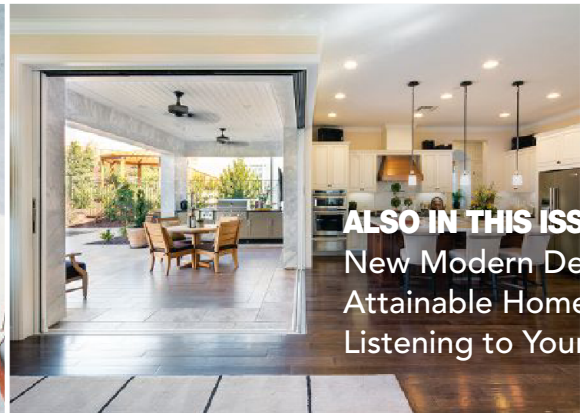




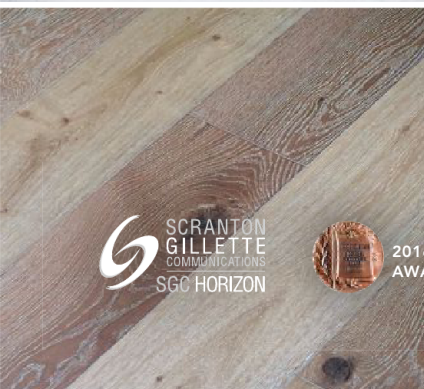
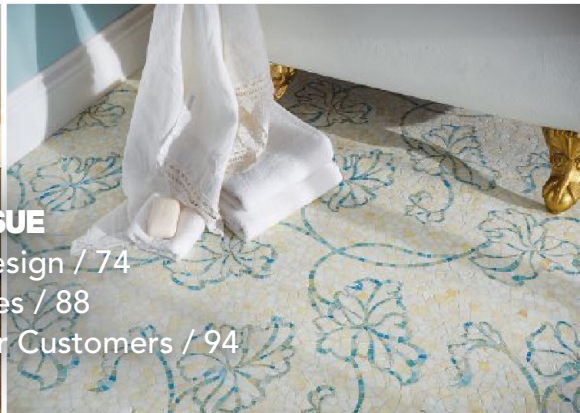
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TOP 100 PRODUCTS



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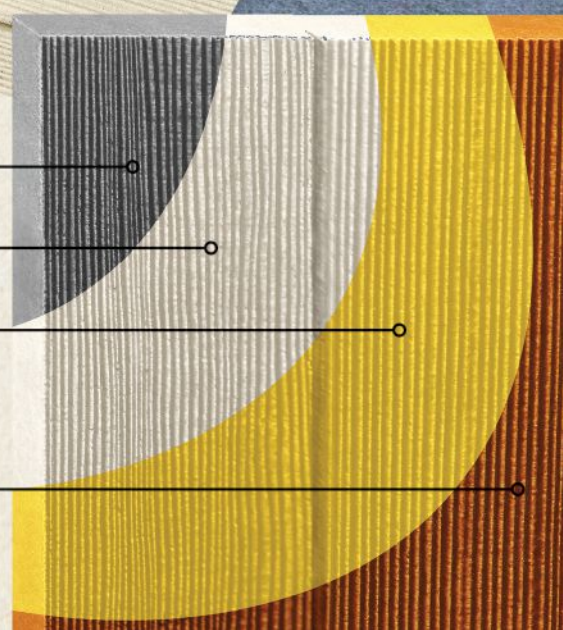
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Our annual compilation features the Top 100 Products chosen by you, our readers

PHOTO MONTAGE: ROBIN HICKS

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Building **Attainable Homes**

Consensus (and the Census) has it that the upward trajectory of housing that began in 2012 is clear and continuing. There have been ups and downs but the overall trend has been steadily rising. We are still nowhere near the “norm” of pre-boom 2000 to 2003, when new-home sales hovered between 800,000 and a million, but we’ve come a long way from the depths experienced between 2009 and 2011.

One wonders, though, where we would be if we had a more robust entry-level housing market. In 2000, according to Trulia, the share of new homes priced in the bottom third of price distribution were at 16 percent. In 2015, the share is less than half that. Even more telling is the fact that homes in the top third of price distribution have grown from 57 percent in 2000 to almost 69 percent in 2015, with the middle third losing ground as well.

The limited supply of entry-level homes has also had the effect of causing the prices for starter homes to increase. Data from Trulia show that in 2016 first-time homebuyers will have to spend 1.3 percent more than they would have just a year ago. But even with lower supply and higher prices, first-time buyers are still managing to become homeowners. The number of first-time buyers increased from 27 percent in May of 2015 to 32 percent in May of this year. And surveys reveal that many in the 18 to 34 age range are saying that it is their intention to buy a home in the near future.

Home builders have always shown an amazing ability to tailor their products to the market. Square footage, amenities, and prices all have been adjusted quickly to accommodate changing buyer profiles. So with more and more first-time buyers looking to purchase, many are asking why aren’t builders building more entry-level homes?

The answer is simple: In most areas, builders can’t make a profit building and selling starter homes. Today’s land costs, development fees, and labor issues make it incredibly difficult to build

homes that can be sold, even at low margins, to the buyers on the lowest rung. Home building is a noble business, but it is a business, and builders must make money to be sustainable.

What’s the answer? There are a few out there, but for many good reasons, builders aren’t rushing to implement them. In earlier issues of *Professional Builder*, we’ve talked about pocket neighborhoods, but zoning often does not allow for single-family homes that would be small enough or dense enough to be economically feasible. We’ve written about developments that combine a variety of housing types to produce an average margin that’s acceptable. Here and there, some of these have been successful. But what we still need are houses that are designed to take up less space and are easier and less expensive to build, yet still appeal to buyers and the community in which they are built.



Today’s land costs, development fees, and labor issues make it incredibly difficult to build homes for buyers on the lowest rung.

In this issue, editor-in-chief Amy Albert takes a look at a prototype community that attempts to overcome most of the issues that have bedeviled previous solutions. Conceived by KTG Architecture + Planning’s R & D Lab, it focuses on a denser but livable site plan, efficient construction, and designs that feel larger than their square footage might indicate. Overall, the firm’s stated goal for the project was attainability for both builders and buyers.

Attainability. It’s the new industry watchword and more of us should be focusing on it.

Denise Dersin, Editorial Director
ddersin@sgcmail.com

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Best of the Best

In this month's issue, one of our most popular of the year, the readers have spoken: Our Top 100 Products are chosen by you, based on your response and inquiry throughout the year. The rundown, vetted by this jury of your peers, starts on page 42.

When I began covering home building, I learned that projects and products are the two subjects of greatest interest to readers. The first one made immediate sense. Who among us doesn't agree that looking at pictures of appealing homes and reading about how they got built is both informative for your business and a great way to pass the time? The draw of the products, however, wasn't as immediately obvious. Sure, ceramic tile is eye candy, kitchen appliances have an automobile-like allure, and a well-designed showerhead is a thing of beauty, with its sculptural sleekness and promise of comfort and water savings. As for the lure of caulk, vents, housewrap, and siding, I was stumped. But only momentarily.

The answer lay in my own kitchen drawer and in my past as a food editor. I recalled that the subjects on which readers had the most fervent opinions were the products and techniques that changed their cooking and made their food taste better. Remember when the Microplane grater came out in the mid-'90s? As many know, it was inspired by a woodworker's rasp. The product's genius was in breaking off from its dull ancestors, which grated knuckles, not food. The Microplane creates snowdrifts of Parmesan cheese. It has fine teeth sharp enough to catch a lemon's zest yet leave the pith behind. It's a product that solved a problem and made for a superior result. Once a user, you will never turn back. And so it is with great products in the high-stakes world of home building.

Water where it doesn't belong, floors that squeak, windows that leak—great building products solve or help avoid a raft of problems, and that makes work easier. Good construction technique does, too. This month, we're delighted to announce a new monthly column, "Quality Matters," by Glenn Cottrell and his colleagues at IBACOS, a consultancy of building experts. Our debut column, on page 28, delivers a close-up look at the crucial details that help prevent leaky showers. "Quality Matters" will take a how-to approach, with clear illustrations of techniques that tackle all manner of common construction concerns, including stucco cracks, conditioned crawlspaces, and more.

Is there a topic you'd like to see addressed that would make your home building better? Please let us know—and enjoy the August issue.

Amy Albert, Editor-in-Chief

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[MARKET UPDATE]

By Michael Chamernik and
David Malone, Associate Editors

TRENDS

HOW PAINT COLOR AFFECTS HOUSE PRICE



Homeowners looking to sell should immediately paint their slate gray walls a new color, according to findings from Zillow Digs, a website where users can browse millions of photos for home improvement and design inspiration.

Zillow Digs analyzed photos of nearly 50,000 homes sold across the U.S. over the last 10 years and determined that a room's paint color influences the selling price.

The report took into account the wall color and the type of room, with controls for all other wall colors, square footage, the age of the home, the date of the transaction, and the location.

Creamy yellow or wheat-colored kitchen walls were most alluring to buyers, increasing a home's sale price by as much as \$1,360 above the expected Zillow estimate (or Zestimate). Light green and khaki were also popular, with bedrooms painted in those colors fetching \$1,332 more than expected. Purple was found to be a nice fit for dining rooms, and homes with mauve, eggplant, or lavender walls earned \$1,122 above the expected price.

When it comes to colors that exert a less-than-positive influence on home price, buyers shied away from terra-cotta

and orange-toned living rooms (houses with these hues sold for \$793 less) and dark-brown bathrooms (\$469 less than normal). But slate and dark gray hues were found to be the biggest turnoffs. Homes that featured dining rooms in those colors sold for \$1,112 less. Lighter grays, particularly living rooms painted in a dove tone, fared much better, earning \$1,104 more than expected.

White and eggshell-color in kitchens, surprisingly, could also have a negative effect on a home's sale price. Generally a popular choice for designers because of the color's versatility and clean, timeless appearance, homes with kitchens painted white sold for \$82 less than expected.

"A fresh coat of paint is an easy and affordable way to improve a home's appearance before listing," said Svenja Gudell, Zillow chief economist, in a statement. "However, to get the biggest bang for your buck, stick with colors that have mass appeal so you attract as many potential buyers to your listing as possible. Warm neutrals like yellow or light gray are stylish and clean, signaling that the home is well cared for, or that previous owners had an eye for design that may translate to other areas within the house." —MC

REAL ESTATE

MULTIPLE-BIDDING BUYERS A CHALLENGE



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[MARKET UPDATE]

school plans don't work out, and like prospective employees who send résumés to every applicable company that's hiring, homebuyers are keeping

all options open when looking for a house in a competitive environment. And that's likely compounding the problem.

In June, the residential real estate company Redfin surveyed 785 of its agents across 38 states and Washington, D.C. Fifty-one percent responded that multiple offers were the greatest challenge buyers faced in Q2. The rate was up from 40 percent in the first quarter of this year and 29 percent in Q4 of last year.

Because finding a home is so tough, buyers are making offers on more than one house to increase their chances of acceptance. If they're approved on multiple homes, they renege on the option they prefer the least.

This strategy sets up two kinds of obstacles. One, sellers are wasting time dealing with prospective buyers who may not be serious about a sale, and two, legitimately interested buyers are getting pushed away. Redfin agents said that homeowners should avoid bidding on multiple homes, pointing out that the urge to place multiple bids is often an emotional response resulting from missing out on another house.

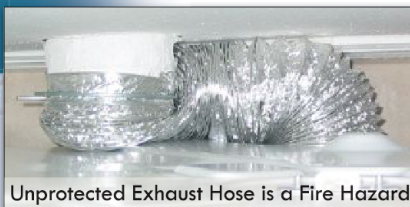
"I recommend that clients in this situation take a step back and consider what's most important to them in their next home and how far they're willing to go to get it," Boston-based Redfin real estate agent James Gulden said on the company's blog. "That way, they can be in the right mindset to make an offer they feel good about on a home they truly love when it hits the market."

When viewing a house, multi-bidders are using the inspection for leverage. Among the survey's findings as to why contracts fell through, 39 percent of respondents attributed the failure to negative or surprising inspection results.

"It's not necessarily true that the inspection reveals major issues or that the buyers just got cold feet," San Diego-based Redfin agent Jeremy Paul said in the company's blog. "It's more that the buyers who are making multiple offers at prices they may not be able to afford just to get an offer accepted often use the inspection as a chance to negotiate significant credits in order to reduce

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costs. When the seller won't budge, the buyers move on."

In the previous two quarters, low inventory was cited as the greatest challenge facing buyers, according to Redfin. —MC

CUSTOMER SERVICE

CONSTRUCTION PHONE MANNERS OFF-PUTTING

Dealing with an unhelpful or rude customer service representative over the phone can quickly become teeth-grindingly frustrating. When those who answer the phone pass you



around like a bad rumor from representative to manager and back again, talking to an automated voice on the other end of the line begins to seem more appealing.

Across all U.S. industries, just 32 percent of Americans said they were satisfied with how their phone calls were handled, according to a recent study

of 2,234 people conducted by audio branding specialist PH Media Group. The construction industry, however, ranked even lower: only 21 percent of respondents said they were satisfied with the way construction businesses handle their phone calls.

Digging a little deeper into the demographics, the study—the largest of its kind conducted in the nation—showed that males are more satisfied (25 percent) with the way construction firms answer their calls than are females (18 percent satisfied).

Additionally, the Northeast and the South tied for the regions most satisfied with phone etiquette, at 22 percent each, and were followed by the Midwest at 21 percent, and the West at 20 percent.

Insurance companies had the highest

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[MARKET UPDATE]

level of satisfaction regarding their phone manner, with 41 percent of respondents saying that they are satisfied. Meanwhile, architecture firms barely edged out construction companies as the industry with which respondents are least content; only 20 percent were happy with architecture firms' call-handling standards.

Today, with so much emphasis placed on the consumer's digital experience, companies often focus their attention on visual marketing and internet presence, failing to recognize the continued importance of phone etiquette. But as Mark Williamson, CEO at PH Media Group, says in a press release, "The telephone remains a crucial aspect of branding, marketing, and sales."

A less-than-stellar telephone experi-

ence can permanently put a potential client off a company, while a good experience can attract new business and help spread positive word-of-mouth. —DM

SOLAR POWER

BIG SOLAR OUTPACING ROOFTOP INSTALLATIONS

Solar power is, pardon the pun, having its moment in the sun. This year, for the first time, solar power is expected to contribute more new electricity to the grid than any other source. And while rooftop installations are beginning to grace the tops of more residential and commercial



buildings in cities across the country, they are small potatoes when compared with the larger solar systems that sell electricity directly to utilities.

The problem is, even with significant price reductions in the cost of solar panels, individual solar rooftop installations are expensive and require incentives and subsidies to make them

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Large systems that sell electricity directly to utilities, on the other hand, benefit from economies of scale and are expected to account for more than 70 percent of new solar added to the grid in 2016 while costing less than other forms of electricity, including rooftop solar installations. Unsubsidized utility-scale solar power, according to Reuters, costs \$50 to \$70 per megawatt-hour (which equates to 5 to 7 cents per kilowatt hour). Even the most efficient type of gas plant can't match those numbers dollar for dollar, as gas electricity from an efficient plant still costs \$52 to \$78 per megawatt hour.

Rooftop installations, meanwhile, cost between \$184 and \$300 per megawatt hour before subsidies. The simple act of taking a solar panel from someone's roof and moving it to a field would significantly decrease the cost of that power. What is lost, however (and what is, possibly, the main reason why many people prefer rooftop panels), is the feeling of independence that accompanies producing your own electricity on-site at home and the fact that power is generated right where it's needed.

In a 2014 contract between Austin Energy and a 150 megawatt solar plant, the utility purchased power for 5 cents per kilowatt hour, opening a market for utility-scale solar in the Southeastern states. The solar plant provides enough energy to light and cool 30,000 homes for, what was at the time, a record-low price for solar energy—without subsidies.

Which brings us to one of the main differences between large-scale solar and solar on individual rooftops: Large-scale solar is doing well even in markets that lack policies promoting green power.

Rooftop solar manufacturers and installers are taking note of the shift and some are beginning to scale up their services and products, such as developing solar power plants and battery storage systems aimed at utilities.

According to the North Carolina

Clean Energy Technology Center, which maintains a database of state renewable-energy incentives, in 2015 as many as 24 states reviewed or made decisions

to study the value of rooftop solar, with the aim of more precisely determining what benefits on-site solar delivers beyond the basic cost of power. —DM **PB**

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BUILDERS ASK FOR COMMONSENSE CHANGES TO NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

Extrême flood insurance rate hikes and inaccurate flood-plain maps drive up the cost of homeownership and threaten small businesses, the nation's home builders told Congress in a hearing on June 30.

Randy Noel, second vice chairman of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and a home builder from LaPlace, La., told the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship that the NAHB has long supported practical, commonsense changes to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

"However, as Congress works to reauthorize the NFIP program by the September 2017 deadline, it must guard against the exorbitant rate hikes and faulty flood-plain delineations that have plagued the program in the past," Noel said.

In 2012, with the NFIP facing insolvency, Congress enacted the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act to ensure the program's fiscal soundness. Unintended consequences from the legislation caused significant problems for homeowners and prospective homebuyers by triggering an immediate shift to full-risk rates phased in over four years.

"Home builders live and work in their communities. We see the effects of flood insurance rate increases in our personal and professional lives," Noel added. "One Louisiana buyer bought a home only to realize the flood insurance rates had increased from \$400 annually to the full-risk rate of over \$13,000."

Flood insurance rate increases also have a direct impact on home builders. The rates make it much more difficult for owners of older properties to sell their homes and "move up" to a newly constructed home that is more resilient and built to higher construction standards. This puts local builders' businesses in jeopardy and also constrains the local economy, Noel said.

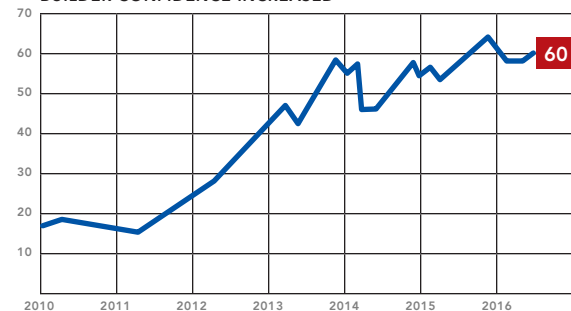
Kevin Robles, a home builder from Tampa Bay, Fla., told the committee that housing prices in Florida are still 22 percent below normal due to the Great Recession.

