

THE SOURCE FOR PROFESSIONAL SOLUTIONS www.ProBuilder.com

[page 39] [page 70] your star manager

[page 26]







RAIN ASSAULTS DOOR

RAIN HANDILY DOMINATED

RAIN COWERS IN DEFEAT

Performance. For many companies, it's just a word. At Peachtree, it's our sole mission. For the past eighteen months, we've revitalized every part of our organization. New technologies. New manufacturing facilities. And new designs. These changes haven't just improved the quality of our products, they've helped unleash a new level of customization – from entry doors to windows to patio doors. Performance? That's a mandatory. The possibilities for you and your customers? Endless.

ALUMINUM-CLAD DOOR FRAMES.

No primer. No paint. No hassles. With aluminum clad door frames, you're providing your customers with a virtually maintenance free future.

COMPREHENSIVE WARRANTY.

•

Unlike many of our competitors, each of our entry door systems comes with one warranty from one manufacturer. Peachtree. No confusion, no excuses.

.....

HIGH-PERFORMANCE SILL.

Every entry door we make comes with our new high-performance sill. Because at Peachtree, high performance isn't an upgrade – it comes standard in everything we do.

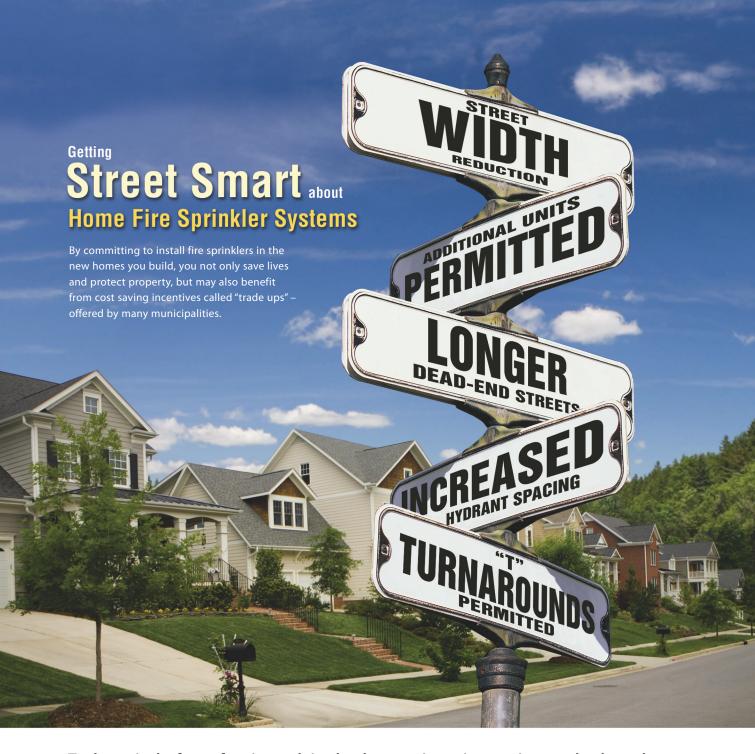
For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-1



FOR MORE INFO 800.732.2499

WWW.PEACHTREEDOOR.COM





Trade ups in the form of zoning and site development incentives can increase land use, decrease development costs, and improve the overall profitability of every home you build.



Help Them Protect Their World

Install *Rapid Response™ Home Fire Sprinkler Systems* in the new homes you build.

With over 200 communities now requiring home fire sprinklers, this is the time to learn more about the Rapid Response™ System.

NAHB





No one should have to work on a deck.



If you don't build the right deck in the first place, time and weather will wear it away.

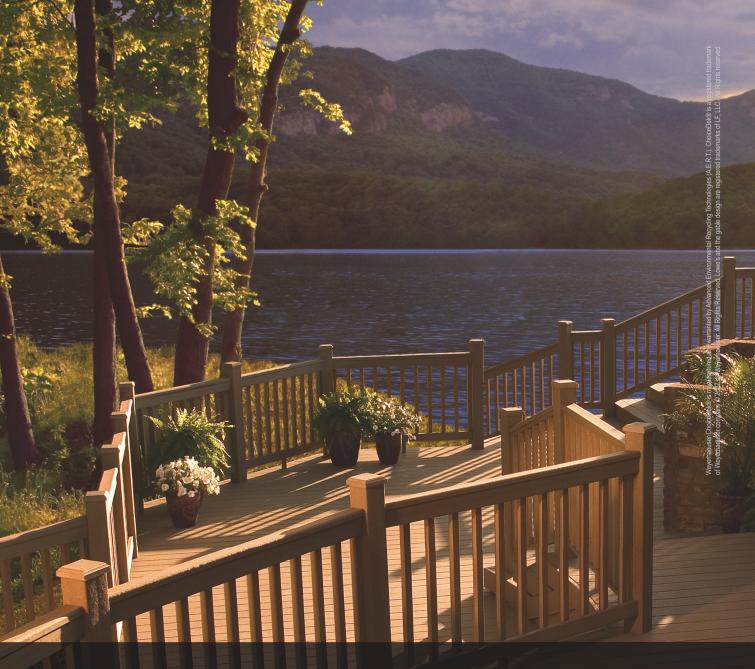


So we engineered our LP WeatherBest decking to resist warping and splitting and applied our SmartGuardTM zinc borate treatment to resist decay. That means it looks beautiful, lasts longer and needs less maintenance. And that leaves more time for what you really want to do on a deck. Nothing at all.



That's what we do. We make the products that build the homes, simply better.





Don't get too attached.



After you finish your beautiful Weyerhaeuser ChoiceDek® project, it'll be tough saying goodbye to your masterpiece. You may never see that deck again, because when you build with ChoiceDek decking there is less chance of callbacks and dissatisfied clients.

There are so many advantages from working with ChoiceDek decking, including the fact that no pre-drilling is necessary, saving you a huge amount of installation time. And your clients will love the lifetime limited warranty, one of the best in the industry, allowing you to leave the job with peace of mind. Say some nice words to your charming ChoiceDek deck, because they are probably the last ones it'll hear from you.

Available exclusively at



choicedek.com

800.951.5117

Contents

Professional Builder The Source for Professional Solutions www.ProBuilder.com





Best Practices

Waiting in the Wings /26 What do you do when your star employee decides to leave the company? Experts weigh in. by Susan Bady

87



Best Practices

- 19 Customer Satisfaction Are We Having Fun Yet?
 by Paul Cardis
- 2I **The H.R. Dept. Analyze Your Interviews** by Rodney Hall
- 23 New Home Knowledge Beyond Wait and Hope
 by John Rymer
- 26 **Feature Waiting in the Wings** by Susan Bady

Emerging Issues

- 39 Industry Analysis James Haughey Reports
- Feature Greetings from the Happiest
 Place in the World
 by Felicia Oliver

Plans and Projects

- 62 Florida Fresh
 University Groves, Sarasota, Fla.
 by Susan Bady
- 70 Inside & Out A New Spin by Susan Bady

Innovations

- 79 **PATH Report Foundation of a Business**by Scott Shepherd
- 83 In My Own Words Haven Properties by Nick Bajzek
- 87 **ProBuilder Product Report**by Nick Bajzek
 - **87 New Products**
 - **89 Countertops and Surfaces**
 - 93 Paints, Caulks and Sealants

Also in this issue ...

- Perspective Benchmark Power by Paul Deffenbaugh
- 106 The Closing Table

 More Process, Less Voodoo
 by Scott Sedam

44

mpressive HOLDS A HEAVY LOAD, SO YOUR MIND DOESN'T HAVE TO.

iLevel Trus Joist Parallam PSL Headers & Beams

The right materials can solve nearly any framing challenge. Materials like Parallam PSL Headers and Beams from iLevel – the new business from Trus Joist, Structurwood and Weyerhaeuser. Manufactured through a patented process, Parallam PSL Beams can support heavy loads over spans up to 60 feet. They resist shrinking, warping and bowing. And the exotic grain adds a rich interior accent when left exposed. To learn more, visit iLevel.com today. Or call 1-888-iLevel8 (1-888-453-8358).







Benchmark Power

We recently completed the site visits for the National Housing Quality Awards, which are based on the Malcolm Baldrige awards but specific to home builders. It's a program we co-sponsor with the NAHB Research Center, and we've been doing these awards for 15 years. After all that time, I think we can safely draw a few conclusions about the gold winners. They separate themselves from the rest by doing one thing no one else does: they benchmark themselves against other builders.

Benchmarking is a difficult process to establish. It is difficult to set up internally, and establishing a benchmarking program against external

you have immediately. Will your financial data end up wandering around the ether for any builder, IRS agent or unscrupulous character to seize? No. The upload is protected, the data is stored anonymously and the information is offered in a completely blind format. It is secure, secure, secure.

The program works like this: you upload your trial balance and the program automatically provides you with analyses and reports, as well as industry benchmarks. Uploading is easy. After the initial setup, you can upload your information on a monthly basis in about two minutes. For builders with off-the-shelf accounting packages, the program does all the work.



The Reed Construction Dashboard allows builders to compare their company's performance on dozens of key metrics against other anonymous builders.

companies that also provides reliable, consistent data is extremely difficult. At best, the data you acquire is uncertain. At worst, it is misleading.

Professional Builder has recently established a new program in partnership with iLumen Financial Information Network that will make benchmarking much easier for builders. Called the Reed Construction Dashboard, this online program allows builders to quickly and efficiently upload financial data and compare it to other builders' metrics.

Let me address the biggest concern

But even if you have a custom package, you can cut and paste your data (it just takes a bit longer).

What do you get? Access to dozens of key metrics and ratios. You can compare those to your previous data, providing easy and good trend information. More important, though, all those ratios and trends can be matched against your industry peers.

Want to know how your percentage cost of materials compares to the industry? Whether that is trending up or down? How about working capital? Current ratio? Line of credit? Revenue



per employee? Gross margin?

Right now, there are hundreds of home builders using the site, allowing you to match your data against a pool that can be broken down by size and geographic region. Alongside your data ride industry analyses from experts and quick links to industry resources. That network of information, wrapped within the simple package of Reed Construction Dashboard, will give you new power at your fingertips.

One of the most exciting opportunities is what this community will be able to achieve as we grow the site. We'll add more key metrics beyond financial data. We'll create more peer groups with greater specificity. But right now, because so many builders already use this site, you already have the chance to benchmark against the industry easily and efficiently.

It is this kind of information package that will allow good builders to become better, strong builders to grow faster and competitive builders to hold an edge. PB

Benchmark Offer

We are providing a special trial offer for Professional Builder Benchmark 2007 registrants. Register for the September 25-28 Benchmark conference and you'll receive free access to the Reed Construction Dashboard as long as you upload your 2006 year-end trial balance before the conference. For more information, go to www.reedconstructiondashboard.com.

Tand D. Mabaux f

Paul Deffenbaugh Editorial Director 630/288.8190 paul.deffenbaugh@reedbusiness.com

Building Tip

Steel Strong-Wall®

Panels Designed for Simplified, Faster Installation

n response to the needs of specifiers, builders and contractors, Simpson Strong-Tie has developed a complete line of cost effective, pre-manufactured shearwalls. Our Steel Strong-Wall shearwalls feature fewer parts and easier attachment at the top and bottom, and are engineered not only for strength, but also quick installation.

Simple and quick installation

All aspects of installation have been simplified, requiring fewer anchor bolts and screws, eliminating the need for washers or straps. Connections at the top and bottom of walls are faster and easier than ever. Our Steel Strong-Wall panels are also designed with preattached wood studs and pre-drilled holes for utilities.



More options available

Steel Strong-Wall shearwalls provide a variety of easy to install solutions. Additional technical information and installation details are available in the new *Strong-Wall Shearwalls* catalog to provide you with effective, easy to install solutions.

Call 800-999-5099 or visit www.strongtie.com.



©2007 Simpson Strong-Tie Company Inc. SSW-BTIP07

BLOG COMMENTS

Are You Online?

Have you visited *Professional Builder's* BlogZone? Log on to www.ProBuilder.com/blogs to join the conversation. Read below for a sample of what your fellow builders are saying.

Determining good fit for buyer not easy

I totally agree with Rick's assessment (Heaston's TouchPoint Selling blog post, "Price or Value?" June 13). Buyers today have so many choices and ways to gather information. Unfortunately some things never change; that is, new home sales people typically give buyers their price list, inventory list and discuss incentives without building trust and a relationship with the customer. How could they possibly know what is a good fit for the buyer?

— Тім Теsta

Blame fraud for the downturn

You're right that everyone was looking the other way when the housing industry was getting people into homes they couldn't afford (Notes from Jim Haughey, "Housing Subsidies Will Not End the Housing Recession," June 19). I don't think there's any practical way to separate the true victims from the people who were complicit in fraud, either. But the last thing the Feds should do is anything that enables the industry to continue this sham of an artificial market. That's why we're in this mess in the first place — they were allowed to continue the sham!

— CINDY

It's time to assign a grade

What do you propose when you say, "We need to turn to builders who aren't living up to those quality standards and say they have to raise the bar" (Paul Deffenbaugh's House Beat blog post,

"Green Must Go Part II" June 21)? How do you propose to enforce something like this? Hopefully, what you are saying is that once the standards are established, all builders should be measured against those standards and then let that measurement do the talking. For too long the industry has been measured on a "pass/fail" basis —perhaps it's time to assign a grade.

— SC Builder

Going green

Well, I will agree on one point (Paul Deffenbaugh's House Beat blog post, "Green Must Go," June 14): there are way too many programs offering green certification. It is however very easy to take shots at a program or building philosophy without offering anything constructive to the debate. How would you define 'sustainable'? And what is it about all of the green programs that you find so objectionable? All of the programs that I have reviewed (and that is most of the offerings) try to achieve the same objectives: increased energy efficiency; reduced impacts on renewable and non-renewable resources; and homes that are more comfortable to live in while being healthier living environments that happen to have longer life spans due to more durable materials. And before you discount my rant, I am a pioneer green builder, having constructed over 700 homes to extremely high standards. Our nation is on the verge of a very uncertain energy future and any move to decrease the energy consumed by the homes we build — whether during the course of construction or after occupancy - will help mitigate impending energy shortages and are a sound business plan for all home builders, no matter what program standards they are building to.

— RICK WILDRICK



Introducing the new *Strong-Wall® Shearwalls* catalog—an all in one reference tool with all the critical information you need, when you need it, where you need it—right at your fingertips. We consolidated greatly expanded technical information, including installation details to ensure simplified installation and help reduce mistakes, saving time and money on your job. Key new Steel Strong-Wall® applications, including stacked wall options for balloon frame and two story structures, plus our Strong-Wall selector software, provide cost effective solutions, supported by full scale testing from a brand you trust.

To request a copy of the *Strong-Wall Shearwalls* catalog call 800-999-5099, or visit www.strongtie.com.

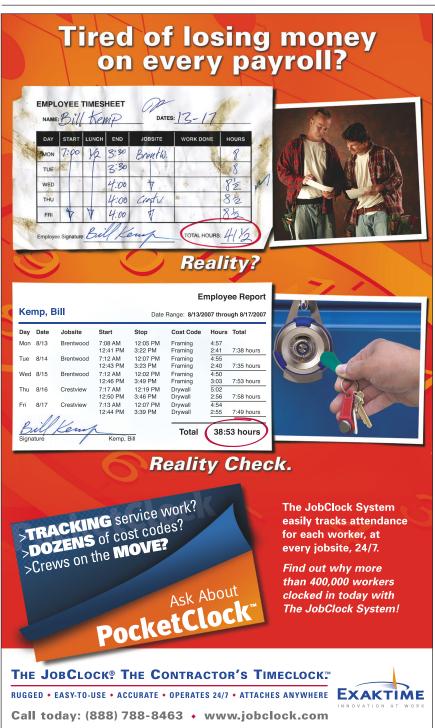
For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-9



Have a question?

Has your subscription run out? Need to order an extra copy of an issue? Not sure who to contact with an editorial question? Here is a list of our most frequently requested phone numbers:

Subscriptions: 800/446-6551 Extra copies: 630/288-8297 Editorial: 630/288-8190



Professional Builder

Editorial Director

Paul Deffenbaugh 630/288-8190 paul.deffenbaugh@reedbusiness.com

Group Managing Editor

Erin Hallstrom-Erickson 630/288-8198 erin.hallstrom@reedbusiness.com

Copy Editor

Sara Zailskas 630/288-8197 sara.zailskas@reedbusiness.com

Senior Editors

Susan Bady 630/288-8194 susan.bady@reedbusiness.com

Mark Jarasek 630/288-8171 mark.jarasek@reedbusiness.com

Bill Lurz 941/371-4804 bill.lurz@reedbusiness.com

Felicia Oliver 630/288-8483 felicia oliver@reedbusiness.com

Products Editor

Nicholas Bajzek 630/288-8187 nicholas.bajzek@reedbusiness.com

Editorial Assistant

Jennifer Powell 630/288-8297 jennifer.powell@reedbusiness.com

Contributing Editors

Chuck Shinn, John Rymer, Rodney Hall, Paul Cardis, Scott Shepherd, Scott Sedam

Vice President, Publishing Director

Julian Francis 630/288-8826 julian.francis@reedbusiness.com

Director of Finance

Bruce Ksiazek 630/288-8120 bksiazek@reedbusiness.com

Director of Electronic Media

Karthi Gandhi 630/288-8172 karthi.gandhi@reedbusiness.com

Audience Marketing Manager

Angela Tanner 800/446-6551 subsmail@reedbusiness.com

Research Director

Barbara Allelujka 630/288-8175 barbara.allelujka@reedbusiness.com

Creative Director

Bill Patton 630/288-8050 bpatton@reedbusiness.com

Editorial & Publishing Office

Professional Builder 2000 Clearwater Drive Oak Brook, IL 60523 Telephone: 630/288-8000 Fax: 630/288-8145

Reed Business Information

Tad Smith Chief Executive Officer
Jeff Greisch President, Chicago Division

SUBSCRIBE TO
PROFESSIONAL BUILDER AT
WWW.PROBUILDER.COM



Look like a hero, without all the heroic effort.

We've made it easy to offer your customers more. Our jobsite-tough extruded aluminum clad now comes in 19 colors at standard pricing. We also offer new casing options—applied at the factory, along with jamb extensions, to save you time. For an unparalleled experience, work with us.

