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Mastering
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2007

Builder of the Year [page 42]

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From back to front: Eric
Snider, Robb Pigg, Terry
Bryan and Bert Selva



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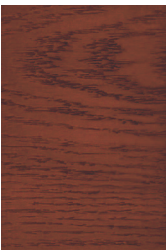
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Healthy and Great

What makes a great company? We answer the question with an example in this month's issue. The *Professional Builder* 2007 Builder of the Year is Shea Homes, and it exhibits all the characteristics of what makes a great company.

While many believe those characteristics include strong strategic planning, great execution and fabulous controls, there are other aspects of greatness I think go overlooked.

Patrick Lencioni, author of the "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable" and other best-selling business books addressed this in his keynote speech at the *Professional Builder* Benchmark Conference in September. His most significant point: there are two requirements for organizational success — to be both smart and healthy — and we tend to focus only on the smart side, which includes strategy, marketing, finance and technology. The healthy side, though, can have more significant effect on our greatness as companies and organizations. By healthy, Lencioni means such things as minimal politics, minimal confusion and high morale



traits in employees: commitment and alignment to company goals.

Our editorial team has had the privilege of working with several Shea Homes employees on different projects, including the National Housing Quality Awards; I can speak from personal experience that these kinds of soft traits are evident in every Shea person I've met. No matter what is happening in the economy or business environment, you understand they are part of a healthy organizational culture that does as much

The *Professional Builder* Giant 400 Survey will be online on Jan. 1. You can review it now by visiting www.ProBuilder.com/Giant400.

— the hard-to-control human aspects of business management.

Shea Homes excels in all the traditional smart areas we measure in the business world. I think it really separates itself in the healthy areas. When Senior Contributing Editor Matt Power traveled to California to interview Shea's senior managers, he was struck by the common language they used. You can see it in his article on page 42. People at Shea Homes speak regularly of honesty and integrity. They benchmark employee morale and company cultural fit. CEO Bert Selva, explains that the company looks to two

or more to ensure the company's greatness than even the most sophisticated process could.

Don't get me wrong. Refined business processes are essential to greatness. But if you want to be a *Professional Builder* Builder of the Year, you have to be healthy — top to bottom. **PB**

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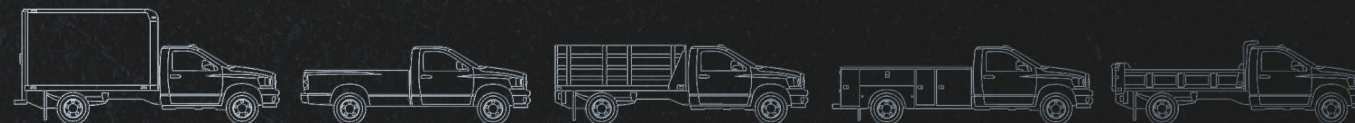
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LESSONS LEARNED

The Last Word on Lean

Seven wasteful activities you should eliminate

My tirade on lean production has gone on now for six months. Many who have endured my conference presentations and keynotes of late have suggested I might need stronger blood pressure medication. I get steamed when so many builders pursue actions — I can't call them strategies — that purport to save money but in reality make things worse for themselves as well as their suppliers, trades and customers.

I am not invoking the proverbial consultant crutch that what's happening is bad in the long term. I am talking about now — this quarter, *this month, this week*. Why do builders pursue actions that lead inexorably to lower margins and upset customers? They understand neither the consequences nor the alternatives.

For last month's column I promised to get into more detail about a different way to preserve and grow margins through lean production methods. First, though, I was compelled to address the incredible proliferation of builder demand letters for across-the-board percentage cuts from their suppliers and trades. That's a perfect demonstration of the primary obstacle to implementing lean methods — the right operating culture.

Let's be frank. If you read my November column and did not see the fallacy of the

demand letter approach, go no further. You simply cannot pursue lean production without strong, positive, high-trust relationships with your suppliers and trades. Such relationships and demand letters are mutually exclusive.

If you are still interested, then you either have the strong relationships required or you are convinced you can undue the damage. That's not easy, but I have seen it done.

Getting to the heart of lean production

So let's look at the heart of lean production and put it in builder-speak.

"Lean" is an extensive body of production science that extends all the way back through management, product planning and purchasing, but at its core it emphasizes eliminating waste in seven ways. These represent huge opportunities for us.

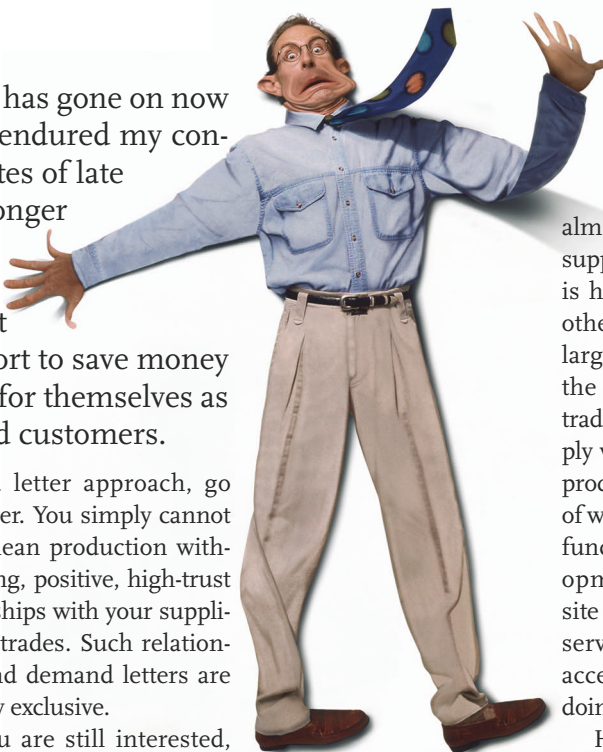
Because our business is

almost entirely dependent on suppliers and trades, the waste is harder to see compared to other types of production. A large percentage is buried in the costs the suppliers and trades bear; thus builders simply view this waste as a cost of production. Another big chunk of waste is contained in builder functions, like product development, site development, site supervision and warranty service, which have become accepted as normal costs of doing business.

Here's a quick overview of the seven wastes.

1. Over-production.

The definition of waste of over-production is producing *more* than is needed *faster* than it is needed or *before* it is needed. In just one year, this has become a monumental industry issue. The current downturn is driven in no small part by excess inventory of finished homes, and a massive finished-lot inventory exacerbates the financial stress. An old mentor of mine used to preach that the greatest builder sin of all was "the unclosed final." I think a lot of home builders would agree with him.



'Lean' is an extensive body of production science that extends all the way back through management, product planning and purchasing, but at its core it emphasizes eliminating waste in seven ways.



2. Wait Time.

Defined as any idle time that occurs when two codependent events are not synchronized, this one should need no further explanation. Yet it must, because on any building site you will see houses sitting idle more often than not. Even when there is activity on a job, it's not hard to spot opportunities for simultaneous work. Subtle, but it's wait time all the same. This is also a huge problem in both community start-up and product development.

3. Process Waste. This is about redundant effort in production, planning and communication that adds no value to the product or service. For example, I can't tell you how many times I have heard superintendents lament turning in a change request for a plan without working out the recurring problem. Six months later, the superintendent is still short 16 pre-cuts on the Pinnacle II plan. Get a group together and start brainstorming all the mistakes your company makes over and over. You'll get it. The trick is taking action to prevent it.

4. Transportation. Any movement of material that doesn't support production is waste. Remember US Build and BuildNet? Those were two high-tech start-ups that blew up in the process of trying to apply new technology to old building industry problems, one of which was the rampant waste in distribution costs. If you don't believe it, walk a few projects and look in the back of the first 10 or 12 panel trucks you see. What you will find is mostly just air. These trucks average less than 20 percent

full. The buried costs are astronomical but, as we have seen, "out of sight, out of mind." And little changes.

5. Inventory. This definition is critical and counter-intuitive, and it's not what you think. House and lot inventory are covered primarily by overproduction. Inventory waste is any supply in excess of materials needed to produce the house in a "just-in-time" manner. In a perfect world, virtually nothing ever sits in a warehouse, on a lot or in a house awaiting installation. It is either being made, being moved or being installed. Our problem is that the cost of this is buried in the balance sheets of our manufacturers, suppliers and trades.

