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july

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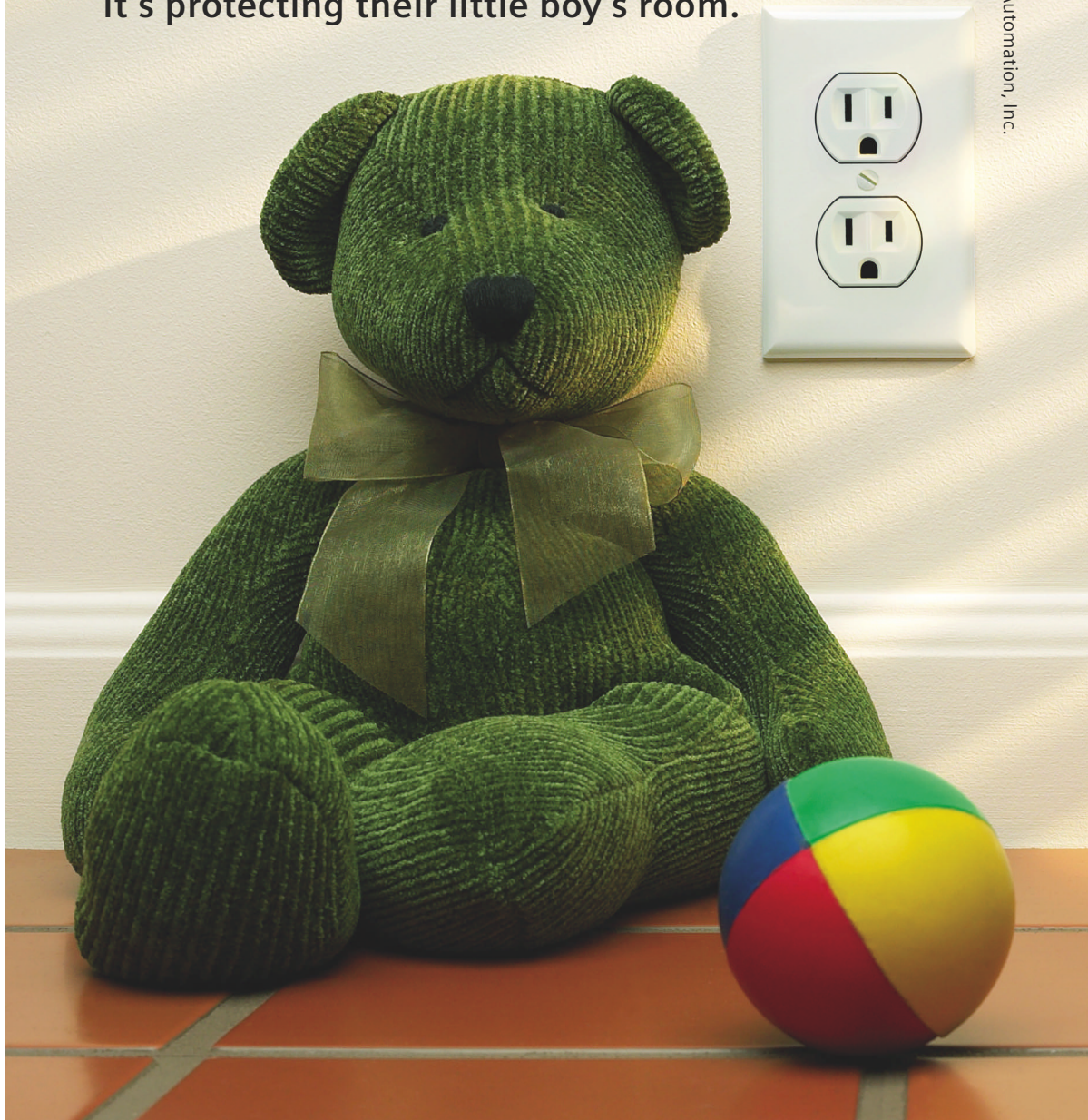
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MONEY AND ALL THINGS

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letters

Story on Impact Fees Did Its Job

I recently read Bill Lurz's article titled "The Impact of Impact Fees" (*Professional Builder*, February). The article challenged associations that the time had come to cut residential impact fees. I took the magazine with me to the executive board meeting of our local Home Builders Association.

Armed with the success story of Dan Magruder & Lake County, I suggested we form a committee for the purpose of lowering impact fees. A committee of eleven was formed, and after some discussion, we decided on a format. Complete with charts and graphs we were able to show our elected officials how permits and revenues from impact fees had steadily declined from a high in 2004 and 2005 when fees were implemented to a projected low of 2008. We told them they were not the only ones suffering from less revenues and that the working class citizens and business people needed some relief. We wanted them to send a message that local government was working for its citizens and that it was doing its part to give men and women back their jobs. We told them if they would work with us we would give them all the credit.

The commissioners bought in, and for the next 18 months our impact fees for fire, parks and library will be cut in half. They completely eliminated road fees. They did not touch water and sewer impact fees. In all, our fees were cut from a high of \$3,600 to \$600. Your article was right: "Now is the time to cut impact fees."

Thank you.

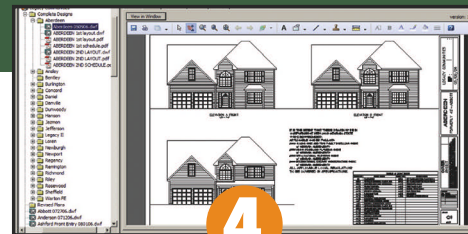
Ron Putman, Chairman

The "Put Bay County Back
to Work Committee" of Panama City
Bay County Home Builders Association

editor's note

In the May issue, we included the incorrect image for Mid-America Siding Components' Mount Block. We regret the error.

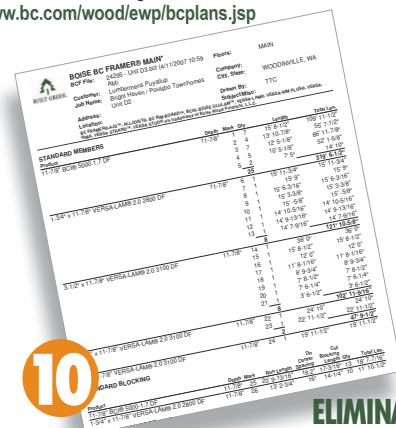
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A Grassroots Charge

The Professional Builder Benchmark and Avid Leadership Conference in October is the time for builders to gather and begin to change the industry from the bottom up.

There isn't a builder in the United States who isn't watching costs right now. We've seen builders across the country make heartbreaking decisions about personnel. But if you are going to survive in the long term, if you're not going to cash in your chips, you have to invest in the future – no matter how tight the purse strings.

A significant element in that investment should focus on improving the operations and efficiencies of your business so it emerges stronger and better when the economy turns around. To that end, we have made two elemental decisions about the Benchmark Conference this year. First, we have combined forces with Avid Ratings to offer two conferences in one, making it easier and more cost effective for you to send your staff. Second, we have given the conference the theme "Tools for the Turnaround." All of our speakers — from leading builders and industry experts to outside the industry thought-leaders — will focus on making your business stronger and tougher. (Check out www.probuilder.com/benchmark for more details.)

Too often management conferences address theoretical business situations. Benchmark has a tradition of nuts-and-bolts advice driven by true performers, and this year we're getting deeper into the nitty-gritty with some fabulous success stories from industry heavy-hitters. In addition, the conference will feature the deep insights garnered from Avid Ratings. Now more than ever, delivering on customer loyalty is essential to long-term success.

Normally, when I talk about conferences, I exclaim over the quality of the speakers and the programs. I could extol the more than 20 educational programs we're offering. Instead, I want to call our audience to action with a question.

In October, would you benefit from being in a room with home builder survivors, learning what they learn, hearing what they've done that works, looking to the future, thinking about what we can do to rebuild this industry into a driving economic success? After all,

We'll survive and prosper due to **our quality**, not luck or government intervention.

if we wait for others to act, we'll be waiting a long time. In this election year, no politician is going out on a limb to push the economy.

The most important thing we can do right now is take matters into our own hands. And the best way to do

that is learn what is working within the deep trenches of quality companies and apply what we learn throughout the country. We'll survive and prosper due to our quality, not luck or government intervention.

Let's turn the *Professional Builder Benchmark* and *Avid Leadership Conference* into a grassroots movement that puts this industry back on its feet. If you want to put together a group, invite other builders or bring your staff, let me know. We'll help pull it together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Deffenbaugh".

Paul Deffenbaugh, *Editorial Director*
paul.deffenbaugh@reedbusiness.com

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Ouch. According to the U.S. Labor Department, the cost of materials in May was 4.7 percent higher than a year earlier. The most significant price increases in April were structural steel (6.2 percent), aluminum (4.5 percent) and asphalt roofing (2.6 percent). Copper prices have also climbed dramatically. But there is some small relief – at least for now. Lumber and drywall prices have dropped 14.4 percent in recent months, according to Bernard Markstein, chief economist at the National Association of Home Builders. This, coupled with a construction labor surplus, have helped mitigate some of the effects of rising costs.

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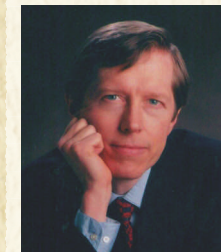
Henry Cisneros' resume is as eclectic as America. Expect his views on urban planning, workforce housing and the current mortgage crisis to challenge the way you think about your business future.



Terry Jones

Founder, Travelocity.com;
Managing Principal,
Essential Ideas

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Historian. Economist. Demographer.

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Tim Sullivan

President,
Sullivan Group
Real Estate Advisors

Tim Sullivan's ideas on defining market opportunities, conceptualizing community design and honing product pricing and absorption potential will help you lead your company's successful strategic growth as the market rebounds.

The CEO Panel and the Capital Roundtable Mix It Up

Three hard-charging CEOs telling it like it is — what could be more fascinating? Unless it's the Capital Roundtable, where industry insiders sketch out the pressures on capital markets and discuss how those pressures affect the financial picture of builders planning for the turnaround. They're two important discussions, and you'll have a ringside seat.

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[CUSTOMER SATISFACTION]

SWAT or Not



Ignoring difficult customers in favor of pleasing the satisfied ones is a surefire way to destroy your brand.

By Paul Cardis, CEO, Avid Ratings

A lot has been said about customer experience management and how builders can reap the biggest return on their investment. The issue came up following a recent Ontario Homebuilders' Association event, where one prominent consultant argued that home builders should not focus on satisfying their toughest customers. Instead, she argued, builders should devote their resources to making happy customers happier. Her rationale was that it's too difficult to turn disgruntled home buyers into loyal advocates and more fruitful to turn moderately happy customers into ecstatic ones.

While this simplistic view is rational, it ignores the positive impact strategic service recovery can have on the bottom line. The truth is, home building is a local business, and it doesn't take much to tarnish one's reputation in a way that kills future sales. A customer management strategy that addresses only moderately happy customers is not just ill-advised, it's dangerous to a builder's long-term success. Clearly, builders should focus their service efforts on the areas of greatest opportunity, but they also must have a process for dealing with those severely dissatisfied custom-

ers who can create a public relations nightmare.