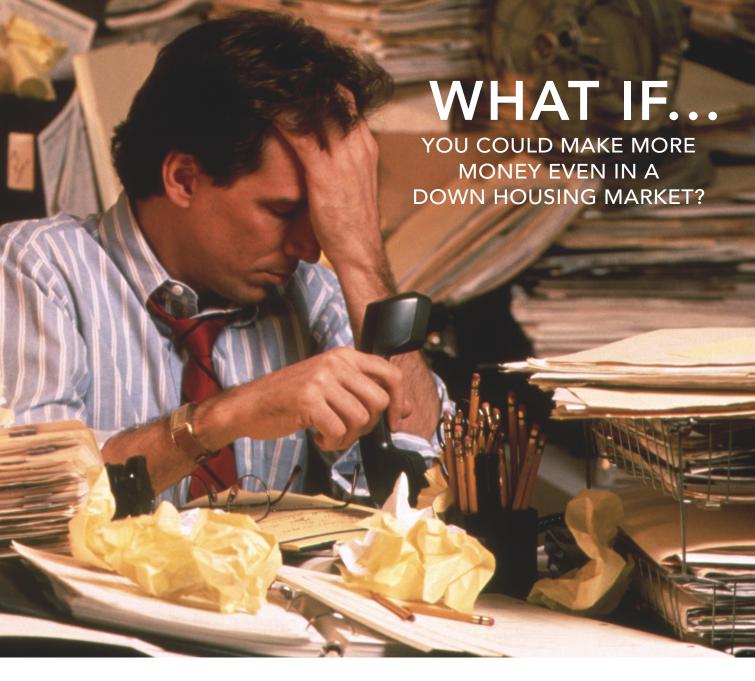
Request our free clad brochure at marvin.com/clad or call 1-800-241-9450.





Built around you.

For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-11





If You Build 25 or More Homes Per Year Dynami Solutions Will Make You More Money.

Dynami Solutions will help you make more money in less time by streamlining your operations. You will be able to capture more sales and model home traffic, qualify more buyers, sell more options and shorten your sales, construction and warranty cycles. More money in less time..... that's success made easier!

No need to disrupt your operation or replace existing software. Dynami Builder TM , our sales and operations management application is easy to implement and will coexist with any estimating, accounting or purchasing system you are currently using or considering.

Want to see how your business can benefit from a relationship with Dynami Solutions?

Go to www.dynamisolutions.com and click on the Dynami Benefit Calculator to estimate your additional profit potential. Or call 1-888-744-5418 and let's explore how you can add dollars to your bottom line with Dynami.



Success Made Easier

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Are We Having Fun Yet?

Why humor in the workplace can help remedy slow sales

When was the last time you laughed at work? If it wasn't today, it could explain why your sales are not better than they are.

Executives are realizing the benefits of a fun and happy workplace. According to researchers, people who have fun on the job are more creative, more productive and more loyal. They are better decision-makers, and they get along better with co-workers. In addition, they are less likely to be absent, tardy or sick.

Hal Rosenbluth, co-founder and chairman of Take Care Health Systems, has always understood the value of a fun working environment. Before launching the health care company, he was chairman and CEO of Rosenbluth International, a global leader in the travel industry. Author of "The Customer Comes Second: Put Your People First and Watch 'em Kick Butt," Rosenbluth believes that to create a great service organization, a company must first focus on its employees. While heading up Rosenbluth International, he said it is "almost inhumane if companies create a climate where people can't naturally have fun."

"Our role and responsibility as leaders and associates is to create a place where people can enjoy themselves. I know our company is doing well when I walk around and hear people laughing."

Attracting customers is easier in a joyful, funfilled environment. Paul E. McGhee, a pioneer in humor research, says humor helps break down any initial objections the potential buyer has by creating a positive emotional disposition toward both the seller and the product or idea being sold.

Humor also helps to hold the buyer's attention even when he or she may prefer to direct attention elsewhere.

How can you infuse fun and humor into your home building enterprise? Better yet, how do you maintain a fun work environment?

First, take this quick assessment to determine how serious the situation is:

Do you regularly see people laughing or smiling at work? If not, you can assume they are not laughing and smiling with customers either.

Do people recognize when something funny happens? Funny things occur all the time, but people have a hard time responding if they are worried about the task at





Our role and responsibility as leaders and associates is to create a place where people can enjoy themselves. I know our company is doing well when I walk around and hear people laughing."

- Hal Rosenbluth

hand. Spontaneous humor is a positive thing. Make sure your staff knows it is OK to stop and enjoy the fun.

Do you regularly sponsor fun activities? If not, start slowly with a few activities and gauge the response. Organize a "Fun Committee" and charge it with dreaming up fun things to do during and after work. Some examples are Take Your Dog to Work Day or Car Wash Day.

Are managers and supervisors usually optimistic and smiling? It is important for managers and supervisors to be seen as team players who can relax, enjoy life and find humor in the day-to-day workings of the company. Management must be committed to creating a fun environment before employees can be expected to pass the baton along to customers. Fun is a powerful tool that few executives have learned to use effectively.

It's easy to overlook the importance of fun when sales are down and everyone is being asked to work harder. Yet, those are the times when a fun corporate culture really pays off.

Take advantage of these times to be different and leap ahead of the competition. PB

Paul Cardis is CEO of AVID Ratings Co., providing full-service research, consulting and employee training. He can be reached at paul.cardis@avidratings.com.





Does your bank think small about your small business?

Your business deserves better. And Capital One delivers with No HassleSM business loans, lines of credit, credit cards, plus a little something we like to call respect. To find out how we can help your business or for more information, visit us at capitalone.com/smallbusiness. What's in your wallet?®

Capitalone

Solutions

O H.R. DEPT.

Analyze Your Interviews

Know which facts to pay attention to – and which to disregard – during your next round of candidates.

After more than 20 years in the search business, my partners and I feel as if we've seen and heard it all. Here are this month's tips to help you gauge your home-building industry candidates:

- The best indicator of future performance is present and past performance. The shrinks refer to it as direct behavioral observations. We call it the Duck Theory: "If it walks like a duck …"
- Direct observations are better than inferred ones. The fact that John describes himself as a people person is encouraging. However, if he frequently slams his coworkers and supervisors during the interview process, it's probably not true.
- "How did...?" trumps "How would...?" Hypothetical questions tell you what a candidate might do, whereas behavioral questions that focus on past actions yield what they actually did. One is fiction until proven to be fact; the other is just plain fact.
- Recency, recency, recency. Like the adage of location, location, the best history is recent history. What someone did five years ago is less important than what they did last year.
- Rarely is anyone as good or bad as we think they are
 — also known as the "divide by two or three" rule.

- Everyone has hot buttons that skew their objectivity. Recognizing the attributes you like to see in people will help maintain objectivity.
- Never make a hiring decision based on any one thing. Don't pin your hopes on an accomplishment or failure; praise or criticism; nor good or bad reference.
- If you don't know what you are looking for, how will you know when you find it? The better you define what success should look like in a position, the easier it will be to assess those abilities in others.
- The more comfortable both parties are during an interview, the more open and authentic each will be. That means no more trick questions or acting like an armchair psychologist. Let candidates feel comfortable flipping a question back to you at any time or asking one of their own.
- The interview and hiring process should be like a courtship, starting with attraction (dating), assessment (learning about each other) and acceptance (pro-





What someone did five years ago is less important than what they did last year."

posal). And like a marriage, it takes adaptability and alignment of expectations on both sides to make it work over the long haul.

■ If a candidate needs more than 24 to 48 hours to accept/decline an offer,

then something in the hiring process was not handled correctly. An effective interview process comprises more than one visit and plenty of opportunities for both sides to learn about each other. The decision should be pretty clear by the time an offer is made. Taking longer than a day or two will not make the decision any clearer or easier.

Counter offers are short-term solutions. Case in point: an employee resigns to pursue another opportunity. The employer offers the employee a raise, bonus or promotion to entice him/her to stay, but never forgets how the employee leveraged the situation to their advantage. The relationship is never the same. It's also a poor way to go about getting a raise or promotion. Typically, the relationship sours within 12 months. 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.

LOG ON To read 'Analyze your interviews' online, visit www.ProBuilder.com/bestpractices

THE STRAIGHT AND NOT-SO-NARROW.



WHILE SKINNY MAY BE POPULAR IN HOLLYWOOD, IN HOMES, WIDER IS ALMOST ALWAYS BETTER.



So we engineered our LP SolidStart I-Joists to be 66% wider than your typical lumber joists. That means more stable floors with less bounce and fewer headaches for builders. We're not expecting the Nobel Prize—just strong houses.



That's what we do. We make the products that build the homes, simply better.



TECHSHIELD° SMARTSIDE° TOPNOTCH° CANEXEL° WEATHERBEST°
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OTHER LP PRODUCTS, VISIT LPCORP.COM.

BUILD WITH US.*

NEW HOME KNOWLEDGE

Beyond Wait and Hope

Refocus your pitch and partner with real-estate agents to make the most of your time.

Talk with most sales professionals today and the conversation sooner or later turns to the glory days of new home sales. They complain of

glory days of new home sales. They complain of customers today who shop and keep waiting for a better deal while traffic dwindles.

There is no guarantee that we will ever see the kind of market that we witnessed in 2003–2005, and if — and this is a big if — it comes along again, chances are sales professionals who have an "it's not my fault, it's the market's fault" attitude will be left in the wake of a new, hungrier generation of new home sales professionals.

Today, new home sales staff frequently choose one of two paths: (1) Hold a regular pity party for themselves and their sales friends, waiting for and hoping a better market comes along soon; or (2) Take control of their own destiny and commit to becoming a better sales professional.

Master the Basics

So let's start with the basics of becoming a better sales professional:

■ Step No. 1: Improve your sales presentation skills. During the go-go days of new home sales the essence of many presentations was to buy before prices rose and availability plummeted or disappeared. Although we

know this approach no longer makes sense to most customers, many sales professionals struggle to find new ways to ask for the order or create urgency. Today's best sales professionals know that creating a compelling value rather than fear of price increases is the key to getting the sale.

Focus your presentation skills on how to build value. Look online for new Webbased sales training tools. Sign up for courses at your local HBA. Role-play with your sales manager or peers.

No matter how uncomfortable you may initially feel when role-playing, the process of peer review is one of the best tools you have to improve your sales skills.

Step No. 2: Re-energize your real-estate agent initiatives. You can't control the market, but you can control agent connections and awareness. Sure it's tough. "Realtors don't have buyers to work with either" is the excuse of many wait-and-hope sales professionals. But while some sales pros are moaning to their agents about market,



the best are excited about the improved values they now have to offer customers.

Attitude and vigilance are the keys to success with today's real-estate agents. Think about it: If you are a top agent and are lucky enough to have a ready-to-buy-now customer, which community are you going to show first: the one with the energetic sales professional who believes in their product and value, or the one who calls to tell you how slow things are in the market?

Remember that alternative No. I will make you temporally feel better but earn you zero commissions and income. Alternative No. 2 will require a good deal of work and discipline, but the rewards can be great, and when the market returns it will pay even higher dividends.

■ Step No. 3: Get reacquainted with your past customers. Chances are you were too busy during the gogo days to spend all the time you should have with your home buyers, and now is the time to reconnect. Referral sales are the best quality leads you can get. The problem is that it requires a long-term commitment while many wait-and-hope sales pros want a quick fix.

As one of the best professionals told me, "It takes me about 15 minutes for each connection I make with a prior buyer. I do that four times a year with each of my prior customers. So for an investment of about two to three hours per week, I end up with 40 percent of my sales."

Sounds like a good return on time invested to me. **PB**

John Rymer is the founder of New Home Knowledge, which offers sales training for new home builders and realestate professionals. He can be reached at john@newhome-knowledge.com.

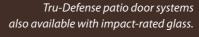
LOG ON To read 'Create a new sales pitch and team with a real-estate agents to boost homebuilder business' visit www. probuilder.com/bestpractices

Beauty Begins Wi th Inner Strength.



Our Tru-Defense entry and patio door systems with impact-rated protection are engineered to keep out wind, rain and flying debris in hurricane-type conditions. And that's a beautiful thing for you and your customers. Get more information at www.thermatru.com/trudefense.









The Most Preferred Brand in the Business[™]
For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-15





Waiting in the Wings

What would you do if one of your key managers gave notice? With a succession plan and a process for developing future managers, you can ensure a positive outcome.



Charlie Scott had been with The Estridge Companies, a Carmel, Ind., home building company, for 19 years when he decided it was time for a life change.

"I didn't see myself being a home builder in my 60s and 70s," says Scott, an executive vice president for Estridge. Knowing that he and his wife would soon become empty nesters, Scott wanted the flexibility to travel more often, particularly to their second home in Colorado. When he ran into Keith O'Brien of Woodland, O'Brien & Associates at the International Builders' Show several years ago, the puzzle pieces fell into place. Woodland, O'Brien &

Associates, based in St. Paul, Minn., is a customer satisfaction research and development firm.

"Keith mentioned that John [Woodland], the other partner and founder, was probably going to retire before he did," Scott says. "I told him I would like to move into a consulting role where I could share what I've learned and help the industry. He was real happy about that because he and John had started talking about succession plans, and said they needed to find a Charlie Scott-type person."

Scott and Paul Estridge, president of **The Estridge Companies**, have been friends for 40 years. Estridge was aware of Scott's long-term plans

and wasn't surprised when he gave his official six weeks' notice. In April 2007, Scott became a partner and principal of Woodland, O'Brien & Associates, and has an office in Carmel.

Ironically, Scott's former employer is now his client. But both men are positive about the change, believing they have an opportunity to be better friends

To think that people are going to be with you forever is just an absurd expectation." — Paul Estridge

because they no longer work at the same company.

"To think that people are going to be with you forever is just an absurd expectation," Estridge says. "Whether it's a superintendent or a salesperson, or an executive or a controller or a CEO [leaving], those things happen, and we have to look at it as being an opportunity for other people to step up and grow and learn to do more."

What's the Plan?

All too often, succession planning is considered only for the president or CEO, but front-line and functional managers also need to dedicate time and energy to developing their people, says Ted Bellamy of the Daniels Group, a Denver-based search firm. "I'd argue that it's a manager's most important job," says Bellamy, "but unless the senior managers demand it, proactive development of people is not likely to happen. We've come across builders who think strategic development can be taken care of during the annual review."

Most home builders typically are in denial about the need for a succession plan, says Bill Carpitella, CEO of the Sharrow Group in Rochester, N.Y., an executive search firm that specializes in the home building business.

"Whether it's overtly or passively, they just assume that everybody else who was underneath that individual is going to pick up the sticks and make it work," says Carpitella. "Typically there's very little discussion about what that looks like or what's in it for them to do that, and the levels of stress and dissatisfac-

tion go up."

Carpitella believes it should be part of a manager's job responsibility to identify individuals within the organization who can take their place. "They need to talk about the

gap between where that individual is today and where they need to be and put some activity together that will bring that person closer and closer to that competency level," he says. Managers should also be proactive about looking for potential successors outside the company and building a relationship with at least one or two such individuals, he says.

Bigger builders tend to be more cognizant of the need for a program that encourages the ongoing development of future leaders, says *Professional Builder* columnist Paul Cardis of AVID Ratings Co., a customer satisfaction research firm in Madison, Wis. Such a program, says Cardis, may include mentoring, direct training and cross-training in the other functions of the organization.

"But size does not mean sophistication, and there are number of very, very sophisticated smaller companies," he says. "It goes to the core of being able to delegate. The only way that owners and top executives will be able to offload responsibilities — which make them productive as well as enabling them to grow the company — is to create leaders."

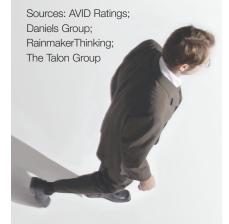
The process is formal at some companies and informal at others. Estridge's philosophy is to hire talented generalists who can be trained and mentored to step up in the event that a key manager leaves. "We sharpen each other's saws and blades," says Estridge. "When that becomes the culture, you don't need any kind of formalized structure."

For a small builder like **The Green Company** in Newton, Mass., hiring from outside may be the best option. Several years ago, the company used a search firm to fill three middle-management positions. "It's tough in a small company where you don't have regular openings," says CEO David Caligaris. "There isn't a logical successor for every single [manager]."

WHY MANAGERS LEAVE

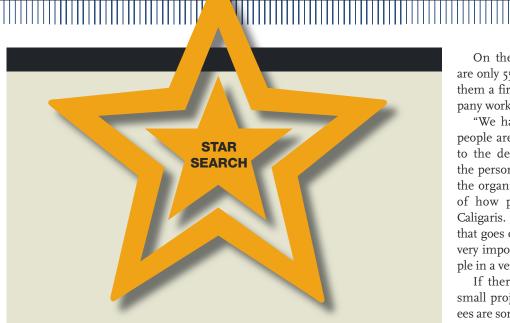
8 reasons why people move on

- Insufficient compensation
- No opportunity for bonuses and other short-term rewards
- No control over work schedule and location
- Lack of opportunity to expand technical expertise and "soft" skills (leadership, mentoring, etc.)
- Dislike or lack of respect for immediate supervisor
- Dissatisfaction with current responsibilities or lack of desire to take on other responsibilities
- Concern about long-term viability of position
- Shift in values between manager and organization





For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-16



A search firm can be a very effective tool in finding a successor for a key management position. After all, search firms that specialize in the home building industry are always talking to executive officers and mid-level managers.

"We understand from candidates what motivates them and what drives them crazy," says Ted Bellamy of Daniels Group, a Denver-based search firm. "We talk to these people all day, every day, and we can be a pretty good resource for information."

Just don't expect the search firm to do all the work.

"We're not mind readers," says Bob Piper, a senior partner with The Talon Group, a Dallas-based executive search firm. "The better a search firm truly understands the company is in direct proportion to finding the right person." Finding someone with the right background and experience is easy; determining fit is a completely different art, Piper says.

Look into the search firm's track record of successful placements. Call references and get a sense of the depth of the builder-recruiter relationship. "Were they used just once or is there a history of working together as partners?" says Piper. "After all, they are representing your company to the candidate universe."

How far and how deep is the firm's reach? Are they national in scope? Global? Do they work only on finance-related searches or do they place candidates from all functional areas within the home building industry? And what types of people are they looking for? A firm like The Talon Group, which places mostly chief-executive-level candidates, probably wouldn't be the best choice if you were looking for, say, a project manager.

Bellamy says a face-to-face meeting with new clients is essential.

"It's generally easy to identify technical proficiency," he says. "It's much more difficult to identify a cultural fit between the candidate and the employer. That's not something we can do effectively over the phone."

Bellamy and his colleagues meet with as many senior managers as possible, delving into where the business is today, where they want to go in the future and the role the new manager will play in that transition.

"We want to understand all the forces that are going to impact that person, including market conditions, internal politics, values, culture and product," Bellamy says. "We'll spend a couple of hours visiting model centers in order to understand the type of product they're building."

On the other hand, because there are only 55 employees, it's easier to give them a first-hand look at how the company works.

"We have meetings where a lot of people are involved and have exposure to the decision-making process, and the personalities at the higher levels of the organization ripple down in terms of how problems are solved," says Caligaris. "So there's a learning process that goes on with that, and I think it's a very important aspect of grooming people in a very subtle way."