I spent a year in the dark ages of the early '90s on a supply-chain team with a major builder. We were astounded at the amount of waste we discovered buried in processes everyone thought were normal — and the builder pays for every cent of it.

1. Motion. Any movement of people that does not contribute to building a home is waste. I am looking for just one builder who finally has the guts to say to their trades, "We will pay you \$200 for each and every dry run to our sites." That would get some attention! But you know what would happen? Within 6 months, the builder would see improved margins. Yes, I am saying it would be a money-maker, because the only way a builder could eliminate the cost of dry runs would be to eliminate the causes. A key tenant of lean production is you *always* stop the line; you *never* bury a mistake. Or guess what; it never gets fixed. Not confronting production glitches such as wasted trips simply guarantees they will continue — and continue to cost you money.


2. Defects. Defect waste, despite an overall improvement in the industry and a few examples of extraordinary performance, is still rampant. The

evidence is inarguable and the cost is horrific. Even many of the top-scoring builders on the J.D. Power and Associates survey routinely reserve 10 days to two weeks for rework and repair between "final" and closing. This is 100 percent pure waste and costs far more than the obvious supervision, carry costs and buried trade expense. What's worse: every trade involved in this quality charade performing rework is *not* building new homes.

We had 15 glory years in home building, and now come a couple gory ones. That's a good trade-off, all things considered, but the impact is still painful. All of our talk about process improvement has produced scant results. During the boom times, the motivation for builders, suppliers, trades and manufacturers alike was never sufficient. That has all changed now.

Fear is a powerful motivator in the short-run and perhaps enough to wake the industry up. People seem at least willing to listen now and, ironically, they also have the time. You have a choice. You can go the formula route of slashing overheads and hammering your suppliers and trades and ultimately lose more than you gain, or you can take the road less traveled in home building that will show you how to maintain your profits without destroying the margins of your suppliers and trades and trashing the relationships that took years to build. That road is called lean production, and it's wide open — no traffic at all. How about creating some? **PB**

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

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Excellent performance is the result of an excellent process. Take a look at great sports teams. They are hailed for executing the basics at levels higher than the competition, and the best teams always seek ways to get better. They also have leaders who use process improvement to push the team to higher performance levels.

Companies have many programs to help improve processes. You have probably heard of some of them, including Total Quality Management, Kaizen (Continuous Improvement) and Six Sigma.

Within any company, there are multiple, related processes that must work together to achieve a desired outcome.

By continually improving your processes, you are creating a powerful system for satisfying and delighting customers. When great processes are in place, they take home buyer satisfaction to new heights and more-consistent levels.

Where Is Your Pain?

Every process improvement program

must begin with the all-important question: where is your pain? You must begin with a general identification of what issues trouble your company and where. Of course, this is just a general description of what you hope to have process improvement efforts fix, but very important to establish a baseline that is the foundation for later decisions.

Process improvement teams will often revise their answer to this question once they collect more data and discover that, in fact, the pain resides in another part of the company.

Let's follow a client whom we'll call XYZ Builders to see how it handled a

process improvement initiative. XYZ Builders lies in a major metropolitan market and came to us for help with its low scores for landscaping satisfaction. At first we thought the pain was landscaping delivery, but after we completed our root cause analysis, we realized it was something vastly different. Read on to learn more.

Decide What to Collect

The next step in getting to the source of pain is to begin measuring. It boils down to three key questions:

- What you are going to measure?
- How you are going to measure it?
- What metrics are you going to use?

For the best process improvement you should measure errors and incidents using the following four metrics when possible:

1. Frequency of incidents
2. Trend of incidents (performance over time)

CHOOSING ANALYSIS TOOLS

You can choose which variables you put in the regression equation, and it will tell you which ones have the most effect. We recommend using a consultant to run this type of analysis for your company. In lieu of using a statistician, you can use failure mode and effects analysis along with cause and effect analysis and scatter analysis (refer to “Quality Essentials” by Dr. Jack B. ReVelle) or a simple correlation function found in Microsoft Excel. Please note that correlations are not the same as regressions and often yield different results, so they must be used carefully in your improvement efforts. We prefer regression over correlation because regression does a better job accounting for misleading relationships in the data. Correlation is well known to be a weaker tool, but still effective if used properly.

3. Range of incidents (maximum and minimum range of errors)

4. Rank order of identified issues

In the case of XYZ Builders, we examined the number of customers who had given the lowest score for landscaping; plotted trends over time; identified ranges of satisfaction or dissatisfaction per month; and ranked the landscaping comments provided by the buyers. This data was critical in making the root cause discovery. You should do the same with your customer data.

Root Cause Analysis

Collecting data is critical to this process, but it can yield more information than anticipated. How do you determine the source of the problem from all this information? The key to making the root cause discovery is to examine your data through analysis tools.

With XYZ Builders’ data, we ran an analysis called regression. Regression is a statistical analysis procedure that takes all of your data and determines the importance of each against a single key variable. (See *Choosing Analysis Tools*, left, for more information)

Armed with regression results, we discovered that the landscaping scores were related to sales scores and overall value. This result uncovered something very important: there was more to the story than just poor performance with our trade. We did further interviews with buyers and discovered that dissatisfied customers thought complete landscaping was included in the home price. The reality was that it wasn’t, even though the builder was marketing and selling these homes as if the landscaping were included. In this case, we had a classic example of misleading expectations that had nothing to do with the performance of the trades contracted to do the work.

Implement Change and Monitor Results

Once you have a root cause or at least alleged root cause, you can set out to fix

the problem. With misleading expectations during the sales and design process now clearly identified, our team helped the client clarify what landscaping should be included in the price. We also worked with the client’s employees to properly communicate the offer and create a clear upgrade option for those who wanted to purchase the higher level of landscaping shown.

Once the revised program was deployed, we monitored results to see if satisfaction levels increased — and they did.

Learn Lessons, Adjust and Redeploy

We initially thought the landscaping company wasn’t doing its job and immediately came down on the trade. The reality of the situation was that it wasn’t the trade’s fault; the root cause was the builder.

In many cases, we go down the road of improvement only to find out that we are not getting the results we expected. This is because we have not found the root cause, and we need to repeat the root cause analysis described above. By diligently monitoring and learning from data, you can adjust and redeploy your solution, getting the results you desire.

Process improvement is critical and difficult, but with discipline and knowledge you can fix things we do every day that impede excellence. Moreover, builders interested in achieving high referrals and increased market share should be anxious to tap into these powerful tools. The best home building companies are already taking the leap into process improvement and yielding big rewards for their disciplined culture of excellence. **PB**

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



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NEW HOME KNOWLEDGE

Sales Presentations for Internet Customers

How to fine-tune your presentations for Web-savvy customers

More than half of your customers have already spent time on your Web site.

Statistics show that walk-in customers who have already visited a builder's Web site are more than twice as likely to buy a home as those coming in with little or no knowledge about the homes or community.

In many ways, a walk-in guest who has visited a Web site is a "be-back." Chances are they already know about your homes, community, locations and prices. They have already eliminated many builders and communities during their electronic search and are now narrowing their options to builders who meet their most important criteria.

A big disconnect in new home sales often comes if you fail to structure your presentation differently when you meet a Web site visitor. I recently attended a new-home sales seminar called "Maximizing Sales from your Web site." The curriculum focused on capturing and harvesting more e-leads from customers who visit your site. Although that is certainly important, it is secondary to understanding the different selling strategies necessary when an online visitor shows up at your sales office.

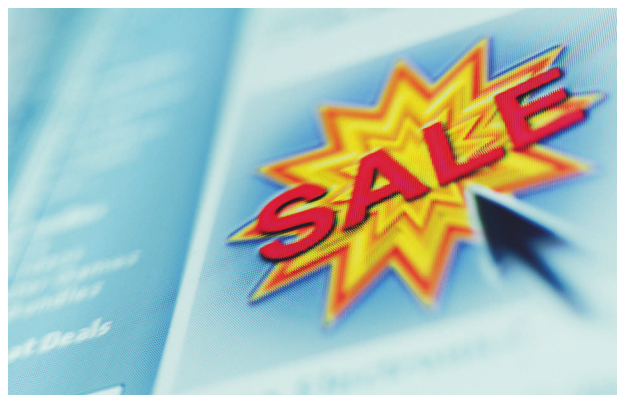
Remember, no matter how well you follow up on e-mail leads, a visitor to your sales office offers a better chance for a sale than prospective buyers sitting at their computer.