Robles added that in Florida, where there are large Special Flood Hazard Areas, it is extremely difficult to avoid building in or near a flood plain, so inaccurate flood plain maps are problematic. It can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to change the flood maps or to elevate a property. **PB**

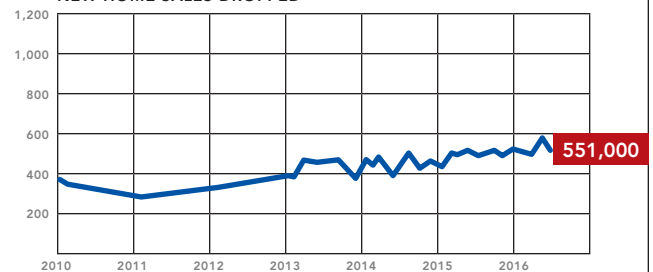
ABOUT NAHB: THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS IS A WASHINGTON, D.C.-BASED TRADE ASSOCIATION REPRESENTING MORE THAN 140,000 MEMBERS INVOLVED IN HOME BUILDING, REMODELING, MULTIFAMILY CONSTRUCTION, PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, SUBCONTRACTING, DESIGN, HOUSING FINANCE, BUILDING PRODUCT MANUFACTURING, AND OTHER ASPECTS OF RESIDENTIAL AND LIGHT COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION. FOR MORE, VISIT NAHB.ORG.

HOUSING MARKET SNAPSHOT

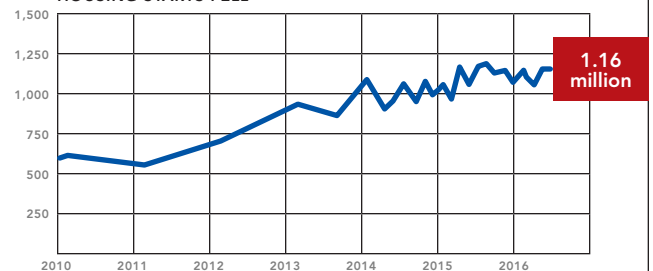
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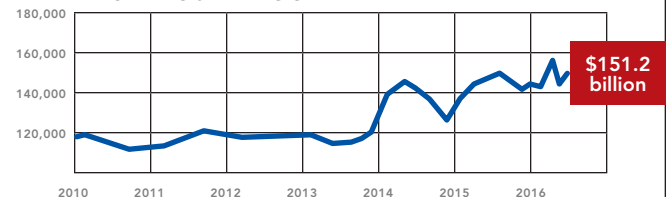
NEW-HOME SALES DROPPED



HOUSING STARTS FELL



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According to the NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Index, builder confidence increased in June to 60. May new-home sales dropped 6 percent from April to an annual rate of 551,000, and housing starts also fell 0.3 percent during the same period to an annual rate of 1.16 million. Remodeling spending in May grew 1.4 percent to \$151.2 billion.



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Circle 763

Supply-Side Anxiety

BUILDERS AND ARCHITECTS SAY THE BEST WAY TO PERSUADE THEM TO TRY A NEW PRODUCT IS BY SHOWING HOW IT PERFORMS

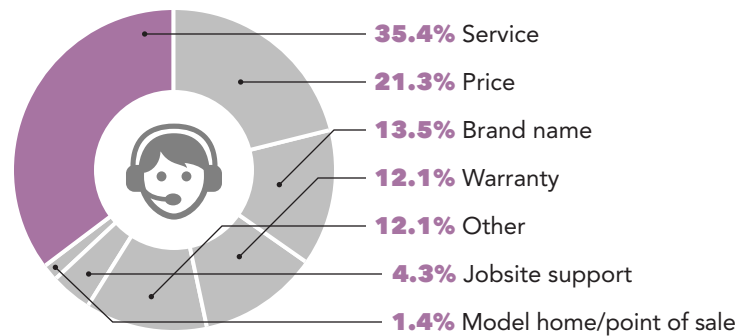
By Mike Beirne, Senior Editor

Trying a new product is like stepping into uncharted territory. New items come with all sorts of promises, but there is little in the way of a track record. Should the product fail, the consequences for a home builder are callbacks, additional cost, customer dissatisfaction, and a damaged reputation. So if a supplier or manufacturer is trying to persuade a home builder to try its product, it better have not only a decent warranty but a dealer who will support that product or a distribution chain that will back it up when something goes wrong. Even better, respondents to *Professional Builder's* 2016 Supply Survey, which included members of Builder Partnerships, said they would consider trying a new product if they can see how it installs and performs or if they are shown examples of other builders having success with it.

A hard sell is a turn-off. A production builder in Ohio wrote that he wants salespeople who call on him to know what his company is trying to do with its homes “so that they will bring only those products that might make sense to us. Then the salesperson should know enough to be able to make the presentation.” More findings about what builders, architects, and designers want from their supplier partners and from new products are in the charts that follow.

METHODOLOGY & RESPONDENT INFORMATION This survey was distributed between June 8 and July 7, 2016, to a random sample of *Professional Builder's* print and digital readers and to members of Builder Partnerships. No incentive was offered. By closing date, a total of 141 eligible readers returned surveys. Respondent breakdown by discipline: 18.6 percent production builder for move-up/move-down buyers; 32.1 percent custom home builder; 21.8 percent diversified builder/remodeler; 3.2 percent production builder for first-time buyers; 1.3 percent luxury production builder; 5.8 percent architect/designer engaged in home building; 2.7 percent multifamily; 0.6 percent manufactured, modular, log home, or systems builder; and 14.1 percent other. Approximately 39.9 percent of respondents sold one to five homes in 2015, and 11.2 percent sold more than 100 homes.

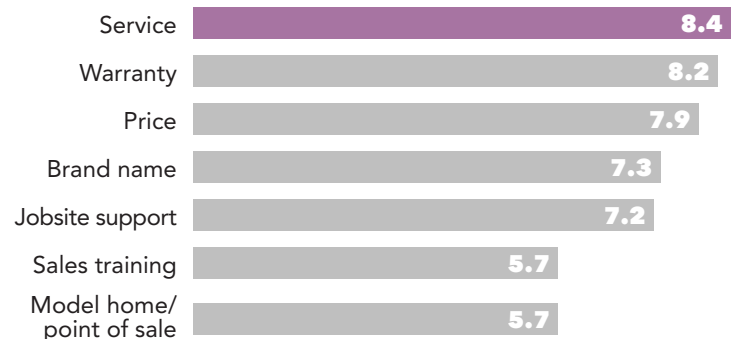
What do you value most from a building product or a plumbing product manufacturer?



BASE: 141; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2016 SUPPLIER SURVEY

Quality products were the most mentioned “other” attribute, while service, price, and brand name, as in past years’ surveys, continue to be the top three values that builders, architects, and designers want from their suppliers.

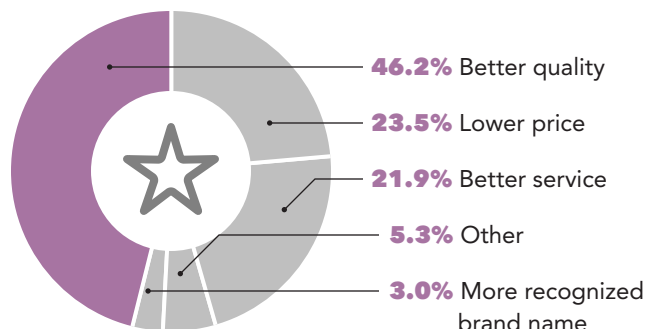
On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most valuable attribute, rank the following traits you want in your manufacturer partners.



BASE: 132; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2016 SUPPLIER SURVEY

Warranty tied for fourth in the previous question but pulled up to the second most valuable attribute when survey participants were asked to rank their answers.

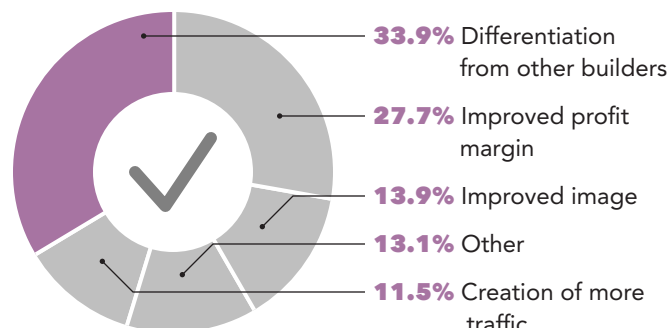
When a manufacturer wants to convert you from another manufacturer, what is the best way?



BASE: 132; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2016 SUPPLIER SURVEY

While price was a distant second to quality, several builders noted that knowing what they're going to pay gets a sales rep through the door. An Indiana custom home builder wrote that a manufacturer's product "must be priced effectively to start the discussion; then everything else is considered." Other ways mentioned by respondents that could make them consider leaving a supplier/vendor include promotional supply and direct sales, establishing a relationship, and membership in the local home builders association.

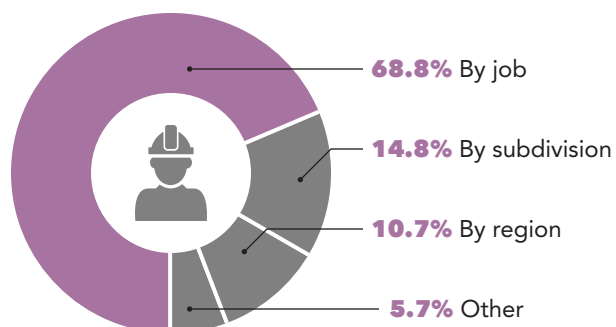
When a manufacturer/supplier wants to sell you an upgrade from a product that you are currently using, what's most likely to convince you to make the purchase?



BASE: 130; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2016 SUPPLIER SURVEY

The persuasive factors for upgrading are similar to sales pitches that would get builders to try a product from an unfamiliar category. However, respondents also indicated that other salient factors include whether: a customer specifically requests the upgrade, it's a better value, the upgrade delivers more quality, or it's able to reduce callbacks.

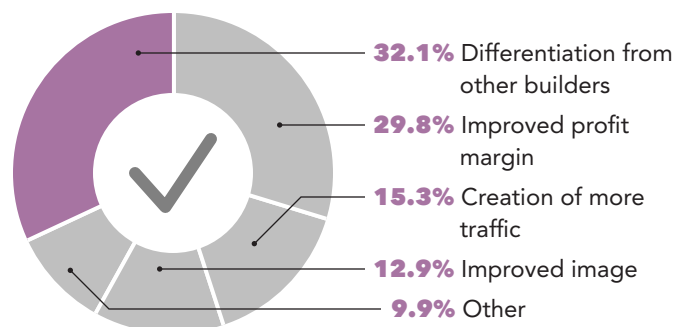
What is the best way for a supplier to convert you from your current supplier?



BASE: 122; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2016 SUPPLIER SURVEY

A hands-on demo at the jobsite is the preferred way to see a new product in action, which is to be expected in a survey where most participants build fewer than 50 homes annually.

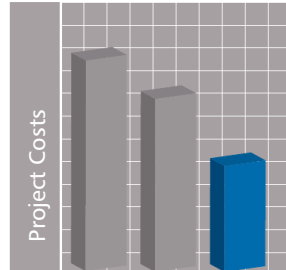
When a manufacturer/supplier wants to sell you a product (such as solar roof panels or a tankless water heater) in a category that you haven't used in the past, what is most likely to interest you?



BASE: 131; PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 2016 SUPPLIER SURVEY

Standing out from competitors and using a product that potentially reduces cost and boosts margin may attract respondents to try a product category they've never used before, but builders also noted that they want to see a track record or, at least, demand from their customers.

It's Not Complicated, Saving is Better!

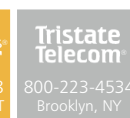
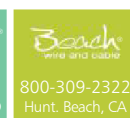
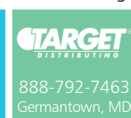
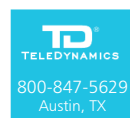
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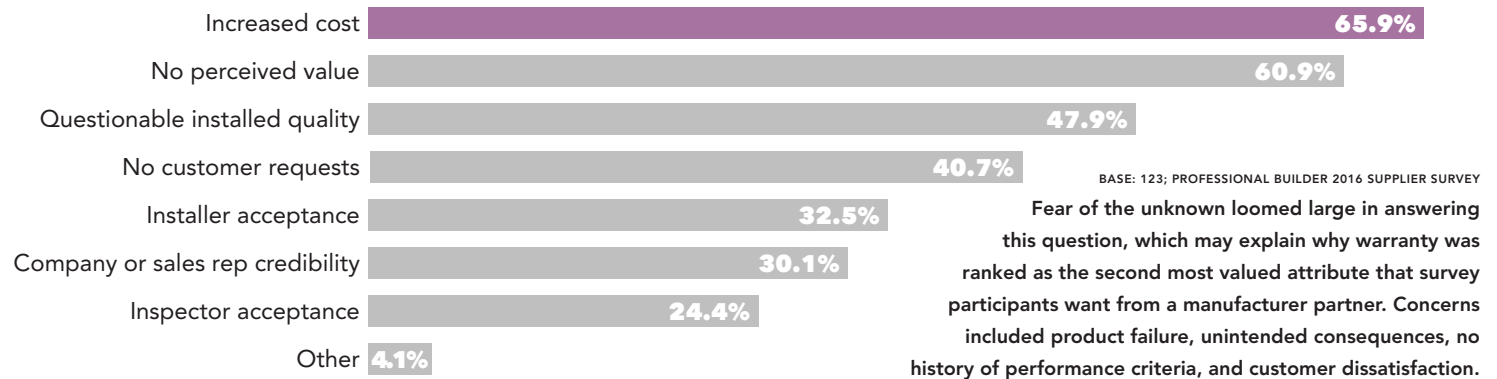
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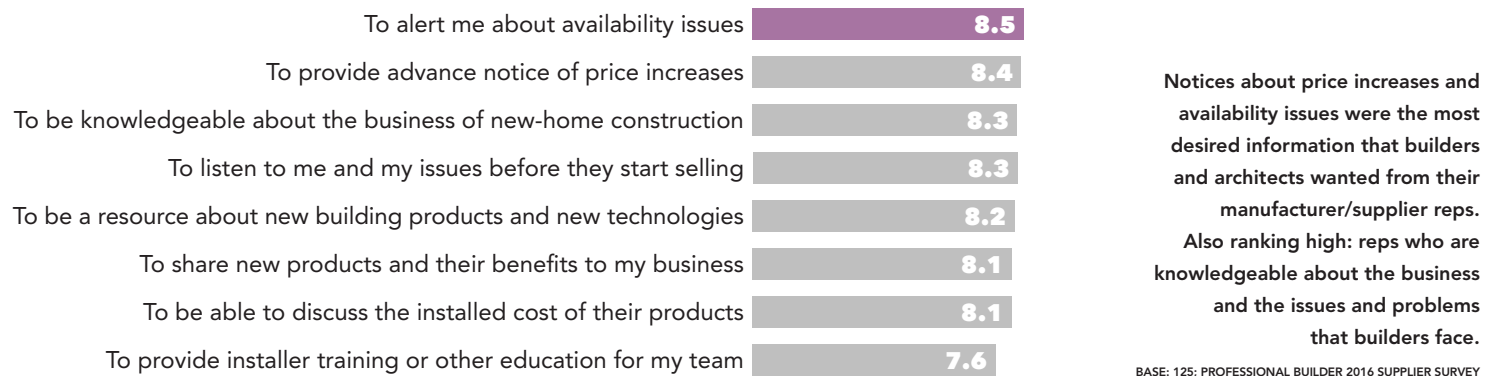
© Copyright 2016, ICC. 1. With a 50-unit enclosure project quote. 2. Visit icc.com/Elite for details.

Circle 764

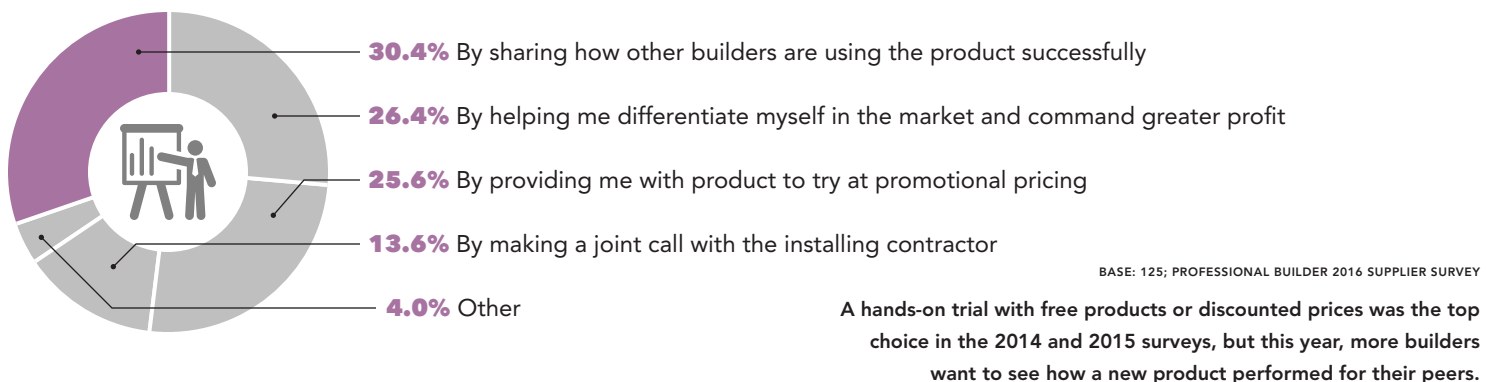
What are your concerns about new products? Select all that apply.



On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most important, what do you want from your manufacturer/supplier sales rep?



What is the best way for a manufacturer/supplier to present a new product to you?



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EMAIL MARKETING

Those compelling, well-written emails
you spent half a day composing?
Good start, but they're just one step
in an important chain of events

By Mike Lyon, Contributing Editor



If you've heard the term drip marketing, you know that it's a communication strategy that sends, or "drips," a prewritten set of messages to prospects over time. These messages often take the form of email marketing.

My partners and I at Do You Convert are huge proponents of this type of sales and marketing automation because it makes the task of marketing so much easier and more efficient. If you only relied on your memory to compose emails one by one and send them out, it would happen intermittently at best.

However, we've seen some confusion when it comes to proper execution. Drip marketing doesn't amount to your entire follow-up process; it's just one component of the big picture. If you leave follow-up solely to the automated system, you're making a tragic mistake. You need a systematic and continuous strategy. With the right planning and training to execute it, the result will be a system that better supports your nurturing of leads. But here's the key: To make your system work, it's crucial to go well beyond automation and plug in the human aspect to create a complete follow-up picture. Drip marketing won't personally respond to a prospect or dial the phone.

So, let's dive in here.



AVOID AUTOMATED EMAILS

Your sales prospects can smell automated email templates a mile away. If they open up your email and it looks like a form letter or template, they'll probably ignore it. If you can't take the time to reach out in a personal manner, why would you expect them to respond in kind?

Email marketing has its place—just not as the only method of communication. That beautiful email marketing blast you designed should be thought of as the 2016 version of a direct-mail piece. Focus your efforts on getting recipients to open and read it, and to then click through and spend time on your website. Remember, it's rare to get an actual response from the prospect from this email. Your goal at this point is to drive traffic to your website. The bonus, with the right CRM, is that

FOLLOW-UP

you'll now start tracking the behavior of this prospect. You'll receive a notification that they're visiting your website. It's invaluable info, especially when you get it in real time.