How about Sprint Nextel, which last summer began dropping thousands of its cell phone subscribers who apparently complained too much? According to Sprint Nextel's own press release, 2008 first quarter revenues declined 9 percent compared with the same period a year ago, and declined 6 percent from the fourth quarter of 2007. "The declines are mainly due to lower average service revenue per customer and fewer post-paid subscribers," the company states.

On average, builders can expect 7.5 percent of its customers to make a negative referral. That's why I have always been a staunch advocate of stabilizing your toughest customers. At the same time, I recognize the value in appealing to your happier customers, too. The truth is, you need to strategically do both!

Go the SWAT Route

The best way to deal with tough customers is to establish a SWAT team, a group of employees that works with buyers to peacefully resolve problems. (Visit HousingZone.com and search for "Builder SWAT Team" for more on this concept).

No builder can turn around every disgruntled customer. But at the very least you should stabilize the situation. It still pays to care for your least satisfied customers. Leading builders who take a holistic customer approach have been able to reduce their percentage of hostile customers to less than 1 percent, while the rest of the industry hovers at 7.5 percent. The fact is, working with your toughest customers can yield tremendous return on investment.

To ignore hostile custom-

Cardis' Tips

Focus individual efforts on all customers — not just the happiest.

Reserve the SWAT Team for your least satisfied customers, strategically targeting the potentially hostile ones.

Resolve problems proactively before they require SWAT intervention.

Who's In Your SWAT Team?

Builder SWAT teams deal with sensitive situations that can touch all aspects of your company. Make sure to include a project superintendent/builder, warranty representative and executive from the main office. Having top-level staff involved shows disgruntled buyers you're serious about solving their problem. Plus, these managers have pull to quickly enact solutions.

ers, however, is disastrous advice and anyone recommending this strategy is misguided. Don't let them put your company in harms way. **PB**

Paul Cardis is CEO of Avid Ratings, a research and consulting firm specializing in customer satisfaction for the home-building industry. You can reach him at paul.cardis@avidratings.com.

Hear the folks from Avid Ratings talk more about SWAT teams this fall at the Professional Builder Benchmark and Avid Leadership Conference, Oct. 5-7, in Phoenix. For more information, visit www.probuilder.com/benchmark.



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[MANAGEMENT]

Managing for Profit



Streamline your organization for the best returns.

By Serge Ogranovitch, The Potomack Group

A streamlined operation is one that can grow easily and effectively and can build 20 or 200 homes with the same organizational structure. To help your company adapt to what will likely be a changed marketplace, look at your organization and plan on rebuilding in a smart way.

Here are 10 keys to prepare your organization for the market change:

1. Processes: Look at the activities and the process flow to find what you can rearrange to be more effective with fewer people — and have more control. When analyzing your process and efficiencies, start with your existing process flow.

2. Responsibility: Look at your processes and assign responsibilities according to who is best qualified to oversee those processes. Consider looking outside the organization for the right person.

3. Documentation: Document what is being done or should be done. When you begin hiring again, this documentation will help you train the new people the way you want your organization to be run. Documentation should include job descriptions; policies and procedures; job ready and job complete; in-

process inspections; forms; and checklists.

4. Roles and functions: When an employee is given more than one responsibility, do it in a planned fashion. Your job descriptions should be well-defined so they can easily be understood and responsibilities can be shared by various employees.

5. Communication: Fix any lack of communication (or sometimes miscommunication) and force communications to go through an integrated process. Poor communication often leads to dissatisfied customers and fewer referrals.

6. Customer care: Fine-tune your customer interface processes to make the customer experience not just a good one but an excellent one. If you offer great customer care, your customers will be praising the experience they had with you throughout the process and well after.

7. Trade involvement: Get the trades involved in your processes and ask them for their input on both products and processes. Make them deliver a consistent product each and every time. Have them work together with each other and with you to improve communication along with

Serge's Tips

ANALYZE
When analyzing your process to become more efficient, start with your existing process flow.

DOCUMENT
Documenting what is being done or should be done will help you deliver quality products once growth resumes.

JOIN
Learn and improve what you do by contributing and sharing best practices with peer groups.

ASK
Ask your employees for their input and check how things are going on a regular basis.

job ready and job completion procedures.

8. Benchmarks: Look at what other builders are doing to benchmark their operations. It also may help to look at other industries for ideas that can work for your company.

9. Quality Trades: Price is an important factor, but it should not be the only factor in selecting a trade. Looking for experience, dependability and quality each time will eventually cost you less than the lowest bidder.

10. People: Take care of your employees. If you want them to be loyal and do an exceptional job, you need to make them feel important and let them know they are an integral part of the building team. This should be done not just once in a while but all the time.

Let's start preparing for the upturn. **PB**

Serge Ogranovitch is a senior partner and founder of The Potomack Group, an international management consultant firm. He is a National Housing Quality Award judge and works closely with NAHB to develop the program.



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Knock Profit Killers Dead

20

Is business-as-usual
tapping your company dry?
Put a stop to common
operational drains in your
organization.

By Felicia Oliver, Senior Editor

You may have heard that home sales are down. What's that? You say you're experiencing a slow-down in your own company, and you're just trying to weather the storm, keep spending in check, and hold on until the upturn? Well, that seems logical.

But wait! This also might be a good time for inward reflection — into your company's operations and processes. You can't change the excess of housing inventory out there, but you can run a more efficient operation in which you don't carelessly annihilate profits you have every right to earn. In some cases this requires spending a bit more to make a whole lot more. What are the profit killers? What changes can you make in how you conduct business that will put more black in your bottom line? We have answers.

Profit Killer: Not building what buyers want

Almost all the folks we spoke to agree this is one of the most common sources of lost profit that plagues builders: not building the homes their market demands.

"We in our industry are a lot like sheep," says Ross Robbins, a senior sales and marketing consultant with Shinn Consulting. "We build what we used to build — in other words, sheep go where they went last month or last week or yesterday."

Builders may have been successful with a particular floor plan or design in the past and figure they should stick with it. They assume the market without doing their research.

“Most builders have no [research] mechanism at all,” says Robbins. “And you need a process where you are relentlessly doing that month after month because the market is always changing.”

Remedy: Do the research

There are easy, inexpensive ways to get a pulse on your market. Ask the Realtor community and your own sales staff what they are seeing. Also do competitive shopping.

“It’s amazing how many builders never visit their competitor’s developments,” says Tom Stephani, president of Custom Construction Concepts in Crystal Lake, Ill. “When I was looking to build more of a Gen X, Gen Y product, I sent my son out to do mystery shops, just to do research and give me his impressions, because it’s his generation.”

Bruce Assam, COO for Holiday Builders in Melbourne, Fla., says focus groups have probably been the most powerful reference tool in understanding the marketing dynam-

else until you’re down to the profit.

“The reason we think that is so important is that it’s a huge 2-by-4 upside the head when you look at how much you are just giving away,” Robbins says. “We are either over the market, or our salespeople aren’t selling value, which is more likely the case, or the market has changed and we have to get down and dirty and redesign our product so that we can hit a \$190,000 price point and not give the store away.”

Remedy: Sell value to the buyer

Salespeople must learn to build value for the customer in the product they are offering. This can be accomplished by simply listening to what the customer is looking for in a home; showing them what you have that best fits their needs and desires; and letting them get excited about it.

“Ask ‘Why are you looking for a new home? What dream you are trying to achieve?’ Then price becomes less of an issue,” says Robbins. “Find out what is of value to them, and then make sure they know that they are getting that. Then they won’t be so all fired up to get extra concessions.”

“I worked for a guy in Orlando that used to say the last thing you want to hear at a homeowner orientation is, ‘I didn’t know we were getting that,’” says Christopher F. Coleman, president of The Dearborn-Buckingham Group, a builder in Northfield, Ill. “That means they didn’t pay for that. That means you didn’t need to include it. It wasn’t part of their buying decision.”

“Most small builders create a system in their mind, but they don’t share it with everybody.”

— Tom Stephani, builder consultant, Custom Construction Concepts

ics of their consumers. And it doesn’t have to cost a lot.

“It’s the cost of bagels and fruit, a nice area to have a conversation, and a tough person to take the good and the bad comments,” says Assam.

Stephani says he also signs up for every opportunity to judge parades of homes and design competitions to take in what’s in the marketplace. He also suggests perusing consumer publications you might not normally read, such as Good Housekeeping and Country Living.

Profit Killer: Giving away too much at closing

The builder sets the home price at a certain amount — say \$200,000 — to get the margin he wants. The salesperson allows the customer to talk him into giving him incentives that effectively take the price down to \$190,000.

“Where does that \$10,000 come from?” asks Robbins. “There’s only one place it can come from: profit. All your other costs are still committed.”

When these sales incentives are given, Robbins tells builders to record the original budgeted contract price and not the actual contract price. Record what you expected to get, and subtract sales concessions as a first line item on your operating statement. Then indicate net sales revenue after concessions, building costs, financing and everything

Profit Killer: Poorly managed field operations

Builders can get a bit lax in the way they do things in the field. They don’t look for new processes and ways to be more efficient, not realizing the financial impact of a few weeks or months of extra construction time.

“It doesn’t sound like a big deal, ‘That home should have taken us three months, but it took us four,’” Stephani says. “But it really saps your resources.” Your ability to build a home in the appropriate amount of time costs you a lot more money than you think.

“To build a home in three months takes X number of hours and supervision. If it takes four months, you’ve spent as much as an additional 33 percent on that home. Time is money,” says Stephani. “Frankly, quality suffers too when the schedule gets dragged out. Believe it or not, the faster you build — within limits — the higher the quality of the home.”

Remedy: Organize and document your processes

Take a look at your operations to determine where breakdowns are occurring. You need documented, repeatable procedures that will make the production of a home flow smoothly and according to schedule.

“Too many times it’s haphazard,” says Stephani. “‘Oh, this is the way we do it — through the start order out there and let’s go.’ The problem is most small builders create a system in their mind, but they don’t share it with everybody. The only way that you can share it with people is if it’s in writing.”

The process starts way before you get out in the field. Builders need to establish a system that covers having well-thought-out and communicated plans and specs; completion of the estimate (using a dedicated staff member or if possible, an estimating program); purchasing (P.O. tracking is a must); selection of trades; and field start orders, change order procedures and selection protocol.

“It’s important to have complete and accurate information before you start and that all the paperwork is in and complete from sales,” says Coleman. “Don’t be so anxious that you end up starting with incomplete information that will lead to a delay at some point in the construction cycle.”

He suggests having scheduling systems in place that eliminate “dry runs” for trades where they make unnecessary trips to the job site because the previous trade hasn’t finished, the materials aren’t in, etc., and the trade can’t get the work done.

“You need to have a relatively sophisticated — which doesn’t mean expensive — system,” Coleman says.

These are things that consultants, speakers and trainers stress to builders all the time, but it’s hard to get a hold of these issues easily.

“I think plans and specs, estimating and purchasing all go into making the production process smoother,” says Stephani. “But they are all separate functions. If you’ve got good plans and specs, good estimating and purchasing practices, then it’s going to make your production processes better as well. A bad production process could take all that hard work and throw it in the trash can.”

Profit Killer: Inaccurate, infrequent or ignored management reports

Accurate management reports help you see what’s going wrong. The key to plugging the leaks is finding the leaks. The data reflected in these reports must be accurate — garbage in, garbage out. And they should be reviewed monthly. Having a profit report at the end of the year is too late.