If there is a sufficient number of small projects in the pipeline, employees are sometimes given the opportunity to manage one. "They still have a functional responsibility within the company, but also a bit more general management responsibility for an individual site. It's a good way to give them more operational exposure," he says.

Bob Piper, senior partner with The Talon Group, a Dallas-based search firm, says a succession plan should designate two or three people within the company who can back up each key executive and manager. It also should designate backups for the backup people. "That gives a company marching orders or at least an indication of a planned intake of people if they see they don't have an adequate number of backups for particular positions," Piper says. Executives can then choose to either hire new managers or recruit employees at lower levels who can work their way up the ladder.

In addition to a succession plan, builders should create a "success profile" for every position in the company, he says. A success profile is broader and deeper than a job description, describing the behavioral characteristics the individual should possess, such as alignment with the company's mission.

Build a Sturdier Bench

Author, speaker and management expert Bruce Tulgan, founder of RainmakerThinking in New Haven,



Now PRO FINISH QUIKRETE® products are available exclusively at Lowe's. Made for the pros, each features a new formula for superior workability and strength. You'll appreciate their extended board life for longer working time and creamy texture for easy troweling. Plus synthetic fibers and air-entraining agents reduce shrinkage cracking and improve durability in freeze/thaw cycles. For the store nearest you, visit lowes.com or call 1-800-993-4416.



Conn., says some organizations take a two-dimensional approach to succession planning — which is to say they have a plan on paper. For each important role, a potential successor is named and becomes, as Tulgan calls it, "the bench strength."

But what usually happens is that the plan is filed away, and by the time it's needed the people on the list no longer

Take a lesson from the Marines:
everyone on a fire team needs to be ready to step into that fire-team leader's role." — Bruce Tulgan

work for the company. "It's got to be three-dimensional, meaning you really need to be engaging your would-be successors on a regular basis," says Tulgan.

Some larger organizations have fast-track programs. Tulgan's view is that such programs make a company "vulnerable to the training and development investment paradox, meaning that you train people, you develop them, they become more and more valuable and then they can use your investment as leverage to make demands and sometimes go sell themselves to your competition."

A better approach, he says, is to identify those individuals who are the bench strength for each manager.

"You need to be talking to that person, if not every day then every other day, or once every week or two weeks. Tell him or her, 'Here's what we need from you; what do you need from us?' And you need to be putting that person in the way of developmental learning opportunities — transferable skills as well as technical skills — and exposing him or her to senior leaders in the organization, organizational supporters and coachingstyle mentors." Try out the individual in ad hoc leadership roles. "Give that person a project to lead. Put that person in

charge for a day and see how he or she operates."

Charlie Trevor, associate professor of management and human resources at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, believes much of the succession planning process is intuitive. "Even in a small company, it requires people at the top levels to systematically review the potential of those beneath them," Trevor

says. "It forces them to take stock of the talent they have, if they plan on filling [positions] from within." It's also likely to force top management to think more about providing developmental experiences

for those who might one day be promoted, such as rotating them through job assignments to attain certain skill sets.

Education and coaching need not be industry-specific, says Trevor. For instance, it might include interpersonal communications, public speaking and leadership skills. The management candidate may also be asked to serve on committees or task forces within the company that are handling special issues. "The idea is to give them more and more exposure to a wide variety of things, since what managers do is generally not narrow," he says.

How do you spot individuals with leadership potential? Referring to Patrick Lencioni's book "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable," Cardis says great leaders are not only trustworthy themselves, but also instill trust in others. Other characteristics include accountability and the ability to allow for healthy discourse — even conflict.

"The one word that I would use is integrity," says Estridge. "[Other] people are attracted to that; there's a natural leadership movement that starts to take place. And I think good leaders are self-less. They don't seek popularity; they get out in front and take people in a direction they might not feel comfortable

going in."

Bellamy points to refined "soft skills," such as the ability to lead, mentor and develop people. "People who are skillful in those areas tend to be successful in different types of environments," he says.

The Green Company's Caligaris believes technical expertise is less important than how well a candidate fits the personality and culture of the organization. An individual who is a good fit "will do a far superior job, even if they don't have the technical background on their resume," he says. "We just did Myers-Briggs testing, and you could see the similarities in personality across the

company."

Exit Strategy

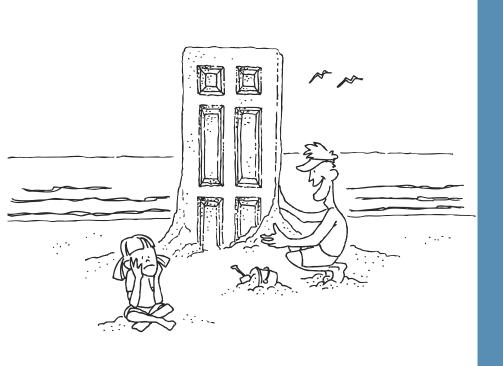
When Charlie Scott told Paul Estridge he was leaving the company, Estridge asked him to break the news to colleagues. "Paul had me arrange a dinner with the vice presidents," says Scott. "Then I did an internal e-mail to all

of the employees, which he let me put in my own words. Often I think the anxiety of the company owners or principals gets so high that they make it a bigger deal than it really is. And Paul didn't look at this in any way, shape or form as being a failure on his part; I think he looked at it as being a success."

About two weeks before his departure, Scott notified trade partners, consultants and other clients in case there were any questions or concerns.

"Even though I physically left Estridge, I feel like I took the company vision with me: 'To serve and enrich the lives of others ... to grow throughout our entire lives.' This was understood and well-received by employees at my going-away party," he says.

Although losing a respected manager is regrettable and a certain amount of



Yeah, we're different.

We really are out there. Door people. People who've devoted our entire careers to mastering the craft of designing and manufacturing only premium quality interior doors. To us, doors aren't just an occupation. They're a preoccupation.

We're door people.



WWW.PROBUILDER.COM 8.2007 PROFESSIONAL BUILDER

grieving is to be expected, if you're prepared for such an event, you can keep disruption to a minimum. Otherwise, warns Tulgan, "there will be total chaos if you haven't been cultivating bench strength and managing people in a highly engaged way. Take a lesson from the Marines: everyone on a fire team

needs to be ready to step into that fire-

team leader's role and all the way up the

chain of command. Short of that, you're

necessary, says Piper. "Speak well of

the individual but make plans to move

Don't belabor the loss any more than

going to be doing a lot of triage."

forward quickly," he says. "Set the tone for something new and exciting on the horizon. Most importantly, don't play the blame game. We've seen numerous instances where the exiting employee's stock went down in the eyes of management once he or she decided to leave."

If you anticipate a lot of internal com-

petition for a particular manager's job and perhaps negative repercussions from those who aren't selected, Cardis suggests getting employees involved in the search. Set up a committee of three to

Inless the senior managers demand it, proactive development of people is not likely to happen." — Ted Bellamy five people to make recommendations

for a successor. The committee may not make the final decision, but they can conduct interviews and due diligence, and you'll get the message across that the hiring process is objective.

Of course, as Trevor notes, there's a

downside to succession planning. "It doesn't come free. You're taking people's time out of whatever job they're doing, and it's going to cost you money if you have to hire a consultant or put them in an MBA program, for example," he says. "And when you develop your employees really well, you're making them more visible to other companies to hire away - though maybe those are the kind of employees you really want to have."

Estridge says it's important for chief executives to encourage key managers to develop the people who report to them. "Don't let [managers] hoard authority and power and influence," he says. "They have to spread that out and share it and teach it so that when they leave, someone else knows how to run the cash register and turn on the stove and cook the eggs." PB

LOG ON To read 'How homebuilders can be proactive about succession planning' online, visit www.ProBuilder.com/bestpractices





More Competitive Bids On Your Business Purchases

Less Bull

Streamline your business purchasing process by using BuyerZone to get fast, competitive bids from top local and national vendors.

Join the millions who have saved time and money by relying on BuyerZone's Request for Quotes service across more than 125 categories of business purchases. Best of all, it's free.

Buy smarter and start saving today!

Visit www.BuyerZone.com

Use BuyerZone to get FREE price quotes for the following types of purchases:

- Construction Equipment
- Construction Software
- Office Equipment & Furniture
- Trailers & Containers
- HR & Benefits
- Air Compressors
- Equipment Leasing
- Security Systems
- Marketing Services
- Telecommunicationsand more

Buyerzene Where Smart Businesses Buy and Sell

A division of Reed Business Information.



100,000-mile/5-year Powertrain Limited Warranty. With Courtesy Transportation and Roadside Assistance, it's the best coverage in independent suppliers⁴ and a choice of wheelbase lengths allow you to customize your truck to fit your business. All of this from Chevy.

The most dependable, longest-lasting trucks on the road.5 chevy.com

AN AMERICAN R VOLUTION



1 Based on 2007 GM Large Van segment. Excludes other GM vehicles. 2 Available on select 2008 Chevy Express 2500HD, 3500 Work Vans, and 3500 Cutaway Vans. responsible for independent alterations. 5 Dependability based on longevity: 1981–July 2006 full-line light-duty truck company registrations. Excludes other GM divisions.

3 Whichever comes first. See dealer for details. 4 Shown with cube body from an independent supplier and is not covered by the GM New Vehicle Limited Warranty. GM is not ©2007 GM Corp. Buckle up, America!

SUN BLOCK.



WHEN IT GETS HOT OUTSIDE, IT CAN GET HOT INSIDE.



SO WE ADDED A THIN SHEET OF
ALUMINUM TO OUR OSB TO CREATE
LP TECHSHIELD. IT BLOCKS RADIANT
HEAT AND NOW IT'S NOT SO HOT.
YEAH, WE DIDN'T PUT A MAN ON MARS.
BUT WE DID MAKE HOMES A LITTLE
COOLER. AND REDUCED ENERGY
BILLS AND BUILDING COSTS AT
THE SAME TIME.



That's what we do. We make the products that build the homes, simply better.



TECHSHIELD®

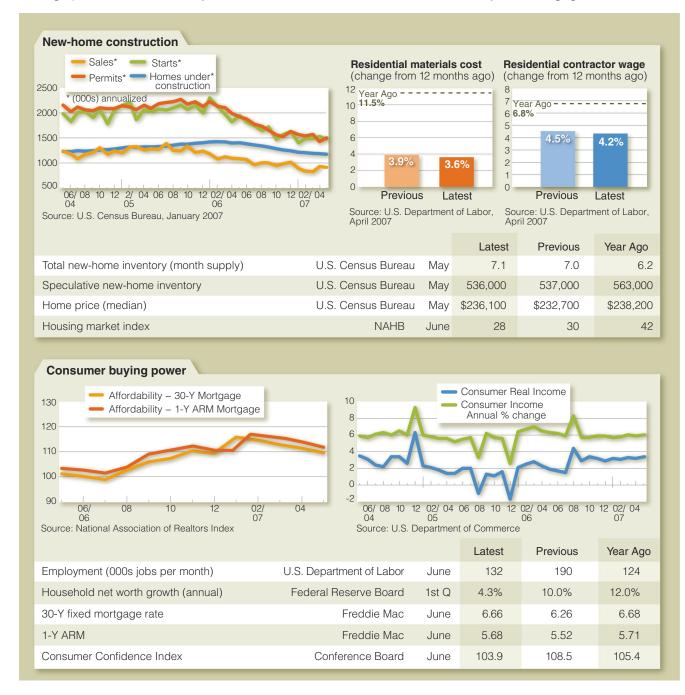
RADIANT BARRIER

Industry Analysis

>> BY JAMES HAUGHEY, REED CONSTRUCTION DATA

Starts Hold Under 1.5 Million

Excess for-sale inventory keeps housing starts nearly 25 percent below demographic demand, in spite of average plus home affordability conditions, consumer confidence and relatively low mortgage rates.



PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 8.2007 WWW.PROBUILDER.COM

Industry Analysis







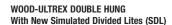
CONFIDENTIAL <

HOW DOES ULTREX HANDLE UV RAYS?

LIKE IT'S SLATHERED IN SPF 80.

RESULT:





Ultraviolet (UV) rays eat into vinyl like sharks digging into chum. On Integrity® windows and doors made with Ultrex,® our patented process applies an acrylic coating two to three times thicker than any competitor's. It resists UV-related fading, discoloration and chalking, so Integrity products keep their good looks longer and keep callbacks at bay.









Official Product Testers: Carl

Watch Carl & Stu put Ultrex to the test at WWW.INTEGRITYWINDOWS.COM

For a catalog or your nearest dealer call 1-800-687-6661

Integr Windows and Doors

© 2007 Marvin Windows and Doors. All rights reserved. ® Registered trademark of Marvin Windows and Doors.

BUILT BEYO ND CODE.

THE FULL-SIZE TUNDRA. This truck will withstand even the most rigorous inspection. The Tundra's available 5.7L V8 delivers 381 hp, 401 lb.-ft. of torque and up to 10,800 lbs. of towing capacity.12 lts huge bed can stow a shop full of tools or materials with an available payload capacity up to 1990 lbs.1.3 All the storage, comfort and elbow room the cab offers means it can double as your on-site office. And the Tundra's quality of construction is beyond reproach. After all, it is a Toyota. And, better yet, it's assembled right here in the U.S.A. Inspect one for yourself, today. Find out more at toyota.com







What makes a good workplace. And why should you care? Maybe keeping afloat is all you feel you can focus on right now. Perhaps you think employees expect too much already: a decent salary, safety on the job site, a pat on the back here and there. What more could they expect?

There was a time when the basics were enough. But Generation X and echo boomer employees in particular have changed the landscape by expecting more from their jobs and careers: work/life balance, opportunities for personal development, an open door policy with management and a corporate commitment to social responsibility. Boomers are embracing these priorities, wanting fulfilling work without spending 60 hours a week at their jobs.

Professional Builder's 2007 Best Workplaces have achieved something phenomenal. At a time when the home building industry has taken a major hit in terms of revenues and when the mainstream media is predicting the industry to get worse before it gets better, employees at these companies tell us they are happy with their jobs and trust their senior management's leadership — and nearly three quarters of them say they believe they will be working for their current employer two years from now.

Builder companies that keep the focus on what several of our winners have described as their most valuable asset — their employees — have a competitive edge sorely needed in this market: employees who are loyal, hardworking and productive. If you give them your best, they'll return the favor.

The Big Picture

FaxonGillis Homes outside Memphis, Tenn., is our top-ranked Best Workplace, which is laudable because of its size and the fact that it is not well-known outside of its local market (FaxonGillis also made its debut on *PB*'s Giant 400 list this year, coming in at No. 385).

FaxonGillis, with 31 employees, \$35.5 million in 2006 revenues and 158 closings, and No. 2 Generation Homes, with 36 employees, \$37 million and 96 closings, demonstrate you don't need the resources of a typical giant builder to provide a great workplace.

Though our rankings reflect overall scores for all five companies — FaxonGillis Homes, Generation Homes (Ranked at No. 2), John Laing Homes

PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 8.2007 WWW.PROBUILDER.COM

(No. 3), Winchester Homes (No. 4), and Pardee Homes (No. 5) — individual companies scored high in particular areas. For example, Generation Homes scored highest in satisfaction with opportunities for advancement and career development — almost 82 percent versus an average score among all respondents of 54.5 percent (a score of 82 percent indicates that 82 percent of company employees that responded to the survey strongly agreed with a particular statement. For more details see Methodology).

John Laing Homes scored highest — 78.6 percent — on satisfaction with opportunities for personal growth and development, and it also ranked first with 75 percent on the statement that training and development is useful and relevant to the employee's current position.

There were noteworthy trends. Of the nearly 1,600 survey respondents, 72.4 percent strongly agreed with the statement they would recommend their company as a good place to work. More than 70 percent expect to be working at their company in two years.

Respondents gave their companies high marks for social and corporate responsibility. The average score on the statement, "My company actively supports community outreach, public service and charitable work" was 72 percent.

Some of the lowest overall

scores were in the area of recruitment and retention. Only 43.9 percent strongly agree that open positions in their company are being filled in a timely manner. Of course, the market slowdown has left many open positions purposely unfilled, with a focus on cutting staff, not adding more. The lowest score, 43.7 percent, was on the statement, "My sal-

ary is competitive with similar positions in similar companies." But a significantly higher percentage, 51.7 percent, strongly believes the better their performance, the better their pay will be.

On questions related to workplace culture and environment, FaxonGillis scored 100 percent on encouraging teamwork and collaboration; 93.3 percent on employing strong, ethical principles in its business practices; and 86.67 percent on creating a climate of mutual respect among employees of different backgrounds The averages for these questions were 70.3 percent, 70.6 percent and 62 percent respectively. Generation Homes scored 100 percent on the statement about employing ethical business practices.

And now for the specifics.

Compensation and Benefits

Many of the Top Five Best Workplaces won points from employees for offering more than the basic slate of benefits.

Both Pardee and Winchester Homes provide a pension plan, uncommon in the home

building industry. Employees are eligible from their first day of work. And both FaxonGillis and Pardee have generous tuition reimbursement policies.

"We encourage people to pursue education related to their work," says Pardee President

Mike McGee. "It currently has no limit, but it is considered on a case-by-case basis as it relates to the person's technical and managerial skills in the job they are in."

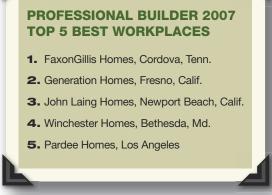
"We encourage continuing education," says Jerry Gillis, chairman and CEO of FaxonGillis. "If someone wants to go beyond their four-year degree, they just have to put

METHODOLOGY

PROFESSIONAL BUILDER SOLICITED RESPONSES to a 32-question online survey about how people feel about the home building company for which they work. We received almost 1,600 individual responses representing 81 identified companies.

Aside from giving a general description of their title (support staff/administrative, middle manager, senior manager or field supervisor) and naming their company, respondents remained anonymous. Survey questions covered compensation and benefits; professional development, education and training; recruitment and retention; job satisfaction, workplace culture and environment; social and corporate responsibility; customer service; and leadership ability of management.

Companies selected scored a minimum of 80 percent overall on the employee survey results — meaning that at least 80 percent of employees who responded strongly agreed with the survey statements reflecting their view of their employer. Only companies with 11 or more respondents representing 20 percent or more of employees were considered.





together a request and bring it to us."

FaxonGillis offers full-time pay at parttime hours when needed to attend classes. The company may cover a significant amount of tuition, depending on what an individual employee needs or proposes.

"We've never turned anybody down," says Gillis.

And who says there is no free lunch? It happens every day at Generation Homes. Employees place their orders at a chosen restaurant. It's on the house, or more specifically,

the home builder.

