jet water feeds and a streamlined trap way to clear the bowl with one flush. The bowl comes in a 15-inch rim, 15-inch elongated rim and 17-inch elongated rim size.

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► **MGS USA**

The new MGS shower column and tub combination is offered as an exposed and in-wall thermostatic mixer. The valve's volume control operates independently of the temperature control. The shower set includes a matching shower head and arm. Engineered from stainless steel, there are no welded seams or fastening screws used in the construction.

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► **Sonia**

Sonia introduces a space-saving and stylish basin with the P04. The P04 is asymmetrically shaped and designed for versatile wall and corner-mount installations. The clay-fired basin houses a single-hole faucet. The basin measures 12 inches from the bottom of the fixation bracket.

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Patrick Lencioni

Patrick Lencioni is the founder and president of The Table Group, Inc., a specialized management-consulting firm focused on executive team-building and organizational health. He has been described by the One-Minute Manager's Ken Blanchard as "fast defining the next generation of business thinkers." Pat's passion for organizations and teams is reflected in his writing, speaking and consulting. He is the author of five business books, including *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, which was on the New York Times best-seller list. His new book, *Silos, Politics and Turf Wars*, came out in March 2006. Pat consults to executives and speaks to world-class organizations, addressing thousands of leaders. Prior to founding his firm, Pat worked for Sybase, Oracle and Bain & Company. He also served on the National Board of Directors for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America from 2000-2003.



Keith Harrell

Known for his energetic, innovative presentations, Keith Harrell is a dynamic life coach who specializes in changing behaviors through a positive attitude. While growing up in Seattle, he aspired to become a professional basketball player. Although he never realized that dream, *The Wall Street Journal* says, "What sets him apart . . . is driving ambition and an attitude that refuses to flag." Through his company, Harrell Performance Systems and his book *Attitude is Everything: Ten Life Changing Steps to Turning Attitude into Action*, Keith specializes in helping companies achieve and maintain their goals. Harrell spent 14 years at IBM, where he was recognized as one of the top sales and training instructors. He is widely regarded as one of the country's best speakers.



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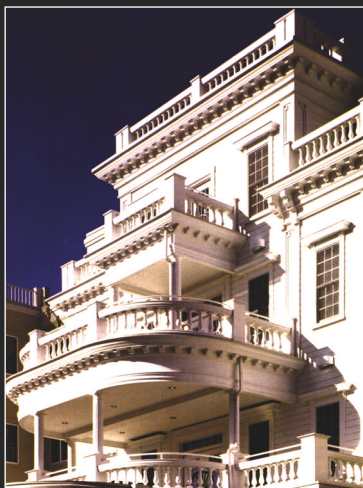
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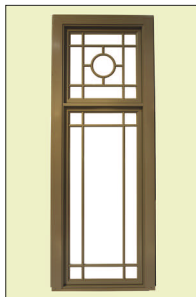
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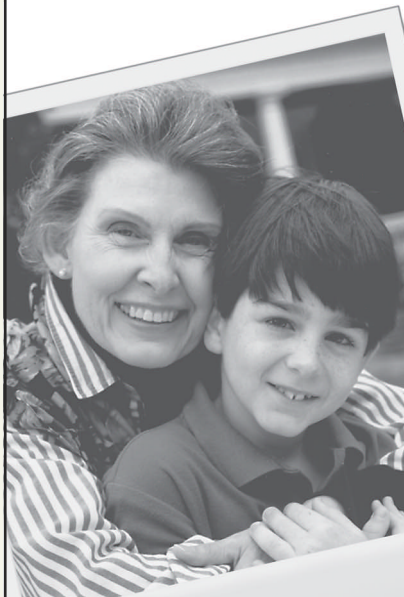
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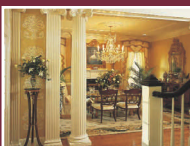
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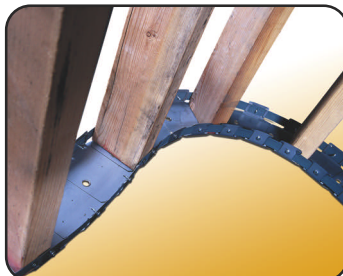
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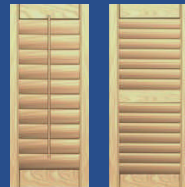
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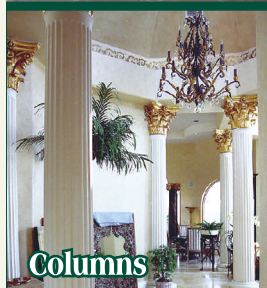
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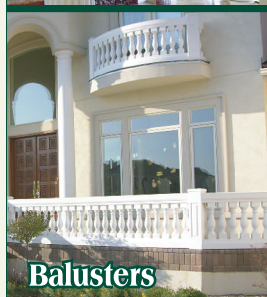
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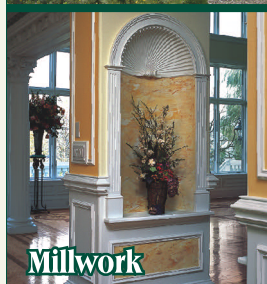
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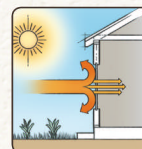
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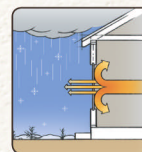


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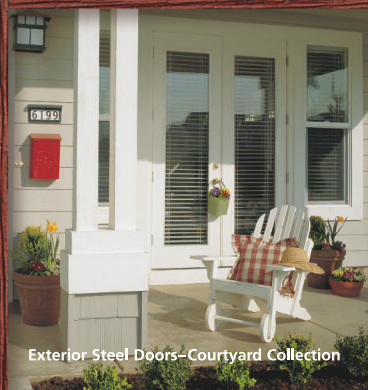


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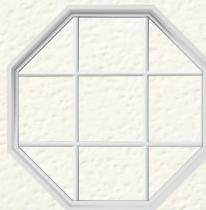
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Vinyl Geometric Window



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