MAKE IT PERSONAL

Email messages that come from a human get responses from humans. That doesn't mean someone has to write a new message every time, but the email template needs to look like it came from your email account. In our experience, shorter, text-only emails work best for encouraging engagement. Use what we call the "five-sentence rule": Make sure your message doesn't exceed five sentences in total. Why? People don't read email; they scan or just quickly skim through. So keep your message succinct and use your words wisely.



DON'T MAKE PROSPECTS THINK TOO HARD

Your email should include an easy way for the person to whom it was sent to respond. If the recipient has to work too hard, they just won't answer. You don't have to accomplish everything in one email; limit the questions to one or two. With the combination of follow-up and drip marketing, you're using a more layered approach that will, in the end, be more effective. The beauty is that you can ask another question in a few days, building on your message as you go. Your Day Seven follow-up email might include something like, "How is your home search going?" or "Do you have any questions I can answer for you?"



PICK UP THE PHONE

Follow-up should involve a variety of modes of communication. Solely relying on email will limit your results. Customers actually expect a phone call, yet eight out of 10 times sales executives won't call a lead, according to a Lead Response Survey conducted by Lasso and Do You Convert. If the prospect has given you a phone number, don't be afraid to use it. Why? Only half of emails sent are actually opened. Sometimes a prospect needs to hear from you to remind him or her to check email. More than half of the time, you'll get

the prospect's voice mail. That's OK. Use that opportunity to leave a powerful, punchy message that works in tandem with the email follow-up. Research by digital marketing companies Silverpop and DemandGen tells us that this style of lead nurturing email gets four to 10 times the response rate that stand-alone email blasts do.



DON'T BE SHY ABOUT FOLLOWING UP

Many sales professionals worry too much about annoying their prospects. They think, "I'm calling too much," or "Do they really want another email from me?"

The short answer is yes. Your sales prospects want to hear from a real person. Remember, they filled out a form, signed up for email blasts, or have in some way requested more information. They've given you permission to be persistent. In fact, they will be offended if you don't follow up because it means you're dismissing them.



TAKE ACTION

Remember: Email marketing and "drip marketing" campaigns shouldn't replace follow-up; they work together. To win more prospects and convert more leads:

- Be responsive
- Be personal
- Be persistent
- Be effective

These steps are your competitive advantage because your competition likely isn't following them. That's why, in my previous article in February, "Going the Distance With Sales Leads," we saw that, in both quantity and quality of follow-up, our industry is doing a pretty miserable job. Effective follow-up is straightforward but it's not easy. In a buyer-driven world, it's essential that you use a multimedia layered approach to increase conversions and create more sales. **PB**

Mike Lyon is president of Do You Convert, a company exclusively focused on online sales and marketing for home builders and developers. Write him at mike@doyouconvert.com.

Sealing the Shower, Reliably

Keeping water away from where it doesn't belong is all in the details. Here's a checklist

By Glenn Cottrell

Every time you drive a large volume of water onto a building surface you run the risk of it penetrating that surface and getting into the structure. It's as true for wind-driven rain on a stucco wall as it is for a multi-head luxury walk-in shower. In the case of the shower, in fact, it's worse, because some 2 gallons of water or more per minute sprayed in a compact area across porous materials such as mortar, ceramic tile, and grout is a sure recipe for leaks.

Like most quality issues, the key to eliminating a leaky shower is in the details, which amount to more than a gap-free bead of caulk. You need to think about where the water is going, what it's hitting, how it drains, and whether your shower design is helping or hindering the chances of water penetrating to the framing and causing all sorts of costly problems.

For example, the shower seat needs to slope a little—like with a flat roof, almost imperceptibly—away from the wall. This way it can shed shower water to the pan and drain instead of the water pooling on the surface where it intersects the wall.

But does the seat need to be right across from the showerhead? To mitigate leaks, shower seats are often best placed to one side or in the corner of the shower enclosure to avoid a direct hit while the homeowner waits for the water to warm up.

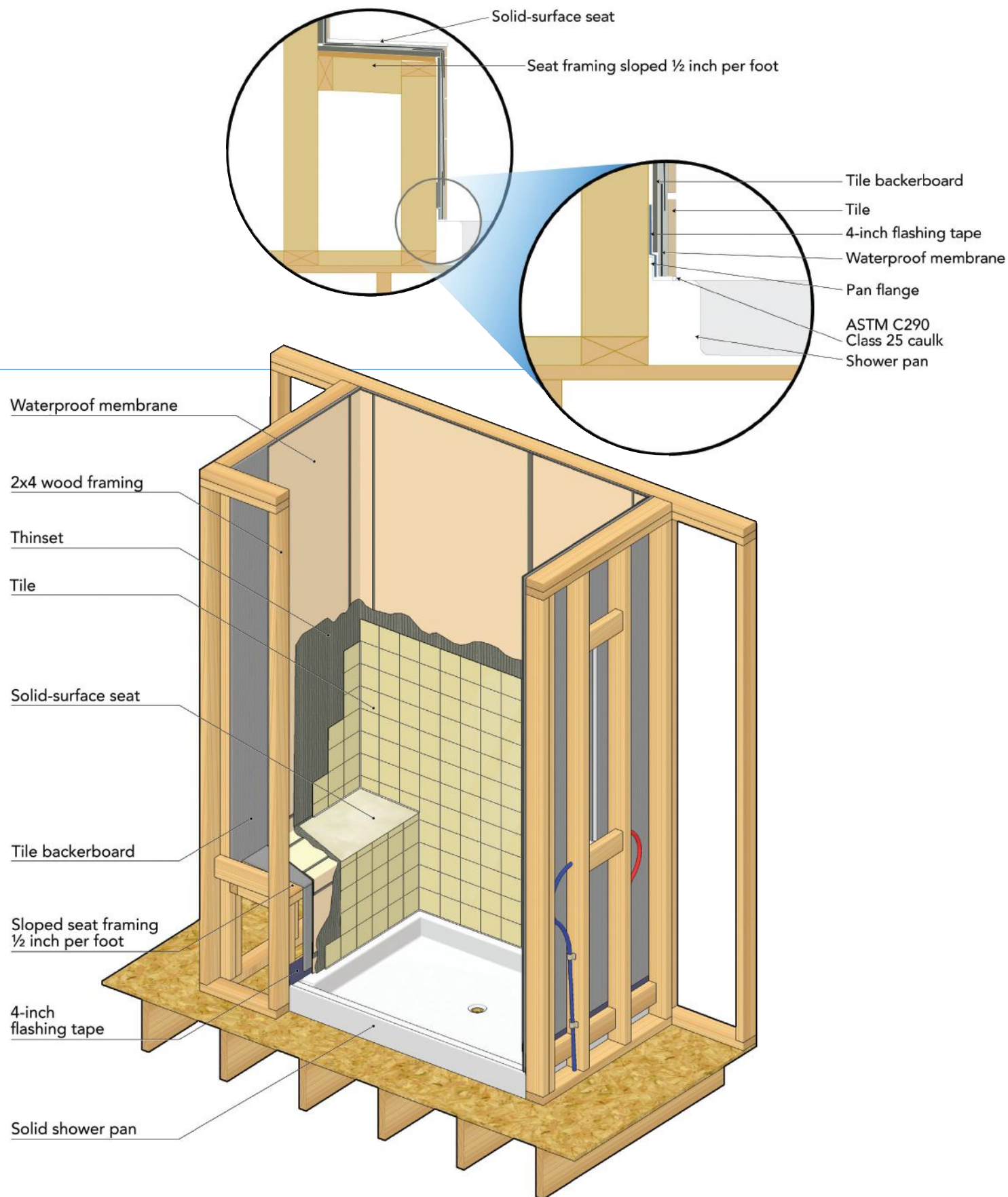
Another thing: Let's stop building shower pans from scratch. If the shower is a common size, it makes more sense to use a molded one-piece shower pan and avoid the risk of getting it wrong and having the water pool or leak.

A quality-built walk-in shower isn't any more expensive or time-consuming to build than the one that's destined for callbacks. Use the illustration opposite and follow this checklist

to take the burden off your warranty service team and better protect your profits:

1. **Framing:** Frame the shower square and level with enough solid backing/blocking to securely fasten the shower pan nailing fin and flashing material.
2. **Flashing:** If using a preformed pan, consider using a self-adhering flashing tape to bridge the flange of the shower pan to the framing.
3. **Seat:** Design the seat and other horizontal surfaces (built-in niches, etc.) away from direct water and sloping 1/2 inch per foot toward the pan/drain.
4. **Tile backer:** Use a backerboard approved as a substrate for tile, hung with factory edges down. Leave a 1/4-inch gap between the backerboard and the top of the pan flange.
5. **Pan:** Use a molded one-piece shower pan with a protective front lip to ensure proper slope to the drain and to contain splashing.
6. **Membrane:** For tile applications, use a waterproof membrane that covers the whole surface of the seat or, better yet, covers the entire shower assembly.
7. **Finish:** Select a solid-surface finish or at least a large-dimension tile or stone to limit grout joints.
8. **Caulking:** Completely seal all joints—including the gap between the tile and the pan flange—with caulk specifically engineered for wet areas.
9. **Weep holes:** Keep them clear of caulk and other blockages. **PB**

Glenn Cottrell is managing director of the Builder Solutions team at IBACOS.





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Cultured Stone® by Boral® has expanded its Contemporary Collection to include two exciting new stone textures: Pro-Fit® Modera™ LedgeStone and Hewn Stone™. Featuring a new palette of sophisticated hues, this extension mirrors the entire line's clean, bold and modular aesthetic and reputation for total design flexibility across numerous commercial and residential projects.

Mirroring the same panel sizes as its Pro-Fit® LedgeStone cousin, Pro-Fit® Modera™ LedgeStone provides a modern edge with a multi-dimensional texture, smooth finish and four new colorways. The Hewn Stone™ texture, available in three subtle hues, stretches the limits of design and creativity with five different sizes that can be combined to create over 20 unique patterns.



As new additions to the Contemporary Collection, Hewn Stone™ and Pro-Fit® Modera™ LedgeStone create versatile looks to cross over the entire spectrum of modern design.

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Builders throughout the country use the Avalanche line as an easy way to show an upgrade option to their base models. Whether it's putting the product in their model homes, sales offices or into showroom vignettes, letting customers see and use the product goes a long way. Heather from Westwood Homes in Indiana says, "Letting customers touch and feel the toilet brings it to life so they can experience the comfort, performance and quality firsthand. It's sure better than selling out of a catalog!" Learn more at www.gerberonline.com or call 1-866-538-5536.

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LP SmartSide siding offers beauty and durability.



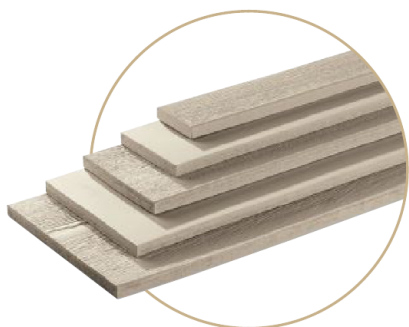
LP SmartSide siding and trim create a versatile look with mixed cladding.



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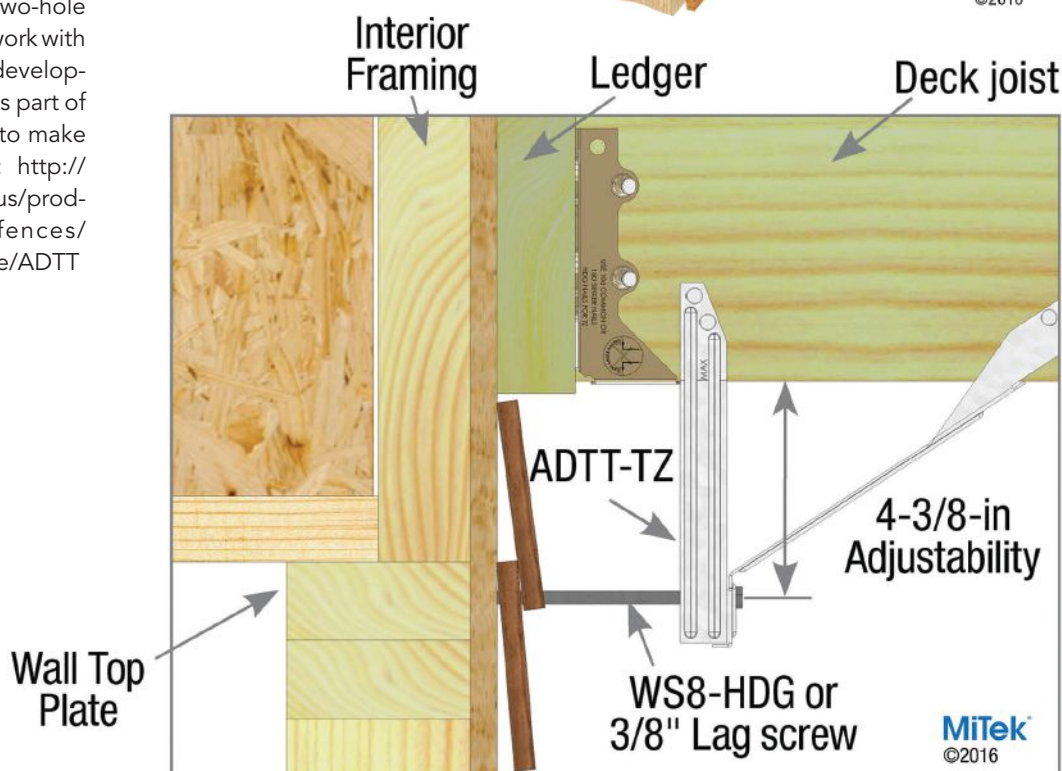
*For complete warranty details, visit LPSmartSide.com

MITEK OFFERS NEW DECK HOLD-DOWN SOLUTION

MiTek's new Adjustable Deck Tension Tie (ADTT-TZ) effectively resists the lateral (horizontal) loads that pull a deck away from the house or structure. The ADTT-TZ also brings users in compliance with the 2015 International Residential Code R507.2.3(2) which requires the installation of a "Hold-Down Device" with a minimum allowable tension load of 750 lbs., in four locations on the deck. The ADTT-TZ satisfies these requirements. The ADTT-TZ's real innovation is its ability for adjustable installation. Using appropriate fasteners (such as USP WS8-HDG or 3/8-in lag screws), the ADTT-TZ can be installed with the screw either adjacent or up to 4-3/8-in below deck joist, avoiding the need for blocking extensions. Made of 14-gauge steel, with G-185 galvanizing, the ADTT-TZ offers a two-hole break-out washer that will work with multiple screw sizes. The development of the new ADTT-TZ is part of an overall effort by MiTek to make decks safer. Learn more: <http://www.uspconnectors.com/us/products/connectors/deck-fences/adjustable-deck-tension-tie/ADTT>


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USP
STRUCTURAL CONNECTORS

BY

MiTek

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WEATHER SHIELD'S AWARD-WINNING CONTEMPORARY COLLECTION™ STEMS FROM DEDICATION TO THE DETAILS

For more than 60 years, Weather Shield Windows & Doors has been committed to making products the best way it knows -- by putting the needs and wants of customers first. Today, this philosophy remains the heart and soul of all the company does.

The company's focus on solving design challenges through innovative and flexible solutions clearly distinguishes it from other window and door companies. It's what drives the company to design, engineer and manufacture the highest quality, most energy efficient products possible. This drive has resulted in more styles, shapes, sizes and options in several product lines.

Contemporary Collection Boasts True-To-Style Aesthetics

The company's commitment to innovation results in products and product lines that are both architecturally correct and energy efficient. The newest product line, the Contemporary Collection, offers narrow-profile frames and lustrous finishes built on the foundation and options of the Premium Series. In developing and refining the Contemporary Collection, Weather Shield worked with architects specializing in modern architecture. The result was a product line that blends individual style with more expansive views. The Contemporary Collection features



The Contemporary Collection features more exposed glass to maximize natural light and expand views

custom-designed hardware, stiles and rails on the multi-slide, bi-fold and hinged doors that are consistent in size and as narrow as possible at 3-1/4" and finishes that deliver the industrious steel-look. Finishes are available in the full palette of standard colors as well as design and custom color matching. Exterior paint opinions additionally add anodized finishes and metallic paints to the offering.

The Contemporary Collection is available in push-out and crank-out casement, awning, direct set and 90-degree corner windows, and an impressive selection of bi-fold, hinged and sliding doors that can accommodate openings up to 50' wide and 10' tall.



Learn more about the Contemporary Collection and how Weather Shield can provide the best solution for your project by visiting weathershield.com or by calling 800.538.8836.

CONTEMPORARY

COLLECTION



Modern architecture can be a challenge for ordinary windows. Weather Shield's new award winning Contemporary Collection™ of windows and doors eliminates the compromises and allows you to fulfill your creative ingenuity.

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Learn more about our Contemporary Collection by visiting weathershield.com/contemporary.



Weather Shield®
Windows & Doors

TOP 100 PRODUCTS

By Professional Builder Staff

Home builders know better than almost anyone that trying a new product is not a casual matter. Using a good new product won't necessarily win you props, praise, repeat business, and glowing online reviews. On the other hand, using a bad one can result in unhappy clients, damage to your hard-earned reputation, lost profits, and more.

Throughout the year, our New Products department keeps you informed on new releases, innovations, and developments, from doors to drains, HVAC to housewrap, and sinks to siding. While it's interesting to us, the work that goes into product coverage is about what you tell us would be interesting to you. And so, on the pages that follow, based on response and inquiry, are the products that appeared in these pages that you, the readers, most wanted to know more about. While trying a new product may not be for the faint of heart, what better way is there to learn what's new and worthwhile than seeing what prompted the strongest interest from colleagues and peers?