Traditional sales training asserts we begin our presentation with the premise the customer knows little about our homes and communities. The "critical path" method of selling forces sales professionals to include information on the home, the home site, the location, the community and the builder in every presentation, no matter how much the potential buyer knew walking in.

Most training programs ask the sales professional to prioritize the customer's needs and then build the presentation around those desires. What each training system fails to address is identifying how much a walk-in visitor already knows about the community.

It is essential that we learn how much the customer knows about the community as part of the connecting or greeting portion of our sales presentation.

I recommend sales professionals ask first-time cus-



No matter how well you follow up on e-mail leads, a visitor to your sales office offers a better chance for a sale than prospective buyers sitting at their computer.

tomers to the sales office the following question immediately after greeting them and exchanging names: "What do you know about our homes and our community?" The question is not intrusive, and the answer provides a wealth of information.

Understanding what customers already know and what made them visit is the key kickoff to a great sales presentation. **PB**

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



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2007 Builder of the Year Shea Homes



THE FANTASTIC

FOUR. Shea Homes' top executives come from diverse work backgrounds, a factor that lends to the company's staying power. Back to front: Eric Snider, vice president of sales and marketing; Robb Pigg, vice president of operations; Terry Bryan, director of safety; and Bert Selva, president and CEO.

>> BY **MATTHEW POWER**, SENIOR CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Lasting Legacy

Not many construction firms can boast 125 years of building. Shea Homes uses that experience to craft a company culture of no ordinary business.

To reach the corporate headquarters of Shea Homes in Walnut, Calif., — the jewel in the crown of the J.F. Shea Co., — you must face the perilous gridlock of Southern California's freeways; the dust and detours of road construction; and all of the other fast-paced pressures of modern life in the fast lanes. Once you walk through Shea's doors, however, you feel like you're home with friends.

The sense of personal relationship with the company's employees is no accident. It's a large part of their corporate creed: the psychological bedrock upon which they have built their reputation — and their construction empire.

"We're concerned with keeping the company's family values and living by those values," notes Bert Selva, CEO and president of Shea Homes, who joined the company 10 years ago. "It begins and ends with honesty and integrity."

Those high-minded ideals, of course, are a familiar mantra in the business world. But the real test is whether a firm actually lives its values. Shea tackles that challenge with a high-tech and a "high-touch" perspective: it uses number-crunching software to benchmark "soft" goals, such as employee morale, customer satisfaction and company cultural fit. At the same time, Shea's corporate philosophy still keeps personal contact high on the priority list.

For these reasons and others, *Professional Builder* has

chosen Shea Homes as the Builder of the Year for 2007. A large, private company, Shea builds more than 6,000 homes a year in eight divisions across the Western United States, along with one self-contained division in North Carolina. The home-building arm of J.F. Shea Co. also includes Shea Financial Services, a mortgage firm that services about 71 percent of Shea's new home sales.

Despite the emphasis on people, this isn't a loosely run firm. The execution — not just the rhetoric — of family values actually plays into the hierarchy of friendly competition within the parent company.

That includes upper management. For example, the company has been conducting very specific surveys of employees for years that ask them how their supervisors perform. The results of those surveys are then ranked. If you're at the bottom of the list, you may get called in for some coaching.

"It's not so hard-core that people feel they're being ranked all the time," Selva notes. "But it gives us a good perspective on how the organization is working."

He adds that Shea emphasizes two major employee traits: commitment and alignment to the organization's goals. Surveys such as this one can tell whether people are really living by the company's values — respecting other employees, for example.

"You can get people who are very committed to the organization," he explains, "but they may not know where the company is going."



“The company really gives us a lot of autonomy and the leeway we need to be successful.”

—Rick Andreen

The Driver's Seat

Shea has developed a custom software program they call “the dashboard.” The inner workings are a closely guarded secret.

What Selva will say is that putting this managerial software into action required a major overhaul of Shea's bureaucracy.

“We used to have as many as 450 different reports that had to be entered,” Selva recalls “We consolidated that number down to about 60, which are really integrated well.”

That data is put into a deceptively simple looking computer screen consisting of a half-dozen simple dials resembling speedometers. But instead of tracking highway speed, these dials reflect real data from all eight of Shea's divisions, collected in real time. At a glance, any division manager can check in on any other division and compare progress for a number of key indicators, including on-time closings, percent of sales from referrals, accident frequency and sales versus units available.

Selva believes all of Shea's divisions should be measured by the same standards (with the exception of product design) despite regional and market differences. Divisions whose numbers are lagging, he says, won't get taken to the woodshed, but they will know it's time to evaluate methods and marketing.

“What [the dashboard] really does is triggers dialogue,” Selva explains. “For example, if sales are not keeping pace with construction, we ask whether they were too optimistic in their sales planning.”

'Collegial' Lieutenants

Despite the pressure of constant side-by-side benchmarking of their performance, Shea's division heads say they don't feel unrealistic pressures.

“The company really gives us a lot of autonomy and the leeway we need to be successful,” notes Rick Andreen, president of the Active Adult division based in Scottsdale, Ariz. “The culture of the company isn't to go and beat someone over

Living History The J.F. Shea Co.

1908

Under the direction of Charlie Shea, described by those who know him as a “pugnacious, hard-drinking little Irishman who hated suits and ties,” the company expands into major sewer and storm drain construction, constantly moving up to bigger, more complex jobs.



1881

John F. Shea opens the J.F. Shea Plumbing Co. in Portland, Ore. His company builds much of that city's infrastructure for the next 20 years.

1926

The J.F. Shea Co. wins a major contract to build the sewer system for the Portland Seawall in Oregon, next to the Willamette River. The \$11 million seawall takes three years to complete.

1935

At the same time the Hoover Dam is being built, the Golden Gate Bridge needs skilled contractors. The J.F. Shea Company wins a \$3.6 million contract to build the piers and abutment that will support the bridge. Ed Shea, the younger brother of Charlie Shea, takes charge of this work.



1958

For legal reasons, the J.F. Shea Co. becomes incorporated as a new company, but it's still run by descendants of the Shea family. The new generation of the Shea family renews the company's emphasis on heavy construction and tunnels.



1931

Thanks to Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, the J.F. Shea Co. manages to thrive and prosper during the Great Depression. It lands major contract work on the Hoover Dam, where Charlie Shea, with his hands-on style, becomes something of a legend.



1940

The J.F. Shea Co. becomes a shipbuilder — one of several companies involved in the production of Liberty Ships, used to transport goods between the U.S. and England for the War effort.

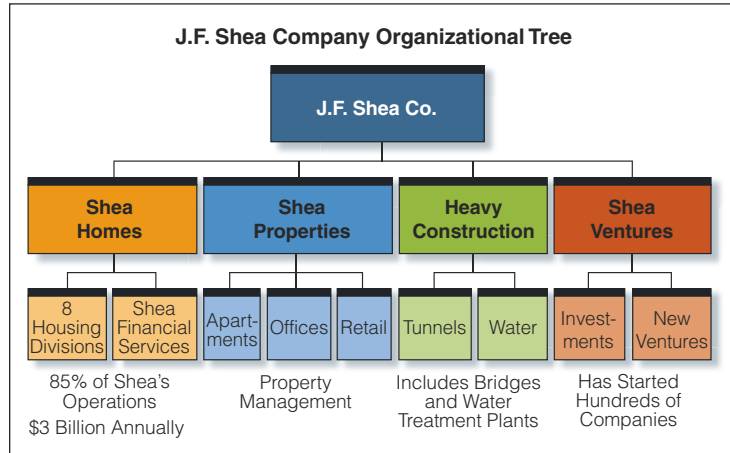


the head if they're not doing well in a certain area. "I've never felt a rivalry between the divisions, and I've been here eight years," he adds. "I have a very collegial relationship with all of the other division managers. We don't really compete for resources."

Andreen also can speak knowledgeably about what separates Shea from the larger, public builders. He used to work for two of the largest in the country.