"Everyone eats together," says
Generation Homes President
Robert Wood. "It's a wonderful
time where you get to socialize and

expand on relationships."

Generation Homes has also found a way to provide health care insurance for employees and their immediate families for free, with typical co-pays for office visits and prescription drugs.

"We pay the first \$2,000," says Wood. "If there was a severe incident and an employee went over that, there would be some out of pocket, but it would be greatly reduced. The preponderance of our staff is in their 30s and 40s. We've been able to take advantage of everybody's good health. At the end of the

day our out of pocket costs are actually less

than if we were in some of the more conventional programs."

Other niceties at Generation Homes include a \$1,500 bonus for every employee when he or she gets married and \$2,500 when someone has a child. The amount is net of taxes.

The company is generous with flex time, allowing college students, parents of school-

What they had to say

"My boss really appreciates each and every one of us. ... He takes the whole company on great trips to fun places and makes sure we have fun things to do."

 FaxonGillis Homes survey respondent

age children and others with specific needs to work the hours that are best for them.

"We value the priorities of faith and family," Wood says. "People have enough respect for our com-

COMPANY PROFILE

NO. 1

FaxonGillis Homes
Jerry Gillis, Chairman/CEO
Cordova, Tenn.
www.faxongillis.com

EMPLOYEES: 31

2006 REVENUE: \$35.5 million **2006 UNITS CLOSED:** 158







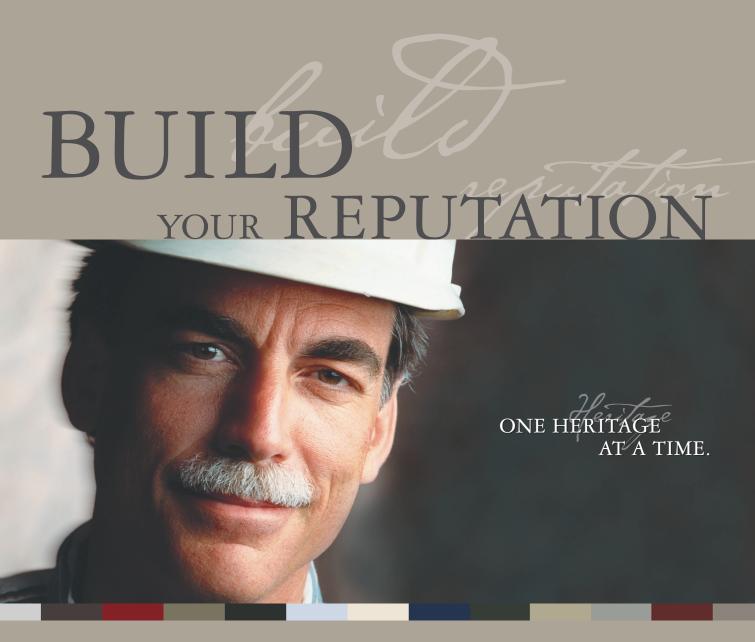
NO. 1: FAXONGILLIS HOMES

FAXONGILLIS HOMES was founded by F. W. Faxon in 1899. The original Faxon Co. began building homes in Shelby County, Tenn., and went on to build some of the city's largest neighborhoods, says FaxonGillis Chairman Jerry Gillis.

Gillis founded Gillis & Co. in 1973. Faxon's grandson, Tom Divine, who eventually took over the Faxon Co., became a mentor to Gillis, even though they were competitors in the same market. Divine eventually retired, and in 1988, the two companies merged to become FaxonGillis Homes.

"We're not a big builder in the giant scheme of things," says Gillis. "We always rank in the top five or six [locally] because we don't have any national builders here."

"Our folks are our most valuable asset,' Gillis adds. "We've got a bunch of people in the eight- to 12-year bracket [in terms of tenure]," says Gillis. "We are very proud of that."



Since 1979, Heritage has provided thousands of contractors with standard to custom-designed, superior quality, easy-to-install, affordable metal buildings to suit the individual needs of their customers. Our knowledgeable staff is dedicated to providing expert customer care before, during, and after every sale. You can be confident your Heritage building is a legacy built to last. For a free quote or to learn more, call 1.800.643.5555 or visit www.heritagebuildings.com.







For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-24

A flegacy Built to Last | 1.800.643.5555 | www.heritagebuildings.com

pany they don't take advantage of it. At the same time we want to honor them by allowing them to attend those events so that they don't feel that work is number one, when it's a little lower on the list."

Professional Development, Education and Training

Patrick Higgins, senior vice president of sales and marketing at John Laing, says the company that, as mentioned, ranked No. 1 in the area of training and development,

offers cross-training opportunities in sales, leadership and customer care, not to mention formalized training through the John Laing University program.

"It's relatively well-defined," says Higgins, "but not so welldefined that it's limiting. If a per-

son wants to move from functional area to functional area, we encourage it as long as they have the aptitude for it."

Generation Homes has a non-traditional corporate hierarchy that's fluid across disciplines. With the exception of sales, no one in the company has a title. Field personnel have moved into estimating and purchasing; office staff have moved into sales.

"Being a small company, we have people wearing many hats," Wood says. "Anytime you're challenged in a new area or a new pursuit, it leads to personal development."

Recruitment and Retention

FaxonGillis Homes scored well on the statement that open positions in the company are filled in a timely manner — 80 percent

compared with the average of 43.9 percent. Generation Homes scored 72.7 percent on open positions being filled with qualified people, compared with the average score of 46.8 percent.

Wooddoesn't ascribe to a particular recruit-

ment theory other than happy employees refer others. He says about 90 percent of our employees are either related to each other somehow or are referred.

A reputation as a great place to work makes recruitment of good people easier.

COMPANY PROFILE

NO. 2

Generation Homes
Robert Wood, President/CEO
Fresno, Calif.
www.generation-homes.com

EMPLOYEES: 36

2006 REVENUE: \$37 million **2006 UNITS CLOSED:** 96







allowed me to change my working hours in order to accommodate my M.A. program school schedule."

Survey respondent



NO. 2: GENERATION HOMES

GENERATION HOMES BEGAN as Cornerstone Enterprises in 1996. "In 2002, we changed our name to Generation Homes," says the company's president, Robert Wood. Wood and his co-partners, Scott Hulme and John Olson, bought out the majority owner in 2002.

"We feel blessed that we have been given great opportunities," says Wood. "We've done well. We have been one of the few local start-up companies that actually made it in home building that is sustainable.

"As a culture it is absolutely imperative to us that the benefits we get we share with our employees," Wood adds. "I don't want to be completely altruistic. Obviously I'm an entrepreneur and we are in business to make a profit. By the same token, we know that as long as we want to be a production home builder, the only way we will be a success is by the quality of the people we have and reinvesting in their growth and personal development."



AVID Ratings looks at your home building from every angle. We zoom in and examine how to improve your internal business processes, and then we give you a wider perspective by comparing your performance to industry averages. See a snapshot of our services at www.avidratings.com



2007 AVID Ratings™ Co. All rights reserved. AVID Ratings™ is a trademark of AVID Ratings™ Corporation

For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-25

SURVEYS	CONSULTING	TRAINING
00		

"We are constantly bombarded by people from the competition saying, if you ever have an opening please, consider me," Gillis says.

Job Satisfaction

"You should love what you're doing at least 95 percent of the time," says Gillis.

What they had to say

"[You get] hugs on a bad day from the person you least expect, flowers from a teammate because you did an outstanding job ... it's just a very, very cool place to be." — John Laing Homes Corona, Calif., office survey respondent

"Everybody has days. But you should get in in the morning looking forward to doing your job, happy about it, and proud of where you're at and who you work for."

FaxonGillis scored well above average on job satisfaction questions, with 100 percent

of respondents strongly agreeing that they would recommend the company as a good place to work, compared with the average of 72.4 percent. FaxonGillis scored 86.67 percent on whether employees say their job provides an opportunity to do interesting work (compared with an average of 67.4 percent) and that achievements are recog-

nized and celebrated where they work (average of 59.8 percent).

"We have a lunch the first Thursday of every month to recognize everybody's anniversary or birthday that's in that month," says Gillis. "[At this lunch] we have a big round of applause for marriages, pregnancies and births. We've got a prayer group when someone's sick. I've got a close knit group."

All 100 percent of Generation Homes respondents rated the company as a great place to work compared to other companies they know about.

"We've never had an employee leave us to work for another home builder," says Wood. "True, we've had to come to a conclusion that at times things didn't work out [with an employee]. But we've never

COMPANY PROFILE

NO. 3

John Laing Homes Larry Webb, CEO Newport Beach, Calif. www.johnlainghomes.com

EMPLOYEES: 881 **2006 REVENUE:** \$1.6 billion **2006 UNITS CLOSED:** 2,269

JOHN LAING HOMES





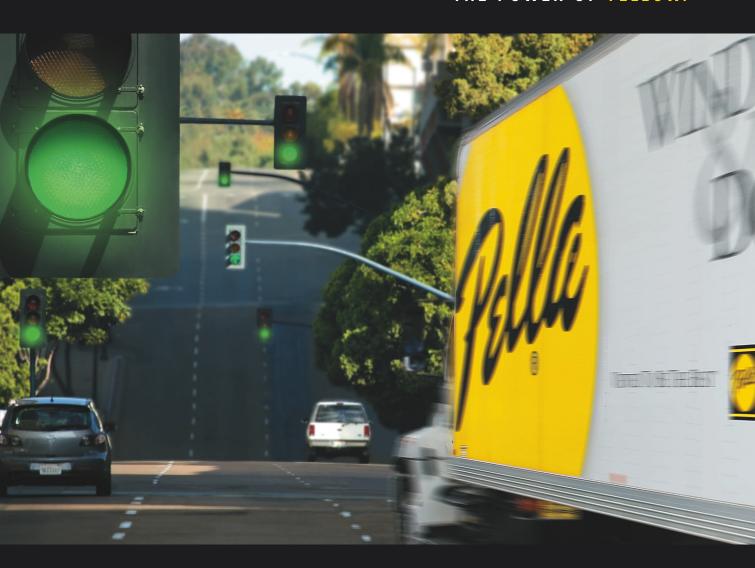
NO. 3: JOHN LAING HOMES

THE COMPANY WAS FORMED in April 1998 with the merger of Encino, Calif.-based Watt Homes and England-based John Laing Homes. John Laing Homes is one of the largest private home builders in the United States. Ranked number 20 on *Professional Builder*'s 2007 Giant 400 list (under the name WL Homes), John Laing Homes was sold to Dubai-based real-estate developer Emaar Properties in 2006. The company has 13 divisions: nine in California, two in Colorado, one in Arizona and one in Texas.

Word has traveled about the Little Laing Book, a wallet-sized booklet that explains the company's values and mission.

"It contains the essence of what we are trying to achieve," says Patrick Higgins, senior vice president of sales and marketing for John Laing Homes. "There's not much in there about 2 by 4s, corbels, or the size of a home. It's about what exists within the organization."

THE POWER OF YELLOW.5M



No costly holdups. No closing delays. Build with Pella® windows and doors, and enjoy one-truck delivery when and where you need it. Plus some of the industry's fastest and most reliable lead times nationwide. Learn more about other ways The Power Of Yellow can make your success unstoppable.

Call 866-209-4216 or visit pella.com/pro.





lost an employee to another [builder]."

Workplace Culture and Environment

John Laing Homes scored first place for policies and programs that help employees balance work and personal/life responsi-

bilities — 81.8 percent, compared with an average score of 53.3 percent.

One way John Laing finds that balance is to have fun at work.

"The office typically closes at 3 p.m. on Fridays," says Higgins. "But typically it's 'Who's bringing in potluck? There's always

something happening in most all of our divisions on Fridays."

There are fun days that might call for employees to dress in a certain way. Leadership on workplace culture comes from the top, and in this case, from the man with the funny shoes.

"One day I was told you have to wear your slippers," says Higgins. "I'm at corporate and Larry [Webb, president and CEO] is walking around with these monster slippers on. He's got a suit on and these - I don't know if they were alligator or something — big slippers. It certainly does start at the top."

Generation's Wood says the company

does a variety of things with staff outside the workplace. Several employees like to hunt, so they spent a couple of days at a hunt club. The trip occurred in the middle of the week and the company paid for it. There have been spa outings and

and frank when it comes to the market downtick and does not hide the truth or set unrealistic Winchester Homes survey respondent overnight trips

to sporting events.

What they had to say

goals based on the past."

"Senior management is open

"We don't do weekends," Wood says." We don't want to encroach on family/personal time."

"We have two outings a year — one locally and one we try to do out of town - two or three hours away," says Gillis. "I have a lake home. We get a block of rooms and go away for a long weekend. There's a staff meeting

COMPANY PROFILE

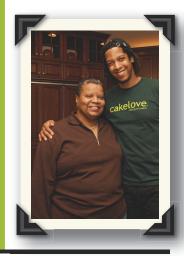
NO. 4

Winchester Homes Larry Burrows, President/CEO Bethesda, Md.

www.winchesterhomes.com **EMPLOYEES: 318**

2006 REVENUE: Not disclosed 2006 UNITS CLOSED: Not disclosed

Winchester Homes





NO. 4: WINCHESTER HOMES

WINCHESTER HOMES is a subsidiary of Weyerhaeuser Real Estate Co. Winchester Homes has communities in Anne Arundel, Howard, Montgomery and Prince Georges counties in Maryland and in Loudoun, Fairfax and Spotsylvania counties in Virginia.

"We can have great land positions, great product, great processes, but all that is executed by people, " says Larry Burrows, president and CEO. "Our success really comes from the work that everybody does."

"Even though we are a production builder, we allow people to customize through a program we call 'Your Home, Your Way," he says. "That requires enormous collaboration. It requires [the cooperation of] virtually everybody in this organization. Not just the people who sell it and build it, but the people who design it, the people who purchase for it, the people who pay the bills for it. Our success begins and ends with our people."



that lasts about 30 minutes. But spouses can come."

Gillis sees it as a way to get his administrative, sales and construction staff together in a totally relaxed atmosphere.

"It pays off handsomely," he says. "It makes people more human to each other."

Social and Corporate Responsibility

All five companies scored 90 percent plus on active support of community outreach, public service and charitable work.

FaxonGillis scored 100 percent. FaxonGillis is involved with

Hope VI — a HUD grant program — St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Bridge Builders for Youth, among others.

Hope VI funding supports housing that mixes economic backgrounds.

"The theory is that a rising tide raises all boats. We've torn down five public housing projects that were basically drug-infested ghettos and turned them into viable neighborhoods," he says. "We have been involved in some of the construction, too."

FaxonGillis sometimes includes a visit to St. Jude Hospital in its corporate outings.

"We close down during a business day, like on a Friday," says Gillis. We meet downtown and we visit St. Jude Hospital and go to where they have Meals on Wheels. We go to some of the organizations that support the community in a charitable way."

Winchester Homes' 25 Acts of Charity program encourages employees to donate their time and labor to selected charitable activities. The Generation Homes Foundation was formed to reinvest in the communities in which it builds, primarily in the areas of youth development and affordable housing.

What they had to say

"The company benefit that I value the most isn't even one typically listed. The camaraderie in our particular division is what I value the most."

 Pardee Los Angeles office survey respondent

Pardee supports St. Jude's Ranch for Children in Boulder City, outside Las Vegas, as part of HomeAid America, a program that provides shelters for home-

COMPANY PROFILE

NO. 5

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

EMPLOYEES: 722

2006 REVENUE: \$1.96 billion **2006 UNITS CLOSED:** 3,007





NO. 5: PARDEE HOMES

PARDEE HOMES is a multi-regional builder and developer of new homes and master-planned communities. Founded in 1921, the company was run as a family business until 1969, when it was purchased by Weyerhaeuser Real Estate Co., a division of Weyerhaeuser, and is now its largest wholly owned subsidiary. Headquartered in Los Angeles, Pardee Homes has regional California offices in San Diego, Orange County, Corona and Sacramento and another in Las Vegas.

"We have a value proposition for Pardee that guides everything we do," says President Mike McGee. "We build homes and communities for the way people want to live, creating premium value through a trusting builder relationship. We shortened that for advertising purposes as a tagline: 'Pardee Homes, the way you want to live.' When we talk about our employees, we say, 'The way you want to work.'"





THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT.







Armstrong Cabinets was ranked "Highest in Customer Satisfaction with Cabinets" by J.D. Power and Associates.

www.armstrong.com

Armstrong Cabinets received the highest numerical score among cabinetry brands in the proprietary J.D. Power and Associates 2007 Cabinet Satisfaction Study³⁴. Study based on responses from 842 consumers measuring 7 brands and measures opinions of consumers who purchased new cabinetry within the previous 12 months. Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of consumers surveyed in April-May 2007. Your experiences may vary. Visit jdpower.com.

For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-28

less victims of domestic abuse in transition. Project Playhouse, Revlon Walk Run and the Boys and Girls Scouts of America are some of the other specific charities it supports.

A few years ago Pardee decided to take money that would normally be spent on

its annual holiday party and have employees use the money to purchase Christmas gifts and items the local HomeAid shelter needed.

John Laing Homes' various divisions participate in myriad charitable projects. But as the saying

goes, charity begins at home. One survey respondent told of the company's personal response to a need: "My mother recently lost her home in a fire. She had only the pajamas she was wearing at the time. The employees and senior staff donated cash, gift cards, computers, furniture and clothes to my mother and little sister."

Customer Service

Though not always measured when determining a best workplace, the truth is that poor customer service often results from employees who are frustrated or aren't given the tools needed to service customers well.

FaxonGillis scored 100 percent from employees on getting adequate feedback regarding customer satisfaction — with 58.8 percent as the average. It scored 86.7 percent on having the tools needed to provide excellent service to external/internal customers. John Laing scored 81.6 percent. The average here was 61.8 percent.

FaxonGillis decided about eight years ago to hire construction managers out of

college so they could be trained to their way of doing things.

"It's made a big difference in our customer satisfaction scores," says Gillis.

FaxonGillis trains staff to treat customers as if they are always right — sometimes even when they clearly aren't.

"We don't get deep into financial information but we share a lot with them, such as what the impacts of decisions are and what opportunities arise," says Wood.

Generation scored 91 percent in employees strongly agreeing they understand the company's business strategies and goals; FaxonGillis scored 86.6 percent. The average was 62 percent.

What they had to say

"If you are ethically challenged you need not apply at Pardee Homes."

- Pardee Homes Los Angeles office survey respondent

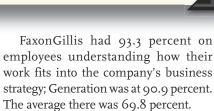
"Sometimes it's just not worth arguing," says Gillis. "If you know the customer reported they had a damaged window screen, and

three days before you saw their 8-yearold son [damage] it, don't even bring it up. Just give them a new window screen. If the item involved is \$10,000 and it's not our fault, that might be a little different. But that's what we try to do."