This year's Top 100 Products are grouped into these eight categories:

INTERIOR PRODUCTS

EXTERIOR PRODUCTS

WINDOWS & DOORS

KITCHEN & BATH

OUTDOOR LIVING

STRUCTURAL / INSULATION / HOUSEWRAP

MECHANICAL / ELECTRICAL / HOME TECH

TOOLS / EQUIPMENT / VEHICLES



DIRECT-VENT GAS FIREPLACE HEAT & GLO

Combining the modern design style sought by homebuyers with the unique installation applications that builders need, Heat & Glo's REVO

Direct Vent gas fireplaces simply hang on the wall or are recessed in-wall, saving space and eliminating the need for a chase. The contemporary series can be installed during any stage of building and in a single trip. Once a hole is made in the wall for the 7-inch-deep unit and the SLP venting pipe is set, the lightweight unit is hung on mounting brackets. The REVO Series fireplaces produce heat output up to 24,000 Btu and come in square, horizontal, or vertical models, with multiple front and panel finish options and optional LED backlighting. **For more info circle 851**



VENTLESS DRYER / WHIRLPOOL

The Hybrid Heat Pump technology in the ventless Whirlpool HybridCare clothes dryer gives builders and designers the flexibility to place dryers virtually anywhere in the home. And, because it repurposes energy during the drying cycle, the HybridCare dryer uses less energy. Its Advanced Moisture Sensing—

with three modes: Speed, Eco, and Balanced—provides optimal drying results and helps to prevent damage caused by overdrying. **For more info circle 852**



PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CLOSETMAID

The maker of wood, ventilated wire, and mixed closet and storage systems also offers a

comprehensive resource to help builders simplify the design, sale, ordering, and installation of ClosetMaid products. A ClosetMaid Professional Service representative can assist with design, selection, and scheduling installation through the company's installing dealer network. The reps also provide product line and point-of-sale collateral support for showrooms and model homes. **For more info circle 853**



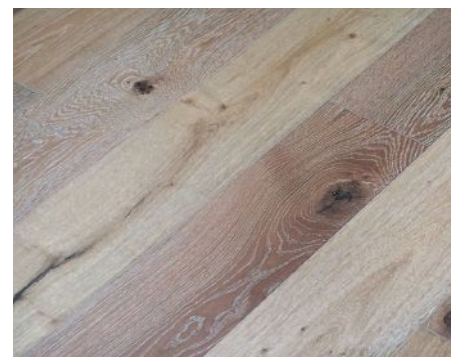
LIGHTING / ACCESS LIGHTING

Access Lighting offers customized LED and fluorescent luminaires and focuses on providing trending contemporary designs with the latest energy-efficient technology at competitive prices. The 25-year-old contemporary lighting manufacturer moved this year to Irvine, Calif., into a new facility with modern assembly and modification lines, a bigger warehouse, and an on-site showroom. Access sells its state-of-the-art products through online dealers and distributors nationwide. **For more info circle 854**



PAINTS AND COATINGS / BENJAMIN MOORE

The Corotech line of more than 40 paints, primers, and coatings made by Complementary Coatings, a Benjamin Moore company, includes high-performance epoxies formulated for one-coat application on interior concrete floors. Corotech's floor coatings provide superior chemical, abrasion, and impact resistance for industrial and commercial applications. The company also makes waterproofing sealers for concrete blocks and masonry. **For more info circle 855**



SOLID WOOD AND ENGINEERED FLOORING COUNTRY WOOD FLOORING

With a selection of engineered and solid wood flooring—hardwood species include oak (shown), maple, and birch, as well as exotic woods such as cumaru (Brazilian teak) and mahogany—Country Wood Flooring offers wire-brushed and oil-finished planks to emphasize the natural depth and character of the materials used. Five Country Wood collections are available and include more than 100 choices of colors and styles. **For more info circle 856**



CORK BRICKS / SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

Cork Bricks from Sustainable Materials are three-dimensional pieces of renewable cork bark that are imported from Portugal and are available in three sizes and thicknesses. These interior wall décor bricks are pre-finished; come in six natural, neutral colors; and are made from naturally harvested and rapidly renewable cork. The bricks offer more than just aesthetic appeal, as they also reduce noise, can be used as a push-pin board, and have self-adhesive backing for easy peel-and-stick installation. **For more info circle 857**



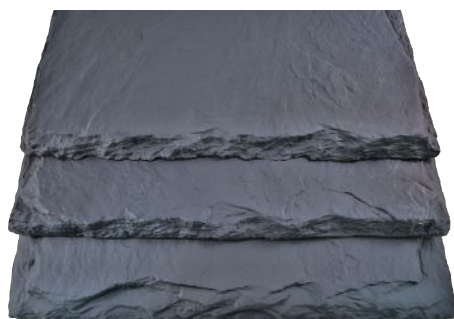
PAINTS & COATINGS / SHERWIN-WILLIAMS

Sherwin-Williams is a 150-year-old manufacturer and distributor of paint and coating products under such brands as Sherwin-Williams, Dutch Boy, Krylon, Minwax, Thompson's Water Seal, and many others. The company's eponymous brand is exclusively sold through more than 4,600 neighborhood stores and facilities in North America, while its other products are available at leading mass merchandisers, home centers, and independent dealers, retailers, and distributors. Sherwin-Williams' newer products include Super Deck, a deck-care finishing system; Paint Shield, an EPA-registered microbicidal paint; and the ColorSnap integrated color selection system (shown). **For more info circle 858**



MOSAIC TILE / NEW RAVENNA

New Ravenna's Sea Glass collection, designed by Sara Baldwin, offers mosaics made in the U.S. hand-cut and assembled by artisans in Virginia. Each mosaic is a custom creation made to fit a specific installation. There are eight mosaic designs, with patterns available in multiple colors and tones inspired by nature. The designs can be created in any of New Ravenna's 70-plus colors of glass and installed on either vertical or horizontal surfaces, both indoors and out. **For more info circle 859**



▲ SYNTHETIC SLATE / DAVINCI ROOFSCAPES

This line of synthetic slate roofing materials offers the beauty of natural slate without its shortcomings. At one-half the cost of installed natural slate, DaVinci's durable slate roofing is economical as well as lightweight, freeze/thaw resistant, Class A fire-rated, Class 4 impact-rated, and wind resistant to 110 mph. The tiles are available in Multi-Width Slate (12, 10, 9, 7, and 6 inches wide), Single-Width Slate, and the Bellaforte line in a 12-inch width. The low-maintenance tiles resist algae and moss growth and come in 50 standard colors. **For more info circle 860**



▲ STONE VENEER PANELS / BORAL

Versetta Stone, a panelized nonstructural, cement-based manufactured stone veneer from Boral, offers the look of traditional stone masonry but at a lower cost and with less installation time. The lightweight aggregate materials make Versetta Stone one-fourth the weight of full-thickness stone. Panels install with nails or screws and have an integrated moisture management system. No additional support footings are needed, and there is no need to paint, coat, or seal. Versetta Stone comes in two cuts, ledgerstone and tight-cut, and five colors, including two new hues: Graphite (dark gray) and Mission Point (light gray). **For more info circle 861**



▲ CULTURED STONE VENEER / BORAL

Cultured Stone by Boral wall veneers are designed to mimic the look of natural stone, yet actually improve upon it with a more consistent color, quality, and weight. Durable, sustainable, and performance-focused, the product is almost completely maintenance-free, the company says, and only needs occasional light washing to remove dust and dirt. No painting, coating, or sealing is required. The veneers contain 54 percent pre-consumer waste-stream material. All Cultured Stone by Boral veneer products are backed by a 50-year limited warranty, and the product is engineered to meet or exceed specifications for all major code approvals. **For more info circle 862**



▲ EXTERIOR PRODUCTS / PLY GEM

Whether it is siding and accessories, windows and doors, trim and molding, stone veneer, or roofing, Ply Gem's portfolio of brands offers builders a huge selection of exterior building product solutions. With over 8,000 trained associates across the country, Ply Gem, and its large portfolio of products, provides almost anything a builder, remodeler, or architect may need to create low-maintenance and energy-efficient homes. **For more info circle 863**



▲ PERMEABLE PAVING / POROUS PAVE

Porous Pave manufactures porous, durable, and flexible surfacing material made from recycled rubber, aggregate, and a binder to produce ¼-inch nominal size rubber chips. The surfacing is engineered with 29 percent void space, so water permeates down into a compacted aggregate base before slowly filtering into the ground. The paving can be used on driveways, sidewalks, patios, pool surrounds, and terraces, and can be installed on slopes up to 30 degrees. Using the recycled rubber from more than 200,000 tires, the company has manufactured and installed a total of 6 million pounds of permeable paving materials. **For more info circle 864**



▲ PVC TRIMBOARD / TAPCO

Made from cellular PVC, Klear PVC Trimboard, a product from the Tapco Group's Klear Trimboard division, is available with Klear's innovative TruEdge. TruEdge features sealed edges that resist stains from dust and dirt and provides a smoother finish than wood or other PVC boards. It also has UV inhibitors to protect it from the elements over time. **For more info circle 865**



▲ SHAKE & SHINGLES / TAPCO

Grayne composite siding offers the look of aged cedar with a weather-resistant surface that doesn't absorb moisture. Produced from the same cutting process used for making cedar shingles, Grayne, from Tapco, can be used to replace or complement fiber cement or engineered wood siding. The plain sawn shingle profile features realistic grain patterns. Natural wood grain textures are visible on all surfaces. The color palette consists of six pre-finished cedar colors, including Lakeside Blue, Aspen Brown, and Ridge Moss. **For more info circle 866**



▲ FIBER-CEMENT SHAKES / NICHIIHA

At ½ inch thick, Nichiha manufactures what it claims is the thickest fiber-cement shake available. Made from sustainable materials such as FSC wood pulp and fly ash, Sierra Premium shakes feature depths and shadows that look like real wood shake. Nichiha coated the shakes with sealer and primer and partnered with PPG to apply a sandstone basecoat and two coats of PPG's semi-transparent finish to deliver deep, rich colors and protection from the elements. Sierra Premium is guaranteed not to rot, warp, delaminate or fall victim to pests, and the finish is covered by a 15-year limited warranty. Available colors include Terra, Shadow, Hazelnut, and Primed. **For more info circle 867**



▲ INSTALLATION SOLUTIONS ENVIRONMENTAL STONWORKS

From manufacturing to installation, Environmental StoneWorks provides a start-to-finish approach to help home builders create exactly what they envisioned. With a team of project managers that oversees the entire job, field support meant to improve and maintain communication, and safety programs to reduce risks as much as possible, all aspects of the stone veneers are managed under one roof, streamlining the entire process. Environmental StoneWorks products are available nationwide through quality building material retailers. **For more info circle 868**



▲ EXTERIOR PRODUCTS / MID-AMERICA

Mid-America, a Tapco Group brand, offers a large selection of exterior products including shutters, window and door trim, mount blocks, utility and siding vents, gable vents, and roof ventilation in a wide range of sizes, colors, and architectural styles. Mid-America products are impervious to moisture and insects, do not require painting, and are made in the U.S. **For more info circle 869**



▲ WASTEWATER TREATMENT / BIO-MICROBICS

The BioBarrier Membrane Bioreactor wastewater treatment system treats blackwater and graywater through the use of a membrane process of microfiltration and ultrafiltration with a suspended growth bioreactor. Micro-size pores in the durable flat membranes separate solids from the wastewater. Completely automated, the system requires no backwash functionality and is ideal for environmentally sensitive areas and water reuse applications. **For more info circle 870**



FIBER-CEMENT SIDING AND TRIM / JAMES HARDIE

James Hardie makes fiber-cement siding and trim that's engineered to withstand the specific climate in which the product is used. Customers are matched with the right product for their region through the HardieZone system. All products are primed and ready for field painting, but builders can also opt to order siding and trim treated with ColorPlus Technology, which adds a durable finish that's covered by a 15-year limited warranty protecting against peeling, cracking, and chipping. **For more info circle 871**



METAL ROOFING / CERTAINTEED

Presidio is a metal roofing line from CertainTeed that replicates the appearance of slate, clay tile, and wood shake roofing. The Energy Star-qualified material is manufactured with up to 50 percent recycled material and is 100 percent recyclable when ultimately removed due to renovation or demolition. Presidio is made with durable, deep draw steel to achieve weather resistance, solar reflection, and noise reduction and its fade-resistant surface with a patented anti-corrosive coating can decrease the amount of heat transferred into a house. **For more info circle 872**



MARBLE OVERLAY / ARRISCRAFT

Adair Marble Overlay from Arriscraft lets architects and builders incorporate quarried limestone into both interior and exterior settings. The product is adhered to a suitable solid substrate and installed with dry joints with no mortar. The thin, easy-to-install limestone units create a dry-stack design that can be laid in horizontal or vertical patterns, and the lengths are randomized to allow for more custom designs. Adair Marble Overlay's variations in color and pattern add to its unique character. **For more info circle 873**



VINYL SHAKE SIDING / FOUNDRY

Split Shake is Foundry Specialty Siding's most popular vinyl cedar shake siding. A Tapco Group division, Foundry makes its shakes from multiple molds of genuine cedar to achieve a warm, authentic look with random grooves and grain. The deep texture also creates a captivating contrast between light and shadow. Split Shake is available in 7-inch exposure and comes in 23 colors, which hold their hues thanks to a durable ASA cap that protects against ultraviolet rays and the elements. **For more info circle 874**



COLUMNS / PLY GEM

Designed as an architectural feature for applications including fence and railing accents, the Column Collection from Ply Gem Stone allows builders and contractors to add curb appeal and character to a house. Columns are molded from a Civil War-era ledgerstone fence and then hand-painted. No mortar is required. The Column Collection is similar to quarried stone with an authentic, variegated design. It comes in two colors: the natural-looking Canyon (shown), and Mystic, a dark gray that fits modern designs. **For more info circle 875**



MANUFACTURED STONE / PROVIA

ProVia has added two product lines to its Heritage Stone manufactured stone collection. The first, Heritage Natural Cut Stone (shown) has fossilization features and color variations that reflect those found in nature. It is available in three colors: Woodbridge, Fernwood, and Ashworth. The second is Heritage PrecisionFit Stone Panels, which attach for a precise fit and quick installation, with irregular edges and dynamic patterns in a stacked-stone look. Available colors are Sage Grey, Adobe Sands, and Driftwood. **For more info circle 876**

THE 2016
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RUN THE TOWN



DODGE RAM / CHRYSLER

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CARRIES
BIG STICKS

BEST-IN-CLASS
TURNING RADIUS
36.3 FT*

CLASS-EXCLUSIVE
FRONT-WHEEL
DRIVE

EXCEPTIONAL
PAYLOAD
4,420 LB

BLUEPRINT

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MULTI-SLIDE DOOR MARVIN WINDOWS AND DOORS

Homeowners can now bring the outside in with the Ultimate Multi-Slide Door from Marvin Windows and Doors. Available in multiple configurations and sizes to fit a variety of different openings, Ultimate Multi-Slide Door panels come in standard widths of 3 feet to 5 feet and heights of 7 feet to 12 feet. When opened, the panels stack in front of one another. A unidirectional configuration or the bi-parting style, which opens from the center, can be selected, and each configuration is available in both left- and right-handed styles. **For more info circle 877**



90-DEGREE MULTI-SLIDE DOOR WESTERN WINDOW SYSTEMS

The Series 3600 90-Degree Vinyl Multi-Slide Door brings a unique indoor-outdoor solution to production builders via its volume program, and a 10-day production lead time helps keep projects on track and on budget. The 90-Degree Vinyl Multi-Slide Door is U.S.-made of 100 percent virgin vinyl and recyclable aluminum and is engineered for a 90-degree, no-post configuration. Features include a low 0.30 U-factor; 0.20 SHGC; and dual-pane, argon-filled, low-E glass. A flush sill option provides a seamless transition to the outdoors. Rolling panels can be stacked at the opening or slid away into pockets. Custom sizes allow for added design flexibility. **For more info circle 878**



VOLUME PROGRAM WESTERN WINDOW SYSTEMS

The company has expanded its Volume Program to include custom sizes and configurations, with a rapid 15-day production lead time, offering home builders more design flexibility. The Volume Program's customizable options are available with the company's Series 600 Aluminum Multi-Slide Door, Series 9500 Bi-Fold Door, and Series 3600 Vinyl Multi-Slide Door. Additional features include heavy-duty stainless steel hardware and a variety of material and finish options. All products are manufactured at the company's headquarters in Phoenix. **For more info circle 879**



RETRACTABLE SCREEN DOOR ODL

The EZ-Glide Control System used on the Brisa Retractable Screen Door by ODL allows for smooth opening and closing while a small locking latch

ensures safety and security. The door installs quickly and maximizes outdoor views. The outer-face mount design optimizes door width, fitting most sizes 32 to 36 inches. The screen can also be customized to fit smaller door sizes between 28 and 31½ inches with two easy-to-make cuts. To prevent walk-through, the door includes subtle stripes woven into the screen and uses durable, long-lasting surfaces and rust-free aluminum housing. The door is also available in out-swing, in-swing, and sliding door variations. **For more info circle 880**



WINDOW SYSTEM VITROCSA USA

A dual-glazed, thermally broken

window system from Vitrocsa, the inventor of the sliding glass wall, completely conceals the sills and frames in the floor and walls, allowing the glazing to span from floor to ceiling. In fact, the 7/8 vertical jambs are the only evidence of a sliding system. Made from U.S.-manufactured aluminum profiles and glass, the Pure window system is available in sliding or fixed units. The special curtain wall system comes with a patented ultra-flush threshold, which provides an obstacle-free indoor-outdoor experience. **For more info circle 881**



FIBERGLASS EXTERIOR DOORS JELD-WEN

The manufacturer's fiberglass exterior doors are offered via three separate product lines—Architectural,

Smooth-Pro, and Design-Pro—that all provide an authentic woodgrain look, decorative glass designs, and increased energy efficiency, offering an array of options to fit any style or budget. Additionally, the doors come in a smooth finish that is ready to paint or stain, or a Direct Glaze option can be selected for a more contemporary look. The doors offer a long lifespan while remaining low-maintenance. **For more info circle 882**



VINYL MULTI-SLIDE DOOR WESTERN WINDOW SYSTEMS

Featuring dual-pane, low-E glass that helps reduce solar heat gain, the Western Window Systems Series 3600 Vinyl Multi-Slide Door is made from cold-formed steel with a rating of 50 kilopounds per square inch. Options include a flush sill, retractable screens, and rolling panels.

For more info circle 883



SPECIALTY DOORS / SIERRA PACIFIC WINDOWS

Of the specialty doors offered by Sierra Pacific Windows, lift-and-slide doors, multi-slide pocketing doors, multi-slide stacking doors, and bifold doors are four options of large-opening doors that make walls disappear. Lift-and-slide doors glide open large expanses of door panels while maintaining maximum energy efficiency. Multi-slide pocketing doors disappear into a pocket on one or both sides of the opening, while multi-slide stacking doors create moving walls of wood or wood-clad glass panels that stack on one or both sides of an opening. The multi-slide stacking doors can also be released from the stationary position, allowing the panels to be stacked anywhere along the track. Bifold doors can stack either to one or both sides to incorporate minimal panel space, which further enhances the clear opening space. **For more info circle 886**



DOORS / LA CANTINA DOORS

Whether they fold, slide, or swing open, LaCantina Doors has a wide array of doors suitable for projects ranging from single-family and multifamily residential construction to restaurant and retail projects. LaCantina folding doors use high-quality rolling hardware and robust panel and frame designs to provide smooth, effortless operation for any size opening. The company's sliding doors have been engineered to the demands of a folding system and use clean, minimal designs and exceed industry standards for air and water structural testing. LaCantina swing doors use heavy-duty stainless steel hinges and strong door panels engineered for taller, wider openings to create more space than typical single and French doors.