“That’s like sending a rocket to the moon that’s off course by 1/10 of one degree,” says Robbins. “You better be able to make a mid-course correction, because by the time it gets out that far, it’s way wide of the moon.”

Management-oriented reports are more helpful than accounting reports because they are more likely to clarify where the variances are.

“How long does it take to build a house? If we have budgeted building costs of \$100,000 and it costs \$500,000, or if we have warranty expense budget of ¼ of a percent of

Profit Cultivators: Sales and Marketing

Here are tips from Jerry Rouleau, owner of housing industry PR and marketing firm J. Rouleau & Associates.

Target ad dollars to the right media: “In today’s market, the best ad dollars are spent on improving and updating a builder’s Web site. Most of the big and small builders are finding that their best and least expensive leads are coming from the Web.”

Establish a customer relations budget: “Builders have a customer service budget for service calls. They don’t have a budget for staying in touch with past customers.” That’s one huge way to track and follow up on possible referrals.

Use e-mail marketing to generate more “be-backs:” After an initial visit to your sales office or model, prospects aren’t likely to be sold over the phone or through the mail. “Builders need to collect more e-mail addresses and do more ongoing e-mail marketing campaigns — with a call to action to get them back in.”

a house and we’re at ½ a percent — those are leaks. We’ve got to measure those things.”

Remedy: Spend the money, address warning signs

If you’re a smaller builder, you may want to hire someone to tally these reports for you, or if you can, invest in an automated management reporting system. It’s a worthwhile expense.

“We are too chintzy in our industry about spending money for systems and training,” says Robbins. “Every other industry I know of spends between a half a percent and one percent of their annual revenue on technology. In this industry we spend less than a tenth of a percent. We are woefully behind.”

And when you spot a problem, have a plan of attack.

“We work with some guys that have really good margins,” says Robbins. “Almost without exception, when they get to a variance they put a multi-talented, multi-disciplined, multi-stake holder task force together, to figure out what went wrong and how to fix it.”

This list of “profit killer cures” is by no means exhaustive. You can invest in landscaping to increase curb appeal and your asking price; work to deliver a defect-free home to save on callbacks and warranty costs; and reduce construction site waste. You get the idea. It’s worth it to consider areas of waste in your company that can easily be avoided. **PB**



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- Rental Homes
- Community Design
- Smart Growth

Interior Design

- Best Kitchen
- Best Bath
- Best Specialty room
- Best Detail
- Best Amenity/Facility

(Some categories are sub-divided according to project size. See the BALA 08 Registration Form at www.ProBuilder.com/BALA for details.)



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BRAND
NAME

Taylor Morrison employee Janice Cooper has a one-year-old grandson named after Taylor Hawkins of the Foo Fighters and Jim Morrison of The Doors. Six months after his birth, Taylor Woodrow and Morrison Homes merged and changed the company name to

Taylor Morrison, and she realized her grandson shares his name with her employer.

Maybe he'll mimic builder/bluesman Albert Cummings of Williamstown, Mass., as homage to both.



Photo: Taylor Morrison-Phoenix Division

INSIDE

Get 'em qualified [page 29]

Do you know how to sell to the single woman? [page 30]

THE TWO AND ONLY.



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AN AMERICAN REVOLUTION

[NEW HOME KNOWLEDGE]

Help for Client Credit Woes



Tougher mortgage standards shouldn't mean a loss in sales. Smart programs can get quality but credit-challenged customers qualified.

By John Rymer, New Home Knowledge

Anyone associated with home building already knows that guidelines at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have changed dramatically since the beginning of the year. At last count, there were more than 160 modifications to underwriting guidelines issued in 2008. The number will undoubtedly get higher, making 2008 infamous for having the most revisions to the mortgage underwriting standards in the last 50 years.

Many home builders view the changes as simply more "piling on" for an industry already under siege. I recent-

wonder our sales are down 40 percent."

Although I understand the problem, I respectfully disagree with the conclusion. Sure, low-credit score borrowers and those with little or no cash are having a very difficult time qualifying for a home mortgage. But for 30-plus of the last 40 years, low-cash/low-credit buyers were unable to qualify for a home, and yet the industry still found a way to sell a lot of homes.

So it's with a sense of history that forward-thinking builders are looking at their playbooks from 15-plus years ago to reinvent their compa-

is like our homes: tailored to the needs of our buyers. Tell me about your situation."

Next, establish a goal based on the percentage of 2008 home buyers who initially were able to qualify for a mortgage but were able to become approved via "The Home Buyers Club." Under this program, credit-challenged customers work through their financing issues over months to become eligible to qualify.

The program is introduced to the customer by telling them the great news: they're ready to become a homeowner, and that although it might take some time to get them qualified, you have plans depending on their ability to meet certain criteria.

Sure this process is tough work and does not produce immediate results. But think about the alternative: endless price negotiations with well-qualified buyers versus working a little overtime for a marginal credit buyer who has few options. It seems like an easy decision for me. **PB**

John Rymer is the founder of New Home Knowledge, which offers sales training for new home builders and real-estate professionals. You can reach him at john@newhome-knowledge.com.

For 30-plus of the last 40 years, low-cash/low-credit buyers were **unable to qualify for a home**, and yet the industry still found a way to sell a lot of homes.

ly spoke to a well-respected home builder who used the changes in mortgage underwriting to explain his company's poor performance in 2008. "Fifty five percent of our sales last year were to homeowners with credit scores under 680, and today we just can't get customers with those scores qualified at any kind of acceptable interest rate. It's no

nies' qualification process.

So what should you do? Begin by making the mortgage qualification process more central to the overall sales presentation at your company. The standby question "Are you pre-qualified?" is a sure way to embarrass buyers and get a less-than-honest answer. The better way to approach the subject is: "Our financing

Rymer's Rules

DEAL WITH FINANCING EARLY

Finding customers willing to purchase is only half the battle. Getting them committed to making sacrifices for homeownership is where the real selling begins.

DON'T OUTSOURCE FINANCING PROBLEMS TO YOUR MORTGAGE COMPANY

Take ownership for getting credit-challenged customers qualified.

SET SALES GOALS FOR CUSTOMERS WHO INITIALLY DIDN'T QUALIFY

It's more work but less competition and higher margins for builders willing to do the heavy lifting.



Numbers Don't Lie

Accounting for one-fifth of home buyers, single women are a formidable market niche. And they're not waiting for Prince Charming to buy them a palace.

By Susan Bady, Senior Editor, Design

Single women are a demographic that's just too big for home builders to ignore. A 2007 survey by the National Association of Realtors found that single women comprise 20 percent of home buyers. Comparatively, only 9 percent of home buyers are single men.

Unmarried female home buyers are a diverse group that includes young singles, single mothers, middle-aged divorcees, widows and seniors. Among them are women who seek to establish a household with one or more friends.

But builders have some catching up to do. Although some builders do an effective job of catering to this market, it's largely overlooked, says Melinda Brody, an Orlando-based sales training expert. "I think that when single women visit a community, they feel like outcasts because the world is still couple-oriented," says Brody. "Home builders need to embrace them and not make them feel isolated just because they don't have a partner."

Jacobs Homes in Deerfield, Ill., attracts a significant number of single female buyers. "We've found that single men only think about buying a home once they get married, but single women are natural nesters who know real estate is a great investment," says Juli Jacobs, director of marketing. "They have the college degrees, the jobs and the money."

A 2006 study by the Joint Center for Housing Studies at

20

Percentage of single female home buyers in 2007.

Source: National Association of Realtors

31

Top Home Features for Single Women

1. Open floor plan
2. Low-maintenance exteriors
3. Home office or office alcove
4. Outdoor living area
5. "Me space," such as a spa-like master bath
6. Guest bedroom(s)
7. An attached garage
8. Ample closet space/storage

BATHROOMS WITH SOAKING TUBS and other spa-like amenities provide a welcome respite at the end of a long, hard day — something single mothers especially appreciate.

Photo: Philip Wegener

Harvard University revealed that nearly 40 percent of unmarried female home buyers are middle-aged (45 to 64 years old) and therefore more established in their careers and earnings than younger buyers.

Bob Hafer, a sales trainer based in Dallas, thinks the priorities of single women are significantly different from those of single men.

"Single guys are interested in the toys, the extras, whereas single women are more practical," says Hafer. "They want a safe environment that's close to shopping, work and family, if they have family members in the area. And they want features that make living in the home easier for them."

Whereas single men tend to take it on faith that their new home will be a good investment, single women are more cognizant of resale value. "They want something that is more manageable — perhaps smaller, but it has to be a good value."

Making Connections

Each sub-group of single females is likely to be looking for something a little different, and the qualities are diverse.

Connection

Single mothers, for instance, check out the neighborhood to see if there are other families with whom they might be able to connect, says Maxine McBride, president of Clockwork Marketing Services, a marketing and public-relations firm in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

Lifestyle

"Single moms don't have a built-in babysitter at home," says McBride. "And they're looking for access to schools and activities for their kids. That's even more important because they're stretched so thin. So your sales approach has to be very much about, 'This is how your life can be easier if you live here.'"

Security

Security is another feature that should be played up. "You want to talk about the fact that it's a gated community and how the gate works, and whether the perimeter is secured, and that there are street lights throughout — things that make people feel safe," McBride says. Other big pluses are low maintenance exteriors that don't require painting and lawns that are mowed by a maintenance crew, features that allow single women to budget much-needed R&R.

Social Environment

Even more important, McBride says, are opportunities to socialize within the community. One very popular amenity nowadays is the dog park, a great place for pet owners to get acquainted.

Community

McBride suggests that builders offer the use of their community centers to charitable organizations for fundraisers and other events. "That makes a real strong connection with the female buyer — that you are willing to host something for charity in your community. It gives them good feelings about who you are."

Accessibility

Jacobs says single women will buy in the suburbs as long as the community is accessible to work, shopping and transportation corridors into the city. "Let's face it: a single woman doesn't want to hang out at a suburban grocery store," she says.

Efficiency

One of the reasons that single women buy new homes at twice the rate of single men is because "they want that warranty," says Anne Olson, principal of Olson Architecture in Niwot, Colo. "They don't want things to be falling apart, and they want to know what they're getting. And a new home is always going to be more energy-efficient than an older one."

'Me' Space

"Me" space — a place to escape the stresses of daily life — is vitally important to these buyers, Olson says. It may mean a spa-like bath with a soaking or aromatherapy tub or a retreat in the master bedroom where they can kick back and read or listen to music.

Amenities

Susan Gunyou, director of sales and marketing for Reardon Brothers Custom Homes in Bluffton, S.C., finds that women tend to be less interested in communities that are designed around a single amenity, such as golf. A variety of amenities (swimming pool, tennis courts, bike paths and so on) appeals more strongly.

But don't assume that what sells at one community will sell at another. Use focus groups to provide insight into what potential buyers are thinking.

"Compared to the cost of fixing a project once you've started it, the expense

54
Percentage of
U.S. population
that was unmarried,
female and 18 or
older in 2006

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Top Community Features for Single Women

1. Multiple recreational amenities
2. Security gate or gatehouse
3. Dog park
4. Community center
5. Attractive entry and landscaping
6. Well-lit streets and walking paths

of a focus group is nominal,” McBride says. “Many times a builder will say, ‘I’ll just get a bunch of people together and ask what’s important to them.’ But if you’re doing it yourself with your own product, there’s no way you can remain objective.”