Management's Leadership Ability

In the best of times, employees hope company managers know what they are doing and are leveling with them about the success of the company and what the future might hold. When times aren't so great, good communication is critical.

Generation has quarterly meetings at the banquet facilities of a local country club. They shut down the office and bring everybody in to talk about where things are headed, specific issues and strategic planning.



"We try to make it an open-door operation," says Gillis. "Our financials are shared with the complete management team. They are shared in a rough format with the entire staff twice a year."

FaxonGillis and Generation have not had any layoffs to date.

"We've had some attrition, but we haven't laid anybody off," says Wood.

"Our philosophy is you never let a good person go because of a downturn in a market," says Gillis. "You may not replace a position. ... If we see a light at the end of the tunnel ... we want to keep this group together, to be there when the market comes back." **PB**



BEAUTY INSIDE OUT.



IF YOU DON'T USE THE RIGHT TRIM THE FIRST TIME, YOUR WHOLE HOUSE IS VULNERABLE.



THAT'S WHY WE ENGINEERED
LP SMARTSIDE TRIM WITH OUR
SMARTGUARD® ZINC BORATE
TREATMENT THAT HELPS PREVENT
FLAKING, WEATHERING AND DECAY.
AND IF YOU USE SMARTSIDE TRIM
FIRST, YOU CAN REST EASY KNOWING
THAT YOUR GOOD-LOOKING HOME
WILL STAY LOOKING GOOD. WE'RE NOT
EXPECTING ANY TROPHIES FOR IT,
BUT WE DO EXPECT HOMES TO STAND
STRONG FOR YEARS TO COME.



That's what we do. We make the products that build the homes, simply better.





THE NEW '08 SUPER DUTY."

A payload of up to 7,230 lbs.* Ford Clean Diesel Technology™ that churns out 350 hp and 650 lb.-ft. of torque.** The bold, new look of the '08 Super Duty.



*Properly equipped. **Available 6.4L Power Stroke® V8 Turbo Diesel engine.
For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-31



Professional Builder BENCHICARK The Premier Management Conference for the Housing Industry

MIDST THE LUSH VINEYARDS JUST 40 MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN ATLANTA, AMERICA'S LEADING BUILDERS WILL SOON GATHER TO DISCOVER INNOVATIVE BUSINESS PRACTICES AND REKINDLE THEIR PASSION FOR EXCELLENCE.



THREE FASCINATING PRESENTERS CHALLENGE YOU TO THINK FRESH

■ Jason Jennings

Author of the best-seller "Think BIG, Act Small," among others, Jennings shares his insights on 10 companies that have performed well despite market conditions and identifies the characteristics and values behind their success — qualities every builder can emulate.



J. Walker Smith

President of the reknowned marketing consultancy
Yankelovich Inc., Smith puts forth his perspective on the consumer empowerment revolution and offers suggestions on how builders can benefit by relating to today's collaborative, creative client.



■ Robert Kriegel

A champion for change and human performance optimization, Kriegel will challenge you in his talk, "Break It! Bringing Successful Innovation and Creativity to Your Business." He will stir your passion for building, show you how to break through barriers to success and remind you why you love the building business.



2007 BENCHMARK: PASSION FOR EXCELLENCE

Tuesday, September 25 - Friday, September 28 Chateau Elan Winery & Resort ■ Braselton, Georgia

A DYNAMIC PROGRAM TO GET YOUR HEART RACING

Discovery occurs at many levels at Benchmark:

ON OUR HOUSING TOUR through some of Atlanta's hottest new communities

WHILE YOU NETWORK with peers and the select group of manufacturers committed to the Benchmark vision



And AFTER HOURS, when you kick back and relax with the finest group of professionals you could hope to befriend, all who know exactly where you're coming from and understand where you want to go.

Benchmark '07 Exclusive Offer...Experience the REED CONSTRUCTION DASHBOARD connected by iLumen™.

Try it now: Register for the 2007 Professional Builder Benchmark Conference and try out the Reed Construction Dashboard FREE through 2007.

Details at www.reedconstructiondashboard.com

2007 BENCHMARK CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

■ Tuesday, September 25

- Housing Tour Greater Atlanta
- Welcome cocktail reception

■ Wednesday, September 26

- Keynote Jason Jennings, "Think Big, Act Small"
- ▶ J. Walker Smith, "Consumers Are in Control"
- James Haughey, State of the Industry Review
- Frank Alexander, NHQ Panel Discussion
- Afternoon Breakout Sessions
- ▶ 2007 Benchmark Awards Gala, featuring the 2007 NHQ Awards, AVID Awards and the 2008 Builder of the Year presentation

■ Thursday, September 27

- ► Keynote Robert Kriegel, "Break It! Bringing Successful Innovation and Creativity to Your Business"
- ▶ John Rymer, "7 Things You Can Do Right Now to Improve Sales"
- Sales Professionals Panel
- Avid Ratings Awards Panel Discussion
- Rick Heaston, "Relationship Selling"
- Builder Panel Discussion
- ► Fun Night at the Winery

■ Friday, September 28

 Complimentary Golf Round at the Chateau Elan Chateau course
 (LIMITED AVAIL ABILITY)

Florida Fresh

Design flair, floor plan innovations and community amenities are a winning combination at University Groves.





Like many housing markets across the United States,

Sarasota, Fla., is soft. But Fidelity Homes is selling homes at University Groves by offering something different. David Hunihan, president of the Venice, Fla.-based building company, says Fidelity's small-lot detached product is turning buyers' heads with strong architectural elements and innovative floor-plan features.

Architect Don Evans of The Evans Group in Orlando, Fla., created a style that is a departure from what the builder calls "the typical Mediterranean Revival look" and Evans calls Florida Classical. To add visual interest to the elevations. Evans used tile details, arches and columned porticos (front porches). Pergolas dress up the front-loaded garages, which are recessed to minimize their impact. Paver bricks cover the driveways and sidewalks, which wind throughout the community, and walkways lead to porches rather than driveways.

"I think these elevations and styles fit really well in Sarasota because a lot of people expect the Florida Classical look," says Evans. "It's a pretty staid market." It's also a market with a cross-section of buyers: "You can hit everything from the first-time buyer to the last-time buyer."

Consequently, the three models at University Groves are distinctly different and take aim at three segments: singles, families and empty nesters who are still working. There's also a mix of 40- and 50-foot-wide plans with enough flexibility to satisfy a range of needs. For example, two-car and three-car garages are available as well as four- and fivebedroom options. In the Cordoba (see plan on page 64), the laundry room/ family studio can be converted to a bedroom, and the Florida basement, which is adjacent to the garage, can serve as the laundry room.

The Florida basement isn't actually a basement; it's a 7-by-12-foot, air-con-

FIDELITY'S SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES at

University Groves in Sarasota, Fla., are a fresh take on the prevalent Mediterranean look, sporting tile details, pergolas over garage doors and front porticos.

ditioned flex space that can serve many purposes. "It could be a storage room or a kids' get-ready room, with cubbies and hooks for backpacks," says interior designer Kay Green of Kay Green Design, Orlando. "It could also be a wine room or an extra study."

Similarly, the laundry room/family studio is a generously proportioned (12-1/2 feet by 12-feet) room that accommodates a front-loading washer and dryer; full-size sink; upper and lower cabinets along two walls; and central work table for crafts and other tasks. Hunihan says buyer response to this room has been

VITAL STATS

University Groves

Location: Sarasota, Fla.

Builder: Fidelity Homes, Venice, Fla. Architect: The Evans Group, Orlando,

Interior Designer: Kay Green Design,

Orlando, Fla.

Developer: University Groves Develop-

ment, Sarasota, Fla.

Model open: Cordoba opened January 2007; Amendola opened February 2007

Home type: Single-family detached

Total sales to date: 10

Community size: 580 total residential units. Fidelity Homes will build 68 singlefamily homes and 78 townhomes

Square footage: 2,615 (Cordoba)

Price: \$544,000 (Cordoba)

Hard costs: \$115 to \$135 per square

foot, excluding land

Buyer profile: Singles, move-ups and

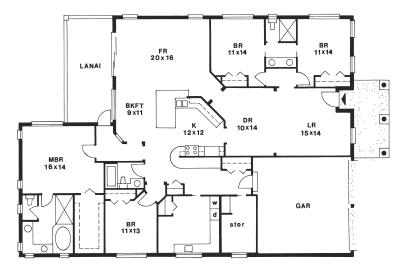
empty nesters



THIS KIDS' STUDY AREA, right, is just off the Cordoba kitchen, promoting more family interaction while meals are being prepared.

Granite countertops and wood cabinets come standard. PHOTOGRAPH BY EVERETT & SOULE





THE DINING ROOM

of the Amendola, top left, is connected to the kitchen/breakfast nook via a butler's pantry. Wood cabinets with glass doors provide a warm counterpoint to the ceramic-tile flooring. PHOTO BY EUGENE POLLUX

"tremendous. It's a 'wow' space that everyone loves."

The Cordoba also has a kids' study area, or tech center, off the kitchen. The granite countertop wraps around one wall and steps down to desk height.

There's room for two children to work side by side, plus cabinets, cubbies and open shelves for books and supplies. "I think we're going to see more of that because parents want to monitor what their children are looking at on the computer," says Green. "In the past we've done tech centers up in the loft, but parents just aren't up there that often."

Interior details evoke coziness and charm. A reading nook under the staircase of the Amendola model, for instance — complete with built-in bookcase and bench seat — has been a big hit with children. "Every kid that goes in that house curls up in that spot," Hunihan says.

The builder includes as much as possible in the base price; granite countertops, wood cabinet doors, 18-by-18-inch ceramic tile floors and ceiling fans are just a few standard features. Baseboards and door casings have a profile that is unique to Fidelity and a little larger than what most local builders include as standard.

"Because the houses are elevated to accommodate the front porch, garage ceilings are almost II feet high, and we couldn't use [standard] attic stairs," Hunihan says. "So we put in a special metal and fiberglass stair system. That alone cost about \$1,000 a house."

Attention was also paid to the landscaping. Fidelity is planting large trees and Empire Zoysia grass, a water-saving variety that, unlike the St. Augustine grass used for many Florida homes, is soft underfoot. "It's more like the grass that people are used to from up north," says Hunihan.

The Place to Be

University Groves' prime location also contributes to the builder's success. Hunihan says the site is "almost a bullseye between the interstate, Sarasota International Airport, and Manatee and Sarasota counties. You can be at four hospitals in 15 minutes." Residents can drive to downtown Sarasota in





Hobbyists get their own workbench, too. PHOTO BY EVERETT & SOULE

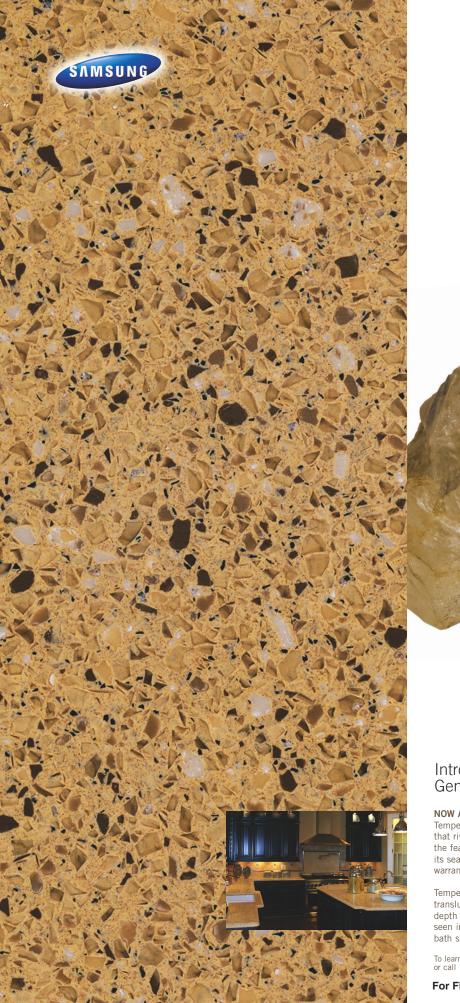
10 to 15 minutes.

University Groves is a master-planned community that, when completed, will also include 78 townhomes, 330 condominiums and a town center with 90,000 square feet of medical and professional office space and nearly 182,000 square feet of retail and commercial space. Fidelity is building the townhouses, and Harp Development of Fort Myers, Fla., will develop the condominiums, with conceptual design by The Evans Group.

Before it was purchased by University Groves Development, the property was almost entirely agricultural, says Howard Camp, a member of the development team and vice president of W.G. Mills, general contractor and construction manager. Camp says the community will have a neotraditional town center with 80 additional residential units, some on top of retail stores. "The whole concept was to create an environment where people could live and work," he says.

Hunihan says the townhomes overlook a large nature preserve/wetland area. "There's a topographical change from the front of the buildings to the back, which is about an 8- or 10-foot drop," says Hunihan. "If all goes as planned, that will allow us to do walkout basements." PB

LOG ON To read 'Fidelity Homes targets a range of homebuyers in Sarasota, Florida' online, visit www. ProBuilder.com/plansandprojects





Introducing Tempest, The Next Generation From Staron Surfaces.

NOW AVAILABLE IN 10 INSPIRING COLORS,

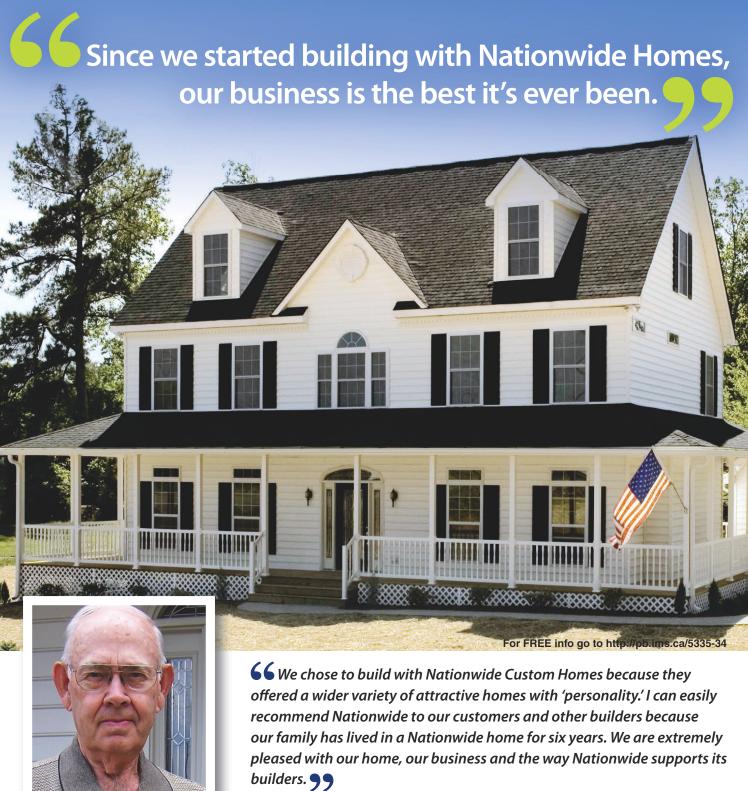
Tempest is a solid surface alternative with a look that rivals natural stone and quartz. Yet it offers all the features and benefits of solid surface, such as its seamless appearance and a ten-year transferable warranty for homebuyers.

Tempest (patent pending) features a larger, translucent particulate that gives it amazing depth and a unique appearance not before seen in solid surface countertops and bath surfaces.



To learn more, visit www.staron.com/pbt3 or call 1.800.795.7177. © 2007 Cheil Industries Inc

For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-33



Wayne Turner Heartland Home Developers, Rockmart, GA

Community Developments • Resorts • Urban Infill • Coastal Homes • Scattered Sites





We deliver the builders' advantage.

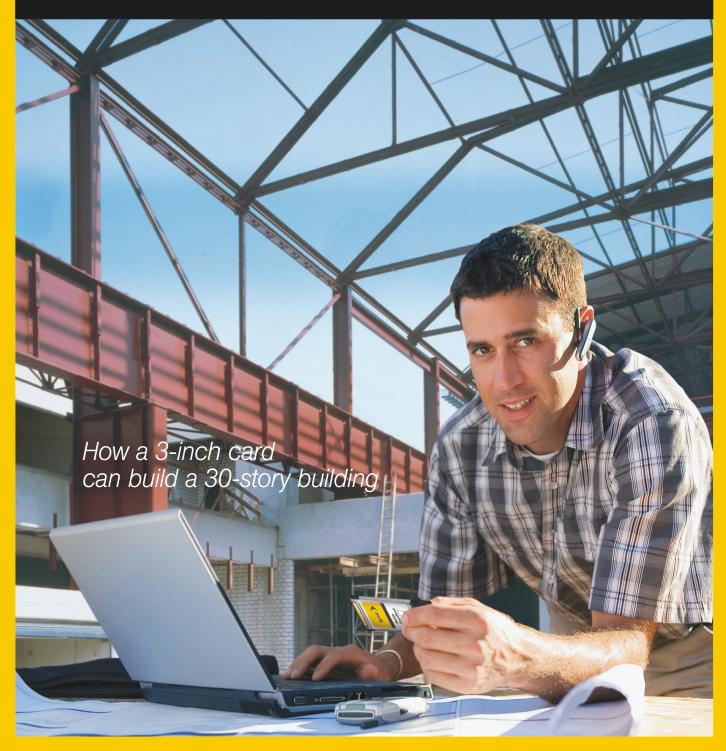
FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL Toll Free: 866-466-3706

MOBILE BROADBAND CARD



Now all you need to set up an instant mobile office at a jobsite is Sprint Mobile Broadband. Instead of waiting for phone and service lines, you're up and running in no time. You can download blueprints, access data from headquarters and finalize contracts faster than ever. With the fastest and largest Mobile Broadband network, Sprint gives you the ability to make just about any place a workplace. That's getting it done at SprintSpeed.™

1-800-SPRINT-1 sprint.com/business



"Fastest" claim based on weighted national aggregate throughput capability of mobile broadband networks. "Largest" claim based on covered square miles. Not available in all markets/retail locations. Actual speeds may vary. Requires Rev. A-capable device. Coverage not available everywhere—see sprint.com/coverage for details. Sprint Mobile Broadband Network reaches over 200 million people—coverage not available everywhere. See sprint.com/coverage for details. ©2007 Sprint Nextel. All rights reserved. SPRINT, the "Going Forward" logo, the NEXTEL name and logo, and other trademarks are trademarks of Sprint Nextel.

INSIDE & OUT

A New Spin

Crafts, homework, hobbies and even your pet's bathtub find a place in today's laundry rooms.