For more info circle 884



TOP-HINGED ROOF WINDOW / VELUX

Velux's GPL roof window allows you to admit daylight and fresh air to spaces such as lofts and attics while also maximizing outdoor views. When closed, the window still allows for fresh air circulation via its ventilation flap. A rotating sash allows easy access for cleaning the glass from the inside, and the bottom latch of the window opens to a 45-degree angle for emergency escape and rescue. The GPL roof window is ideal for any room requiring that windows be placed in a low position. **For more info circle 887**



WINDOWS AND DOORS WINDSOR WINDOWS & DOORS

With thousands of product possibilities, Windsor Windows & Doors helps create one-of-a-kind homes that allow builders to realize their vision and meet homeowners' needs. Whether it's aluminum, wood, cellular PVC, or vinyl windows and doors, Windsor products offer high-performance glass, a range of colors, and stylish hardware. **For more info circle 885**



MODERN-LOOK WINDOWS WEATHER SHIELD

Styled with a narrow-profile frame and sash, square glazing bead, and custom-designed hardware, Weather Shield's Contemporary Collection of windows and doors meets the needs of modern architecture. The full line includes casements, awnings, pictures, and sliding and hinged doors featuring low-maintenance extruded aluminum exteriors with anodized or AAMA 2605 performance finishes for long-lasting color. Enhanced frame and glazing systems maximize energy savings. **For more info circle 888**



▲ HIGH-QUALITY SERVICE TIMBERLAKE CABINETRY

Timberlake Cabinetry offers everything from custom-built cabinets to more budget-conscious options, but its service is standard across the board. The company's smooth delivery process progresses from the design and quote phase through the punch-out and transfer step, which entails an inspection from a Timberlake representative. Sales reps, builder service reps, designers, field supervisors, and service technicians are located around the country, and Timberlake monitors blueprints, paperwork, and schedules through the Maestro custom software system. **For more info circle 889**



▲ LINEAR DRAIN / NOBLE CO.

Noble's Freestyle Linear Drain is made from a single piece of plastic (PVC or ABS) with no seams. It allows for a single-slope shower base, versatility of drain location, and uninterrupted installation of large-format tile. The drain features a membrane-clamping mechanism that ensures a watertight connection to the waterproofing membrane. Noble makes the linear drain in six lengths and four brushed stainless strainer styles. **For more info circle 890**



▲ REFRIGERATION / THERMADOR

By mixing and matching refrigerator, freezer, wine, and bottom freezer columns, Culinary Preservation Centers from Thermador offer customization to fit the needs of any home chef or entertainer's kitchen. Each food storage column can be mixed and matched with any other column and can be selected in 18-inch, 24-inch, 30-inch, and 36-inch sizes. Someone who loves to entertain may choose a combination of a 30-inch built-in refrigerator, a 24-inch built-in wine column, and a 30-inch built-in bottom freezer, while an urban family living in a more compact space may opt for a 24-inch built-in refrigerator and an 18-inch built-in freezer. As kitchens become more personalized, Thermador's Culinary Preservation Centers offer builders a unique blend of design freedom and flexibility. **For more info circle 891**



▲ FLOOR-MOUNT TOILET / GEBERIT

The Monolith Floor-Mount Toilet is a slim, attractive alternative to a typical toilet. Designed by Geberit to connect to existing drainage and water supply lines so no structural modifications are required, the Monolith installs quickly and completely into the existing toilet rough-in. Large and small levers offer water-saving dual-flush choices: 1.6 gallons per flush (gpf) for solid waste and 0.8 gpf for liquid waste. Monolith exceeds EPA WaterSense HET flushing performance and North American code approvals. **For more info circle 892**



▲ SHOWER PAN SLOPE / NOBLE CO.

To help builders create the code-required ¼-inch-per-foot slope toward the center under a shower pan liner, Noble Co. makes the Pro-Slope, a preformed composite from durable expanded polystyrene that comes in 40-by-40-inch and 60-by-60-inch sizes and a 40-by-80-inch tub replacement size. Extensions are also available. The product can easily be cut using a utility knife and doesn't require any mortar, mixing, or curing. **For more info circle 893**



▲ POWER-FLUSH TOILET / GERBER

An improved trapway headlines the improvements to the Avalanche, one of Gerber's most popular toilet lines. The new concealed trapway allows improved flushing and cleaning of the toilet bowl and gives the base of the Avalanche family a smooth, sleek look that is easy to clean and maintain. All internal components are Fluidmaster brand, including the premium 540 Series 3-inch flush valve combined with the 400A fill valve. The toilet uses 1.28 gallons per flush and is WaterSense certified. **For more info circle 894**



▲ SHOWER WALL / KOHLER

The Choreograph collection is manufactured from Serica, a durable proprietary material, and enables the family bathroom to be the space that works for everyone by bringing functionality and organization into the shower. Kohler offers a variety of wall panels, storage solutions, and accessories in a range of colors, patterns, and textures to match any décor. The walls can be trimmed on site for custom cuts and installed over tile. The joints of the Choreograph collection leave a minimal seam, making the shower walls easier to clean and maintain. **For more info circle 897**



▲ IN-WALL TOILET SYSTEM / GEBERIT

Low maintenance coupled with water and space savings are the hallmarks of Geberit's In-Wall Tank and Carrier System. The re-engineered Sigma concealed tank for the wall-hung toilets fits within a standard 2x4 or 2x6 wood- or metal-frame wall and has more space, allowing for the tool-free removal of the fill and flush valves behind the decorative flush panel. An adjustable tank height of 15 to 19 inches ensures that anyone will be able to use the fixture, which supports up to 880 pounds. It also offers dual-flush functionality of 1.6 or 0.8 gallons per flush. **For more info circle 895**



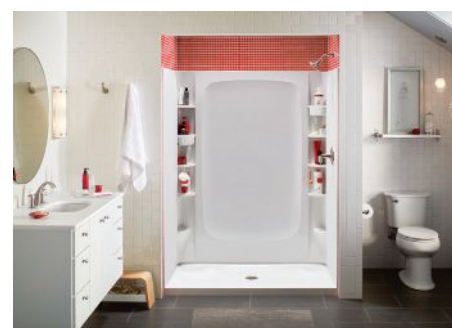
▲ FRENCH-DOOR DOUBLE OVEN / VIKING

Just one hand can open the extra large doors of the Viking Professional French-Door Double Oven. The 4.7-cubic-foot oven with 11 modes for cooking versatility is equipped with six porcelain-coated rack positions. It also comes standard with backlit steel knobs, three oven racks (two ball-bearing racks in the top oven and one in the bottom), and twin 8.5-inch bidirectional convection fans. **For more info circle 898**



▲ PROFESSIONAL APPLIANCES / ELECTROLUX

The Frigidaire Professional suite of appliances, which includes a free-standing range, French door refrigerator, and dishwasher, is focused on offering consumers high-quality appliances inspired by restaurant-style kitchens at affordable prices. And, unlike most professional appliances, the Professional suite is compatible with standard-size appliances so they fit into existing kitchens. Styling is characterized by symmetrical lines, heavy-duty knobs and handles, and easy-to-use control panels. The suite uses the company's Smudge-Proof Stainless Steel to resist fingerprints and ensure easy cleaning. **For more info circle 896**



▲ BATH/SHOWER UNIT / STERLING

This bath/shower unit from Sterling, a Kohler company, consists of modular panels connected with Dry-Block seal; no caulk is needed. The entire unit is made of Vikrell, Sterling's exclusive long-lasting, stain- and scratch-resistant material that's easy to clean and won't chip or fade. Offering abundant shelving and a unique channeled water containment system to prevent leaks, the unit's available sizes include 60 by 30 inches and 60 by 32 inches in White or Kohler Biscuit. **For more info circle 899**



OUTDOOR KITCHEN CABINETS / DANVER

Stainless steel construction makes the entire line of Denver's indoor/outdoor kitchen products virtually maintenance-free, the company says. But homeowners need not opt for a strictly stainless steel finish: dozens of finish combinations are available, including custom painted color options and powder-coat painted wood finishes on doors and drawer fronts.

For more info circle 900



HARDSCAPING KEYSTONE RETAINING WALL SYSTEMS

Keystone offers a range of segmental retaining wall products for both structural and landscape use as well as pavers, patio stones, edgers, and capstones and the pins and tools needed for creating distinctive hardscapes. Attractive, functional, and durable, the products are versatile and easy to install. Keystone's landscape wall systems can be used to create small to mid-size gravity retaining walls and outdoor living elements such as kitchens, fireplaces, fire pits, benches, and more. Patio stones and pavers are offered in a wide range of styles, sizes, and textures. **For more info circle 901**



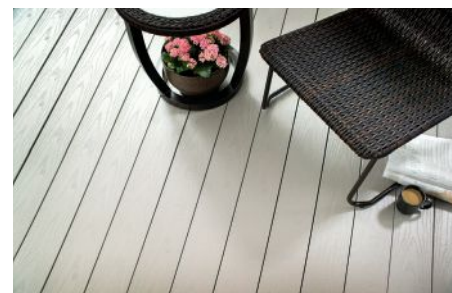
CONCRETE STAIN / QUIKRETE

Transform boring driveways, garage floors, sidewalks, and patios into aesthetically pleasing surfaces through the use of concrete and masonry stains from Quikrete. There are three stain options to choose from, each one offering its own unique look. Etching Stain permanently stains concrete in one step and delivers a marble-like appearance with warm earth tones and unique shading. Penetrating Concrete Stain is a UV-resistant formula that provides an opaque appearance with a deep, rich color highlighted by natural variations in concrete and masonry. Translucent Concrete Stain is a semi-transparent, water-based, polymer-bonded stain that highlights the natural variations in concrete and masonry surfaces. The three stains are available in a variety of colors. **For more info circle 902**



CEMENT AND CONCRETE PRODUCTS / QUIKRETE

Quikrete has played a role in delivering durable, long-lasting projects for 75 years and has been a major component of new construction as well as helping to bring old projects back to life. Quikrete offers more than 200 products ranging from structural concrete and masonry mortar to water repellents and decorative finishes. With over 150 manufacturing plants, Quikrete is the largest manufacturer of pre-blended, packaged concrete and related products in North America, providing what is necessary for any concrete construction job, be it residential or commercial, big or small. **For more info circle 903**



PVC DECKING / KLEER

Using 100 percent PVC deckboards that are lightweight, easy to handle, and resist mold, mildew, and insects, Kleer's decking solution combines the deckboards with KleerKlip, a specially designed system that conceals fasteners within the grooved edges of the boards. The boards are designed with an embossed pattern for added traction and are available in solid colors with wood-grain patterns, and streaked colors such as Brazilian Redwood and Golden Teak. The product does not splinter and includes a 25-year stain-resistance warranty. **For more info circle 904**

FORTITUDE

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Stands Tall, Through It All. And American Made.

InSinkErator® puts more than 75 years of experience to work in every disposer we make. Take Evolution Excel®, for example. It has 13 patents and features MultiGrind® and our Auto-Reverse Grind System®, a unique Jam-Sensor® Circuit, SoundSeal® and a solid construction that enables this powerhouse to take on the toughest kitchen challenges.

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ROOF AND WALL SHEATHING HUBER ENGINEERED WOODS

With a simple two-step installation process—just put up the panels and tape the seams—Zip System sheathing and tape from Huber Engineered Woods installs 40 percent more quickly than housewrap, the company says. The structural roof and wall system provides an integrated air and water-resistive barrier, maximizing energy efficiency and eliminating the need for housewrap. **For more info circle 905**



WEATHERIZATION SYSTEM / DUPONT

Thanks to its nonwoven-fiber structure that resists air filtration and water intrusion while still allowing moisture vapor to diffuse through the sheet, Tyvek HomeWrap can improve building durability by helping to prevent mold and mildew buildup and wood rot. Tyvek HomeWrap's top-rated protection can reduce home energy bills and improve occupant comfort. Backed by a 10-year limited warranty, Tyvek HomeWrap is part of the DuPont Weatherization System that also includes flashing tapes and installation accessories. **For more info circle 906**



SPRAY FOAM INSULATION / CERTAINTEED

CertaSpray X (CSX) polyurethane open-cell spray foam insulation helps stop drafts and noise while also complying with fire protection codes. Because it meets the requirements of AC377 Appendix X, CertaSpray X is suitable for installation in attics and crawlspaces without the need for an additional ignition barrier or intumescent coating, reducing the risk of callbacks and failed inspections. CSX meets ICC-ES code requirements for thermal and moisture protection, minimizes thermal bridging—saving up to 20 percent in heating and cooling costs, the manufacturer says—and can contribute to the requirements for an Energy Star home. CSX also cures to a distinctive mocha color, making it easily identifiable to building inspectors. **For more info circle 907**



FLOOR FASTENER / PASLODE

With its barbed helix design, the TetraGrip fastener from Paslode is designed to eliminate squeaky subfloors that are brought on by the use of more traditional nails. The unique design allows for the nail to drive like a nail and hold like a screw. The rotation provided by its barbed double-helix design provides superior withdrawal resistance without destruction of the wood. With less wood destruction and a better hold, the chance of squeaky subfloors is greatly reduced.

For more info circle 908



TERMITE CONTROL / NISUS

The use of penetrants and glycols allows Bora-Care to provide long-term control of termites and other wood-destroying insects and fungi. Bora-Care, from Nisus, is sprayed directly onto wood, concrete, and plumbing pipes, which limits the chemicals that can seep into waterways. The product does not corrode metal fasteners, fittings, or nails. It is less toxic than traditional pesticides, and can earn credits for LEED and other green-building certifications. **For more info circle 909**



HOUSEWRAP / TYPAR

The Typar Weather Protection System controls moisture intrusion, mitigating the damaging impacts that come with it without sacrificing comfort or energy efficiency. The Weather Protection System offers superior tear strength, air and water holdout, and moisture vapor transmission due to its polypropylene nonwoven breathable weather membrane. Essential to the whole system are the Typar Weather-Resistant barriers, which are installed before the exterior siding and act as air and moisture barriers while still allowing moisture vapor to escape from the wall cavity. Typar Housewraps are made in the U.S. and offer a lifetime warranty and can be used with a variety of claddings including brick, wood panels, vinyl siding, cedar shakes, stone, and manufactured stone. **For more info circle 910**



WATERPROOFING MEMBRANE / NOBLE CO.

Available in both 3-foot and 6-foot widths, Noble Co.'s ValueSeal Thin-Bed Bonded Waterproofing in an ultra-thin membrane for interior waterproofing of floors and walls. At 16 mils, it's the thinnest membrane offered by Noble. Thin, lightweight, and flexible, the sheet can be applied with latex-modified thinset or NobleBond EXT. ValueSeal is suitable for concrete and plywood substrates and is plumbing code approved. Made in the U.S., ValueSeal is cost-effective and comes with a 10-year warranty. **For more info circle 911**



ADHESIVE / DAP

One can of DAP SmartBond Construction Adhesive packs eight times more adhesive coverage than traditional adhesive cartridges, the company says. The product applies as foam and changes to a gel for a fast cure and high-strength bond to dimensional and treated lumber, plywood, OSB, and high-performance enhanced OSB. Application is faster as there is less gunning, less change-out, and less fatigue compared with using cartridges. The SmartBond Pro-Grade Applicator, a gun-grade option for subfloor and landscape SmartBond, offers faster application, precision, control, and maximum adhesive yield. The line includes adhesives for the subfloor, heavy-duty, landscape, and an adhesive cleaner. **For more info circle 912**



LAMINATED STRAND LUMBER WEYERHAEUSER

Trus Joist TimberStrand LSL comes in various widths, lengths, and thicknesses for load-bearing wall and roof applications. The laminated strand lumber columns and wall framing are straight, no matter the length. They resist shrinking and deliver consistent performance for the tall walls used to create entryways and two-story great rooms. Doors and windows operate more smoothly and cabinet and tile installation is easier with a stable frame as a base. **For more info circle 913**



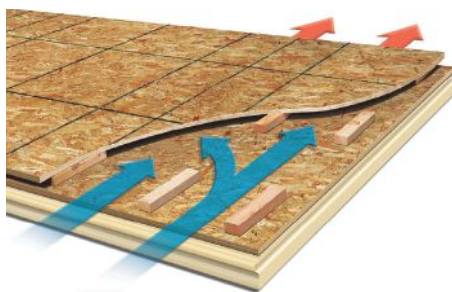
FIRE-RESISTANT GYPSUM BOARD GEORGIA-PACIFIC

ToughRock Fireguard 45 Gypsum Board is a UL-classified Type FG gypsum board for use in fire-related wall assemblies and can replace standard and lightweight gypsum board in all ½-inch wall and ceiling assemblies. These wallboards are noncombustible and are made with a dimensionally stable gypsum core specially formulated to increase the strength and resistance to the passage of heat. The core is sandwiched between face layers made of 100 percent recycled paper. In addition to its fire-resistant qualities, ToughRock also lowers sound transmission between rooms. **For more info circle 914**



HOUSEWRAP / HENRY CO.