Outside professionals know how to recruit people who fit the profile of your intended buyer and solicit valuable feedback without taking any of the comments personally, she says.

Selling Dos and Don’ts

This may be the 21st century, but some new-home salespeople still cling to outdated approaches that alienate single women, says Brody. The most important role a salesperson can play is trusted adviser and confidante. “It would behoove a salesperson to be a good listener and pour on the empathy,” she says. “For some women, it’s their first time buying a home and they’re kind of nervous.”

Not all salespeople are good at follow-up. “They’re already moving on to the next sale when they should be communicating via phone and e-mail with updates on the community and alerts about parties and other events — anything that personalizes the experience,” she says.

Another way to cement relationships with customers is by introducing them to other buyers who have similar interests. “Single women need a support network,” Brody says. “They may have relocated to the area for work and don’t know other women. They’d like to hook up with other single women who have kids or dogs or are into yoga or photography or running.”

Never insult a single woman by asking if her husband or significant other will be along later. “Salespeople cannot assume that because a woman is single, she’s going to have a difficult time making the purchase,” says McBride. “That’s the worst thing they can do.” Brody says a politically correct way to ask the question is, “Who, in addition to yourself, will be making this decision?”

Obviously, salespeople should avoid getting too personal with their questions. But they might ask, “How many people are going to be living in the house?” in order to figure out how many bedrooms a buyer needs. “Usually buyers open up and tell you they’re single or recently divorced,” Jacobs says.

Hafer believes there’s one selling principle that applies regardless of age, income and other differentiating factors: discovery.

10.4
Millions of single
mothers living with
their children in 2006

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

“There will be differences, but a salesperson cannot assume he or she knows what those differences are. The key is listening, understanding and then influencing according to the interest of the individual.”

Target the Market

Jacobs Homes has two active communities in the Chicago suburbs that are drawing a significant number of single women (15 percent at one community and 29 percent at the other). Most are between 30 and 40 years old and buying attached single-family homes in the \$300,000 to \$400,000 range. Jacobs uses a combination of print advertising, direct mail and e-mail blasts to reach out to them.

Clockwork Marketing has planned a number of events to market new communities to single women, including Meet Your Neighbor Night, Movie Night and the “Shop Hop,” a day trip to a shopping mall. “The Shop Hop is a great way to get a whole bunch of women on a bus,” says McBride. “You have all this time to talk to them about your community in a subtle way. A couple of mimosas don’t hurt in getting the information down, too.” Be sure to follow up after the event: “Offer a great prize as an incentive to get prospective buyers to register.”

Brody encourages home builders to not just think outside the box, but to smash that box with a hammer.

“In my opinion, builders are too conservative when it comes to marketing,” she says. “If I wanted to attract single women to a new community, I’d focus on the predominant age group and what they might like.”

Her suggestions include:

- Hosting a day of holistic Zen activities, co-sponsored by a local spa and complete with lit candles, New Age music, herbal tea and chair massages. At the end of the day, distribute spa coupons.
- Organizing a “Sex and the City” movie party where Cosmos are served at the community center or sales office.
- Inviting single mothers to tour a community on a weeknight. Keep the sales office and models open until 9 or 10 p.m. and provide a sit-down dinner or buffet and entertainment for the children.

“Working single moms pick up their kids from day care around 7 p.m.,” she says. “They’re bringing home boxed dinners so they don’t have to eat out for the 19th time. On weekends, they don’t have time to shop for a new home. If your sales office is open when they’re actually available, you’re more likely to capture their interest.” **PB**

44
Percentage of female
buyers who are
unmarried and at least
45 years old (12 percent
are seniors)

Source: Joint Center for Housing Studies
at Harvard University, June 2006

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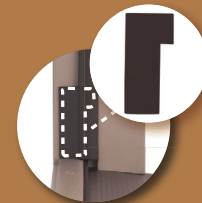
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Emulating late 19th-century English Arts and Crafts design, this foyer welcomes guests to the Cumbria model at Windermere on the Lake in Stamford, Conn. An interior window flanks the staircase, drawing light from the adjacent family room into the triple-height foyer. All the homes at Windermere have extensive bays of casement windows that capture views of the park-like surroundings. For inspiration, architect Roger Bartels looked to the work of C.F.A. Voysey, a leading architect of the Arts and Crafts movement in England.

OPEN INVITATION

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Photo: Gabrielsen Photography

INSIDE

The envelope, please: 50+ Housing Awards [page 36]

50+ Housing Awards



Professional Builder presents the winners of the NAHB 50+ Housing Council's Best of 50+ Housing Awards.

By Kristin Foster and Jennifer Powell, Staff Writers

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Consider the retirement communities of your father's day no more. The gold winners from this year's Best of 50+ Housing Awards are proof that home builders have thrown the dated retirement home concept out the window and are approaching housing for older consumers in a completely different way. And the biggest signifier that things have changed is variety. This year's winners are communities and homes that vary not only in type and purpose, but also in design, target market, size and amenities. In the Best of 50+ Housing Awards, you will find excellent design and smart marketing projects that cover all the bases.

The National Association of Home Builders' Best of 50+ Housing Awards encourage quality and innovation by giving national recognition to the latest trends in active-adult and service-enhanced housing. This year, the judges awarded more than 100 entries in more than 50 categories for excellence and innovation in the design, development and marketing of housing for the 50-plus bracket.

As you look through the winners, notice this year's trends of the 50-plus market the judges noted:

- High-density projects on smaller plots of land
- A focus on energy-efficiency and sustainable building materials
- Amenities geared toward wellness, spirituality and meditation as opposed to just physical well-being
- Continuing education opportunities through nearby colleges and universities
- Maintaining home quality without the "bigger is better" mentality

**THE 2008
BEST OF
50+
HOUSING
AWARDS**

Meet the Judges

ACTIVE-ADULT CATEGORY

Norman Cohen
NSC Residential, Atlanta

Chuck Covell
Covell Communities, Gaithersburg, Md.

Wendy Pieper
Builders' Design Inc., Gaithersburg, Md.

Dick Willhoit
Estrella Associates, Paso Robles, Calif.

Doug Van Lerberghe
Kephart community :: planning :: architecture, Denver

SERVICE-ENRICHED CATEGORY

Douglas Ahlstrom
KKE Architects, Las Vegas

Kevin Glover
Erickson Retirement Communities, Baltimore

Evelyn Howard
Howard & Associates, Bethesda, Md.

Doug Pancake
Irwin Pancake Architects, Costa Mesa, Calif.

MARKETING CATEGORY

Kate Brennan
Mary Cook & Associates, Chicago

Janis Ehlers
The Ehlers Group, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Bob Karen
Symphony Village, Owings Mills, Md.

Jennifer McKee
The McKee Group, Springfield, Pa.



■ **Gold Award for Best Overall Community – Small (Up to 100 Homes)/
Best Clubhouse Interior Design – Small**

Easy Farm Livin'

In building Adams Farm, Brendon Homes paid great detail to retaining the rural farm environment. The community has a classic New England motif, with hand-carved wooden signs and sprawling white fences. This feel is enhanced by the community's clubhouse, The Morgan Club, which is built in classic farmhouse style. Brendon Homes added extra detail to embody the classic New England aesthetic of country living, from cathedral ceilings and crown moldings to custom millwork and red oak hardwood floors. Extra care was taken to provide the necessary features for the 50+ consumer, such as minimal steps in the front entry; extra wide doors into and within the home; and varying countertop heights.

Project Name: Adams Farm

Project Location: Shrewsbury, Mass.

Developer/Owner: Brendon Homes, Southborough, Mass.

Architect: Shane Structures, Hopkinton, Mass.

Builder: Brendon Homes, Southborough, Mass.

Marketing Firm: Prime Time Communities, Littleton, Mass.

Interior Designer: Design East Interiors, Exeter, N.H.

Photography: Rixon Photography



■ **Gold Award for Best Overall Community – Midsize (101 to 750 Homes)**

A Light Rail Community

Metropolitan Homes partnered with the local transit authority to plan a community that revolved around the local light rail. The home builder designed Vallagio at Inverness to give residents easy access to Denver by creating a covered pedestrian connection between the community and the light rail station. Metropolitan Homes created six different product series in a variety of styles, prices and sizes. All of the houses have several aging-in-place features that include large kitchen islands for easy access to all appliances and large doorways. The three-story townhome product series comes with optional personal elevators.

Project Name: Vallagio at Inverness

Project Location: Englewood, Colo.

Developer/Owner: Metropolitan Homes, Denver

Architect: Kephart community :: planning :: architecture, Denver

Builder: Metropolitan Homes, Denver

Interior Designer: Design Works, Denver

Photography: Steve Hinds Inc.

■ **Gold Award for Best Overall Community – Large (Over 750 Homes)**

A Community That Plays

Vintage Communities and Pulte Homes focused the design of Village at Deaton Creek by Del Webb around lifestyles. They realize the homeowners are at a point in their lives where they can spend more time doing activities they love. The houses have open kitchens and great rooms that make entertaining easy and a covered lanai that can be used year-round. Features also include wide hallways, lower thresholds and levers instead of door-knobs. A 35,000-square-foot clubhouse with a fitness center, library, gourmet kitchen, meeting room, billiards room, arts and crafts multi-purpose room and an indoor lap pool round out the community. Outdoor amenities include a lagoon-style pool, tennis courts, space for bocce ball, trails and a children's playground for visiting grandchildren.

Project Name: Village at Deaton Creek by Del Webb

Project Location: Hoschton, Ga.

Developer/Owner: Vintage Communities/Pulte Homes, Duluth, Ga.

Architect: Pulte Homes, Duluth, Ga.

Builder: Pulte Homes/Del Webb, Duluth, Ga.

Marketing Firm: Anderson Communications, Hilton Head Island, S.C.

Interior Designer: DEI, Kennesaw, Ga.

Photography: Warren Bond Photography





■ **Gold Award for Best Home Design – Over 2,400 Square Feet/ Best Overall Website/ Best Overall Sales Center**

No Bluff

The focus of Stonebridge of Lake Bluff is the floor plan, The Hampshire. This floor plan centers on first-floor living with additional spaces. The design has wider hallways and doorways, easy opening doorknobs and shower entries that can adapt to wheelchairs if needed. The den, adjacent to a half-bath and the master bedroom, can turn into a second bedroom, and the half-bath can become a full bathroom. The dining room can be turned into a den. A few of the amenities in the community include a business center and a fitness center.