"At the end of the day, as a private company, we can act with a longer term horizon," he says. "We don't need to do things that make our numbers look good for January. If accelerating a land purchase makes this year's numbers look worse, but promises better long term results, we can do that. I've seen public builders buy extra units that they know are not going to be profitable just so they can hit the numbers they promised."

"I have a direct relationship with the company owners," he adds. "A public firm can't possibly know all of its 13,000 shareholders."



ORGANIC GROWTH. Instead of pushing aside one business to start another, Shea maintains its traditional profit centers while forging into new areas. Weakness in one sector may mean opportunity in another, providing a financial safety net.

At the same time, he says, his team members share an indirect sense of connection with the Shea family.



1965

Shea tackles high-profile tunneling projects such as the Bay Area Rapid Transit System, earning a reputation for superior engineering even in the worst seismic conditions.

1974

PBS Corp. changes its name to Shea Homes as Roy Humphreys takes the helm. The company enters a period of many years of cyclical highs and lows.



1988

Shea Homes rebounds. Now fully staffed with 200 employees, the company has diversified into three divisions and becomes increasingly involved with master planned communities.

2004

As part of ongoing diversification, J.F. Shea Co. forms an investment banking firm called Shea Ventures and a property management firm called Shea Properties. The latter company creates new opportunities for Shea Homes, enabling it to offer new types of product in both commercial and residential markets.



1968

The J.F. Shea Co. enters the home building business under the name of PBS Corp. Starting with just six employees in Newport Beach, Calif., the firm has 145 homes under construction by the end of the first year.

1982

Hit hard by high interest rates and high inflation, Shea Homes builds only 38 homes this year, the fewest since 1968. Personnel are thinned down to 35 employees.

1995

With both the number and financial strength of housing divisions increasing, the J.F. Shea Co. acquires a mortgage company, which soon expands into other financial products and services, becoming Shea Financial Services.

2007

Thanks to a decade-long building boom, Shea Homes has grown to include eight housing divisions responsible for more than 6,000 units of new housing each year. At the same time, in the Eastern U.S., Shea Homes Charlotte, based in Charlotte, N.C., builds homes under the Shea name as well, although it's an autonomous operation and the umbrella of the larger corporation.

“

Half of my job is looking at the future, deciding which markets we want to move into.”

—Bert Selva

“I think the most important thing to understand about Shea is that we get the best of both worlds. We’re a family-owned business and a big corporation. People don’t like doing business with big corporations, but they do like the stability a corporation offers. The fact that we’re also a family business makes the corporate aspect acceptable.”

Shea’s San Diego division earned a National Housing Quality award this year. It won the same award 10 years ago. And it’s not alone. Shea’s Arizona and Colorado divisions have also won the prestigious award in recent years.

“We look at where we were 10 years ago when

we won that award,” says San Diego division president Paul Barnes, “and we’re light years ahead of that mark today.”

Barnes notes that his division implemented Total Quality Management principles in 1991 and reduced defects by 80 percent. It’s building between 500 and 700 new homes a year.

“The numbers are important,” Barnes adds, “but we can still take the risk. You just tell [the company’s top brass], ‘Here’s what we want to change,’ and you’ll get the support you need.”

Barnes adds that this sense of trust from corporate allows his division to take on relatively

FACES FROM THE FIELD

How do Shea Homes’ employees view the company? Here’s what they had to say.



GARY GOESSLING, Superintendent,
Southern California Division,
Tapestry Community, La Habra, Calif.

“I feel like I can pick up the phone and talk to anybody in the company. ... Believe it or not, the only thing we’re short on is labor. When there’s a slow down like this, a lot of the trades will lay people off, so there are fewer of them to go around.”



JOE SCHULTE, Community
Representative, Tapestry Community,
La Habra, Calif.

“We try to keep in contact with buyers through construction and beyond. We hold meet-your-neighbor parties and bring in people from both the construction and mortgage side of Shea. We talk a lot about Shea’s history as a builder, pointing out that the company has been around forever, that they’ve been involved in all these great projects. That helps them understand that we care about quality.”



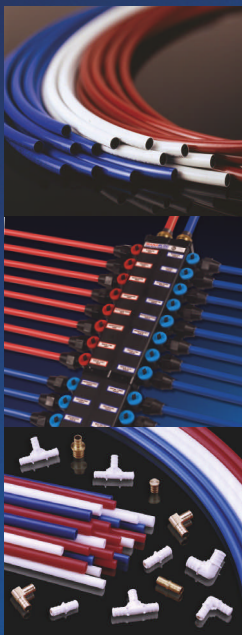
DAVID MUELLER,
Assistant Supervisor,
Walden Estates, Brea, Calif.

“I’ve been with Shea for 15 years now; I just transferred here from another community that’s built out. This company’s been very good to me. They’re really focused on quality and constantly making improvements.”

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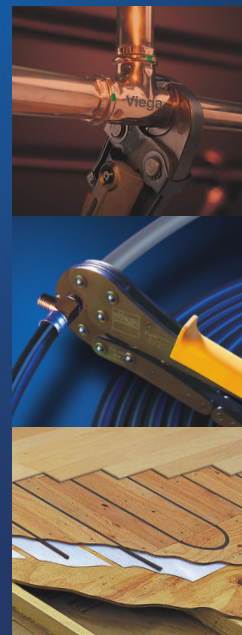
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“Our employees come at the business from the perspective of customer satisfaction.”

— Paul Barnes

small projects — an important flexibility as land becomes scarce.

“Sometimes it’s hard to fit into the Rubik’s cube of local entitlements,” he says. “We’ve got a couple of years [land] supply here in San Diego. The smallest is about 67 homes, but it’s a block from the ocean. Part of why we take a project is because we love what we do. We want to do stuff that’s fun. So sometimes we’ll take a 40-home community if it plays to our strength.

“Our employees come at the business from the perspective of customer satisfaction,” Barnes continues. “That’s part of the culture, and we’ve been practicing it long enough that it’s paying dividends for us. We’ll continue to fine-tune the buyer experience.”

Market Chameleon

Like most highly successful companies, Shea responds quickly to market changes. It’s known as an innovator, not just in terms of building homes but also in its marketing.

Case in point: a serious housing slowdown that’s rippling across the Southwest. In response, Shea’s Southern California division just launched a campaign that helps home buyers sell their existing homes.

Eric Snider, vice president of sales and marketing, exemplifies the company’s efforts to unify operations across divisions.

“I’m charged with shepherding the brand — maintaining brand integrity,” he explains. “The divisions really handle local advertising buys;

SAFETY PAYBACK

Shea Homes’ commitment to worker safety has led to unexpected payoffs.

When Terry Bryan joined Shea back in 1999 as director of health and safety, he came from the trenches — literally. Bryan had expertise in heavy construction, including tunneling, and he brought with him new approaches to improving Shea’s safety record.

“When I first came on board, they were using an outside safety firm. But it was clear that having a third-party person come by the job site once a week to do an inspection was not enough.”

Bryan created a checklist for every job foreman to complete on a regular basis. He also established criteria for screening trades, similar to methods commercial firms use.

“We began to check their experience modification factor, which measures their tendency to have accidents.”

Bryan also initiated regular training in safety for trades and an audit system to eliminate companies that don’t clean up their practices. The result during three years: a 41 percent reduction in accidents, and a 66 percent reduction in the severity of accidents.

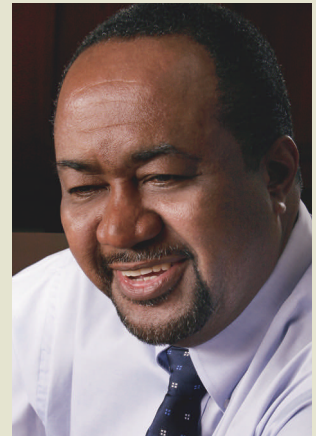
Robb Pigg, vice president of operations, says this safety upgrade has another big benefit: reducing the number of lost work days.

“What we’re seeing is a total change of culture,” Pigg says. “Because of the focus on safety, each

supervisor knows the capability of every man on his team and doesn’t put him in a position where he could get injured.”

At the same time, Pigg notes, he and Bryan allow for variations in how different divisions meet various safety requirements. Employees can implement multiple solutions to problems that the company will accept if it agrees. “Being at the corporate level gives us the vantage point of seeing the big picture, of what system serves each community best,” Pigg says.