The Henry Blueskin VP100 air barrier membrane is crucial to the company's building envelope systems. A fully adhered, peel-and-stick, water-resistant membrane, Blueskin VP100 works to eliminate air and moisture gaps around nails and other fasteners and creates improved insulation performance due to its sealing technology, in turn helping to reduce home energy costs. The membrane also helps protect against mold by limiting moisture ingress into the building. **For more info circle 915**



ROOF INSULATION / GAF

Cornell ThermaCal Nail Base Roof Insulation from GAF helps reduce heat drive into living/conditioned spaces and ventilated versions can exhaust excess moisture before it condenses in the deck or the roofing system. The panels were designed for use on structural wood or steel sloped roof decks and are perfect for cathedral ceilings, glued-laminated timber, post-and-beam structures, and conditioned attic spaces. Panels consist of sheathing that serves as the nail base for shingles, metal, slate, or tile; built-in ventilation space (a non-ventilated panel also is available) and polyiso insulation. **For more info circle 916**



WOOD SHEARWALL / SIMPSON STRONG-TIE

According to Simpson Strong-Tie, Strong-Wall SB shearwall delivers greater lateral-force-resistance performance than most comparable wood shearwalls. Strong-Wall SB is customizable—it can be field trimmed for rake walls and different heights. It fastens to headers with drill zones, and it has a chase for wiring. Suitable for applications including standard, portal, two-story stacked, balloon-framing (up to 20 feet), and rake walls, Strong-Wall SB's narrow panel widths have significantly higher allowable loads than the original Wood Strong-Wall. **For more info circle 917**



SILL PAN FLASHING / JAMSILL

Jamsill Guard, an adjustable sill pan flashing, is made from high-impact ABS plastics and is designed to prevent water damage from window and door leaks. The flashing won't deteriorate or corrode over time, the company says, and its simple design is inexpensive and easy to install. The product's multi-piece telescoping design allows on-site adjustability to fit all rough openings. It is then bonded together in the field using PVC cement, creating a one-piece sill pan flashing. Sloped weep areas help evacuate moisture to the exterior of the home. **For more info circle 918**



WEATHER BARRIER / STO

Sto's energy-efficient StoGuard fluid applied weather barrier can be sprayed on or applied with a roller and requires no special training, reducing the risk of improper installation. No additional breathing apparatus or special handling is necessary, and StoGuard does not require the use of staples, nails, or other means of attachment to adhere to the wall. Other benefits of StoGuard include the fact that it is bonded to the sheathing, does not require mechanical fastening, and will not tear, rip, or blow off during construction. **For more info circle 919**



FRAMING MATERIALS / NORBORD INDUSTRIES

MC Norbord manufactures several roofing, flooring, and wall products that improve a home's energy efficiency. Solarbord radiant barrier sheathing for roofs and exterior walls features heat-reflecting foil laminated to OSB, reducing a home's HVAC load and cooling attics by up to 30 degrees. Pinnacle, a durable subfloor panel, is produced with SFI Chain of Custody wood with no added urea formaldehyde resins. Windstorm and TallWall OSB wall sheathing reduce air leakage by up to 60 percent (when compared with using 4x8s), the company says, and work in tandem with raised-heel trusses for better R-values. **For more info circle 920**



SPRAY FOAM INSULATION / ICYNENE

Icynene's spray foam insulation products include Classic Max and Classic Plus. Classic Max is an open-cell, low-VOC foam that allows for reentry and re-occupancy two hours after installation—with active ventilation. It is also an ignition-barrier-free product that the manufacturer says can smother an attic fire in less than a minute. Classic Plus is a high R-value open-cell spray foam that achieves R-22 in 2x6 wall assemblies and may contribute toward points for new-construction LEED certification. **For more info circle 921**



DECK FASTENER / SIMPSON STRONG-TIE

The Simpson Strong-Tie DTT1Z Deck Tension Tie eliminates the need to access floor joists from inside the home and is fastened from outside the house instead. The DTT1Z addresses a new 2015 international Residential Code provision that allows four 750-pound lateral connectors to be fastened to structural framing joist members in the house, providing an alternative to using two 1,500-pound lateral connections from the deck to the floor joists within the house. Available individually or in a kit of four with four Strong-Drive SDWH Timber-Hex HDG screws and 24 Strong-Drive SD Connector screws, the DTT1Z Deck Tension Tie is a safe and time-saving alternative for attaching deck joists to a home's structural framing. **For more info circle 922**



HOUSEWRAP / TYPAR

This tri-laminate vapor-permeable woven housewrap from Typar is designed to include a spacer that creates a millimeter-size gap between sheathing and cladding. Housewrap DW provides 96 percent drainage efficiency, as measured by ASTM 2273, and exceeds AC 38 drainage specifications, the company says, providing faster drainage and drier exterior walls, which helps prevent mold and rot damage. **For more info circle 923**



POLYURETHANE FOAMS / BASF

BASF spray polyurethane foams are helping builders meet the demand for more energy-efficient, comfortable, and durable homes. Spraytite and Eternite Spray Foam Insulation Residential Applications offer an array of benefits, from superior insulating values to a complete air barrier system. With a single installation, Spraytite closed-cell spray polyurethane foam insulation virtually eliminates uncontrolled air leakage, and Eternite open-cell spray foam can be used to improve energy efficiency or to provide a barrier against unwanted sound. It thoroughly fills spaces and adheres to surfaces creating a tighter and more seamless fit over conventional insulation. **For more info circle 924**



▲ DRYER WALL VENT / IN-O-VATE TECHNOLOGIES

Manufactured from heavy-gauge steel that's galvanized and powder coated, the Dryer Wall Vent from In-O-Vate Technologies is built for durability and won't chip, crack, or deteriorate. Its clean lines, smooth finish, and low profile don't detract from exterior aesthetics, and the vent is engineered for a quick, accurate fit. The Dryer Wall Vent exceeds all requirements for safe dryer venting, the company says, and has large, clear openings and a lighter damper, yielding lab-proven, zero back pressure, and ensuring that the termination doesn't hamper exhaust performance. **For more info circle 925**



▲ DESIGN SOFTWARE / SOFTPLAN

SoftPlan 2014 residential design software includes a 64-bit memory model and improved three-dimensional output, which allows users to generate large, detailed renderings. It offers simplified drawing commands, extensive customization tools, and advanced BIM automation. This version also contains plan sets for printing, interior elevations, and other new enhancements, and symbol libraries. SoftPlan 2014 also has SoftPlan+, a subscription service for cloud-based SoftPlan access with technical support and upgrades. **For more info circle 926**



▲ TANKLESS WATER HEATER / NAVIEN

Navien Premium Efficiency (NPE) tankless water heaters come in four output sizes, with or without built-in recirculation. NPE-A (Advanced) features ComfortFlow recirculation, with a pump and buffer tank and six pump control options. NPE-S (Standard) tops the Energy Star rating list with up to 0.99 EF (energy factor). All sizes have dual stainless steel heat exchangers and come with a 15-year residential warranty.

For more info circle 927



▲ LED SPOTLIGHTS / MR. BEAMS

Using radio frequency connectivity, multiple Mr. Beams LED Spotlights with NetBright technology can be linked into one network. The battery-operated spotlights are wireless and feature a motion sensor that turns off after 30 seconds of inactivity, making the lights ideal for security and safety applications. The spotlight gives off 200 lumens of light and each set of D-cell batteries provides up to 5,000 activations. The lights are equipped with four channels to create separate networks. Up to 50 spotlights can be connected to each channel within one NetBright network while operating at a range of 200 feet. **For more info circle 928**



▲ VENTILATION FAN / PANASONIC

For homeowners who want to replace an existing fan from below the ceiling, the Energy Star-rated WhisperFit EZ is a good option that lets users utilize the existing duct. The product is easy to install and its 5 5/8-inch housing fits most ceilings. The FV-08-11VFM5 model has a motion sensor with a 20-minute off-delay timer that activates the fan when someone enters the room. The line has a Pick-A-Flow speed selector so users can adjust the ventilation (80 or 110 cfm). **For more info circle 929**



SMART LOCK / KWIKSET

To satisfy consumer demand for both convenience and security, the Kevo smart lock by Kwikset is a Bluetooth-enabled deadbolt that gives homeowners the ability to unlock the door using their smartphone; send electronic keys (eKeys) to family, friends, and service people; and receive notifications whenever someone enters or exits the door. By simply installing Kevo and downloading the mobile app, your smartphone becomes your key. Kevo is now available on Apple iOS and select Android 5.0 Lollipop devices. **For more info circle 930**



VENTILATION SYSTEMS / PANASONIC

A well-designed ventilation system saves energy, controls moisture, and improves the durability of the home. Panasonic offers a range of cost-effective ventilation solutions to help builders meet code and lower their homes' HERS Index scores, including the WhisperGreen Select, Whisper Recessed LED, EcoVent, Whisper Comfort, WhisperValue, and the Select Cyclor whole-house ventilation system (shown). **For more info circle 932**



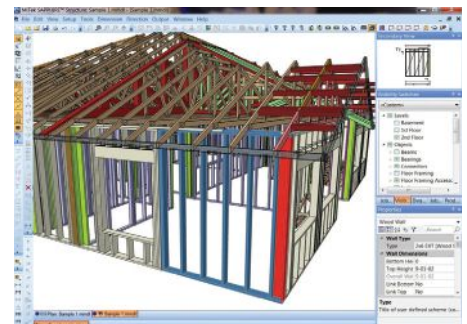
VENTILATION FAN / PANASONIC

By incorporating a unique Veri-Boost feature to ensure optimal performance without compromising style, the EcoVent Energy Star-rated fan from Panasonic delivers airflow while offering a smaller grille size that blends into the ceiling and doesn't detract from the room's aesthetics. EcoVent provides verification assurance and can be used to comply with airflow requirements for installed performance per ASHRAE 62.2 and Energy Star for Homes 3.0, among others. **For more info circle 933**



DRYER VENT BOX / IN-O-VATE TECHNOLOGIES

In-O-Vate produces five models of recessed dryer vent box that are installed in the wall behind a dryer. The U.S.-made Dryerbox is deep-drawn and molded, made from 22-gauge aluminized steel and weighing nearly five pounds. The recessed box allows the dryer to be placed flush against the wall, which gives the laundry room more floor space. The setup also protects the exhaust hose from getting crushed by the dryer or damaged or broken during the completion of construction. **For more info circle 931**



3-D SOFTWARE / MITEK

MiTek's Sapphire software allows users to create 3-D models to collaboratively manage the design-and-estimating processes and create buildable homes with predictable costs. Using Sapphire Structure's 3-D modeling, builders can design, optimize, and build a structure, while improving cycle time, efficiency, and the bottom line. Files can be shared with customers, improving the communication of the design process. Sapphire Viewer is used to review models in Plan and 3-D views, isolate items in the model, examine elevation drawings, and print layout sheets. **For more info circle 934**



TANKLESS WATER HEATER / RINNAI

Rinnai expanded the Ultra Series line of condensing tankless water heaters with the RUR98i and RUR98e. These RUR models feature recirculation, with or without a dedicated recirculation line. Recirculation, which shortens the wait time for hot water, is provided by thermal bypass technology that includes an integrated pump, internal bypass line, and thermal bypass valve. **For more info circle 935**



WIRING ENCLOSURES AND OUTLETS / ICC

ICC is a manufacturer of residential and commercial copper and fiber structured cabling products such as wiring enclosures and outlets. The 30-year-old company's midrange products designed for condos, town homes, and single-family production-built houses include wiring enclosure combos, each with eight phone ports, six video ports, eight Category 6 data ports (model K), a door or cover, and mounting hardware. **For more info circle 936**



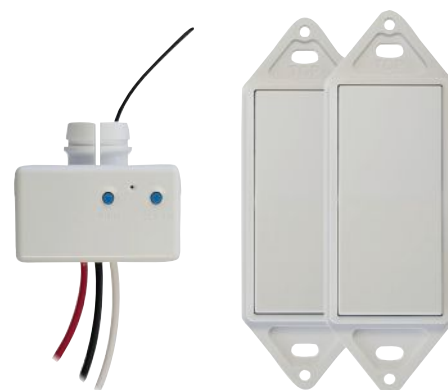
WIRELESS CHARGING SURFACE / DUPONT

The Corian Charging Surface in select versions of DuPont countertops charges a mobile phone or tablet using a transmitter under the countertop. By wirelessly transferring energy to a receiver within or attached to the smart device, users simply place their mobile device on the charging spot to commence charging. Nearly all smart devices can be charged with a charging ring from Duracell Powermat, but charging cases also are available, and some devices already have wireless charging capability built in. Local distributors can be found at corian.com/powerup. **For more info circle 937**



LED LIGHTING / GE

The Bright Stik LED is a sleek new shape in LED lighting that consumers can enjoy at an affordable \$4 per bulb. The Bright Stik offers a 15,000-hour rated life and, says the manufacturer, lasts 50 percent longer while using 20 percent less energy than compact fluorescent bulbs, and lasts 15 percent longer and uses 80 percent less energy than incandescent/halogen bulbs. Bright Stik is available with a CRI rating of 80 and a color temperature of 2,850K, and does not contain lead or mercury. **For more info circle 938**



WIRELESS SWITCH / GOCONEX

Because it isn't physically attached to a home's structure, GoConex's wireless electrical switch is faster and simpler to install and provides added flexibility in where the switch can be installed. The lack of wires means that a switch can be moved without the need to touch wires or cut drywall. The wireless switch reduces building-material and vapor-barrier penetrations and also provides users with the option of controlling one or multiple switches from any GoConex wireless switch. **For more info circle 939**



VENTILATION FAN / PANASONIC

The WhisperGreen Select ventilation fan from Panasonic includes several features that allow for greater customization and easier installation: the built-in Pick-A-Flow speed selector lets users choose the amount of airflow (50, 80, or 110 cfm); Plug 'N Play modules help installers comply with the latest codes by providing up to three extra features they can pick from to meet a variety of ventilation applications; an installation bracket with articulating joints allows the fan to be precisely positioned; and SmartFlow technology senses the amount of resistance in the duct run, automatically adjusting the fan speed to deliver optimal cfm output. **For more info circle 940**



LED FAN / PANASONIC

Panasonic's Energy Star-certified WhisperRecessed LED fan is UL listed for tub/shower enclosures and offers quiet operation. The 80 cfm fan exhausts indoor moisture, pollutants, and allergens while its recessed adjustable LED bulb's positioning and deeper lamp regression minimize glare. The warm-white dimmable LED lamp lasts up to five times longer than CFLs and uses up to 20 percent less energy. A built-in damper prevents backdraft. **For more info circle 941**



TANKLESS WATER HEATER / NORITZ

The NRCP line of residential tankless water heaters from Noritz has a circulating pump inside. This setup keeps hot water close to the outlet, which minimizes the wait for warm or hot water and the waste of unused potable water. The recirculation system can be programmed to operate only when needed via a digital display on the front of the water heater. The auto setting lets the system learn the household's water-usage routines so it can automatically control the recirculation loop activation times. **For more info circle 942**



SMART-HOME PRODUCTS / NEST

Nest is recruiting Nest Pros by offering training, tools, and professional pricing to those interested in selling and installing products such as the 3rd Generation Nest Learning Thermostat. The portfolio also includes the Nest Protect, a smoke and carbon monoxide alarm that speaks when there is a problem and sends alerts to a resident's phone via the Nest app if they're not home, and Nest Cam, a tripod-mount-with-magnet security camera with 24/7 live streaming night vision, digital zoom, and motion and sound detection that sends alerts to the homeowner's phone. **For more info circle 943**



GARAGE DOOR OPENER / LIFTMASTER

The MyQ-enabled garage door opener gives users the ability to control a door from anywhere with a smartphone, tablet, or computer via the free MyQ app. The garage door openers include battery backup and a quiet DC motor belt-drive system. The system gives home builders upsell opportunities and improved reliability, cutting down on callbacks. **For more info circle 944**



▲ CARGO VAN / MERCEDES-BENZ

The 2015 Sprinter Cargo Van has two engine/transmission combinations from which to choose: the standard powertrain OM651 4-cylinder with 7-speed 7G-Tronic transmission, and the OM642 V6 with 5-speed transmission. The OM651 delivers up to 18 percent better fuel economy over the 6-cylinder/5-speed combo, according to the company. Both engines run clean due to Mercedes' BlueTEC SCR technology, which features a fuel-economy rear axle for optimized gearing and a regulated fuel pump to optimize fuel supply. A Sprinter 4x4 cargo van is also available. **For more info circle 945**



▲ SAW BLADE / LENOX

Lenox Gold Power Arc Curved Reciprocating Saw Blades last twice as long as traditional straight recip blades, the company says, in part due to a titanium coating that better dissipates heat from friction. The coating also allows the blades' teeth to stay sharper for longer. The blades are angled so that they provide faster cutting through materials such as wood, metal, heavy metal, demolition, and nail-embedded wood. **For more info circle 948**



▲ DRILL BITS / IRWIN

Irwin's Double-Ended Power Bits offer convenience and improved driving functionality. Two ends save builders from searching for replacement bits between applications. DoubleLok Technology securely locks both ends of the bit into impact drivers and quick-change chucks. A snug fastening reduces stripping and cam-out, which lengthens the life of the bit. Like the single-ended options, the double-ended bits are compatible with Irwin's Magnetic Screw-Hold Attachment that holds fasteners with a powerful rare-earth magnet. **For more info circle 946**



▲ DRYWALL TOOL / CALCULATED INDUSTRIES

The Blind Mark XT Magnetic Drywall Cutout Tool from Calculated Industries makes it easy to locate and cut electrical outlet access holes in drywall, plywood, exterior siding, and other materials. The process requires no measuring. First put a target magnet in the outlet, then install the drywall. Place the locator magnet above the outlet and trace around it to know what to cut. The simple tool saves on time and lifting and lowering drywall sheets to mark, cut, and install. **For more info circle 949**



▲ VEHICLES / FORD

The 2015 Ford Transit has multiple configurations, including two wheelbases, three body lengths, and three roof heights. Van, wagon, chassis cab, and cutaway body styles are also options. The Transit has three engines to choose from, starting with the base 3.7-liter V6, as well as an EcoBoost twin-turbo gas V6 and a 5-cylinder diesel. It has higher fuel economy ratings than previous full-size vans. The voice-activated SYNC connects users with their phones for hands-free calling. The interior has three rows of seating and hundreds of cubic feet of space, depending on the configuration. Ford can customize the Transit for nearly any building or technical trade. **For more info circle 947**



▲ CUTTING PLIERS / IRWIN

Irwin Vise-Grip Max Leverage Diagonal Pliers feature PowerSlot Technology, which provides up to twice the cutting power with half the effort. Three-zone comfort grips give cushion and allow for more control, and the handles have hooks that attach to the Irwin Performance Lanyard. The pliers, designed for electricians and general construction workers, can cut through nails, screws, ACSR cable, and even piano wire. They have a rust-resistant finish and are available in a 7-inch and 8-inch size. **For more info circle 950**

ELEGANCE REMASTERED

Create the space homebuyers dream of with Marble Attaché. This distinguished porcelain tile emulates the world's finest marble in its most unique natural colors. Offered in two finishes, Marble Attaché adds luxury and style to any home. Learn more about this lavish tile at daltile.com/MarbleAttache



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IMAGINE WHAT'S POSSIBLE™

Photo features Turkish Skyline 12 x 48
field tile on the floor and wall.

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THE LOOK OF WOOD. THE EASE OF LOW-MAINTENANCE.

Today, people want the beauty of wood without the high cost of maintenance that accompanies it. That's why they're turning to Kleer cellular PVC products. Kleer provides affordable, sustainable, low-maintenance alternatives to wood trim and wood exterior products without compromising beauty or function.

Kleer products make it easy to distinguish your home's exterior with eye-catching fascias, soffits and corners or custom architectural details. Inside or outside the home, Kleer decorative mouldings, beadboards and other trim are not only made to impress, but also to stand the test of time. Kleer trimboards do not require paint for protection or to retain their brilliant white color. But when color coordinating with other home exterior elements, they can easily be painted with 100% acrylic latex paint.

Proudly made in the USA using the highest quality PVC resin, Kleer Trimboards deliver optimum workability and lasting durability. Our breakthrough manufacturing technology produces an array of trim options that look like wood, but are superior in many ways.



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**UNIQUELY SEALED PACKAGING.
A DIRT-RESISTANT SEALED EDGE.
SIGNED, SEALED AND
DELIVERED FROM KLEER.**

Our new, smaller, easy-to-handle KLEERPaks
keep our trimboard cleaner even longer. And Kleer
Trimboard with TruEDGE® helps it stay that way
through installation. TruEDGE resists dust and dirt,
with a smooth finish that's easier to clean than
wood trim or PVC boards with no sealed edge.
Visit KLEERLUMBER.COM



Panasonic continues its strong showing in the annual Professional Builders Top 100 products listing with an impressive four models placed. Here are the 2016 winning products from Panasonic, chosen by you, the reader:

WhisperGreen Select™

WhisperGreen Select is turning heads for not just its performance, but also for its built-in Pick-A-Flow™ speed selector that lets you select required airflow, and its unique set of customizable features. Four patented Plug 'N Play™ modules provide a quick and cost effective method of customizing the ventilation fan to match requirements. A Multi-Speed with Time Delay module allows you to select the proper CFM to satisfy ASHRAE 62.2 continuous ventilation requirements. An energy-saving SmartAction® Motion Sensor automatically activates when someone enters the room. A Condensation Sensor that detects relative humidity and temperature to anticipate dew point, automatically turns the fan on to control humidity. And a NiteGlo™ LED Night Light automatically turns on a 1 watt LED night light when darkness is sensed in the room. WhisperGreen Select can include a combination of up to three modules. An ultra-quiet DC motor with intelligent SmartFlow™ technology ensures the fan will perform as required.