Project Name: Stonebridge of Lake Bluff
Project Location: Lake Bluff, Ill.
Developer/Owner: Stonebridge of Lake Bluff, Lake Bluff, Ill.
Architect: Myefski Cook Architects, Glencoe, Ill.
Builder: New England Builders, Skokie, Ill.
Marketing Firm: Leibson, McGrath, Mankedick, Northbrook, Ill.
Interior Designer: New England Builders, Skokie, Ill.
Photography: Soft Mirage, Jess Smith



■ **Gold Award for Best Home Design – 1,701 to 2,400 Square Feet**

Flexible Home Design

Four Seasons Charlottesville, Creston II, has 600 detached single-family homes with spacious floor plans, just as K. Hovnanian Homes intended it. The home's living room and dining room are open to each other, so if a homeowner doesn't want a formal living and dining room, the room can be combined. The kitchen and family room sit at the back of the house where a wall of windows offers natural light. The kitchen's peninsula sink with a bar top, which faces the family room, offers a place to gather for drinks. The master bathroom has his-and-her sinks along with his-and-her closets in the master bedroom. The design is flexible in terms of space, but it is also universally designed for future use. The bathroom is reinforced for grab bars to be added if needed, and the shower is wide enough for a wheelchair. State of the art wiring is available with optional panic cell remotes.

Project Name: K. Hovnanian's Four Seasons Charlottesville, Creston II

Project Location: Ruckersville, Va.

Developer/Owner: K. Hovnanian's Four Seasons Active Adult Communities, Chantilly, Va.

Architect: K. Hovnanian Homes, Cary, N.C.

Builder: K. Hovnanian Four Seasons Active Adult Communities, Chantilly, Va.

Marketing Firm: SB&A, Richmond, Va.

Interior Designer: Design Works, Fairfax, Va.

Photography: Alan Goldstein Photography



■ **Gold Award for Best Home Design – Over 2,400 Square Feet**

Comfortable & Upscale

The Preserve at Saddlebrooke, Sabino, is nothing short of luxury. Robson Communities added Old World craftsmanship to the architecture. The design is an intricate layer of indoor and outdoor living areas with age-specific design elements. The home is one story, which makes it easy to navigate. Extra-wide hallways give room for wheelchairs or scooters if they're needed. A walk-in shower allows easy maneuverability, and a comprehensive Homeowners' Association plan provides no-maintenance living. There is also an option for separate sleeping quarters as the homeowners age; a full guest suite with a private bath is located at the opposite side of the home. The front of the home boasts a casita, and homeowners also have studio space with a main great room or bedroom, a private bath and a sink or wet bar.

Project Name: The Preserve at Saddlebrooke, Sabino

Project Location: Tucson, Ariz.

Developer/Owner: Robson Communities, Sun Lakes, Ariz.

Architect: BSB Design, Scottsdale, Ariz.

Builder: Robson Communities, Sun Lakes, Ariz.

Interior Designer: Robson Communities, Sun Lakes, Ariz.

Photography: Mark Bolsclair



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■ **Gold Award for Best For-Sale Attached Home Design – 1,701 to 2,400 Square Feet**

An Oasis on the Strip

Terra Bella, located only 25 minutes from the Las Vegas strip, is the only multifamily attached project within a golf-oriented master planned community in Henderson, Nev. The age restricted development has a total of 236 condominiums (ranging from 1,423 to 2,200 square feet with five different floor plans) spread among identical 24-unit buildings. Builder Westmark Homes took advantage of the significant grade change on the site by configuring it into two levels to maximize views of downtown Las Vegas.

Project Name: Terra Bella
Location: Henderson, Nev.
Developer/Owner: Westmark Homes, Las Vegas.
Architect: RNM Design, Newport Beach, Calif.
Builder: Westmark Homes, Las Vegas
Interior Designer: Carol Eichen Interiors, Santa Ana, Calif.
Photography: RNM Design

Professional Builder / July 2008

■ **Gold Award for Best Attached Home Community (Any Size)**

All About the Community

Chestnut Oaks Condominiums embodies a sense of community of high luxury and with a high quality of life. The condos have several strategies to bring together the residents and the community. They throw thematic lunches and events with great food and a chance to socialize. Community activities such as field trips on a free shuttle to local shopping, church services, cultural outings and entertainment cater to active homeowners. A movie theater hosts a weekly movie night with popcorn. And if that wasn't enough, residents reach out to the local community by adopting local groups and networking with the nearby community college; in turn, the groups provide on-site services for residents.

Project Name: Chestnut Oaks Condominiums

Project Location: Fort Washington, Md.

Developer/Owner: Poretzky Building Group, Washington, D.C.

Architect: Grimm + Parker Architects, Calverton, Md.

Builder: Meridian Construction Co., Gaithersburg, Md.

Marketing Firm: Joint Venture, Baltimore

Interior Designer: Peristyle, Baltimore

Photography: Kenneth M. Wyner



■ **Gold Award for Best For-Sale Attached Home Design – Up to 1,700 Square Feet**

Universal Design

Metropolitan Homes was sensitive when the company designed Vallagio at Inverness, Moscatto. The floor plan sets up mainly first-floor living that has several aging-in-place features that can be tapped if needed. Examples include the openness of the floor plan for ease of mobility, a large kitchen island that slows access to all appliances, a walk-in shower in the master bathroom and wide doorways. The developer also partnered with the neighboring Inverness Hotel and Golf Club to give residents access to its luxury amenities. The Moscatto provides a maintenance-free, lock-and-leave lifestyle with all the benefits of an urban location.

Project Name: Vallagio at Inverness, Moscatto

Project Location: Englewood, Colo.

Developer/Owner: Metropolitan Homes, Denver

Architect: Kephart community :: planning :: architecture, Denver

Builder: Metropolitan Homes, Denver

Interior Designer: Design Works, Denver

Photography: Steve Hinds Inc.



www.ProBuilder.com



■ **Gold Award for Best Assisted Living Overall Facility – Any Size**

It Feels Like Home

Steering away from the institutional feel of a typical assisted-living facility, Grace House has taken special measures to make their look and feel like a regular house. The building's size (two-story, T-shaped, 30 rooms) was kept purposefully small, and the exterior architectural style was chosen to match the single family-homes in the Mid-Atlantic region. Design and furnishings of the common areas (concentrated in one wing of the building's footprint) match rooms that would be found in a typical home. When possible, institutional necessities such as hand rails and fire-barrier doors are made less conspicuous, giving Grace House the single-family atmosphere it desired.

Project Name: Grace House
Location: Silver Spring, Md.
Developer/Owner: Victory Housing, Bethesda, Md.
Architect: Bennett Frank McCarthy Architects, Silver Spring, Md.
Builder: Hamel Builders, Elkridge, Md.
Interior Designer: Aumen Asner, Baltimore
Photography: Kenneth M. Wyner

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■ **Gold Award for Best For-Sale Attached Home Design – Over 2,400 Square Feet**

High Class in the Hill Country

Located in Southlake, Texas, a suburb 25 miles northwest of Dallas, Watermere at Southlake is an attached home development that's part of a 60-acre active-adult community. Watermere's attached villa and condominium homes are clustered in U shapes surrounding groomed motor courts. Designer Galier Tolson French used the Texas hill country as an inspiration for the exterior, which incorporates natural stone, stucco, cedar beams and tin roofs as accents. The villas come in 10 different floor plans, with kitchens and bathrooms incorporating universal design techniques enabling Watermere's residents to age with grace in place.

Project Name: Watermere at Southlake
Location: Southlake, Texas
Developer/Owner: Southlake Care Group, Southlake, Texas
Architect: Galier . Tolson . French Design Associates, Bedford, Texas
Builder: Integrated Construction, Southlake, Texas
Marketing Firm: RC&P, Lubbock, Texas
Interior Designer: Faulkner Design Group, Dallas
Photography: Doug Handel Photography

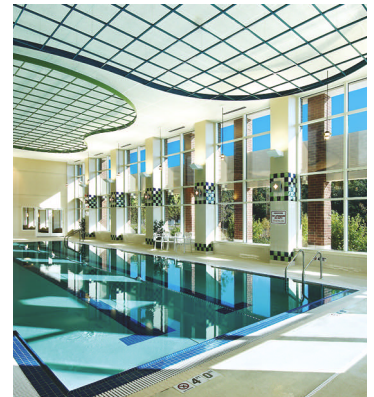


■ **Gold Award for Best Continuing Care Retirement Community – Large (Over 200 Units)**

A Village for the Future

Envisioning a modernization for the 30-year-old continuing care retirement community, Friendship Village of Schaumburg, Schaumburg, Ill., worked with architecture firm Dorsky Hodgson Parrish Yue to give the community the updates it desired. The existing Friendship Village campus comprised 640 independent living apartments, 28 independent living cottages, 99 assisted-living units and 248 skilled nursing beds. In addition to a shift in the community's philosophy to focus on wellness instead of illness, a new six-story, 315,000-square-foot building was built to serve as the new campus entrance. The new facility consists of both common areas and 170 more independent living apartments.

Project Name: Friendship Village of Schaumburg
Location: Schaumburg, Ill.
Owner: Friendship Village of Schaumburg, Schaumburg, Ill.
Architect: Dorsky Hodgson Parrish Yue, Cleveland
Photography: David Miezal



July 2008 / Professional Builder



■ Gold Award for Best Special Needs Housing

All Users Considered

For the Childers Place design team, the philosophy was simple: create a building that serves residents, visitors and staff alike. For residents, the private units are grouped into households and neighborhoods that include kitchens, dining venues, lounges and healing gardens. Workspaces, Wi-Fi and a café and courtyard are available for visitors' comfort. The staff is provided with a training center, premium space for functions and a private employee garden. The architecture stays true to Texas' Panhandle region and even manages to be both innovative and aesthetically pleasing while staying within Texas' strict regulations for nursing facilities.

Project Name: Childers Place

Location: Amarillo, Texas

Developer/Owner: The Bivins Foundations, Amarillo, Texas

Architect: Perkins Eastman, Chicago

Builder: Western Builders, Amarillo, Texas

Interior Designer: Perkins Eastman, Chicago

Photography: Chris Cooper



■ Gold Award for Best Renovated Housing – Multifamily

A Dollar Goes a Long Way

What's a city to do with a former hotel that survived two fires and years of neglect? Turn it into affordable senior housing, of course. The Snapps Hotel, built in 1907, was the jewel of downtown Excelsior Springs, Mo., but two fires left the building in bad shape. To revitalize the area, the city made plans for affordable senior housing and sold the old Snapps Hotel to developer Carlson Gardner Inc. for \$1. After a \$9.5 million renovation, there are 40 apartments that feature preserved terrazzo floors and a replica of Snapps' original marble staircase.



■ Gold Award for Best Renovated Housing – Service-Enriched

From Industrial to Residential

Built in 1895, Whitman Mill No. 1, a two-story former cotton textile mill, is quite possibly the least likely place to find senior independent living apartments. Having fallen into disrepair by the 1990s in a community that was in need of affordable 55-plus housing, developer WinnDevelopment worked to restore the mill within the National Park Service's historic preservation guidelines. The building, now Whaler's Place Apartments, comprises mostly one-bedroom flats, though what was once the boiler house now contains town-house-style apartments. An assisted-living facility takes up the northern portion of the mill building, allowing residents to age in place.

Project Name: Whaler's Place

Apartments

Location: New Bedford, Mass.

Developer/Owner:

WinnDevelopment, Boston

Architect: The Architectural Team, Chelsea, Mass.

Builder: Keith Construction, Stoughton, Mass.

Interior Designer: The Drawing Room Interior Design, Byfield, Mass.

Photography: Bruce T. Martin



Project Name: Oaks Apartments

Location: Excelsior Springs, Mo.

Developer/Owner: Carlson Gardner Inc., Springfield, Mo.