That approach pays off in tangible ways, Pigg says. On one job site in the Costa Azul community in Newport Coast, Calif., it’s been 875 days since a crew member missed a day because of injuries.



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"Fifty years from now, I'd like people to look back and say we made a difference. We enhanced a lot of peoples' lives — not just our customers — but also our employees."

— Bert Selva



that's where most of the advertising budget goes. We spend about 10 percent on national buys, such as the *Wall Street Journal*."

Snider adds, however, that Shea's marketing effort "is not a strict hierarchy." Divisions often market outside of the brand, particularly in a master planned community involving several builders.

A tougher sales market has shifted the focus in recent months. The company has gone back to a more local model, he says, where divisions are encouraged to try innovative marketing ideas all the way down to the subdivision level. "For example, Active Adult is trying something: a guaranteed price. They've found that these clients are very aware of price variations. The way it works is if we close on their unit and change (lower) the base price of that unit within 90 days of the closing, we give them back the money they would have saved."

Shea often taps synergies across divisions, linking their mortgage company to marketing plans, for example. "We're working on a retailing message to get an interest rate that will infuse some interest," Snider says. To make that happen, Shea Financial Services bought a "compelling rate" that Snider believes will entice buyers.

Some moves are less dramatic but equally unexpected. For example, the company introduced four-car garages in Phoenix and made a bang. But Shea doesn't innovate for the sake of change, Selva notes. Like most builders, it follows the customer's lead.

"Whatever we do has to create added value in the customer's mind," Selva says.

On the other hand, he says, as a private company, Shea doesn't have to chase volume. And as a result, Shea's divisions often set themselves apart by saying no to the latest big builder craze.

"For instance, a lot of the big builders are doing high-rise towers," Selva explains. "We chose not to get into that business now, because you can't close one unit at time, which is how we like to build. If the market slows and we need to slow starts, we can do it. We don't have Wall Street people calling us, pressuring us."

Snider notes that Shea's marketing isn't just about selling homes in the here and now. It's about sustainability.

"Half of my job is looking at the future, deciding which markets we want to move into," he explains. "We look at where and how

people live today and do extensive surveying. We want to understand what the motivational drivers are."

Snider says he's currently looking closely at Florida, evaluating Shea's plan for a new division there.

The Long View

Despite the market slowdown, there's little doubt that Shea will ride out the slide and possibly emerge even stronger. That's been its pattern for 125 years. Paradoxically, the secret to that success has come from its focus on the future, not dependence on an illustrious past. Side by side with the people-focused culture of the company is a sharp, no-nonsense corporate approach to balance.

Selva says he receives a monthly letter from each division president that summarizes specifics of the division. "Our sales people are telling us that traffic is down, but at the same time the quality of buyers is up," Selva says.

The construction business tends to balance in other ways, too.

How important is the company's 125-year legacy? That depends on what you emphasize, says Andreen.

"We did a study on the subject," he says. "We found out that once your building company longevity gets beyond 30 or 40 years, customers don't care if you're Centex, Pulte or Shea."

They do pay heed, he adds, when they learn about Shea's work on landmark projects. "They like to hear that we worked on the Hoover Dam or the Golden Gate Bridge, or that we have a tunneling business 900 feet under Manhattan island."

Selva adds that during his job interview, he asked Shea's owners "point blank" about whether they had plans to sell the company to a public builder in the near future.

"You should have seen the look they gave me," he recalls. "I realized then that the Shea family really cares about their legacy and their good name as much as they do about making money. They still get excited about new ideas. I don't see them making any big changes."

"Tomorrow is more important than yesterday," Selva continues. "Fifty years from now, I'd like people to look back and say we made a difference. We enhanced a lot of peoples' lives — not just our customers — but also our employees."



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*A Comparison of Air Duct Systems Energy Savings and Acoustical Performance. NAIMA Pub. No. AH 109. May 2000.

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The Shea Homes Universe

Shea's eight divisions spread across several states. While product design varies from state to state and community to community, the merging of art with sound building science remains a constant.

RICK ANDREEN, president of Shea's Active Adult division, explains how the company's flexible approach allows different divisions to capture local architectural styles and market demands. Shea understands that both second-home buyers in Colorado can be very different from Active Adult buyers in Southern California.

"They give us a lot of leeway to be successful," Andreen says.

"We're dealing with a buyer who is a lot more particular than the standard buyer. On average, they've owned 7.4 houses, including 3.2 new homes. That's well above the average. They have discretionary income, and a lot more time.

"Think about this," he adds, "a move-up buyer typically has two people in the household working all day, so it's dark by the time they get home. If they get a settlement crack in the foundation, they don't worry about it too much. The active adult, on the other hand, is sitting there all day, watching the crack grow."



SAGUARO HEIGHTS AT VISTANCIA

SET AGAINST A BACKDROP OF MOUNTAINS IN PEORIA, ARIZ., this single-family home community of 51 homes that "harmonize with the desert" is about half completed and sold. Shea's Arizona division's community includes about 1,700 acres of open space. Homes range in price from \$330,000 to \$402,000, in sizes ranging from 1,721 square feet to 2,766 square feet. The Web site, like all of Shea's interactive community Web sites, includes a "live-lot map," where potential buyers can choose a lot the same way they might pick an airline seat.

Web site: www.sheahomes.com

Eight is not Enough

Shea's eight home divisions will likely expand to include Florida soon.

Shea Homes, Southern California (Brea, Calif.)

Shea Homes, Inland Empire (Corona, Calif.)

Shea Homes, San Diego

Shea Homes, Northern California (Livermore, Calif.)

Shea Homes, Colorado (Highlands Ranch, Colo.)

Shea Homes, Sacramento (Roseville, Calif.)

Shea Homes, Active Adult (Scottsdale, Ariz.)

Shea Homes, Arizona (Scottsdale, Ariz.)


Shea Financial Services (Aliso Viejo, Calif.)



BROWNSTONE COLLECTION

LIKE MANY BIG BUILDERS, Shea recognizes the growing appeal of traditional neighborhood planning. This community south of Denver includes 359 brownstone-style townhomes, sized from 1,332 square feet to 1,835 square feet. Unit prices range from \$231,900 and \$295,000. That price point — along with the promise of semi-urban living (with homes in close proximity to retailers) — has attracted both move-up and first-time buyers. The Colorado division reports that the second and final phase of construction is underway.

Web site: www.sheahomes.com



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THE SHEA HOMES UNIVERSE



SET IN THE HIGHLY PRIZED NEWPORT COAST REGION of Southern California, this luxury single-family project is about half complete, with Phase 5 of 14 underway. Full build out will include 64 homes priced at \$2 million or more. These homes will become part of Pacific Ridge, a gated community. They are being offered in three base plans, with numerous options and amenities, in sizes ranging from 3,601 square feet to 4,889 square feet. Most amenities aim at the California lifestyle, including indoor-outdoor living spaces, single-level living, three-car tandem garages and pool cabanas. Web site: www.sheahomes.com

MANRESA AT SUMMER LAKE

DESCRIBED AS THE LATEST IN "DESTINATION LIVING," this community in Oakley, Calif., features 132 upscale single-family homes priced between \$661,000 and \$800,000 to be built in 13 phases. Shea's Northern California division is now completing phase three. The community is being sold for its resort-style living, with amenities such as a swimming and recreation center and hiking trails. The four base floor plans range in size from 3,660 square feet to more than 4,300 square feet, with four-car garages. Web site: www.sheahomes.com



WITH LOTS FOR 82 SINGLE-FAMILY LUXURY HOMES IN SAN DIEGO, this upscale community is set on the edge of a nature preserve called Mission Trails Regional Park. Despite prices that start at \$1.3 million, Shea has kept the design options relatively simple, with just three base floor plans. Homes at Stonebridge range from 4,435 square feet to 5,599 square feet. Each plan includes three to five bedrooms, an interior courtyard and the option of a four-car garage. Paul Barnes, division president, reports that his team just completed phase three of seven. Web site: www.sheahomes.com

SANCTUARY AT STONEBRIDGE ESTATES





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THE SHEA HOMES UNIVERSE

WATERMILL AT ADELINE'S FARM

"OLD EUROPE MEETS AMERICAN VERNACULAR" might be a good way to describe the design theme and marketing for this community of 147 large, single-family homes in Winchester, Calif. Shea's Inland Empire division offers three floor plans in one- and two-story variations, ranging in size from 2,651 to 3,198 square feet. Prices range from \$452,000 to about \$525,000, with luxury perks available such as four-car garages and home offices. The builder reports that phase 5 of 11 is underway, with 72 units sold and about eight lots currently available.