WhisperRecessed LED™

Combining performance and beauty, WhisperRecessed LED incorporates a powerful yet quiet 80 CFM fan hidden behind an elegant recessed LED light. Its stylish all-in-one design delivers the quietest, ENERGY STAR® certified recessed fan/light combo unit available. Despite its good looks and impressive performance, WhisperRecessed LED cuts no corners when it comes to sustainability. The warm white dimmable LED lamp lasts up to five times longer and uses up to 20% less energy than CFLs.



WhisperFit® EZ

WhisperFit EZ fills a critical yet overlooked niche in the bathroom fan category: it's specifically designed to easily get installers through challenging retrofits as quickly as possible. WhisperFit EZ slashes remodel install time with the use of an included 4" to 3" duct adapter which lets you use existing duct work. This powerful yet quiet ventilation fan features a low profile of 5⅜" depth and its Flex-Z Fast™ bracket makes it easy to install anywhere.

EcoVent®

The compact yet powerful Panasonic EcoVent was designed to solve problems caused by underperforming fans. As industry standards evolve to specify airflow, raters are verifying the airflow of installed fans prior to certifying that they meet ASHRAE 62.2 and ENERGY STAR® for Homes 3.0 standards. EcoVent features a Veri-boost switch that bumps up CFM output to meet code — much easier and less expensive than ripping out and replacing an underperforming fan. Panasonic has dubbed this little workhorse your "verification assurance policy."

These Professional Builder Top 100 Products can help you comply with ASHRAE 62.2, LEED for Homes, CALGreen, ENERGY STAR® for Homes 3.0. and other green building codes & standards.

Panasonic

us.panasonic.com/ventfans

WINNER'S CIRCLE

WhisperGreen Select™
VENTILATION FAN



WhisperRecessed LED™
VENTILATION FAN

TOP 100
PRODUCTS
**Professional
Builder 2016**

WhisperFit® EZ
VENTILATION FAN

ecoVent™

The readers of Professional Builder have spoken, and once again, the buzz is about Panasonic. We're proud to have not one, *but four* models selected among the 100 Top Products for 2016 for having generated the most inquiry and strongest interest among readers. Will the winners please step forward ...

The customizable **WhisperGreen Select™** lets you build the perfect ventilation fan with its Pick-A-Flow™ selectable airflow feature and also a set of four Plug 'N Play modules. **WhisperFit® EZ** is the ideal retrofit fan that's quick and easy to install. **WhisperRecessed LED™** is a fan hidden behind an elegant recessed LED light. And the compact yet powerful **EcoVent™** is our cost effective spot ventilation solution that delivers required airflow with the flip of a switch. Still, as much as we like winning, we understand it's merely a by-product of our relentless quest to produce the best performing, energy efficient ventilation solutions on the market today.

Let Panasonic be part of your winning game plan. Learn more at us.panasonic.com/ventfans

Circle 778



SMART REFRIGERATOR TAKES STORAGE SERIOUSLY

The new Whirlpool® Smart French Door Bottom Mount Refrigerator from Whirlpool Corporation will change the way you look at – and interact with – refrigerators. It features 32 cubic feet of total storage space and is the industry's easiest refrigerator to organize¹ with its revolutionary, pantry-inspired layout and unique shelving system. The refrigerator, which will be available in the third quarter of 2016, earned top honors with two 2016 CES Innovation Awards in the Smart Home and Home Appliances categories.

The refrigerator's innovative storage areas allow users to cut down on clutter and efficiently store 30% more.¹ For example, infinity slide shelves can slide back and stop at any point to give homeowners the space they need and the removable stadium divider can be inserted to raise small, hard-to-find items. In addition, there are underlit shelves to increase visibility.

The refrigerator's connection with home automation features includes smart notifications to alert families of a WiFi outage; customized settings, including Party Mode, which, through activating Party Mode in the Whirlpool®



The pantry-inspired layout and unique shelving system simplify refrigerator organization.

mobile app, makes the refrigerator produce ice more quickly and lowers interior temperatures during the party; and advanced customer care through the Whirlpool® mobile app by displaying fault codes and helping to schedule service appointments²



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¹ Among leading french door mount refrigerator brands

² Requires Wifi and account creation. App features and functionality subject to change. Subject to Terms of Service available at: www.whirlpool.com/connect. Data rates may apply.

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Circle 779

10 REASONS PRODUCTION BUILDERS LOVE THE SERIES 3600 VINYL MULTI-SLIDE DOOR

WHY WESTERN WINDOW SYSTEMS' LATEST INDOOR-OUTDOOR LIVING SOLUTION IS A HIT WITH HOME BUILDERS

In 1959, Western Window Systems produced its first glass product in Phoenix. Since then, the company has sold thousands of large sliding glass walls across the country. Its latest, the Series 3600 Vinyl Multi-Slide Door, available through the company's Volume Program, has production builders talking – here are 10 reasons why.

1. IT STANDS UP TO THE ELEMENTS Energy efficiencies like a low U-value of .30, reduced SHGC for blocking radiant heat energy, and dual-pane, argon-filled, low-E glass mean builders throughout the country can bring this door system into their home designs.

2. IT'S BUILT AND TESTED TO LAST A design pressure rating of DP40, cold-formed steel with a rating of 50ksi for structural strength, and stainless steel hardware start the Series 3600 Vinyl Multi-Slide Door on the path to a long life.

3. DIFFERENTIATION IS A SNAP Options like a flush sill for a seamless transition to the outdoors, rolling panels that can be slid into pockets or stacked at the opening, and a retractable screen give you ample flexibility for designing homes that differentiate and drive sales.

4. PRODUCTION LEAD TIMES ARE SHORT An incredible five-day production lead time for standard size vinyl door systems ensures your project stays on time and on budget.

5. POPULAR WITH HOMEBUYERS Because Western Window Systems products are typically a preferred upgrade option with homebuyers, many builders choose to include them as standard features in their homes.

6. YOU CAN CUSTOMIZE THE SIZE Custom sizes and configurations give you more design flexibility than ever to differentiate your homes. Plus, most come with a 15-day production lead time.



7. THERE'S A 90-DEGREE OPTION For completely uninterrupted indoor-outdoor living, the Series 3600 90-Degree Multi-Slide Door opens up the sides and corners of a room by eliminating a connecting post.

8. HIGH-QUALITY VINYL American-made 100% virgin vinyl extrusions retain their color and never need painting.

9. THERE'S A MODEL HOME DISCOUNT If the Series 3600 is featured as an option, you get one set of discounting. If it comes standard with a home, the savings are greater.

10. IT HELPS DRIVE REVENUE By offering upgrades such as outdoor barbecues and landscaping packages, you can inspire homebuyers to take indoor-outdoor living even further. This helps drive revenue and offers selling options that can be tailored to any building project.



For more information on Western Window Systems and the Series 3600 Vinyl Multi-Slide Door, visit westernvolumeprogram.com.

VALUESEAL®—THE NEW STANDARD FOR ULTRA-THIN SHEET MEMBRANES

Two Noble products are included in Professional Builder's Top 100 Products List: ValueSeal®, a new ultra-thin sheet membrane for waterproofing showers, and FreeStyle Linear Drains™. Both products are made in the USA and loaded with features that make them the best choice for design and construction professionals.

ValueSeal is one of several ultra-thin sheet membranes. It is extremely light and thin like competitive membranes, but it has features that no one else offers. First, it's available in 6' and 3' widths. The others are 1 meter (39") wide. The 6' width simplifies installation and allows most shower floors to be waterproofed without a seam, which reduces the potential for leaks. Inside corners can be folded and bonded to the tile side of the backer board or installed behind the board. Walls can also be waterproofed with ValueSeal.

Use of modified thin-set mortar to install ValueSeal is another difference. Other ultra-thin sheet membranes require un-modified thin-sets. However, modified thin-sets are preferred by tile manufacturers, especially for installing porcelain and glass tile. ValueSeal is also translucent, so coverage of the thin-set can be visually confirmed. Assurance of coverage is especially important with seams. ValueSeal holds a crease to simplify the installation. Lastly, as the name implies, ValueSeal offers great value with very competitive prices.

FreeStyle Linear Drains provide the greatest assurance of a watertight installation. They are made from a single piece of plastic (ABS or PVC) so there are no seams. Connection to the waste system is made by solvent welding the waste pipe into a properly sized hole in the drain. A clamping collar provides a mechanical attachment of the waterproofing membrane to the drain.



Noble Company
Products Provide Important
Features Not Available From Competitors

Competitive drains are made from stainless steel so the connection to a PVC waste pipe requires the use of a coupler or adapter. Many linear drains are V-shaped and must be leveled with mortar. Furthermore, without clamping mechanisms for top-mounted membranes, there is no mechanical fastener to ensure a watertight connection to the waterproofing membrane.

Noble FreeStyle Linear Drains provide high-capacity drainage with a low-profile format, making them ideal for barrier-free installations (including ADA accessible showers). Use FreeStyle for new construction or renovations in hospitality, health care, commercial, and residential applications. Waterproof with ValueSeal for a durable and watertight system. FreeStyle Linear Drains and ValueSeal are listed by both national plumbing codes (UPC and IPC) and available at authorized Noble distributors throughout the USA. Visit www.noblecompany.com or call 800-878-5788 for more information about these and other Noble Company products.



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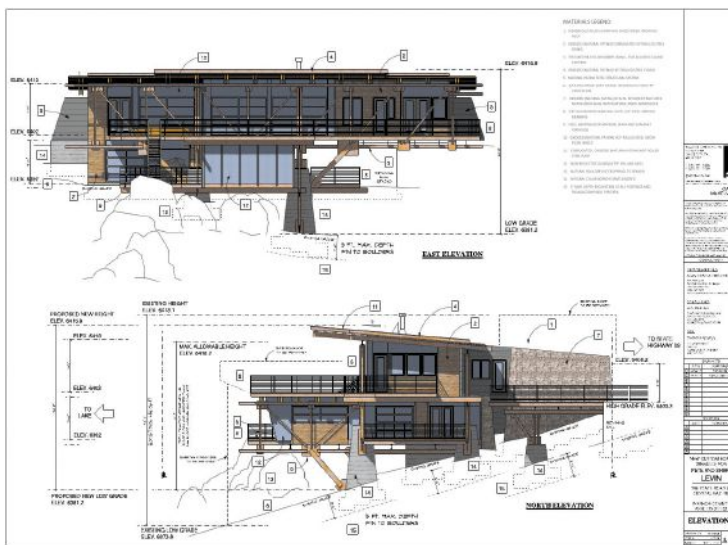
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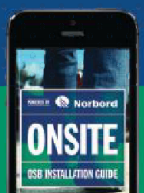
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[DESIGN]

By Susan Bady, Senior Editor

Contemporary architecture can take many forms: Northwest contemporary, Spanish modern, mid-century modern, desert contemporary, and Prairie. In recent years, especially, it's been constantly redefined according to the tastes and preferences of homebuyers.

"When the average person thinks about contemporary architecture, they think of nontraditional, nonconventional style," says Klif Andrews, division president of Pardee Homes, in Las Vegas. "It treats rooflines differently, whether it's a parapet that hides a roofline or a pronounced angled roof. And it has to have a lot of windows that form a strong connection between the inside and outside of the home."

Contemporary design tends to be more prevalent (and daring) on the West Coast, especially in California. "[Californians] have always marched to a different drummer," says Jerry Gloss, senior partner with KGA Studio Architecture, in Louisville, Colo. "They get to do things that we don't necessarily get to do here in Denver."

But there are devotees of modern design in other parts of the U.S. North Carolina Modernist Houses, a nonprofit organization, documents, preserves, and promotes residential modern architecture. Nashville, Tenn., and Austin, Texas, are also progressive markets where modern and contemporary design flourish, says Ed Binkley, design/business director at BSB Design, in Safety Harbor, Fla.

BSB designs houses in Florida for such builders as Mattamy Homes, Century Homes, and Taylor Morrison. "Some have shed roofs and a little bit of a mid-century modern look," Binkley says. "We call it modern, but in a sense it really goes back to contemporary or transitional."

While some builders are forging ahead with contemporary designs, others are proceeding with caution. Binkley has created designs for builder clients that, he says, "they may or may not introduce, but they want to have them in the portfolio in the event that some neighborhoods are better suited to contemporary."

Meritage Homes successfully took the contemporary plunge at Solavera in Austin, Texas. Still, says Binkley, it's the smaller boutique builders in urban-infill and urban-fringe locations that tend to take the lead.

THE



NEW MODERN

CONTEMPORARY DESIGN HAS PERMEATED THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF HOMEBUYERS AND CHANGED THE ELEVATION LINEUP FOR MANY BUILDERS



Aamodt Plumb Architects designed this contemporary home in central Texas. "It has a less rigid form to it," says Mette Aamodt. "It still has very clean lines, which is generally true of modern architecture, a great connection between the indoors and outdoors, and an open floor plan."

[DESIGN]

Homes at New Rainier Vista are 5-Star Built Green certified, with solar-ready rooftops; advanced framing; high-impact insulation; triple-glazed windows; tankless, on-demand hot water; radiant heating systems or ductless mini splits; and heat recovery ventilation (HRV) systems to help prepare them for net-zero-energy usage in the future.

BELOVED BY MILLENNIALS AND BOOMERS ALIKE

Millennials are typically drawn to contemporary houses because they want something different, Gloss says. “It’s [their way] of saying, ‘This is not what my mom and dad bought; this is not what they’re living in.’ The funny thing is, we’re getting a lot of interest from Boomers, too, for the same reason.”

Modern may be the purest form of contemporary, “but you don’t have to go all the way to modern architecture in order to be contemporary,” Andrews says. “You can do more moderate things that are warmer and have a more traditional feel, such as mid-century modern.”

The popularity of mid-century modern has a lot to do with nostalgic TV shows like *Mad Men*, points out Tim Lin, in-house architect for Estes Builders, in Sequim, Wash. “Home renovation shows also tout mid-century modern,” he says. “The style has really good bones and a lot of features [buyers want] nowadays,

such as open floor plans and simple, functional design.”

Binkley notes that of all the variations on contemporary, mid-century modern may be the least expensive to execute “because it does not cry out for a lot of details and brackets and gingerbread,” he says. “It’s a pretty clean, true style. I think it’s kind of whimsical, too.” It’s also the hardest, he adds, because there’s no molding to hide behind.

While the Bauhaus (1919–1933) in Germany was extremely influential, modern architecture didn’t become truly livable until mid-century modern came along, says Seattle architect Julian Weber: “The materials and the indoor/outdoor connection really respond to the way people want to live.” In the last 15 years, one of the biggest tweaks to contemporary design has been spatial fluidity, Lin says: “Back when most houses were larger, rooms had specific purposes—formal dining room, office, library, etc. With the popularity of the small-house movement and Sarah Susanka’s *Not So Big House*, we rarely see formal dining rooms and such anymore. Instead, rooms have become multifunctional, where the dining room is part of the

PHOTOS: TUCKER ENGLISH

great room, which also serves as the study.”

Contemporary design is eclectic and employs a variety of building materials, says Cambridge, Mass., architect Mette Aamodt. For instance, contemporary homes in the Northeast feature wood framing, while masonry is the dominant material in Texas and the Southwest—“adobe structures, concrete Traditional or vernacular references evoke the past,” Aamodt says, “but the home is still modern or contemporary.”

TEMPTING SEATTLE TECHIES

At New Rainier Vista in Seattle’s Columbia City neighborhood, modern detached homes fit seamlessly into what developer Anthony Maschmedt calls “a hodgepodge of architectural styles.”

Columbia City is one of eight historical districts in Seattle, but Maschmedt, founder and principal of Dwell Development, wasn’t going for a historic look. He wanted the homes to “clearly be of the place,” architect Julian Weber says.

“Columbia City is a very diverse, transit-oriented neighborhood, and Seattle is tech-savvy. Therefore, designing contemporary homes was the most logical choice.”

The Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) encouraged Maschmedt and Weber to produce a variety of elevations. “We explored a lot of different roof shapes,” Weber says. “The first unit has a really long overhanging flat roof that [drops] down into a wall that in turn folds out over the entry to become the porch element. Directly adjacent to that is a steeply pitched metal roof. There are also some true parapet roof-deck units.”

New Rainier Vista started as a 15-unit project on a site owned by the SHA. “In late 2008/early 2009, we were one of the only builders in Seattle [able to obtain] financing,” Maschmedt says. “We did New Rainier Vista in sections of four homes each. I wouldn’t close on the next four until I had plans, permits, and financing in place.”

Over the next few years, the project expanded into 42 homes, all of which were presold during construction. “We had a waiting list even during the downturn,” he marvels. Prices started



For cost effectiveness, the New Rainier Vista homes are primarily clad with fiber-cement panels. The flashing is exposed and used as a design element, with custom corner details in the metal. The square-lap cedar siding, which has a contemporary look, was installed like traditional lap siding.

[DESIGN]

Homebuyers in Austin, Texas, find Solavera's contemporary designs refreshing. BSB Design used a variety of rooflines, window shapes and sizes, materials, and blocks of color. Meritage Homes is offering four plans ranging from 1,900 to 2,866 square feet and priced from \$650,000 to \$780,000.



at \$390,000 to \$425,000 for the first four units. By the time the last four were sold, prices had climbed to the mid- to upper \$700,000s. Each floor plan is unique.

Weber says the primary focus was to promote a communal feeling, with space between the homes “where people would be comfortable engaging each other. That’s a very timeless idea, along with porches and stoops that relate to the street.”

Maschmedt believes modern architecture can be successful anywhere if it’s done right. “Our design concept is well received in most of our markets because it’s different and it’s fresh. Millennials make that connection between modern and sustainable.”

WARM CONTEMPORARY IN LAS VEGAS

Andrews says that Pardee Homes is expanding the contemporary offerings at its Las Vegas communities. Buyers can choose

from such architectural styles as Desert Contemporary, Mid-Century Modern, Desert Prairie, and Contemporary Spanish. The designs feature large amounts of glass, angled forms, splashes of bright color, and nontraditional finishes such as concrete and flat wood. Stacking glass doors, gliders, and spacious decks provide a balance of indoor-outdoor living, with large openings offering visual and spatial connection to outside.