It wasn't long ago that the laundry room consisted of an alcove for the washer and dryer, a laundry tub and maybe a cabinet or two for detergent and bleach. More often than not it was located in the basement. Few people thought about it as a hub of family activity.

Today, laundry rooms are for multitaskers, providing a pleasant environment not only for washing, drying and ironing clothes but also reading; surfing the Web; arts and crafts; gift wrapping; and bathing pets.

The room sports a variety of new names such as family studio, home studio and home management center. Generally it's located near the kitchen or garage; sometimes it's part of a mudroom.

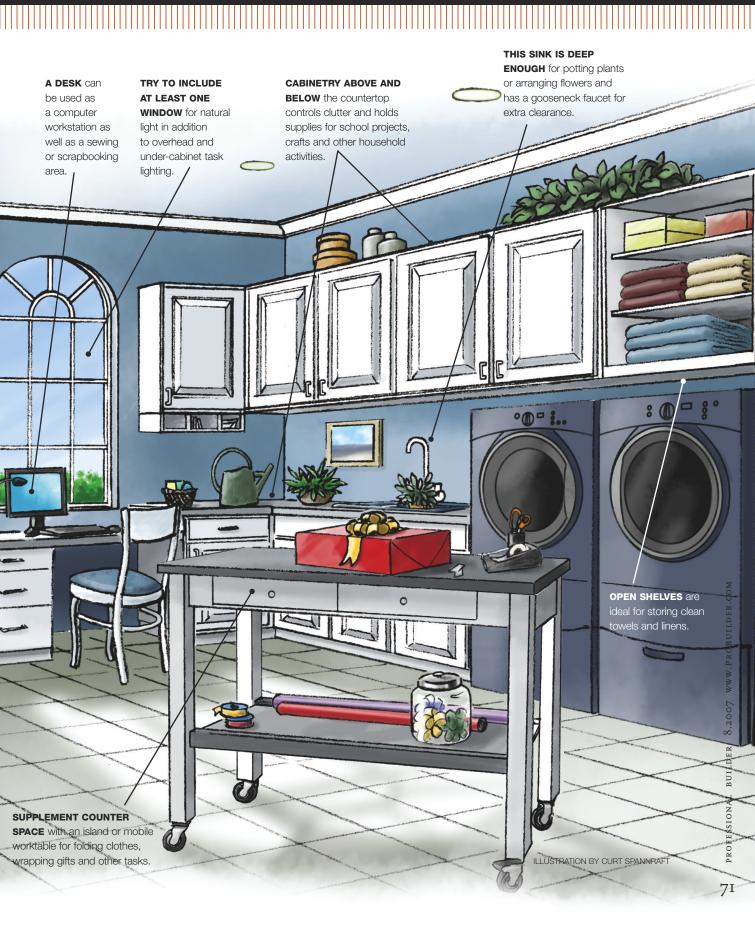
One reason for bigger and better laundry rooms is consumers' frustration with the way laundry rooms are typically designed, says Pam Rogers, director of Whirlpool brand laundry machines, based in Benton Harbor, Mich.

"We literally watched people do laundry and found there were anywhere from 18 to 53 steps within that process," says Rogers. "A mom with three kids whose bedrooms are on the second floor and laundry room is in the basement [has] a lot of intermediate steps, plus the folding and the putting away." Homeowners obliged to fold clean clothes in the living room or on the dining-room table wished they could do everything in one space, but their laundry rooms weren't set up for it, she says.

It's not unusual for laundry rooms to be 12 feet by 12 feet or larger, says architect Don Evans of The Evans Group in Orlando, Fla. "We usually try to take a room that's about the size of a bedroom and closet and do the conversion over to the home studio," says Evans.

As uses for the laundry room have expanded, so has the type and amount of storage. This can include a tall cabinet for the ironing board, mops and other cleaning supplies; open shelves for clean towels and linens; and cubbies and mail slots over desks. "The cabinetry is often of the quality you'd put in the kitch-







TODAY'S QUIETER WASHERS AND DRYERS can share home office space without disrupting work. Storage is maximized with cabinets over the appliances. PHOTO COURTESY OF KRAFTMAID CABINETRY

DESIGNED FOR THE AVID GARDENER,

this laundry room, right, has a combination of drawers, cabinets and open shelving for pots and other supplies, plus plentiful counter space. PHOTO COURTESY OF KRAFTMAID CABINETRY

en," says architect Anne Olson of Olson Architecture in Niwot, Colo. "The laundry room has become a space that is not totally utilitarian."

In the laundry rooms of homes she designs, Olson often includes dog showers, litter box enclosures and pet doors leading to the yard or garage.

Even a small laundry room can be tweaked for double duty, says interior designer Lita Dirks of Lita Dirks & Co. in Englewood, Colo. Dirks did just that for a model by Engle Homes Colorado. "When this particular laundry room was done, it had a tad more space than usual — maybe an extra 12 inches," she says. "All we really did was put a countertop in with a bulletin board and open shelves above it, so it became a hobby space."





THE NEW COMMERCIAL STANDARD



GRAB LIFE BY THE HORNS





WE JUST STARTED COMPETING, BUT WE'VE ALREADY GOT A FULL TROPHY CASE.

The new '07 Dodge Ram 3500 Heavy Duty Chassis Cab wins where it counts. With best-in-class* standard V8 horsepower and torque, thanks to HEMI® power. Best-in-class* standard GVWR for single rear-wheel models. It's got the largest available diesel engine in its class, the 6.7L in-line Cummins® Turbo Diesel. Best-in-class* interior passenger volume (Quad Cab®) and standard 52-gallon fuel tank capacity. And most important, best-in-class* rear frame steel strength-50,000 psi. For more info, visit dodge.com/chassiscab or call 800-4ADODGE.

*Based on 2007 Dodge Ram 3500 Heavy Duty Chassis Cab vs. 2006 Ford and GM one-ton pickup-based chassis cab models. Properly secure all cargo.









A GIFT-WRAPPING STATION puts supplies close at hand. Dowels hold wrapping paper, ribbon and gift bags, and there's a spacious work surface below. PHOTO BY DAVE BROWN

THE FAMILY STUDIO

of the Cordoba model at University Groves in Sarasota, Fla., below, has a mobile work table for folding clothes, wrapping gifts and doing arts and crafts projects.
PHOTO BY EVERETT & SOULE

Clutter Buster

In the Darlington S plan at Harmony on the Lakes in Holly Springs, Ga., builder/designer Haven Properties dispenses with the laundry room label altogether, offering a home management center that's 12 feet by 14 feet. Wired for Internet access, the room is a few steps away from the kitchen island, with access from the garage as well as the back deck.

Tori Ewing, vice president of corporate communications and marketing for Haven Properties in Alpharetta, Ga., says the home management center is a place for conducting daily chores and keeping everyday clutter out of the main living areas.

"It relieves demands on kitchen countertop space," says Ewing. A laundry chute near the children's bedrooms upstairs sends dirty clothes into a cabinet above the dryer. Kids can toss their backpacks on open shelves and hang their coats on wooden pegs.

Connie Edwards, director of design for











Quality: Inside and Out. Put in a quality window and everything looks brighter. Which is why investing in windows from Silver Line — now an Andersen Company — is the clear choice. You'll make a wise investment. Your customers will trust they have too.



www.silverlinewindow.com

Timberlake Cabinet Co. in Winchester, Va., notes storage options can include rollout shelves for detergent; drawers for mending kits and other small items; and cabinets to hold supplies for auxiliary projects. Her crew sometimes shortens the cabinet above the washer and dryer to make room for a hanging rod, she

An island or work table provides an

additional work surface. The utilitarian laundry tub is being replaced by a kitchen sink deep enough for arranging flowers and potting plants. And because natural light is just as important as overhead and under-counter task lighting, laundry rooms often have at least one window.

Front-loading washers and dryers are more popular than ever with homeowners, as much for their good looks as for ergonomic reasons. They're available with optional pedestals that raise the machines to a more comfortable height. Some pedestals double as storage drawers for extension cords and other items.

In fact, Edwards says, new appliances are one of the reasons laundry rooms have transformed. "They're very energyefficient, they use less water and they're considerably quieter than they used to be, though builders might still want to put sound-deadening material in the walls," she says. PB

LOG ON read 'Laundry rooms become multipurpose spaces' at www.ProBuilder. com/plansandprojects

SURFACE SOLUTIONS

Durability, low maintenance and water resistance are important considerations for countertops and flooring in a laundry room. Countertop materials often include laminate or granite.

Interior designer Kay Green of Kay Green Design in Orlando, Fla., says ceramic tile is the No. 1 flooring choice. "It's almost like vinyl has left the laundry room because it's a more important space now," says Green.

Lita Dirks of Lita Dirks & Co., an interior design firm in Englewood, Colo., sometimes uses modular carpet tiles, heavy-duty carpet squares that have been a staple in commercial buildings for years because of their durability. Carpet tiles are beginning to show up more frequently in residential settings, she says. If stained or damaged, only a few squares need to be replaced rather than the entire carpet.

There's plenty of latitude for design creativity as well. In a model home at Harmony on the Lakes in Holly Springs, Ga., interior designer Kathy Camp of Kathy Camp Inc. in Marietta, Ga., conceived the idea of using broken pieces of multicolored ceramic tile to create a terrazzo look for the floor.

Says Tori Ewing of Haven Properties, Alpharetta, Ga., which designed and built the home: "We wanted to do something unique instead of just putting hardwood or tile in there."



For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-37

Rotary Lasers

TOLL: 1-800-435-1859 www.davidwhite.com/therighttool



A TILED DOG SHOWER with a hand-held sprayer keeps muddy pets from soiling the home. PHOTO BY FRED FORBES





Davio VInite

Helping America Build.. since 1895



Ryobi[®] ONE+[™] 18V tools own the sweet spot where performance meets value. One battery runs all 34 of our One+ tools. So who needs 34 batteries and chargers? Nobody. That's why we sell One+ tools without them for less. When you choose ONE+, you can always have the right tool.

For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-38





18V Drill Kit with 2 batteries & charger, all for



Foundation of a Business

Frost-protected shallow foundations can become a builder's standard practice.

When home builders refer to comfort, they often mean a good HVAC system or a well-sealed building envelope — a foundation system likely doesn't come to mind.

But a good foundation system is integral to a comfortable end product, and frost-protected shallow foundations can get you there. When the slab is insulated from the outside, FPSFs make a home warmer in winter and cooler in summer — which means they're also energy efficient. Add to that fewer materials and reduced construction time and expense and you get a system some builders swear by.

About 10 years ago, builder Judy Fosdick started to specialize in durable and energy-efficient single-family custom homes. This led to FPSFs, which changed the way she does business. Fosdick, the co-owner of Tierra Concrete Homes in Fowler, Colo., and her team now install FPSFs in every home they build.

Foundation for a Better Home

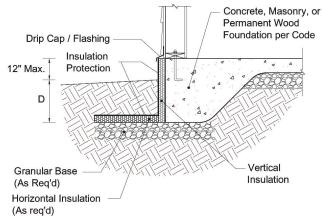
"The beauty of FPSFs is that they let you take advantage of the heat in the building slab and the surrounding soil to raise the frost depth," Fosdick says. "With a correctly insulated slab and footings, you don't lose that heat. And since you've got a warmer slab, you don't have to worry about frost heave."

FPSFs require no excavation below the frost line. The bottoms of FPSF footings are placed only 12 to 16 inches below grade. Compare that to the 3 foot-plus depths required for typical construction, and the labor savings are evident.

Vertical insulation — either expanded polystyrene (EPS) or extruded polystyrene (XPS) — is placed at the outside edge of the foundation and extends from above grade to the bottom of the footing. The insulation redirects heat that would have been lost from the building, keeping it in the foundation and preventing the winter cold from penetrating below the foundation. With insulation along the outside edges, floors at the perimeter of the home are significantly warmer, reducing heat loss.

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory monitored one of Fosdick's homes in 2005.

"The results showed that the foundation inside the insulation on the north-facing walls never dipped below 50 degrees during the winter, despite below-freezing temperatures



FPSFs don't require any special tools or materials, other than the insulation itself. It's pretty easy to incorporate it into standard building practices."

Judy Fosdick

A SECTION DETAIL showing properly placed insulation protection.

outside," she says.

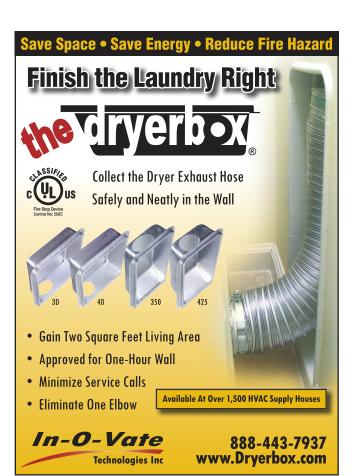
In colder climates, "wing" insulation extends outward horizontally from the footing. The colder the weather, the further the wing insulation extends. As a result, FPSFs are effective in a variety of climates. However, their popularity remains greatest in colder states where frost heave is an issue.

Code Acceptance

FPSFs aren't without their challenges; getting through code approval is one of them.

"Getting [customer] buy-in is easy; getting approval from building department officials is a little more difficult," Fosdick says.

Builders have the tools to effectively educate uninformed officials. The foun-



For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-39



Innovations

dation system is included in the 2000 and 2003 edition of the International Residential Code (IRC). The American Society of Civil Engineers developed a standard, "Design and Construction of Frost-Protected Shallow Foundations." The NAHB Research Center also produced the "Design Guide for Frost-Protected Shallow Foundations" in 2004. Note that in some areas of heavy termite infestation, local codes may limit the use of rigid foam insulation on the outside of the foundation or require termite-resistant insulation.

"The first time we proposed using FPSFs, the building official had never heard of them and was inclined to disallow them, so I immediately asked about their appeals process," Fosdick says. "I got on the appeals board agenda and came in with my engineer and our pile of documentation from the NAHB Research Center."

By providing research and referencing two case studies, they convinced the board. The whole process only took a few weeks, Fosdick says.

Bill Eich of Eich Construction in Spirit Lake, Iowa, first learned about FPSFs in 1984. He, too, had to educate his local code officials when he started. However, he says FPSFs have become standard practice in his area, and officials now approach him for opinions on proposed FPSF plans.

Putting FPSFs to Work

FPSFs' impact can be seen in builders' bottom line.

With FPSFs, Fosdick discovered, the time, labor and equipment required for deeper excavation disappeared.

"FPSFs don't require any special tools or materials, other than the insulation itself. It's pretty easy to incorporate it into standard building practices," she says.

A 1988 study by the NAHB Research Center showed a 15 to 21 percent cost savings with FPSF over conventional foundations because of labor and equipment costs. In individual projects, builders have reported savings of \$635 to \$4,750.

Because the rigid polystyrene foam is left in place, once the method is mastered, crews find FPSFs easier and faster to install than conventional foundations. Detailing the outside edge of the foam with a durable, attractive finish is the biggest challenge, but Eich says the entire process requires minimal training.

"I wouldn't do a foundation any other way," Fosdick says. $\mbox{\bf PB}$

Scott Shepherd writes about better building practices on behalf of the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing (www. pathnet.org). PATH is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Learn more at www.pathnet. org.



 ${\bf LOG}$ ON Read "Frost-protected shallow foundations can become a homebuilder's best friend" online at

www.ProBuilder.com/innovations

SIGNS OF AGE INCLUDE STRIKING BEAUTY.



Weather and moisture are no friend to the beauty of your home. And if you don't start with the right siding, time isn't on your side either.



So we prefinish each piece of LP Canexel siding in 5 layers of paint and sealant for a lasting finish. What you get is naturallooking siding that keeps a home looking beautiful for years to come. We're not looking for a Genius Grant—just better-looking homes.



That's what we do. We make the products that build the homes, simply better.

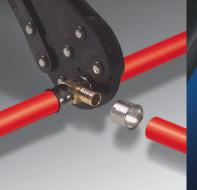


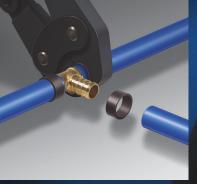
P CANEXEL®

PREFINISHED SIDING

PEX connections? No sweat.

Viega PureFlowbrings you three proven systems to connect PEX.







Viega Bronze PEX Press Fittings

The ultimate PEX fitting system, fast, reliabile and designed to connect with ViegaPEX™ and FostaPEX® tubing.

Viega Brass PEX Crimp Fittings

A high quality, proven dependable connection system, perfect for residential applications.

Viega PolyAlloy PEX Crimp Fittings

An economical and corrosion resistant joining system that installs quickly and easily.

For more information about Viega Pure Plow PEX connecting systems ask your Wholesaler or Rep or contact us at service@viega.com, call 1-877-VIEGA-NA or visit pureflowplumbingonline.com.



SL-AD-PF74

Viega...continually bringing new technology to PEX plumbing.





Haven Properties





Honeywell

The F300 Whole-House Electronic Air Cleaner by Honeywell removes up to 98 percent of airborne particles passing through the system. The system creates an electrical charge on airborne particles and then collects them like a magnet, much like the consumer units commonly advertised. The system is also low-maintenance, requiring periodic cell washes by the homeowner. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-126

In My Own Words

"These purifiers are an integral part of every Haven Properties healthier, high-performance home. The four-inch pleated filters trap more particles and up to five times more pollutants than regular air filters. Our home buyers notice that they dust less frequently and their allergy symptoms improve, which says a lot in Atlanta's high-pollen environment. Plus, home buyers who have pets tell us they notice less pet fur in their homes."



Cosentino

Touted as clean, safe and green, the Zen Series of surfaces from Cosentino's Silestone Quartz line include five colors ranging from plum, brown and white. Named Satori, Haiku, Koan, Unsui and Gedatsu, the surfaces feature Microban protection and are certified safe for food preparation areas. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-125

In My Own Words

"Our home buyers like the look of the Silestone countertops, which can be manufactured to mimic all the popular styles and colors. What they like even better is the fact that Silestone countertops are more durable than most natural products, plus they're keeping germs at bay. The countertops are an integral part of 'The Cleaner Kitchen,' which we're proud to offer standard with every home we build."

>> Haven Properties cont'd



Marvin Windows and **Doors**

Answering demand for large radius shapes, the Ultimate Double-Hung Magnum Round Top by Integrity by Marvin Windows and Doors is now available in a variety of shapes and sizes, including elliptical, evebrow and true radius sizes for double- and single-hung variations. Nineteen colors, several wood species and divided lites are also available. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-127

Delta Faucet Co.

Fitting the company's "shabby chic" and "sophisticated country" trend, the Talbott single-handle kitchen faucet from Delta features a recessed aerator in a one-hole, two-hole with side spray, three-hole without side spray and four-hole with side spray configurations. Finishes include chrome and Brilliance stainless. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims. ca/5335-128



In My Own Words

"We choose Delta kitchen and bathroom fixtures because we know we can rely on them to deliver a broad selection of popular styles and finishes. In our kitchens, we use Delta's single-handle filtration faucet, which complements the design of our kitchens and provides bottled water quality with a Pür water filter."