Web site: www.sheahomes.com



TRILOGY AT GLEN IVY



ONE OF THE LATEST OFFERINGS FROM SHEA'S ACTIVE ADULT DIVISION, this community in Corona, Calif., includes both single-family and attached "lock and leave" product. The homes are marketed for their quiet seclusion within close proximity to Los Angeles. The site is located next to the rolling hills of the Cleveland National Forest. Sales to date have been strong, thanks in part to a price range from the mid \$300,000s to low \$900,000s. The builder reports that the community's 1,300-unit build out is 86 percent complete. A wide range of floor plans also appeals to buyers, with both modest and more luxurious models from 1,290 square feet to 2,300 square feet. Web site: www.sheahomes.com



Sierra Sky at Whitney Ranch

LOCATED IN ROCKLIN, CALIF., this community of 134 single-family homes includes three relatively similar floor plans. The marketing plan targets move-up buyers looking for good-size homes with a few luxury amenities, such as master suites, high ceilings and optional bonus rooms. Shea's Sacramento division also emphasizes easy freeway access, proximity to the Sierra Nevada Mountains and "open, flowing floor plans." Prices range from \$500,000 to \$600,000 for floor plans that hover around 3,000 square feet.

Web site: www.sheahomes.com

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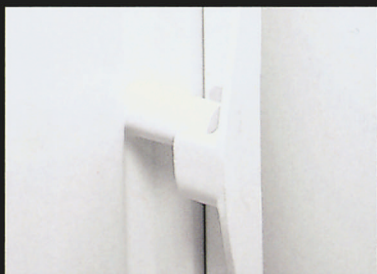
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INSIDE & OUT

Suite Style

Master retreats become luxurious, private destinations within the home.

A MASTER SUITE SHOULD ALLOW FOR PRIVACY, but not so much that all contact with the outdoors is shut out. This private get away offers double door opening to a veranda.

HOME BUYERS WANT A PLACE TO DISPLAY their accomplishments and memories. Built-in storage adds a custom touch to the room and will also provide much-needed storage space.

MASTER SUITES have turned into master retreats. To provide a luxurious, vacation-like feeling, divide the master bedroom into separate areas or zones. Here, there is a sleeping area and a sitting area.

COMFORT IS KING in the master suite. Depending on the region, fireplaces add a nice touch to the design and create a cozy space for sitting areas.



HOMEOWNERS WANT LUXURY in their master suites.

Turn unused space above the fireplace into a focal point for art or entertainment systems.

Master bedrooms once sat 12 feet wide and included a whirlpool tub, if that. But not anymore, builders and architects say. Clients want double the square footage while adding luxury, too.

Size and Space Matter

Jerry Messman, partner emeritus of Bloodgood Sharp Buster Architects and Planners in Tampa, Fla., has seen the amount of space devoted to master suites grow. “About five years ago, master bedrooms were 12 feet wide. Now everyone wants 14 to 15 feet wide plus 18 to 20 feet in length,” Messman says.

Separating the master bedroom from the secondary bedroom helps create a master retreat. Keeping the master bedroom on the main floor can work well in a two-story house. Builders can separate the master bedroom from the secondary bedrooms in a one-story home by placing them on opposite ends of the house.

Separate Spaces, Not Separate Rooms

The master suite can offer homeowners the privacy they crave when the room is divided into separate his and her spaces. Couples still want to share the same bathroom for the social aspect, but they don’t want to share the same vanity. Some homeowners request to install separate his and her toilets.

Privacy can also include separating the master closet. Many master retreats have two walk-in closets, specifically making the larger one of the two designated to the woman and the smaller to the man. Some master retreats include one large walk-in closet and an island cabinet with drawers dividing the his and her space.

In the end, the master retreat is a place to relax and unwind. “Today the master bedroom is an adult living space,” says Berkus. “When we talk to customers one of the first things they start talking about for their want list is the master bedroom.”

Focus on Luxury

More space in the master retreat allows for more luxury.

“We’re seeing a lot more luxury in master suites as a whole,” says Tracy Holmes, president and interior designer of Studio H, Chicago. Holmes estimates between 40 and 50 percent of the firm’s master suite projects go to the luxury market. The firm has worked on about 40 master suites in the past year.

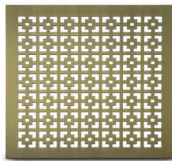
“The trend is going to a four-star luxury feel,” says Don Anderson, president of Color Design Art in Culver City, Calif. “People want that kind of pampered feel and they don’t want



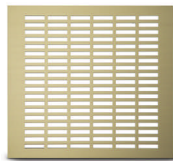
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to have to go on vacation to get it." Builders might also add luxury by creating a luxurious room filled with intricate touches in the flooring, ceiling and wall treatments as well as built-in cabinets and shelving throughout.

Part of that luxury feel comes from simulating the spa experience; homeowners crave the indulgence of a spa when they step into their master retreat, builders say. To accomplish the ultimate spa feel, some builders add a room equipped with a massage table and exercise equipment. The spa room can even be separated from the master bedroom by placing the master bathroom between it.

"A lot of builders want to really show the master suite is becoming a real retreat," says Messman. "It doesn't mean you're going to spend all your time there away from the rest of the family, but when you walk into the master bedroom you feel like you're almost on vacation."

Mastered Lifestyles

The master retreat can really be whatever the homeowner wants it to be; adding a library, exercise area or other specialty nook can complement this private homeowner's master suite. "We're living fast-paced lifestyles," says Holmes, "so having space that isn't public space is becoming essential to our well-being."

"We're now seeing more alcove areas that really are separate for different lifestyles," Holmes adds. "It could be a nursery or library or an office or even a yoga room, but it's something that is very personal to the homeowner."

Builders create these private spaces in many ways. A sitting area seems to be the most popular use of this extra space, which can be an extension of the bedroom or an attached alcove off to the side of the bedroom. The sitting area often has a space for seating, a possible fireplace and space for a plasma television.

Simple designs can add to the master retreat's effectiveness. "Some people like a master sitting retreat that's separated from the master by doors," says Barry Berkus, president of Berkus Design Studio, Santa Barbara, Calif. "If somebody wants to stay up at night to read or write or watch television, they're still within the master complex, but they're basically shut off."

Avid readers might enjoy a library, a feature that's making a comeback because of the nostalgia associated with books, says Berkus.

Outdoor living can add to the master retreat concept as well. "Some clients actually want walk-out areas with a deck or back yard where you actually walk out of the master bath into an outdoor shower," says Robert Williams, principal and part owner for KTG of Irvine, Calif. "It's almost like a rock area or waterfall."

Each homeowner will use the space differently, but it's up to the builder to provide the proper amount of space to accomplish the master retreat each homeowner is looking for. **PB**



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Between the Valleys

SunCrest Community perches in the Wasatch Mountains with views of the Salt Lake area.

High above Draper, Utah, resides the master planned SunCrest Community by developer Terrabrook. Residents have spectacular views of two valleys — Salt Lake Valley and Utah Valley — on either side of the Wasatch Mountains.

The neighborhood of Stoneleigh Heights is the only townhouse community within the master plan. When searching for a builder to construct the townhouses, Terrabrook turned to Hamlet Homes of Murray, Utah, to be the sole builder. “They wanted to select a builder that could design a very nice looking townhouse that fit their architectural style,” says David Irwin, vice president of sales and marketing for Hamlet Homes.

“They weren’t strict. It was really choosing the right builder who could pull off a good-looking product,” says Irwin. “That’s when they came to Hamlet.”

Opportunities

One of Hamlet’s fortes is building townhouses, but this project provided the opportunity to do something a bit more upscale.

Few townhouse projects provide the kind of site lines Hamlet does. The project is positioned at the entrance to SunCrest. “It puts us in a location with great views for townhouses where buyers would typically be spending \$600,000 or \$700,000,” says Irwin. “Our townhouses start in the \$200,000 range.”