Architect: Stark, Wilson, Duncan Architects, Kansas City, Mo.

Builder: DCI Construction, Springfield, Mo.

Marketing Firm: Mid America Management, Springfield, Mo.

Interior Designer: The Hollis & Miller Group, Overland Park, Kan.

Photography: Jeff Nichols

■ Gold Award for Best Clubhouse – Small (Up to 6,000 Square Feet)



Project Name: Brookhaven of East Cobb
Project Location: Kennesaw, Ga.
Developer/Owner: Chastain Road Development Partners, Atlanta
Architect: CADD, Cartersville, Ga.
Builder: Jim Chapman Communities, Atlanta
Interior Designer: L. Green Studios, Atlanta
Photography: Chris Voith Photography

■ Gold Award for Best Clubhouse – Large (Over 6,000 Square Feet)



Project Name: Meadow Lake Village Grand Lodge
Project Location: Meridian, Idaho
Developer/Owner: Touchmark Development and Construction, Beaverton, Ore.
Architect: Myhre Group Architects, Portland, Ore.
Builder: Andersen Construction Co., Boise, Idaho
Interior Designer: Myhre Group Architects, Portland, Ore.
Photography: Taylor Photo Graphics

■ Gold Award for Best Clubhouse – Large (Over 6,000 Square Feet)/Best Clubhouse Interior Design – Large (Over 6,000 Square Feet)/Best Overall Television Commercial



Project Name: Sun City Festival
Project Location: Buckeye, Ariz.
Developer/Owner: Pulte Homes; Del Webb, Scottsdale, Ariz.
Architect: SHJ, Phoenix
Builder: Pulte Homes; Del Webb, Scottsdale, Ariz.
Marketing Firm: Chapter 2, Scottsdale, Ariz.
Interior Designer: Loewen Gunther Design Group, Phoenix
Photography: Todd Photography

■ Gold Award for Best Model Home Merchandising – Up to 1,700 Square Feet



Project Name: Terravista, The Pavilion
Location: Round Rock, Texas
Developer/Owner: Spicewood Development Inc., Austin, Texas
Architect: Kipp Flores Architects, Austin, Texas
Builder: Spicewood Development Inc., Austin, Texas
Marketing Firm: In House Marketing, Austin, Texas
Interior Designer: Mary DeWalt Design Group, Austin, Texas
Photography: Robert McGee

■ Gold Award for Best Model Home Merchandising – Up to 1,700 Square Feet



Project Name: Meadowbrook Pointe

Location: Westbury, N.Y.

Developer/Owner: Michael Dubb, Jericho, N.Y.

Architects: Axlerod & Cherveny, Architects, Commack, N.Y.;
Barton Partners Architects, Norristown, Pa.

Builder: Meadowbrook Pointe Development Corp., Jericho, N.Y.

Marketing Firm: Marketing Specifics, Kennesaw, Ga.

Interior Designers: Mary Cook and Associates (models),
Chicago; Beechwood Design Team (clubhouse), Jericho, N.Y.

Photography: Taylor Photography

■ Gold Award for Best Model Home Merchandising – 1,701 to 2,400 Square Feet



Project Name: Del Prado Collections at Sonoma Ranch, Plan 1

Location: Las Cruces, N.M.

Developer/Owner: Sonoma Ranch Subdivision Co., Las Cruces,
N.M.

Architect: Iverson Architects, Newport Beach, Calif.

Builder: Sonoma Ranch Subdivision Co., Las Cruces, N.M.

Marketing Firm: SGW Creative, Sequim, Wash.

Interior Designer: Possibilities for Design, Denver

Photography: Eric Lucero

■ Gold Award for Best Model Home Merchandising – Over 2,400 Square Feet



Project Name: K. Hovnanian's Four Seasons Charlottesville, Wingate

Location: Ruckersville, Va.

Developer/Owner: K. Hovnanian's Four Seasons Active Adult Communities,
Chantilly, Va.

Architect: K. Hovnanian Homes, Cary, N.C.

Builder: K. Hovnanian Four Seasons Active Adult Communities, Chantilly, Va.

Marketing Firm: SB&A, Richmond, Va.

Interior Designer: Model Home Interiors, Elk Ridge, Md.

Photography: Alan Goldstein Photography

■ Gold Award for Best Model Home Merchandising – Over 2,400 Square Feet



Project Name: Del Prado Collections at Sonoma Ranch, Plan 2

Location: Las Cruces, N.M.

Developer/Owner: Sonoma Ranch Subdivision Co., Las
Cruces, N.M.

Architect: Iverson Architects, Newport Beach, Calif.

Builder: Sonoma Ranch Subdivision Co., Las Cruces, N.M.

Marketing Firm: SGW Creative, Sequim, Wash.

Interior Designer: Possibilities for Design, Denver

Photography: Eric Lucero

■ **Gold Award for Best Continuing Care Retirement Community Common Area Interior Design – Large (Over 200 Units)**



Project Name: Regents Point

Location: Irvine, Calif.

Developer/Owner: Southern California Presbyterian Homes, Glendale, Calif.

Architect: Serdar Architecture, La Canada, Calif.

Interior Designer: CastleRock Design Group, Newport Beach, Calif.

Photography: John Bare Photography

■ **Gold Award for Best Income-Qualified Affordable Rental Apartments**



Project Name: Garden Grove Senior Apartments

Location: Garden Grove, Calif.

Developer/Owner: Meta Housing Corp., Los Angeles

Architect: KTGy Group, Irvine, Calif.

Marketing Firm: Bernie D. Sandalow, Culver City, Calif.

Interior Designer: Linda Howard Interior Design, Costa Mesa, Calif.

Photography: Christopher Mayer Photography

■ **Gold Award for Best Income-Qualified Affordable Rental Apartments**



Project Name: Victory Heights

Location: Washington, D.C.

Developer/Owner: Victory Housing, Bethesda, Md.

Architect: Torti Gallas & Partners, Silver Spring, Md.

Builder: Hamel Builders, Elkridge, Md.

Interior Designer: Aumen Asner Inc., Baltimore

Photography: Kenneth M. Wyner

■ Gold Award for Best 'On the Boards' Clubhouse – Large (Over 6,000 Square Feet)/Best Overall Special Promotion



Project Name: Peachtree Hills Place

Project Location: Atlanta

Developer/Owner: Isakson Barnhart, Atlanta

Architect: Foley Design Associates, East Point, Ga.

Marketing Firm: GlynnDevins Advertising & Marketing,
Overland Park, Kan.

Interior Designer: Foley Design Associates, East Point, Ga.

Photography: B. Sheppard Consulting

■ Gold Award for Best 'On the Boards' Clubhouse – Large (Over 6,000 Square Feet)



Project Name: Warm Hearth Village

Project Location: Blacksburg, Va.

Developer/Owner: Warm Hearth Village – New Century Housing,
Blacksburg, Va.

Architect: SFCS, Roanoke, Va.

Builder: Fralin & Waldron, Roanoke, Va.

Marketing Firm: Sharon Brooks & Associates, Richmond, Va.

Interior Designer: Builders' Design Inc., Gaithersburg, Md.

Photography: Virtual Solutions, Quebec, Canada

■ Gold Award for Best 'On the Boards' Home Design (Any Size)



Project Name: Provenance, Mozart

Project Location: Longmont, Colo.

Developer/Owner: Bosch Land Group, Boulder, Colo.

Architect: Olson Architecture, Niwot, Colo.

Builder: Masterwork Home Co., Boulder, Colo.

Marketing Firm: Bosch Marketing Group, Boulder, Colo.

Photography: Olson Architecture

■ Gold Award for Best 'On the Boards' For-Sale Attached Home Design (Any Size)



Project Name: Artesia, Unit A

Location: Scottsdale, Ariz.

Developer/Owner: Starpointe Properties, Scottsdale, Ariz.

Architect: Kephart community :: planning :: architecture, Denver

Builder: Starpointe Properties, Scottsdale, Ariz.

Photography: Kephart community :: planning :: architecture,
Denver

■ **Gold Award for Best ‘On the Boards’ Continuing Care Retirement Community – Small (Up to 200 Units)**



Project Name: Taube-Koret Campus for Jewish Life
Location: Palo Alto, Calif.
Developer/Owner: Jewish Homes for the Aged, San Francisco
Architect: Steinberg Architects, San Francisco
Builder: Webcor Builders, San Mateo, Calif.
Photography: Steinberg Architects

■ **Gold Award for Best ‘On the Boards’ Continuing Care Retirement Community – Large (Over 200 Units)**



Project Name: Makemie Ridge
Location: Westtown Township, Pa.
Developer/Owner: Presby's Inspired Life, Lafayette Hill, Pa.
Architect: THW Design, Atlanta
Marketing Firm: RLS, Hartford, Conn.
Interior Designer: THW Design, Atlanta
Photography: THW Design, Atlanta

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■ **Gold Award for Best Affordable Rental Apartments' Common Area Interior Design**



Project Name: Village at the Crossing
Location: San Bruno, Calif.
Developer/Owner: KDF Communities, Newport Beach, Calif.
Architect: Kwan Hemni Architecture, San Francisco
Builder: Cahill Construction, San Francisco
Interior Designer: Creative Design Consultants, Costa Mesa, Calif.
Photography: Matthew Millman Photography

■ **Gold Award for Best ‘On the Boards’ Affordable Rental Apartments**



Project Name: Santa Barbara Palms
Location: Las Vegas
Developer/Owner: George Gekakis Inc., Las Vegas
Architect: KKE of Nevada, Las Vegas
Builder: George Gekakis Inc., Las Vegas
Photography: ABDDBA 3D-China

■ Gold Award for Best Overall Logo



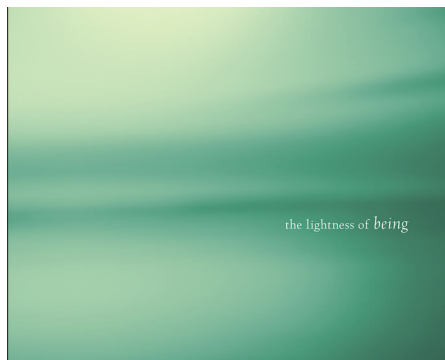
Project Name: The Lodge at BridgeMill
Location: Canton, Ga.
Developer/Owner: The Club at BridgeMill, Troy, N.Y.
Architect: Niles Bolton Associates, Atlanta
Builder: American Construction Co., Troy, N.Y.
Marketing Firm: United Realty Management, Troy, N.Y.
Interior Designer: Niles Bolton Interiors, Atlanta
Logo Design: Kate Spiller, United Group of Companies

■ Gold Award for Best Overall Community Brochure



Project Name: Chester River Landing, Charleston
Location: Chestertown, Md.
Developer/Owner: Chestertown Associates, Gaithersburg, Md.
Architect: Morgan Design Group, Owings Mills, Md.
Builder: Covell Communities, Gaithersburg, Md.
Marketing Firm: NDG Communications, La Plata, Md.
Website Designer: NDG Communications, La Plata, Md.
Photography: Merick Towle Advertising

■ Gold Award for Best Overall Community Brochure



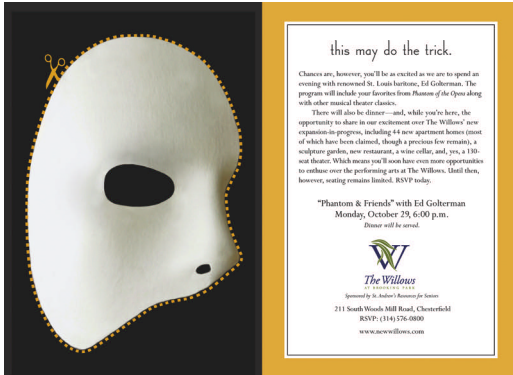
Project Name: Luma, The Lightness of Being
Location: Nayarit, Mexico
Developer/Owner: Front Porch Development Company, Burbank, Calif.
Architect: Del Sactillo Marquez y Arquitectos Asociados, S.C. Architect, Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, Mexico
Builder: Front Porch Development Company, Burbank, Calif.
Marketing Firm: Greenhaus, San Diego
Interior Designer: Colectivo Arquitectos, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico
Website Designer: Greenhaus, San Diego
Photography: Art Brewer

■ Gold Award for Best Overall Direct-Mail Piece/Campaign



Project Name: The Mather
Location: Evanston, Ill.
Developer/Owner: Mather LifeWays, Evanston, Ill.
Architect: Solomon Cordwell Buenz, Chicago
Builder: Power Construction, Schaumburg, Ill.
Marketing Firm: Mather LifeWays, Evanston, Ill.
Interior Designer: Interior Design Associates, Nashville, Tenn.