In My Own Words

"The right windows are important to create beautiful, light-filled homes while also maintaining comfort and reasonable energy consumption. Marvin windows answer homeowners' desires for style and also our requirements for high performance."



What's the latest building industry **BUZZ?**

Go to ProBuilder.com to stay on the leading edge of housing industry news.

PROBUILDER.COM IOGS

You'll find your favorite Professional Builder columnists, editors and housing industry

thought leaders

offering their unique perspectives in personal blogs.

You can even add your favorite Professional Builder blogs to your RSS reader.

Get in on the buzz at

www.ProBuilder.com/blogs

Professional



One Source For Urethane And PVC Trim.

It only takes one call, to one company, to source your urethane and PVC trim. Fypon makes it easy for you to order premium synthetic millwork that installs fast and sets your homes apart from the competition with rich, decorative detail. For trim that resists rot, mildew, insects and warping, Fypon has you covered from peak to plinth. For more information, *call 800.446.3040* or visit fypon.com. For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-42



Who's worried about a little water?

Not MiraTEC® trim. Thanks to a unique manufacturing process that treats natural wood fibers with zinc borate and binds them with phenolic resins, MiraTEC is remarkably resistant to moisture, rot and termites. That's why it's backed with an industry-best 30-year warranty. MiraTEC looks and handles just like wood, with the long-term performance and durability of PVC and fiber cement. At a fraction of their cost. So make the jump to MiraTEC. The water's fine.

Call your dealer or 1.800.255.0785 for a FREE sample.



miratectrim.com





ProBuilder Product Report:

New Products



Made for sawing through reinforced concrete, roofing tile, brick and masonry materials, the SpeedWave Diamond Blades from Bosch feature synthetic diamonds bonded directly to the blade core. A vibration-dampening cooling disc reduces friction and extends the life of the blade. The SpeedWave is available in 4 ½-, 5-, 7- and 9-inch diameters. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-129



The Draco, Fury, Chimera and Pyro lighting pendants from W.A.C. Lighting can be used in a variety of applications, from low-voltage monorall to monopoint and multipoint systems. Each pendant varies in size and design, but each utilizes a Xenon Bi-Pin 50-watt lamp. The socket sets are made in bronze, chrome and platinum. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-130



Weyerhaeuser

Made under the company's iLevel line, Weyerhaeuser's Grip H nylon roof sheathing clips are designed to slide easily onto the edge of panels. The strength of the product comes from four splayed prongs that work as a flexible hinge to keep a firm grip on the panels. The clips leave a consistent 1/8-inch expansion gap. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-131

▲ Boral Bricks

Made with the look and feel of large handmade bricks, the Thin Bricks from Boral are manufactured with molds crafted in flat pieces with matching corner pieces to complete the look of an installed brick wall — at only 3/4-inch thick. Colors include gray-taupe, traditional red, rustic brown and caramelgray. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/15335-132



Verizon Wireless, America's most reliable wireless broadband network, works with you and your existing systems to make your construction company more competitive.

- Manage crews and materials more efficiently with simple, reliable wireless solutions from Verizon Wireless.
- Utilize email and our high-speed wireless broadband network to connect and communicate from the job site and with the client.
- Use Field Force Manager to reduce labor costs and improve customer service.
- Get the G'zOne, a durable, shock and water-resistant cell phone ideal for construction sites work areas.

Visit verizonwireless.com/construction or call 1.800.VZW.4 BIZ (899.4249)



BroadbandAccess is available in 242 major metropolitan areas in the U.S. Offers and coverage not available everywhere. Network details & coverage maps at verizonwireless.com. Network and coverage not in all areas. America's most reliable wireless network claim based on fewest aggregate blocked and dropped connections. See verizonwireless.com/bestnetwork for details. © 2007 Verizon Wireless.

PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 8.2007 WWW.PROBUILDER.COM

ProBuilder Product Report:

Countertops and Surfaces



▲ DuPont

The latest solid surface offerings from DuPont's Corian line include 13 new colors that the company wants to "reflect the heritage and luxury of American cottage style." DuPont also released 11 colors under its Zodiaq quartz surface brand. The Zodiaq-Okite collection ranges from terra-cotta and lapis lazuli to warm neutrals. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-134

colors: cocoá, honeysuckle, ivy (shown), jasmine, juniper

LG HI-MACS

G HI-MACS Eden coun-

tertops were developed

using at least 12 percent pre-consumer recycled materials. The countertop are available in six natural

and lemongrass. The Eden

line is nonporous, anti-

microbial, stain-resistant and backed by a 15-year warranty. Eden is certified for

its recycled content by Sci

entific Certification Systems

(SCS). For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.

ca/5335-133

The Antique Heart Pine countertop by Craft-Art is derived from reclaimed wood. The custom wood countertop has a yellow-brown straw color with reddish-brown accent rings. A quarter-sawn technique creates a vertical tight-grain wood texture. Tops are available in plank and an edge-grain style using full-length boards or an end-grain style for a checkerboard-type pattern. The company will also use other non-endangered domestic and exotic species upon request. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-135

CaesarStone

Joining the company's large quartz surface collection are the mustard-inspired sandalwood, bedrock, eggplant-hued mulberry mist, pebble, nougat, raven and other styles from CaesarStone. The surfaces resist heat, cold, mildew and stains. According to the company, the latest colors are inspired by the growing green movement. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-136





Samsung

Rivaling the look of quartz and natural stone, the Tempest line from Samsung's Staron brand features what the company's national sales manager calls "a new visual dimension ... that is like nothing else we've offered." Unlike quartz, however, the Tempest is nonporous. The product can be fabricated into backsplashes and patterns can also be incorporated into the surface for added aesthetic appeal. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-137

InPro Corp.

Realizing its solid surface palette needed an overhaul, InPro Corp. released 70 new colors in its Prism Solid Surface line. Mountain mist, tumbleweed and pesto are among the colors. The company's Suncast cultured marble line features 12 standard vanity top sizes in eight standard colors. For FREE information, visit http:// pb.ims.ca/5335-138



Inspired by natural stone formations, Wilsonart's High Definition Laminate includes the Passage Series, which ranges from soft sand to mid-clay, deep greens and dark plum, mimicking the look of igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rock. The collection is designed to complement oiled bronze and stone gray finishes recently introduced by many commercial grade appliance manufacturers. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims. ca/5335-139

Silestone by Cosentino

Touted as clean, safe and green and offering a sense of inner peace, the Zen Series of surfaces from Cosentino's Silestone brand include five colors ranging from plum, brown and white. Named Satori, Haiku, Koan, Unsui and Gedatsu, respectively, the surfaces feature Microban protection and are certified for food preparation areas. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-











wouldn't you rather be with your customers than managing paperwork?

Welcoming American Express® Cards can help you operate more efficiently, leaving you more time to focus on customers. Because when customers use American Express Cards, you can:

o Reduce paperwork.

Spend less time preparing invoices, sending late notices, and tracking down unpaid bills.

o Receive faster payment.

There's no waiting for checks to arrive in the mail or clear your account. American Express deposits payment into your account in as few as three business days, reducing the number of days sales outstanding.

Save time and money.

Since American Express has already reviewed your customers' creditworthiness, you don't have to spend time on credit checks

When you accept American Express Cards, your company is automatically listed—at no additional cost—in our online B2B Directory of merchants. Cardmembers use the B2B Directory to locate merchants who offer the products or services they need. Visit americanexpress.com/b2bdirectory to learn more.

In addition, we offer marketing programs to build customer loyalty and exclusive savings on everyday expenses.

To find out how we can help you grow your business, just

call 1-800-332-6186 or go to american express.com/acceptamex7





Bosch received the highest numerical score with Dishwashers in the proprietary J.D. Power and Associates 2006 Major Home Appliance Studys Study based on 12,656 total responses measuring 11 brands and measures opinions of consumers during the previous 24 months. Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of consumers surveyed in July and September 2006. Your experiences may vary. Visit jdpower.com. ©2007 BSH Home Appliances Corporation B0214-14-81952

ProBuilder Product Report:

Paints, Caulks and Sealants

Convenience Products

The DampLock masonry waterproofing paint from Convenience Products' Seal-Krete line is made for belowgrade interior or exterior walls. The paint emits little odor and features a smooth finish. The product contains the company's Home Shield Mildewcide and has a five-year guarantee against mold and mildew along with a 10-year waterproof guarantee. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-141

UZIN MK 100

1-K-PUR PARKETTKLEBSTO



UFloor Systems/UZIN

Ideal for moisture-sensitive installations, the MK 100 from UFloor Systems is a solvent-and water-free adhesive for all types of wood flooring. According to the company, the adhesive spreads easily, is high in initial tack and grabs fast. It is also non-flammable and emits low levels of VOCs. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-142

Novagard

Solutions Featuring VOC compliancy in all 50 states, the silicon-based siding and trim sealant from Novagard Solutions is available in most manufacturers' colors. The sealant is waterproof, adheres to most common building materials, resists mildew and does not shrink or crack. It is tack-free in 10 to 15 minutes and fully cured in two days. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-



16 kg

Thompson's Water Seal

Featuring a three-part epoxy installation kit, Thompson's Water Seal Garage Floor Epoxy Coating includes a gray or beige base color can, a one-gallon can of activator and an additive packet. According to the company, the coating resists water and protects against chemicals and automotive fluids. For FREE information, visit http://pb.ims.ca/5335-144

Professional Builder BERCHMARK The Premier Management Conference for the Housing Industry

MIDST THE LUSH VINEYARDS JUST 40 MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN ATLANTA, AMERICA'S LEADING BUILDERS WILL SOON GATHER TO DISCOVER INNOVATIVE BUSINESS PRACTICES AND REKINDLE THEIR PASSION FOR EXCELLENCE.



THREE FASCINATING PRESENTERS CHALLENGE YOU TO THINK FRESH

■ Jason Jennings

Author of the best-seller "Think BIG, Act Small," among others, Jennings shares his insights on 10 companies that have performed well despite market conditions and identifies the characteristics and values behind their success — qualities every builder can emulate.



J. Walker Smith

President of the reknowned marketing consultancy
Yankelovich Inc., Smith puts forth his perspective on the consumer empowerment revolution and offers suggestions on how builders can benefit by relating to today's collaborative, creative client.



■ Robert Kriegel

A champion for change and human performance optimization, Kriegel will challenge you in his talk, "Break It! Bringing Successful Innovation and Creativity to Your Business." He will stir your passion for building, show you how to break through barriers to success and remind you why you love the building business.



2007 BENCHMARK: PASSION FOR EXCELLENCE

Tuesday, September 25 - Friday, September 28 Chateau Elan Winery & Resort ■ Braselton, Georgia

A DYNAMIC PROGRAM TO GET YOUR HEART RACING

Discovery occurs at many levels at Benchmark:

ON OUR HOUSING TOUR through some of Atlanta's hottest new communities

WHILE YOU NETWORK with peers and the select group of manufacturers committed to the Benchmark vision



And AFTER HOURS, when you kick back and relax with the finest group of professionals you could hope to befriend, all who know exactly where you're coming from and understand where you want to go.

Benchmark '07 Exclusive Offer...Experience the REED CONSTRUCTION DASHBOARD connected by iLumen™.

Try it now: Register for the 2007 Professional Builder Benchmark Conference and try out the Reed Construction Dashboard FREE through 2007.

Details at www.reedconstructiondashboard.com

2007 BENCHMARK CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

■ Tuesday, September 25

- Housing Tour Greater Atlanta
- ► Welcome cocktail reception

■ Wednesday, September 26

- Keynote Jason Jennings, "Think Big, Act Small"
- J. Walker Smith, "Consumers Are in Control"
- ▶ James Haughey, State of the Industry Review
- Frank Alexander, NHQ Panel Discussion
- Afternoon Breakout Sessions
- 2007 Benchmark Awards Gala, featuring the

2007 NHQ Awards, AVID Awards and the 2008 Builder of the Year presentation

■ Thursday, September 27

- ► Keynote Robert Kriegel, "Break It! Bringing Successful Innovation and Creativity to Your Business"
- ▶ John Rymer, "7 Things You Can Do Right Now to Improve Sales"
- Sales Professionals Panel
- Avid Ratings Awards Panel Discussion
- ► Rick Heaston, "Relationship Selling"
- Builder Panel Discussion
- Fun Night at the Winery

■ FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

 Complimentary Golf Round at the Chateau Elan Chateau course
 (LIMITED AVAIL ABILITY)

DOMES BY OUTWATER



Outwater's new lines of Shallow Decorative Polymer Domes, Fiberglass Round and Elliptical shaped Domes, and Domes with Integrated Light Coves were designed to accommodate otherwise insurmountable technological challenges often encountered when installing large, dimensional objects in new and existing residential and commercial ceiling applications.

Outwater's new Domes are available in both "one step" surface mounted or recessed installation formats, and feature one-piece construction integrating the Domes with their peripheral Trim for a "seamless" clean finish.

FREE 1,100+ PAGE MASTER CATALOG!

LOWEST PRICES...WIDEST SELECTION... ALL FROM STOCK!



ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTS BY OUTWATER Call **1-888-772-1400** (Catalog Requests) 1-800-835-4400 (Sales) • Fax 1-800-835-4403

> www.outwater.com New Jersey • Arizona • Canada

For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-200









Interior/Exterior / Product Showcase



- Over 1 million Satisfied Customers
- Benefit from Over 45 Years of Professional Service

www.empiretodayhomebuilder.com

For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-204

Weyerhaeuser ChoiceDek® Products



For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-205

Weyerhaeuser ChoiceDek[®] products are ideal for decks, dock surfaces, boardwalks, access ramps and walkways. Made from a patented process that encapsulates recycled wood fiber in recycled polyethylene, the unique composition of ChoiceDek® products makes them easy to maintain. Boards are available in 12', 16', and 20' lengths in 5/4" X 6" profiles. www.choicedek.com

(800) 951-5117 Weyerhaeuser

VELUX Solar Powered Shade



The VELUX solar battery powered skylight shade requires no extra effort or expense to install. The battery is an integral part of the shade which is offered in the VELUX Lightblock series. Operation is by remote

The built-in solar cell converts direct or diffused sunlight to electrical energy, which is stored in a battery with a capacity of approximately 500 operations without recharge.

www.veluxusa.com Ph: 800-283-2831

For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-206

Glass Rail Accents



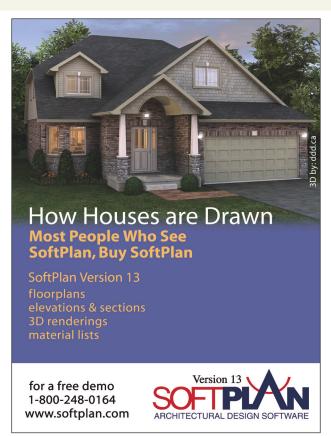
Designing a beautiful deck has never been easier than with Maine Ornamental's Tiffany-style Glass Rail Accents. These striking glass accents turn any outdoor project into a work of art. The Glass Rail Accents are easily mounted between wood or composite balusters and are available in a rectangular size of 3.5" x 31". Glass Rail Accents are available in Tiffany-style Sunflower, California Grape, and Mission. Matching Tiffany-style post caps are also

www.postcaps.com/pbj Ph: 866.910.9094

For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-207



Promo Code: PROBSM-807



For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-208



For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-210



For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-209



Interior/Exterior / Product Showcase



For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-212

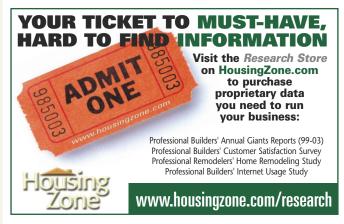
Peachtree Entry Doors

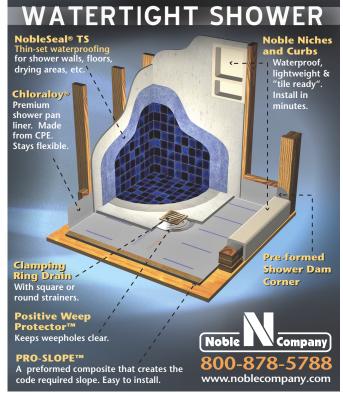


Peachtree Entry Doors make a statement with monumental transoms, decorative glass options, custom grille patterns, multiple hardware finishes, and 9 different clad frame colors. Every door comes standard with a High-Performance Sill System at no extra charge. And every component, from the door panel and aluminum-clad door frame to the sill and weep systems, is designed as part of a complete system. All under one comprehensive warranty from one manufacturer. Prefinishing capabilities are also available. Learn more at www.peachtreedoor.com or call 800-732-2499.

Peachtree Doors & Windows

For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-213





CREATE A







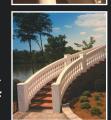




COLUMNS, BALUSTRADES & MOULDINGS

- Fiberglass Columns
- Poly/Marble Columns
- Synthetic Stone Balustrades & Columns
- **Wood Columns**
- Cast Stone **Balustrades & Details**
- Polyurethane Balustrades, Mouldings & Details
- GFRC Columns & Cornices
- **GRG Columns** & Details

Custom Quotations: 800-963-3060

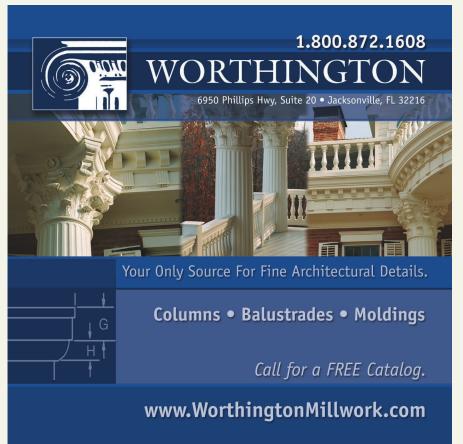








For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-250





Closer to You

ne of the best things you can give your child or grandchild doesn't come from a store. It's time spent with you exploring the gifts of nature, discovering that what's really important in life...is life itself.

Go to arborday.org and check out The National Arbor Day Foundation's Kids Explore Club. Your family will have fascinating adventures right in your neighborhood, and you'll gain a deeper appreciation for the wonders of nature, and for each other.

Whether you live in the city, the country, or anywhere in between, the Kids Explore Club has fun activities just right for you. Go online to arborday.org/explore, or write Kids Explore Club, National Arbor Day Foundation, Nebraska City, NE 68410.