Hamlet has had tremendous success building low-maintenance townhouses for entry-level buyers with a very dynamic and workable floor plan. The company

added features to the Stoneleigh Heights townhouses to give them a more luxurious feel, such as bay windows, double vanities in the master bathroom, and an island in the kitchen.

In most townhouse projects, the end unit is the most popular plan. At Stoneleigh Heights, though, the Blair

VITAL STATS

Stoneleigh Heights

Location: Draper, Utah
Neighborhood: Stoneleigh Heights in SunCrest Development
Builder: Hamlet Homes, Murray, Utah
Architect: dw taylor associates, Ellicott City, Md.
Interior Designer: Pace Interiors, Salt Lake City, Utah
Developer: Terrabrook, Dallas
Models open: February 2005
Home type: Single-family townhouse, 1-to 2-car garage
Sales to date: 120
Community size: 170
Square footage: 1,918 – 2,044
Price: \$239,990 to \$254,990
Buyer profile: Second-time move up, single professionals and empty nesters

HIP ROOFS BLEND IN with the edge of the mountain as the backdrop.



THE FAMILY ROOM
and kitchen accentuate environmental elements brought indoors through the stone fireplace and wood cabinetry.

model, which can only be situated in the middle unit, is the most popular of the three Hamlet plans.

The Living Experience

To take advantage of the views of the mountains and valley, Hamlet developed a floor plan with the main living space at the rear of the home. The family room, kitchen and dining room face the back instead of the usual streetscape. The bay window in the family room accentuates the townhouse's place in the environment. The master bedroom on the second floor and an optional lower level family room also look out over the valley.

Placing the main living space at the rear of the home forces the garage to occupy the front. Hamlet's hired architect, Don Taylor, president and principal of dw taylor associates, says trying to get a plan that works with the garage on the same level is always a challenge. "It had to be entered from the front because the back of the house was overhanging the mountain," says Taylor. "With a garage, the objective was how do you get an entrance that was inviting with a large foyer."

Taylor achieved this by pushing all the living space to the rear and creating a foyer and staircase toward the front, which also provided a semi-formal entry.

Connecting the townhouses visually to their mountain setting is a Craftsman-



style exterior with a hip roof that mimics the rolling mountains.

Winter in the mountains can be harsh, and Hamlet specified exterior materials — a mix of stone and HardiPlank siding — to help shield the home from extreme weather.

Outcome

Although winter brought building to a halt for most builders in SunCrest, it didn't slow Hamlet. "We had an aggressive construction schedule to start foundations to take us into winter construction," says Irwin. Once the foun-

dations were in place, Hamlet continued framing throughout the winter.

Hamlet is currently building phase two at Stoneleigh Heights and has one more phase to go. Of the 170 townhouses available, 120 of them have sold. "We're out-selling most of the other townhouse projects [in the Salt Lake area]," says Irwin. "We command a higher value for the home because of location. It's like your own little place on top of the mountain." **PB**

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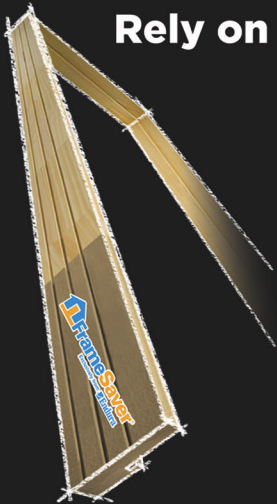
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PATH REPORT

Back to the Future

Building trends offer a glimpse of what's to come

If you limit yourself to the headlines, 2006 was a bad year for builders. New home sales lagged, construction costs soared and homes sat vacant for months.

But for builders who have adopted new building science technologies, the market is looking bright.

In the past year, the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing (PATH) has met many builders who have increased their business by using factory-built systems or manufactured components to improve the building envelope.

Here are *Professional Builder* and PATH's take on the top building technologies of 2006.

From the Factory to You

Today's factory building is a far cry from yesteryear's.

As reported in "Streamline Your Business" in our August issue, manufacturing sections of the home in a controlled factory environment helps ensure product quality and consistency while it speeds the home-building process. The components can be built more quickly because factory workers can work in all weather, and on-site assembly goes swiftly because workers erect whole sections at once using the minimum tools.

Modular Homes

Frank Dusick, owner of Mustang Builders in Eau Claire, Wis., started as a stick builder more than 40 years ago, but bad knees forced him to look for other options. In 1981, he switched to building modular homes.

The homes comprise individual modules that are delivered from the factory to the site, bolted to a foundation, and hooked up to services. Site-specific embellishments, such as window bays, porches and garages, make the home look like any other.

Beyond quality, the main advantage for Dusick is speed. It takes 10 to 12 weeks from the day a customer walks into Dusick's office to the day he turns over the keys. Dusick has increased his profit margin because the homes sell for the same price but cost 10 to 15 percent less to build. Dusick also enjoys less need for skilled labor, fewer home inspections and less expensive builder's insurance.

Panelized Components

After years of traditional stick-building, Paul Truax, owner

of Vermont Built in Chester, Vt., switched to panelized components to improve the quality of his framing.

As reported in our March issue, panelized systems take many forms, from structural components such as roof trusses to all-in-one panels that include framing, insulation and sheathing. These systems significantly speed wall and roof construction.

Because erecting the panels is easy, construction requires less skilled labor, and because they go up fast, workers — and materials — spend much less time exposed to the weather.

Advanced Framing

Introduced in our August issue, Fernando Pages-Ruiz, owner of Brighton Construction, has built his business on building quality homes at an affordable price.

Author of "Building an Affordable House," Pages-Ruiz continuously seeks technologies that achieve quality and affordability. He decided to try advanced framing techniques after reading about them in a PATH demonstration project.

Advanced framing uses engineering principles to reduce the need for lumber. The techniques also reduce



We have increased our market share by educating consumers who have an open mind about technological innovations.

— Ann Crocker

the need for labor, cut costs and time and yield a more energy-efficient home. Although not all builders do advanced framing with factory-built components, Pages-Ruiz has a factor assemble the panels and ship them to his sites for quality control, affordability and speed.

SIPs

Discussed in our November issue, structural insulated panels (SIPs) result in more durable walls that go up quickly and require less skilled labor and less time on site.

SIPs are made from a thick layer of foam sandwiched between two pieces of oriented strand board, plywood or fiber-cement. The long-term energy savings for homeowners won over Scott Bergford, president of Scott Homes in Olympia, Wash.

Precast Concrete

Brian Bock of Mustang Construction in Naperville, Ill., builds with precast concrete wall and floor panels for commercial and residential projects. Strength and speed drew him to the technology.

Builders often use precast concrete, a concept we discussed in our January issue, for foundations. A typical panelized foundation can be erected in four to five hours without the need to place concrete on site. The result is a foundation that can be installed in any climate zone in one-sixth the time needed for a formed concrete wall.

Panels are installed quickly with the

use of a crane and then immediately back-filled after waterproofing. Precast panel construction also generates less waste than conventionally framed homes.

Manufactured Components

Manufactured building components can be engineered to certain specifications, which speed and simplify the building process while improving durability and energy efficiency. Many of these products are more sustainable because they are manufactured from recycled materials.

ICFs

In November, *Professional Builder* and PATH teamed up to discuss ICFs.

As discussed in "Strong, Silent Types," building with insulating concrete forms (ICFs) speeds construction time and still delivers a durable home, particularly important in high-wind areas. ICF buildings are also very energy efficient because the higher R-values lower air infiltration rates.

ICFs also provide a competitive edge. Just ask Ann Crocker and Ross Rains of Energy Smart Solutions in Flower Mound, Texas, who use ICFs to give them an edge over the competition.

"We have increased our market share by educating consumers who have an

open mind about technological innovations," Crocker says.

Autoclaved Aerated Concrete

In our October issue, we introduced Doug Edwards, who has been building with autoclaved aerated concrete (AAC) since 1999.

A precast, manufactured building block, AAC goes up as easily and is as strong as a standard concrete masonry unit structure, but much lighter, which can save construction time. AAC is also more energy-efficient.

Available in a variety of forms, from wall and roof panels to blocks and lintels, AAC can be sawed, drilled, nailed and milled, making it highly adaptable to a variety of architectural styles. And it can easily be engineered to meet structural load requirements.