■ Gold Award for Best Overall Direct-Mail Piece/Campaign



Project Name: The Willows at Brooking Park

Location: Chesterfield, Mo.

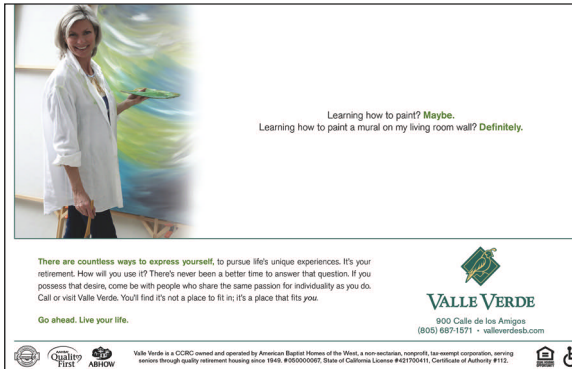
Developer/Owner: St. Andrews Resources for Seniors, Chesterfield, Mo.

Architect: Saur and Associates, Clayton, Mo.

Marketing Firm: SB&A, Richmond, Va.

Photography: SB&A, Richmond, Va.

■ Gold Award for Best Overall Black-and-White Print Advertisement



Project Name: Valle Verde Retirement Community

Location: Santa Barbara, Calif.

Developer/Owner: American Baptist Homes of the West, Pleasanton, Calif.

Marketing Firm: GlynnDevins Advertising + Marketing, Overland Park, Kan.

Photography: Corbis Photo

■ Gold Award for Best Overall Color Print Advertisement



Project Name: Four Seasons at New Kent Vineyards

Location: New Kent, Va.

Developer/Owner: K. Hovnanian's Four Seasons, Chantilly, Va.

Builder: K. Hovnanian's Four Seasons, Chantilly, Va.

Marketing Firm: SB&A, Richmond, Va.

Photography: Tony Silvestro

■ Gold Award for Best Overall Sales Center



Project Name: Sun City Mesquite

Location: Mesquite, Nev.

Developer/Owner: Pulte Homes/Del Webb, Las Vegas

Architect: SHJ Studio, Phoenix

Builder: LEDCOR, Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Marketing Firm: Susan Shook Associates, Newport Beach, Calif.

Interior Designer: Design Perspectives, Aurora, Colo.

Website Designer: Susan Shook Associates, Newport Beach, Calif.

Photography: Eric Jamison Studio



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TECH-DRIVEN HOME

Your home buyers can bring the tunes playing indoors to their outdoor living spaces with JBL's Control Now speakers. The multiple-application speakers are weatherproof and are great for just about any outdoor living area. The other gizmos in this issue aren't just for tech geeks – Joe Builder can fit these into any next-generation home

Photo: JBL

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High-tech solutions for the A/V geek in all of us [*page 53*]

Software and service solutions to keep businesses buzzing [*page 55*]

Fight termites as you build [*page 56*]



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[HOME TECHNOLOGY]

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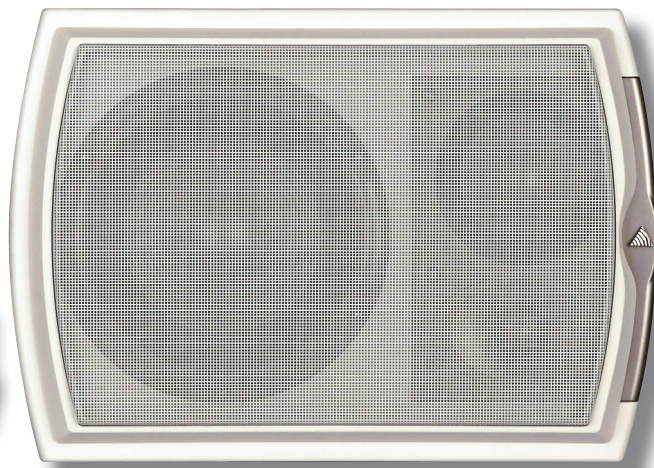
To Infinity and Beyond

Utilizing the company's MRS woofer, Infinity's ERS610 in-ceiling home theater loudspeaker uses Infinity's Same-Plane Surround suspension to provide increased sonic stability and accurate driver motion. Joining the MRS woofer are dual 3-inch CMMD mid-range drivers and a 1-inch CMMD tweeter for added sound quality. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.ims.ca/5647-128>**



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Users can control up to 15 scenes for a room or area and can manipulate up to 11 whole-house scenes with Pass & Seymour's Lightsense radio-frequency and matching hard-wired devices. A neat feature is the occupancy emulator option, which records normal light usage throughout the home and replicates it when the owners are away. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.ims.ca/5647-127>**



Sounds Great to Me

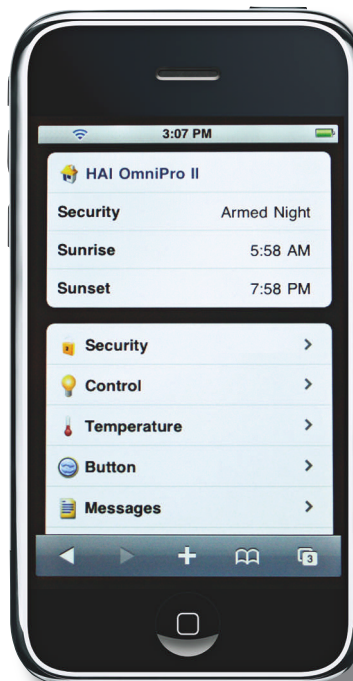
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[HOME TECHNOLOGY]



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Introducing the Silhouette from Kidde. These new UL-approved smoke alarms protrude less than half an inch from the ceiling and are powered by a sealed, rechargeable battery that lasts the life of the alarm. Builders benefit from an easy hard-wired installation thanks to the pre-stripped wiring harness with tinned strands. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.ims.ca/5647-131>**

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HAI's new automation software platform is the WL3 for Windows Home Server. The WL3 allows you to monitor and control your HAI Home Control System from any device with a web browser, including smart phones. It can also support IP cameras and users can view or record video regardless of what brand of camera you have. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.ims.ca/5647-132>**

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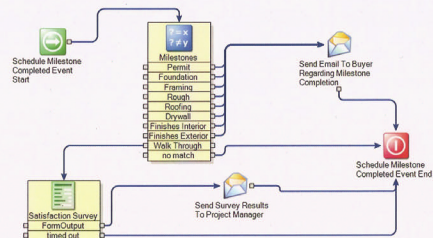
The market's first UL-listed, radio-frequency-based carbon monoxide detector is great for new or retrofit applications where pulling cable is a challenge. Made by Linear, model DXS-80 can be integrated into most alarm panels, and with the integration of the DX receiver it can be added to the home security system. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.ims.ca/5647-133>**

[BUSINESS SOLUTIONS]

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If you're tired of running PowerPoint but still want a simple system to create sophisticated-looking graphics, look no further than SmartDraw's 2008 edition. The software is designed with simplicity in mind; it has plenty of templates to toy with and plenty of automated help features. It also has 17 categories of charts, including maps and other graphics. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.ims.ca/5647-137>**



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On Center Software's Quick Bid 4.8 has a slew of improvements. Using the new Material eQuote feature, users can send and receive multiple requests for proposals to vendors and then automatically populate bids after choosing the best quote. The Bid Send feature securely shares your password-protected electronic bid information with multiple estimators. **For FREE information, visit <http://pb.ims.ca/5647-134>**



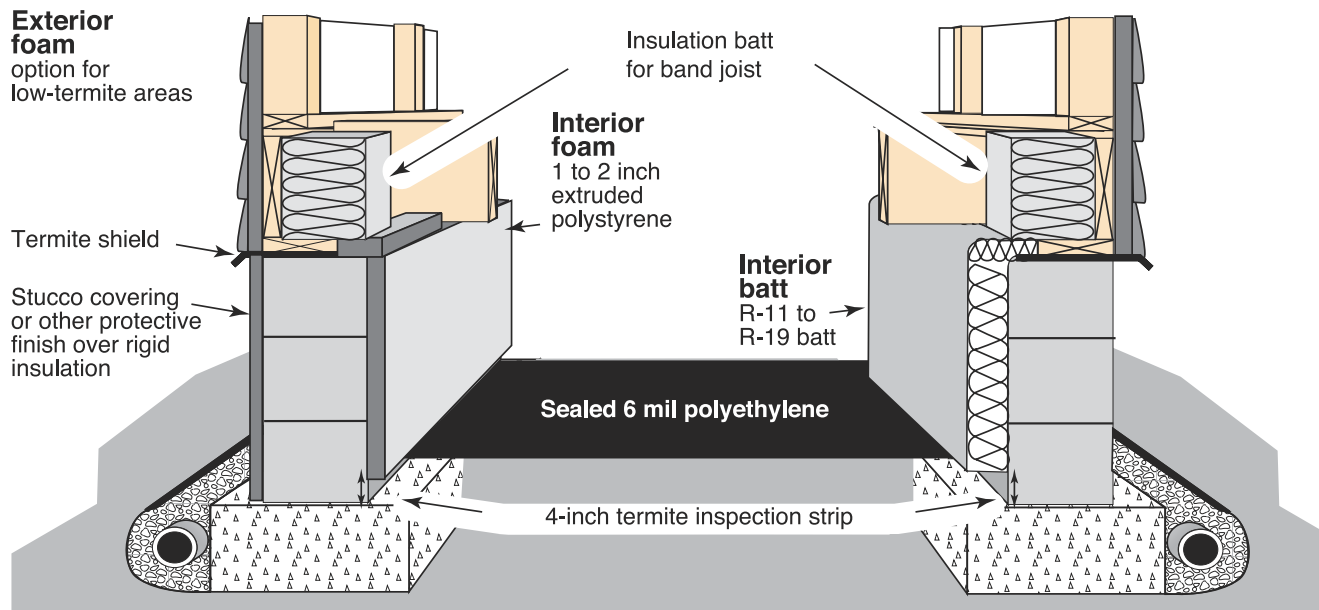
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Courtesy of Southface Energy Institute

[PATH REPORT]

Little Bugs, Big Problems

You can fight termites as you build. Here's a look at termite barriers and pesticide-free termite control.