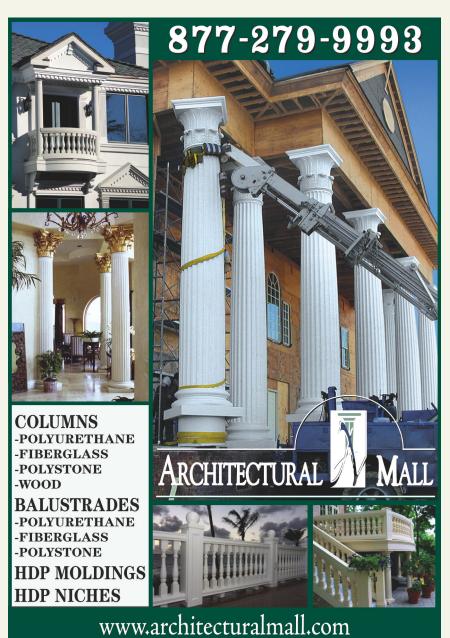




For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-252



For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-253









This is the do-it-yourself answer for those small brick and mortar color match problems. The Brickman's Stain kit is very user friendly. The just-add-water kit arrives complete with brushes, pigments, measuring spoons and cup, gloves, glasses and a training DVD in a sturdy, handy to carry briefcase.

Mespary Gosmeijes, Inda

1625 Miami Street South Bend, IN 46613 Phone: 574.234.1812 Toll Free: 888.698.8705 Fax: 574.234.2240

Perfect for Home or Business:

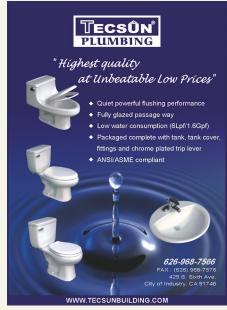
- *Additions
- *Renovations
 *Chimneys
- *Fireplaces
- *Repairs
 - -chips -patchwork
 - -limepops



"Applying the Science of COLOR to brick for Over 20 Years." www.masonrycosmetics.com

For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-256







ARE THESE ISSUES GETTING YOU DOWN EVERYDAY?

Completing warranty work

Tackling punch list items

No exit strategies

Keeping crews busy all year round

Interest rates

Economy ups and downs

Explore the many benefits diversifying into the remodeling world can bring you and your business.

Case Handyman and Remodeling Services, LLC is the largest full-service remodeling organization in the country today with franchises in 180 territories around the country.

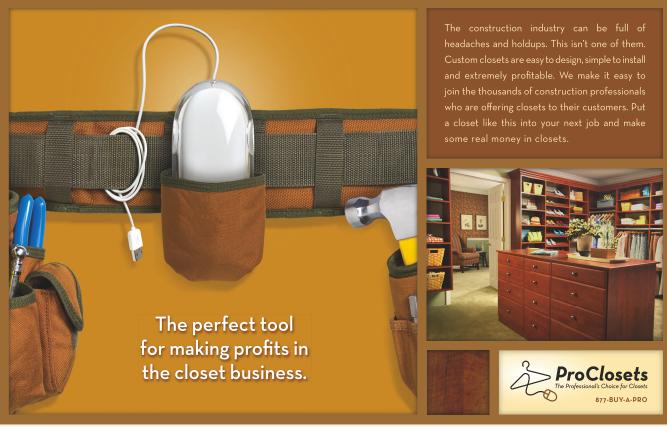
We're looking to bring a select group of franchisee's into our system. If it's the right time for you, our mutual decision making process will allow you to decide if our opportunity will provide you with what you are looking for.

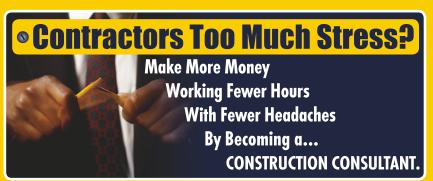


Hit the nail on the head with Case!

Clients For Life

To learn more about franchise opportunities with Case, call today at **800.426.9434**. **CaseFranchise.com**





- Capture lost income by working with clients as a S National Home Building Consultant.
- Reduce your stress by eliminating owner complaints and deadlines.
- Cut your work load in half while maximizing profits.
- Enjoy knowing you've helped people get the most house for their dollar.
- End competitive bidding.
- Feel appreciated instead of blamed.

SAVE \$2500!

Be the First in Your Area.

CALL NOW

National Home Building

CALL: 1-877-422-6728 www.NHBConsultants.com

For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-261



For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-263



Fill, bond, and laminate AZEK® Trimboards!



TrimBonderBonding System

- ▼ Fills nail holes, joints, and gaps quickly and permanently
- ▼ Bonds/laminates AZEK* Trimboards, metal, wood, and PVC
- ▼ Non-yellowing, sandable, paintable
- ▼ Easy to use, fits standard caulking gun



1-800-933-8266 www.trimbonder.com

AZEK is a registered trademark of Vycom Corporation.

Devcon and TrimBonder are registered trademarks of Illinois Tool Works.

© 2006 ITW Devcon. All rights reserved.

Available through your local AZEK® Trimboards dealer

For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-262



Fighting Heart Disease and Stroke

Keep more than memories alive with memorials and tributes.

AMERICAN HEART
ASSOCIATION
MEMORIALS & TRIBUTES



This space provided as a public service. ©1994, 1997, American Heart Association

Ad Index For FREE information on any of these advertisers, please visit http://probuilder.ims.ca

Company	Page #	Circle #	Phone	For more information
+Ainsworth Lumber Co Inc	34a-34b	19	877/661-3200	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-19
American Express	91	45	866/805-1239	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-45
Armstrong Cabinets	55	28	800/588-1703	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-28
Bosch Appliances	92	46	800/866-2022	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-46
+Brick Industry Association	60-61	30	703/620-0010	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-30
Broan-NuTone	12	7	800/548-0790	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-7
Capital One Services Inc.	20	13	800/955-7070	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-13
CertainTeed WeatherBoards	29	16	800/233-8990	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-16
Weyerhaeuser	8	5	800/887-0748	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-76
CMI/MiraTec	33	18	800/255-0785	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-18
CMI/MiraTec	86	43	800/255-0785	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-43
CST Berger	77	37	800/435-1859	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-43
DaimlerChrysler Corp.	73	37	248/576-5741	Пцр.//ро.штв.са/0000-07
	18	12	618/972-7052	http://ph.imp.co/5995_19
Dynami Solutions, LLC				http://pb.ims.ca/5335-12
Empire Today LLC	C-3	47	847/583-3000	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-47
Exaktime Inc.	16	10	888/788-8463	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-10
Ford Motor Company	58-59	31	800/258-FORD	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-31
Fypon	85	42	800/446-3040	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-42
GMC Commercial Vehicles	36-37		800/GMC-8782	
iLevel, A Weyerhaeuser Company	11	6	800/887-0748	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-6
In-O-Vate Technologies Inc	80	39	888/443-7937	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-39
Integrity from Marvin	41	22	800/435-0013	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-22
JELD-WEN	C-4	48	800/535-3462	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-48
Louisiana-Pacific Canexel	81	40	800/648-6893	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-40
LP-EWP	22	14	800/648-6893	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-14
Louisiana-Pacific Smartside	57	29	800/648-6893	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-29
Louisiana-Pacific TechShield	38	21	800/648-6893	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-21
Louisiana-Pacific WeatherBest Marvin Windows & Doors	7	4	800/648-6893	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-4
	17	11	800/435-0013	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-11
Merillat Industries Inc.	4-5		517/263-0771	
Heritage Building Systems	47	24	800/643-5555	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-24
Avid Ratings Co.	49	25	608/824-2500	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-25
Palm Harbor Homes	68	34	800/456-8744	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-34
Peachtree Doors & Windows	c2-3	1	888/888-3814	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-1
Pella Corp.	51	26	888/84-PELLA	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-26
Lowe's	31	17	800/993-4416	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-17
Samsung Staron	67	33	800/795-7177	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-33
Silver Line Windows	75	36	800/234-4228	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-36
+Simonton Windows®	34a-34b	20	800/542-9118	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-20
Simpson Strong-Tie Co. Inc.	14, 15	8, 9	800/999-5099	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-8
Sprint Spectrum	69	35	800/SPRINT-1	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-35
Therma-Tru Residential Entry Systems	24-25	15	800/THERMA-TRU	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-15
Toyota Motor Sales	42-43	23	800/TOYOTA	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-23
Ryobi® Power Tools	78	38	800/525-2579	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-38
Tyco Fire & Building Products	6	3	877/438-8926	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-3
Open Joist	65	32	866-243-3381	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-32
Viega	82	41	1-877-VIEGA-NA	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-41
Velux America, Inc.	53	27	800/283-2831	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-27
Verizon Wireless	88	44	800/VZW-4-BIZ	http://pb.ims.ca/5335-44
+REGIONAL ADVERTISER				

Reed Business Information, A Division of Reed Elsevier Inc. | Specialized Business Magazines for Building & Construction | Research | Technology | Electronics | Computing | Printing | Publishing | Health Care | Foodservice | Packaging | Environmental Engineering | Manufacturing | Entertainment | Media | Home Furnishing | Interior Design | and Lodging, Specialized Consumer Magazines for Residential Design PROFESSIONAL BUILDER (ISSN-1072-0661, GST #123397457) Vol. 72, No. 8 is published 14 times a year, monthly except sent-monthly in September and December by Reed Business information is a Brown Blovd, Highlands Ranch, CO 80126, Gubscription includes all Issues), Reed Business information is a Division of Reed Elsevier (inc., 300 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010; Tad Smith, CED, Jet Greische, President, Chicago Division Predictions | Possage Paid at Littleton, CO 80126 and additional mailing offices. Circulation records are maintained at Reed Business Information, 8878 S. Barrons Blovd, Highlands Ranch, CO 80126-2465. Phone: 303470-4445. Possage Paid at Littleton, CO 80126-2365. Photom unfoldered sent address to record paid of the Company of the Professional Professi Canada, \$179.90 1-year (includes 7% GST, GST#123397457); Mexico., \$164.90 1-year; foreign surface, \$224.90 1-year; foreign air expedited surcharge \$292.90 1-year. Except for special issues where price changes are indicated, single copies are available for \$10 US and \$15 foreign. Please address all subscription mail to PROFESSIONAL BUILDER, P.O. Box 7500, Highlands Ranch, CO 80163-7500. PROFESSIONAL BUILDER and ANNUAL REPORT OF HOUSING'S GIANTS are registered trademarks of Reed Properties Inc., used under license, Printed in the USA

Advertising

Associate Publisher/Director of Sales

Tony Mancini, 610/205-1180 Fax 610/205-1183 armancini@reedbusiness.com

Emedia Solutions Manager Shannon Darmody, 630/288-7963 Fax 630/288-8145 Shannon.darmody@reedbusiness.com

Regional Manager Northeast CT, DC, DE, ME, MD, NH, NJ, NY, PA,

RI, VT, VA, WW John Huff, 630/288-8189 Fax 630/288-8145, john.huff@reedbusiness.com

Regional Manager Southeast

AL, FL, GA, MS, NC, SC, TN Jason Dragos, 630/288-8161, Fax 303/265-5990, jason.dragos@reedbusiness.com

Regional Manager Great Lakes

IN, KY, MI, OH, Eastern Canada Jeff Elliott, 616/846-4633 Fax 616/846-4802, jelliott@reedbusiness.com

Regional Manager Southwest AZ. AR. Southern California. CO, HI, LA, NM, OK, TX **Jessica Elliott,** 651/290-7694 Fax 303/265-2064 iessica elliott@reedbusiness.com

Regional Manager Midwest IA, IL, KS, MN, MO, NE, WI *Tim Gillerlain,* 630/288-8168 Fax 630/288-8145 tim.gillerlain@reedbusiness.com

Regional Manager Northwest AK. ID. MT. NV. ND. Northern CA. OR. SD, UT, WA, WY, Western Canada Emily Clay, 503/675-3861 Fax 303/265-3697 emily.clay@reedbusiness.com

Inside Sales **Shelley Perez,** 630/288-8022 Fax 630/288-8145 shelley.perez@reedbusiness.com

Business Development *KT McNamara*, 563/332-9231 Fax 630/288-8145, ktmcnamara@reedbusiness.com

Administrative Support Rebecca Breskman. Administrative Assistant 610/205-1179, Fax 610/205-1183 rebecca.breskman@reedbusiness.com

Arlean Talley, Administrative Assistant 630/288-8183, arlean.talley@reedbusiness.com

Director of Events/Custom Publishing Judy Brociek, 630/288-8184 Fax 630/288-8145, jbrociek@reedbusiness.com

Marketing Director Gayle Colbert, 630/288-8693 Fax 630/288-8145 gayle.colbert@reedbusiness.com

Marketing/Events Coordinator Heather Weber, 630/288-8109 Fax 303/265-2695 heather.weber@reedbusiness.com

Custom reprints and electronic usage 800/290-5460 x136 professionalbuilder@reprintbuyer.com

Advertising Production Manager Paul Brouch, 630/288-8074

Advertising Contracts Stephanie West, 630/288-8419

Editorial & Publishing Office

Professional Builder 2000 Clearwater Drive, Oak Brook, IL 60523 Phone: 630/288-8000, Fax: 630/288-8145

To Advertise: See above for the office closest to you, or write to the Publisher. Best in American Living Award: To enter this design contest, contact address above. Annual Report of Housing's GIANTS®: To request a survey form, contact GIANTS400@reedbusiness.com; For subscription inquiries and change of address: Customer Service, Reed Business Information, 8878 S. Barrons Blvd., Highlands Ranch, CO 80126-2345; phone: 303/470-4445; fax: 303/470-4280; e-mail: subsmail@reedbusiness.



More Process, Less Voodoo

Listen up, builders: It's time to create a bulletproof building process to ward off customer problems.

>> BY SCOTT SEDAM, TRUENORTH DEVELOPMENT

I frequently run into my neighbor John in the yard. Last evening, while watching the dogs play, we talked about the protective actions taken in the Great Lakes to limit the diversion of fresh water to far-off places, something everyone in my area is against. That led to a discussion about the environmental groups who are leading the fight, such as the World Wildlife Federation.

John said, "Well, you know some of those green groups just go too far; they are obsessive." I agreed with John but said I thought that was because they had to be. The combined power of the all the industries and governments that had conspired to make such a mess of the Great Lakes requires a bunch of very loud, obnoxious people overdoing it on a regular basis to get anyone's attention.

Eighteen hours later I ended a 90-minute interview with the co-author of a new book on how to achieve the utmost in customer loyalty and reap exceptional results. We were doing fine until he asked me about some of the "high-powered techniques" many builders use to analyze, classify, understand and communicate with prospects and customers.

Now, I like some of that stuff, and our facilitators even use some of it in training. But a lot of it is pure voodoo. It has more to do with manipulating people rather than communicating with them.

I explained to the author that 90 percent of what builders do to get customer satisfaction is front-end or backend.

A good estimate is 20 percent up front, trying to know the customer and set expectations; 70 percent at the backend, managing the final walk, closing and warranty period; and only 10 percent during the building process. Why? The middle requires improving and managing the construction process itself, and that's a lot harder.

Here's the rub. With business as bad as it is, builders have cut back on both the front and back ends and especially on service. They can no longer afford reparations.

The data in J.D. Power and Associates scores lags as much as two years, but I'd guess the 2006 national builder average of 112 will drop this year, if only a point or two. In 2008, however,

I predict a precipitous drop
— unless something big
changes. That something big
will be builders finally getting serious about genuine,
deep, paradigm-changing
process improvement.

With a few notable exceptions, builders have not figured out that if you create a disciplined, bulletproof building process you will have very few customer issues. And for those you do, they have time to deal with them. Our people spend all of their time fixing things and relationships that are broken, leaving no time to prevent problems and improve product and process.

Meanwhile, I will keep cajoling, agitating and writing to provoke builders into becoming truly processfocused. When I finally came up for air at the end of the author's interview, which had morphed into a Scott process tirade, he said, "Wow, you're really obsessive about this process stuff, aren't

I replied simply, "Damn right. I have to be." **PB**

you?"

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





Measure the Value of a Partnership with Empire Today's Professional Home Builder Program

G



Next Day Installation

Warehouse Pricing

In-home product selection is more convenient for customer

Our award-winning customer service keeps your home buyer satisfied

Your buyer loves all the options they can choose

Higher percentage of upgrades through in-home sales

Upgrades add to your bottom line

Reduce your need for additional personnel

Additional profit with Window Treatment packages

Benefit from our 45 years of professional service

24-Hour Empire Today customer call center

Empire Today manages the install process

You manage selection and installation

You schedule service crews

Have to limit time for buyer to pick out furnishings

Buyer goes elsewhere for Window Treatments

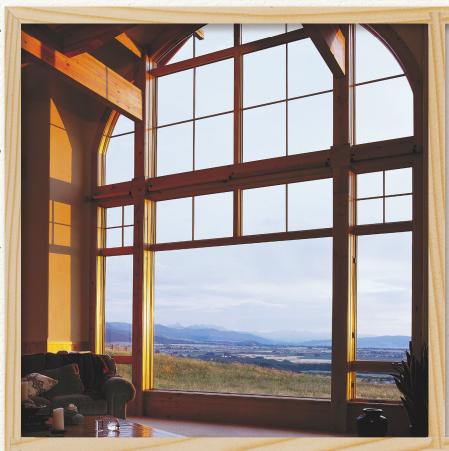
WITHOUT EMPIRE TODAY



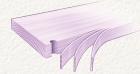


Carpet / Area Rugs Hardwood / Laminate / Ceramic Flooring Window Treatments

Call or visit our web site: (888) 588-2386 www.empiretodayhomebuilder.com For FREE info go to http://pb.ims.ca/5335-47



Solid pine AuraLast®, the worry-free wood from JELD-WEN, is guaranteed to resist decay and termite infestation for 20 years.



AuraLast® Wood

A unique vacuum/pressure process provides virtually 100 percent penetration of the protective ingredients from the surface to the core.

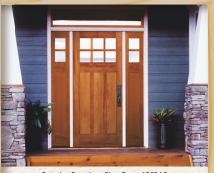


Dip-Treated Wood

Dip-treated wood is only protected on the surface.

Colors are used for illustration purposes only. AuraLast wood has a clear pine color.

Throw everything you know about wood out the window.



Exterior Premium Pine Door 1863AP



Wood Radius Casement Window



Exterior Premium Pine Door 1871AP



Wood Double-Hung Window





JELD-WEN® windows and doors with AuraLast® wood will stay beautiful and worry-free for years. AuraLast wood provides superior protection against decay, water absorption and termite infestation. Unlike dip-treated wood, AuraLast wood is protected to the core and comes with an exclusive 20-year warranty. That's added protection for any building project. To learn more about AuraLast wood and all our reliable windows and doors, call 1.800.877.9482, ext. 1014, or go to www.jeld-wen.com/1014.

RELIABILITY for real life®