While contractors often report some initial hiccups with new technology, they also report that having a little experience solves most problems. Most importantly, these technologies have given them a competitive edge. **PB**

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

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Cool New Faucets



▲ KWC

The LED-lit Eve from KWC includes the company's Neoperl pull-out spray from the swivel spout and is made in versions for the kitchen sink, countertop or smaller bar or bathroom vanity. The faucet can be used with or without the light, comes in chrome or stainless-steel finishes and can be purchased without the LED option. It is ISO 9001 certified.

Circle 125 or go to <http://pb.ims.ca/5216-125>



► Moen

The Vivid faucet from ShowHouse by Moen has a flowing water atop lime glass configuration. The water flows out of the raised fountain to create the look of a cascading stream. A widespread two-handle faucet with chrome bell handles with chrome faucet base channels come standard. The faucet has a sheer coating provided by Diamon-Fusion International.

Circle 126 or go to <http://pb.ims.ca/5216-126>



▲ Delta Faucet Co.

The Asian-influenced, minimalist Rhythm faucet from Delta Faucet Co.'s Urban Collection has a variety of single and dual-handle configurations, including a wall mount. Design options also include a single-handle joystick faucet. The line also offers the European-inspired Grail kitchen faucet and geometric Arzo.

Circle 129 or go to <http://pb.ims.ca/5216-129>

► American Standard

The Culinaire two-handle kitchen faucet with metal cross handle and color-matched side spray from American Standard also includes a cap for non-spray applications. The faucet has 1/2-inch IPS inlets, a 13-1/2-inch spout height and a 10-1/2-inch aerator clearance. Finish options include chrome, polished brass and satin.

Circle 127 or go to <http://pb.ims.ca/5216-127>



► Danze

The Sirius collection from Danze has a ribbon-like spout shape and a rectangular base. Five lavatory faucet options include single- or two-handle styles for deck and wall mounts. Users can adjust water pressure and temperature. The Sirius faucets are made with ceramic disc valves and are constructed with solid brass. Chrome and brushed nickel finishes are available.

Circle 128 or go to <http://pb.ims.ca/5216-128>



▲ Price Pfister

The Ashfield single-control lavatory faucet from Price Pfister is designed to reduce water usage by 27 percent without compromising flow strength. The Ashfield line offers a high-arc swivel kitchen faucet with an upswept handle design and a matching quick trim wall flange for installation. Finishes include chrome, satin nickel and bronze. All finishes have a lifetime warranty.

Circle 130 or go to <http://pb.ims.ca/5216-130>



▲ Grohe

The K4 suite of faucets and accessories features pull out faucets for both main and prep sinks as well as a pillar tap and a pot filler. The suite, made by Grohe, is made in the company's StarLight chrome or RealSteel solid stainless steel finishes. It also offers SilkMove fingertip controls, and handles can be placed to the left, right or center.

Circle 131 or go to <http://pb.ims.ca/5216-131>



▲ Symmons

The Symmetrix Sereno single-hand lavatory faucet from Symmons features ceramic control components, an aerator, a single-hole mount and all-metal construction. It is available in polished chrome, satin nickel or polished brass finishes. The faucet line has a flow rate of 2.2 gallons per minute and also includes a shower head, tub/shower valve and Roman tub filler.

Circle 134 or go to <http://pb.ims.ca/5216-134>



▲ Dornbach

The Maro series from German manufacturer Dornbach is an avant-garde inspired kitchen faucet with a square tip to the high pivoting spout to fill pots. The

Maro series, along with its counterpart, Lot, features a rinsing spray set or an optional liquid soap dispenser with or without a rosette. The faucets come in polished chrome or platinum matte finishes.

Circle 132 or go to <http://pb.ims.ca/5216-132>



▲ California Faucets

The Avalon Series from California Faucets is a single-hole faucet with 7-inch or 9-inch spout lengths. The faucet has an optional vertical configuration with a two-handle version available. The series has 30 finishes, including 10 physical vapor deposition colors that resist corrosion. The line has a matching range of accessories, including under-sink fittings such as p-traps and supply risers.

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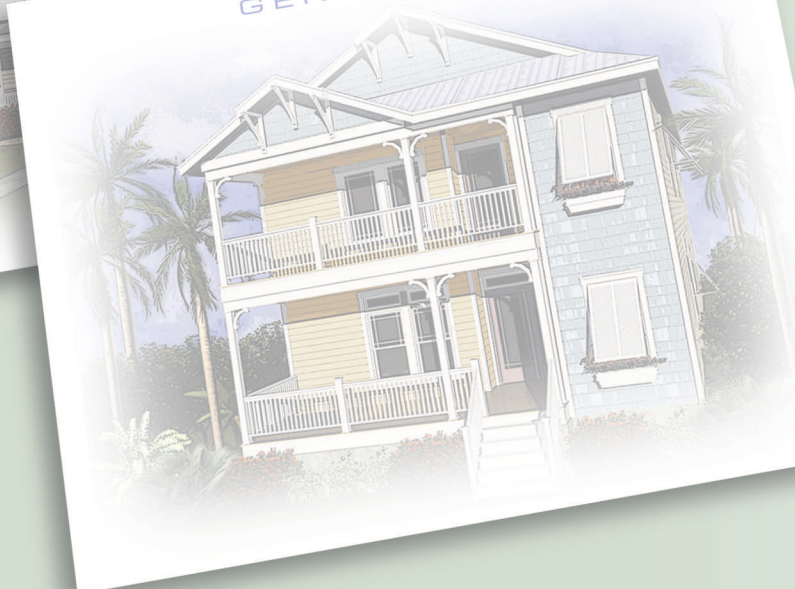
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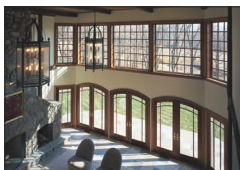
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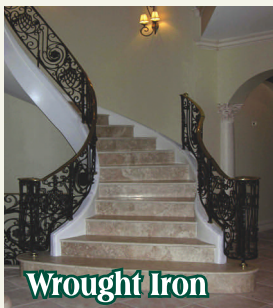
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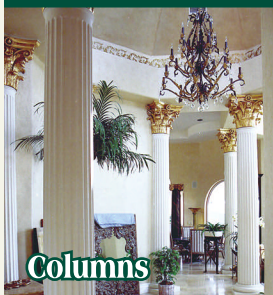
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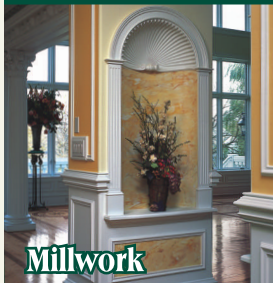
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heavy-duty pickup owners
agree on.



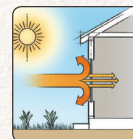
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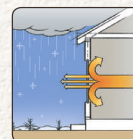




JELD-WEN offers a wide range of windows and doors that include energy efficient Low-E glass.

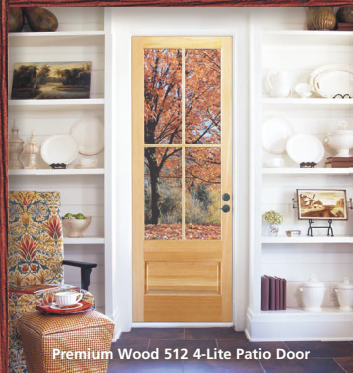


In warm weather, Low-E glass reflects the sun's energy and reduces heat gain in the home.



In cold weather, Low-E glass reduces the amount of heat loss by reflecting it back inside.

We were energy efficient before it was cool. Or hot.



Premium Wood 512 4-Lite Patio Door



Wood Casement Window



Vinyl Geometric Window



Steel 9-Lite Patio Door

For years, homeowners have relied on JELD-WEN for energy efficient windows and doors. Now Low-E glass comes standard in our wood windows and patio doors, and in our Steel patio exterior doors. It's also an affordable option in our vinyl or aluminum windows, and in our Premium Wood doors. Low-E glass is just one of a variety of energy-saving choices you can offer from a company that's been an ENERGY STAR® Partner since 1998. To learn more about any of our reliable windows and doors, call 1.800.877.9482 ext. 4314, or go to www.jeld-wen.com/4314.



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