By Susan Conbere, PATH Partners

The typical chemical application for termites in new construction is about 282 gallons of termiticide for a 1,500-square-foot house. That's a lot of chemicals in the ground. And one dose lasts roughly 5 years, so it must be repeatedly reapplied.

Many experts feel that, left undisturbed, today's termiticides pose no threat to humans or the environment. But for some clients, no pesticide is safe enough, and for those with chemical sensitivities or children who love to dig in the yard, termiticides may be intolerable. Sites with wells or high water tables also don't lend themselves to regular pesticide use, and some soils and foundations are particularly difficult to treat.

These concerns have led to the development of physical barrier alternatives, which are permanently installed during construction. Physical barriers can isolate vulnerable elements of the house or protect the foundation perimeter.

They won't kill termites, but they will force them to tube in places that are visible.

If you opt for barriers in lieu of chemicals, the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing (PATH) recommends reducing termite infestation with the following:

Termite Shields

The easiest and cheapest option is termite flashings, or shields, which provide a physical barrier between the foundation and wood structural elements. Regular flashing materials also work as termite shields. The Southface Energy Institute advises that shields be installed continuously under the sill plate of the building and extend beyond other building materials. This forces termites into the open for easy detection.

In high-termite areas, you may need a more aggressive method of control. The main entry points for termites are pipe penetrations, con-

USING EXTERIOR RIGID FOAM insulation on slabs may provide a hidden path that allows termites to find their way into a home. Although the insulation does not increase the likelihood of termite activity, it makes detection more difficult. Find flashing details for exterior foam insulation on slabs in Southface's Energy Technical Bulletin No. 29, "Insulating Foundations and Floors." (Visit www.southface.org and search for "Insulating Foundation.")

struction joints and biggest of all, bath traps. Flashing may not fit snugly enough around pipe penetrations to ward off determined populations.

According to Bill Koehler, professor of entomology of the University of Florida, common pipe wraps provide termites access into the house and protect them from soil termiticides as they enter through slab penetrations. Pipe wraps are required for copper but optional for CPVC pipe. If the building code allows it, Koehler recommends omitting pipe wraps around CPVC pipes. However, the use of a physical barrier around pipes, Koehler notes, solves the problem completely.

Your choices are aggregates and stainless steel mesh.

Aggregates and Mesh

Aggregates contain rock, sand or another large medium that is too large for termites to chew but too small to pass through. Distribution in the U.S. is limited, so stainless steel mesh is the only practical barrier alternative for U.S. builders.

Stainless steel mesh is a finely woven, marine-grade screen that is used to create a continuous physical barrier between new construction and ground contact. The edges of the mesh form to the concrete, and hole openings are protected.

Ray Tonjes, owner of Ray Tonjes Builder in Austin, Texas, and chair of NAHB's Green Subcommittee, recommends the

mesh system.

Tonjes has experimented with various physical barriers, particularly a coarse sand barrier, but found it difficult to adapt. Metal flashing, he says, doesn't really work around plumbing penetrations. In 2000, he tried stainless steel mesh and found it works around plumbing penetrations and cold joints, and it can be installed around the perimeter. He claims a success rate of 100 percent but notes tricky parts: you have to educate other trades on its use and application so they don't alter the installation before pouring the foundation.

As with all methods of termite protection, homes with mesh should be inspected regularly — perhaps as often as twice a year in states with heavy infestation. This also means it's important to keep the slab viewable from the outside. Leave at least 6 to 8 inches of slab visible for inspections, and discourage homeowners from planting near the foundation.

According to Termimesh, cost depends on building design. The number of penetrations influences price. To keep costs down and also to reduce the number of termite entry points, the manufacturer recommends running water lines and electrical conduits overhead and limiting joints in slabs. **PB**

Susan Conbere writes about better building practices on behalf of the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing (PATH). Learn more at www.pathnet.org.

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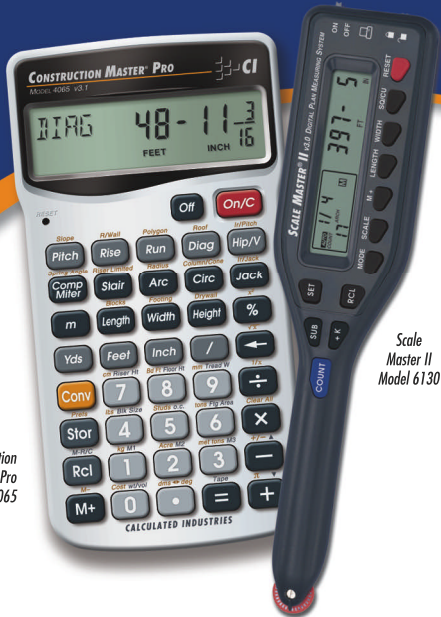
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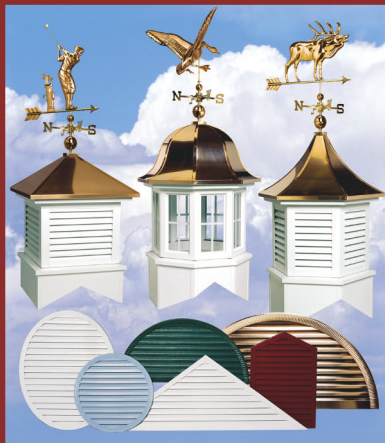
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Think about it

1

Construction workers in Chicago's Gold Coast found a human bone on a construction site, the Chicago Tribune reported. Officials told the newspaper it was possible the place where the bone was found might have been a cemetery at one point. Did anyone see "Poltergeist?"

351

Mark Twain's house at 351 Farmington Avenue in Hartford, Conn., might have to shutter, reports The New York Times. Twain wrote some of his works, including "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" and "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," in the historic home. Built in 1874 at the height of his success, the house may be closed to the public due to lack of money.

3,000

KnowledgePlex reports that Tiki Barber will be renovating affordable housing,

including more than 3,000 units in Virginia. The former NFL player is part of a new joint venture with New York-

based The Related Companies to renovate low-income housing apartment complexes.



60% Toilets, showers and faucets account for 60 percent of water usage in the home, according to the EPA. Replacing these items with more efficient models can **save 11,000 gallons of water per year**. And 11,000 gallons, says the U.S. Geological Survey, is enough to grow one – that's *one* – bushel of wheat.



2010 The 2010 U.S. Census might be **less accurate than the 2000 U.S. Census**, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. We guess with the country's **300 million people and counting**, it might be a little difficult to catch up.



56% According to a survey from AOL/Zogby, 56 percent of respondents think **homeownership is attainable for most people**. Then why are we drowning in foreclosures?

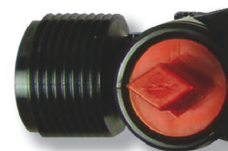
2.55 trillion Data from the U.S. Federal Reserve shows that **total consumer credit** rose to 2.558 trillion in March.



2020 39 percent of the U.S. population **will be minorities** by 2020, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.



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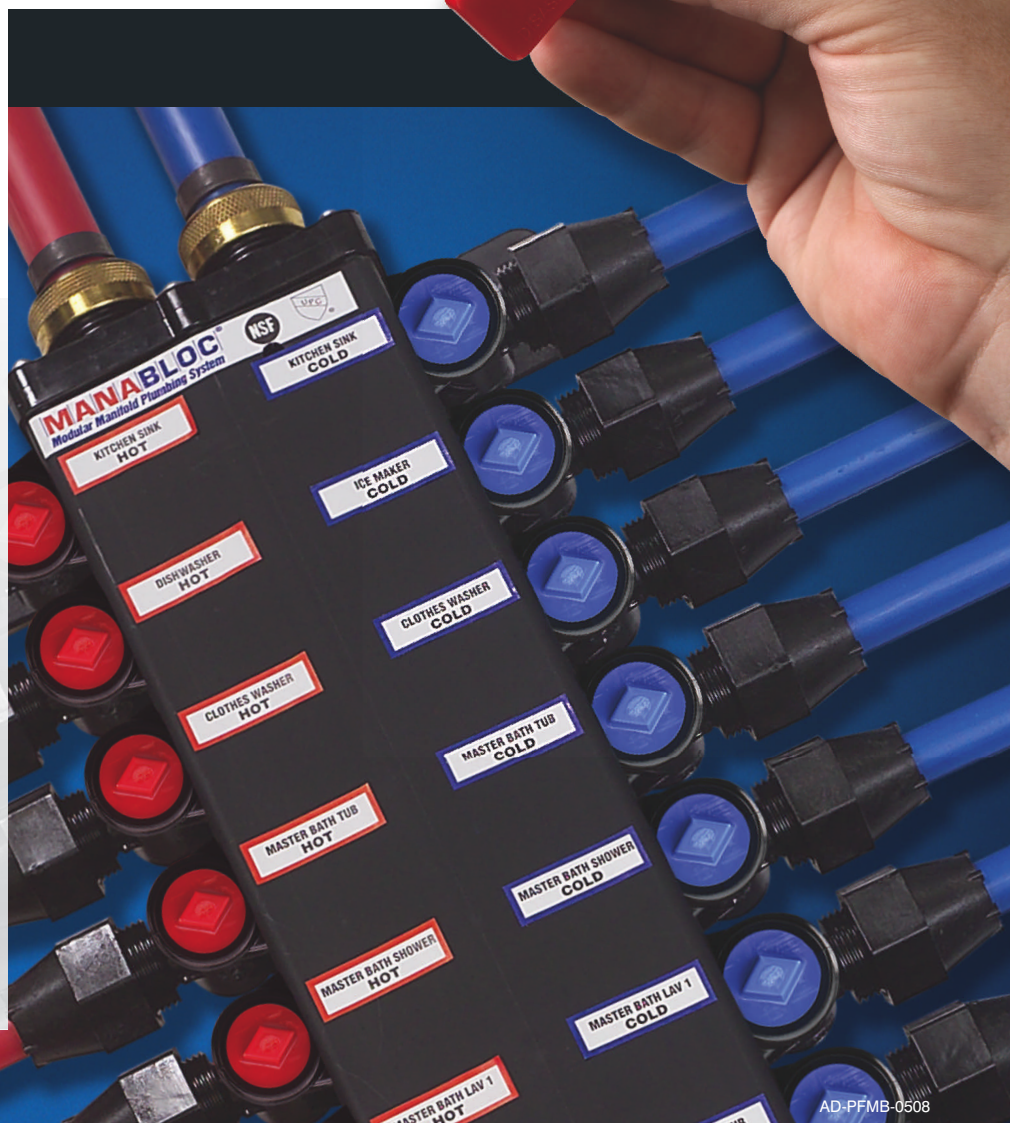
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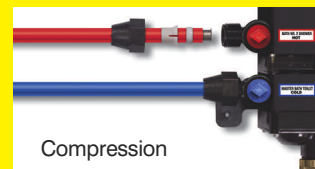
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