“[And] more rustic features are being incorporated,” Andrews says. “For example, we use a lot of chiseled stone, which has a pronounced texture and [pairs well] with [flatter] surfaces.” The overall effect, he says, is a warmth that contemporary homes in the 1980s lacked, with their “cold, concrete kind of look.”

The modern-furniture craze hasn’t been lost on Pardee. Model homes have contemporary countertops, flooring, back-splashes, and plumbing fixtures, as well as furnishings that buyers can snap up at retailers such as Ikea and Restoration Hardware. “It’s such a powerful trend right now,” Andrews says.

PHOTO: RACHEL KAY/APPLEBOX IMAGING

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At Meridian in Las Vegas, the Desert Contemporary elevation is the most modern-looking with its flat roof. The boxy exterior is broken up with stucco, stone, and brick; bands of windows; and a second-floor deck. The price starts at \$663,000 for 3,946 square feet.

NEW BUILDER CHALLENGES NATIONALS WITH FRESH PRODUCT

"Contemporary design" doesn't have a specific meaning for Chris Presley. But the homes she's building at the Leyden Rock master planned community in Denver—which include a Modern Prairie elevation—are selling like hotcakes. Presley started Epic Homes, in Littleton, Colo., about 15 months ago and opened models at Leyden Rock in April 2016. At press time, 13 of 52 detached homes were sold, priced from \$476,900 to \$539,900 for 2,361 to 3,498 square feet.

"Leyden Rock is the second most active master planned community in Denver, after Stapleton," she says. "A lot of big national builders are there. Since we opened our models, we've been No. 2 in sales."

Presley collaborated with KGA on the Leyden Rock houses. "From an elevation standpoint, KGA did a phenomenal job," she says. "But from an interior design/floor plan perspective, a lot of what's resonating with our buyers is the thoughtful use of space."

Epic Homes utilizes more windows than competing builders. "It costs extra but makes a difference," Presley says, "and in this price point, people notice it."

Architectural color consultant Rick Overby also helped Epic up its game. "Rick understands that the quality of light in Colorado is more intense," says KGA's Jerry Gloss. "If you go too light [with the colors] it almost blinds you." The color blocking and the textures of the materials are orchestrated to give the Summit "a little more zip from the curb," Gloss says. **PB**

PHOTO: PARDEE HOMES

GETTING THE COMMUNITY ONBOARD

An educational session at PCBC 2016 addressed the growing interest in contemporary elevations and how to successfully introduce them in an established community. Marc Rouso, president of JayMarc Homes, on Mercer Island, Wash., discussed his experience developing new homes on the island. "You have to work more closely with the community," Rouso said. "One thing we learned is that [residents] wanted more trees and a variety of elevations."

Garrett Hinds, director of architecture for Trumark Homes, in Danville, Calif., said that having a presence on social media is critical to the acceptance of contemporary design because it's the best way to reach Millennials. For design inspiration, Hinds recommended looking to hotels, restaurants, and other public gathering spaces. Dahlin Group of Pleasanton, Calif., took design cues from downtown buildings to create new homes for JayMarc.

"The stair rails have more steel than wood," Rouso said. "Juliet balconies, metal awnings, and glass are also prominent features." While an abundance of glass is desirable, he recommended using traditional window sizes "or you'll break the bank." For example, standard-size windows can be used to create corner views that give the home a contemporary aesthetic. JayMarc sourced "great vinyl windows with silver frames" for the project.

The builder plans to include a bigger selection of contemporary elevations in future projects, Rouso added. "They cost 20 percent more to build, but we're making it up on sales."

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INNOVATE



By Scott Sedam, Contributing Editor



In June I participated in the IBACOS annual Alliance Innovation Summit, held this year in downtown Chicago. The lineup of speakers was excellent and, as you might expect, those attracted to a conference with “innovation” in the title tend to be

seekers, thinkers, and learners—industry leaders trying to escape the box in some manner to find an edge. The group was thoroughly engaged and although I had a speaking role, I reveled in the opportunity to get off the podium for 95 percent of the time and simply be another one of the participants. Those of us who write, speak, and present frequently in the industry don’t do enough of that—just listening—and some, I suspect, never do. Perhaps because we’re supposed to be the experts, or at least we sell ourselves as such, we are afraid to be seen as just another student trying to learn, understand, and solve problems like everyone else.

There were some compelling questions raised both during and after presentations that provoked challenges and even disagreement—all perfectly in the spirit of the conference. It’s rare that anything on the leading edge of innovation is fully developed, totally fleshed-out, with hard data to support the new technique, strategy, or tactics. Those who demand to see the data prior to implementation will never take on the role of innovator because there will never be enough data to support a genuinely new direction. How could there be? Don’t toss that off lightly as merely a passing observation on the state of innovation because it is indeed a massive obstacle to process and product improvement, and most of us succumb to it without ever realizing it. Examples abound.

Not long ago I worked with a senior manager whose response to virtually every single improvement idea proposed by suppliers, trades, or his own people was, “But that’s not the way we do it here.” Oh really? Totally surprised to hear that. It got so bad that I wanted get him one of those Staples red buttons I keep on my desk that, when smacked, says, “Gee, that was easy!” but

OR GET BACK TO BASICS?

WHAT THE HOME BUILDING INDUSTRY REALLY NEEDS NOW

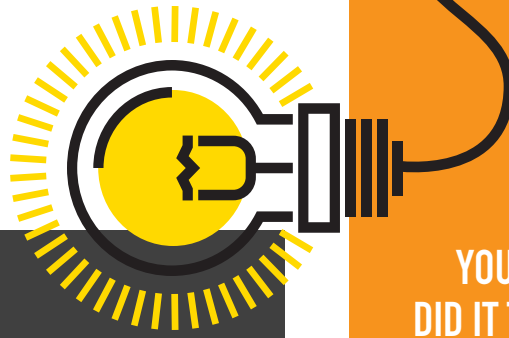
change it to “Gee, that’s not how we do it here!” so I could save him the trouble. I tried every way imaginable to help him, to the point of looking him right in the eye and stating, “The fact that your firm and every other builder in town does not do it the new way represents the very opportunity you seek.” If everyone already did it that way, how could there be an opportunity? By definition, anything new, different, or innovative represents something you do not do now. “We don’t do it that way” should have been music to his ears, yet he was totally deaf to it.

INNOVATION—OR BASICS?

A week after the conference, while working on a presentation for PCBC (aka, the West Coast builders show) about solving the trade shortage, during a long flight from Detroit to San Francisco, an interesting thought occurred to me. My talk on “The Chaos That Destroys Quality” at the IBACOS Innovation Summit was perhaps the only one out of 20 or so presentations at the event that wasn’t really about “innovation” per se. To give you an idea, the other major presentations that day focused on

the “New Age of BIM,” “Smart Cities,” and “Housing Reinvented.” Each of those described genuinely disruptive technologies that, to adopt, would require major change in both thinking and operating practices. My presentation, on the other hand, was really “back to basics,” describing 20 specific fail points in the home building process, starting with business strategy and land/lot selection all the way through schedule, turnover, and homeowner management. (See list on page 84.) Just a few of these fail points, working together, create chaos that trashes quality, customer satisfaction, and profit.

Then I looked over the summary list of points I was making for individual builders trying to beat the trade shortage (as opposed to the industry trying to solve the broader problem). There was nothing really innovative about the list at all, just back-to-basics things that every builder can and should do. The fact that most builders fail on these points does not make them innovative. Would teaching a pilot how to land a plane undamaged constitute innovation? Would teaching a chef how to avoid food contamination be innovative? Sure, you might devise an innovative technique but still, most of it is merely basics.



BACK TO BASICS: 20 SOURCES OF COMPLEXITY

1. "Moth to the flame" business strategy
2. Changes in land use/plot plan
3. Changes in product, models, specifications
4. Creeping elegance
5. Inadequacies in standard plans, options, colors, selections
6. Incomplete plans without working drawings, mechanicals, or sufficient detail
7. Insufficient training for salespeople and design-center staff
8. Incomplete house-bid packages for suppliers and trades
9. Incomplete base contracts with detailed scopes of work
10. Options selections and colors not 100 percent priced and agreed to up front
11. Custom and/or structural options accepted without capacity in systems or processes
12. Incomplete house-start packages for suppliers, trades, and field supervisors
13. No respect for cut-off dates for options and selections
14. Percentage of house cost done under VPO too high
15. Poor relationships with municipalities that delay permits, inspections, approvals
16. A loose schedule with continual changes, no predictability
17. High turnover in suppliers and trades
18. High turnover and inadequate training in both office and field staff
19. Indecisive senior management
20. Lack of comprehensive, proactive homeowner management: Day 1 through warranty

THE FACT THAT YOUR FIRM
AND EVERY OTHER BUILDER
IN TOWN DOES NOT DO IT
THE NEW WAY REPRESENTS
THE VERY OPPORTUNITY
YOU SEEK. IF EVERYONE ALREADY
DID IT THAT WAY, HOW COULD THERE
BE AN OPPORTUNITY?

This all came as a surprise to me because I have always thought of myself as more of a bleeding-edge kind of thinker without a lot of respect for traditional ways of doing things. I am attracted to almost anything new and edgy. Yet Lean process implementation, which constitutes the vast majority of my firm's work that keeps five of us very busy, is at its most basic level about very elementary stuff. As my grandmother at age 103 once remarked, as I described again what I do for a living, "So basically, all this stuff you do is just a fancy way to get these builders and their suppliers and trades to talk to one another? And they pay you to do that?" Well yes, Granny, that's pretty much it. Doesn't sound too innovative, does it?

Take a look at the 20-point list again. It's all about simply trying to get builders to do the right things, invest in high-return processes, and stop repeating the same mistakes over and over. Now juxtapose that with the innovative methodologies on display at the IBACOS summit. Is it possible that through innovation we could completely reinvent the process of home building and structurally avoid so many of the 20 pitfalls listed here?

Consider the current rage over self-driving, autonomous vehicles as a parallel. Being based in Detroit, I hear a great deal about this. When several noted advocates of these new technologies get together, what they describe is nothing less than fantastic. Eliminate driver control and just tell the car where you want to go, "Park within 100 yards of the Cupcake, Yoga, & Kick Boxing Emporium," and off you go in complete safety. The recent revelations about Tesla accidents notwithstanding, excluding the driver eliminates the variation and thus removes most of the possibility for error that produces accidents. In time, there would be no need for stop signs or stop lights as the system would know on its own whether a stop or yield was needed. Roads and freeways will be able to carry far more vehicles with almost no delays. Now add to that taking the wheel out of the hands of the 14.68 percent (my estimate) of all drivers who are certifiable menaces and, well, I am cautiously looking forward to the day—I think.

Just recently, there was a lot of news about "3-D printing houses" and this, too, came up at the summit. Exciting stuff,



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although I still can't figure out how they'll differentiate between all the materials that go in a simple wall, including structural members plus exterior sheathing, plus an interior surface all sandwiched around ducts and wires and tubing, surrounded by an insulating material. That's about 10 very different and specific types of materials that will have to be simultaneously printed. The programing and setup sounds more difficult than building using traditional methods, but I probably suffer from limited vision here. In September I will present at the Building Systems Housing Summit, in Asheville, N.C., and I wonder if structural printing will be a feature there yet.

STILL WAITING, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS ...

I launched my post-collegiate career in manufacturing with U.S. Steel and Motorola, and later spent an entire year touring and evaluating more than 30 manufactured and modular housing companies for a national builder. I am a sincere advocate of using components wherever possible to reduce cycle time, labor input, and to control quality. Having said that, I have seen far more of these efforts fail than succeed in my day.

I vividly recall what Bill Pulte said in a workshop 27 years ago when he held up his fingers about half an inch apart and declared, "True application of manufacturing techniques in home building is a revolution about this far from happening since the end of World War II!" As of 2016, that's a total of more than 70 years, and that's still a good description of where we are as an industry. Bill was a huge fan of technology and continually pursued advanced techniques in home building, but he never sacrificed getting a product or process detail right in his quest for innovation. Are we on the cusp of a genuine upheaval in our approach to building homes? I suspect that those under 50 will help manage it, those under 40 will participate in the change directly, and the rest of us will watch it on TV while eating soft food in some institution, reminiscing about the good old days.

Let's go back to the senior manager who was so hung up on his current methods and cite an example I mentioned in my *Professional Builder* column last month: ceiling trays. Between our team and a couple of trades, three alternatives were posed to replace the double-layered 2x12 trays. Option 1: Create them from 2x4 material and OSB, for about half the cost. Option 2: Omit the OSB, letting the drywall itself provide extra stiffening; again cutting the cost. Option 3: Build the trays right into the trusses. We didn't get to fully price that last option because our senior guy killed all three alternatives as "not how we do it here." Yet we know it would save a day in the schedule, a lot of labor, and would reduce site waste, so that's a good start.

In my mind, Options 1 and 2 are no more than good, smart home building technique—that is, basics. Option 3 is tougher to define. In my home state of Michigan, almost everyone does build trays into trusses, so that would qualify as basics. But as

IT'S RARE THAT ANYTHING ON THE LEADING EDGE OF INNOVATION IS FULLY DEVELOPED, TOTALLY FLESHED-OUT, WITH HARD DATA TO SUPPORT THE NEW APPROACH.



we travel around the country, we rarely see this method used, and in some markets, they've never seen it at all. So in those locations, do we call this method innovation?

THE INDICTMENT

The night after that flight to San Francisco, I ran into Betsy Scott who runs the Housing Innovation Alliance and I described what I'd been mulling over. She immediately countered and suggested that no, since most builders don't follow these proven steps for solving either complexity or the trade shortage, my process outlines do indeed qualify as "innovative" and thus a perfect fit for a conference on innovation. But let's take the issue of solving the trade shortage for a moment, which includes requirements such as involving suppliers and trades early in plan and specification development, providing a complete and accurate bid package, a "gospel-quality" start package, and a "sacred schedule," just for starters. This is innovation? If so, that's one damning indictment of the building industry.

It would be perfectly consultant-ish to conclude by saying, "Yes! We need both innovation and basics to compete at the top level," and it's not hard to support that. But the cold, hard truth of the matter is, given the current state of operating practices in home building, I'd spend the majority of my time and money doing whatever it takes to get the basics absolutely nailed. That presumes, of course, that we know what the basics are. Maybe it's time we all went back to school for some remedial training on that. **PB**

Scott Sedam is president of TrueNorth Development, a consulting and training firm that works with builders to improve product, process, and profits. You can reach Scott at scott@truen.com or 248.446.1275.



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[FIRST LOOK]

By Amy Albert, Editor-in-Chief

In the debate about how best to deliver new homes to buyers who are just starting out or just moving up, the question of attainability tends to get lost. It's an issue that expands beyond one generation to what may be one of the most pressing questions in our industry. In its most recent "The State of the Nation's Housing" report, released in June, The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University confirmed that while income growth and demand for new homes are on the rise, so are income inequality and rent burden. The report maintains that efforts to provide affordable housing aren't coming close to meeting the need, with far-reaching and dire long-term consequences. As a result, providing buildable, profitable, and affordable new homes is seen by many builders as beyond their grasp at best and at worst, too labor-intensive to make sense.

However, new prototypes are challenging that idea, merging time-honored configurations with up-to-date materials and

contemporary design. Here's a sneak peek at what may be a sound and sensible response to the charge that we, as an industry, can do better to help new buyers earning middle-class incomes enter the market—and in so doing, design for what architect and planner Daniel Parolek has called the "Missing Middle": clustered, single-family homes that are less car-centric.

Making the Numbers Work

Margins on product targeted to the new buyer tend to depend on a home's being between 1,600 and 2,100 square feet, built at five or 10 to the acre, says Nick Lehnert, director of the R & D Lab at KTG Architecture + Planning, which came up with the new designs. "They all sit in that zone together and everyone's trying to compete," he observes, describing loading a house up with rooms, options, and finishes in an effort to "put enough meat in the sausage to justify the land prices." The

Design Within Reach

Building homes that are affordable, appealing, builder-friendly, and profitable is a tall order—or is it? New prototypes offer answers



Attainable homes are single-family detached houses that aim to be profitable for builders and within reach of buyers currently being shut out of the housing market.

problem, of course, is that in many regions, ever-increasing square footage and prices have resulted in homes that are no longer affordable to buyers with modest incomes.

The tiny house movement, with its promise of a lightened financial burden and less material encumbrance, has captured the country's imagination. The 100-to-300-square-foot homes we see in shelter magazines and on design blogs are fun, but their diminutive size makes them unrealistic for many potential homebuyers. The question remains: How to create new homes that are both profitable for builders and within reach for those with modest incomes?

Doable Density, Sensible Size

For a long time, the answer lay in the attached townhome, with its lower costs for buyers and better margins for builders. Another solution lies in density. After considerable market

research, the development team at KTGy asked: Instead of building 1,600-to-2,100-square-foot homes at five or 10 to the acre, why not build sized-down, single-family detached homes at 10 or more to the acre, ranging from 1,000 to 1,600 square feet and which hold great potential appeal for first-time buyers—an underserved market, to say the least. The homes in turn help create a niche and could help keep builders from losing market share to the resale market.

Building at density isn't a new idea. One of the most popular examples, the bungalow court, is thought to have originated in Pasadena, Calif., just after the turn of the 20th century. Soon after, neighborhoods built during the 1920s and 1930s throughout the country followed suit, fitting well within the range of eight to 10 units per acre. Among the various configurations were green courts, auto courts, and alley-loaded garages.



In fact, modestly sized homes are an American tradition. Through its oft-cited Modern Homes program, Sears Roebuck catalog-marketed house kits during the first half of the 20th century. More than 400 styles were offered, from rustic vacation cottages, like Model No. 147, to grand homes, such as The Magnolia. “There’s still a ton of those houses out there with one-car garages and appealing scale,” Lehnert says. “It’s not a stretch to think that you can take something like that, dust it off, put new contemporary thinking to it, and have it apply to today’s buyers.” The inspiration you can draw from Sears catalog homes is “pretty darn cool,” Lehnert adds.

What About Parking?

Research by the University of Michigan shows a 15 percent drop over the last three decades in the percentage of young Americans opting to get a driver’s license. Currently, medium-size lots of 4,000 square feet with a two-car garage and a two-car driveway translate to 800 square feet dedicated to the car, or 20 percent of the lot size before setbacks, and it’s not livable space. “We’re putting all this value on the garage and parking in front, but it turns out not to be so important,” Lehnert says.

The design team has come up with a solution of two cars per unit that involves on-site parking as well as off-site garage parking. An important design task is making the experience

of walking from carpark to home a pleasant one, something that bungalow communities had figured out. A modern iteration can be found in projects such as Black Apple, a cottage community in Bentonville, Ark., by the design firm GreenSpur, whose design was inspired by architect Ross Chapin’s pocket communities. GreenSpur owner Mark Turner says, “Making the owners migrate through the property on a daily basis encourages conversation, casual rubbing of elbows, evening beers, barbecue—relationship that knits the community together. Many of the developments we’ve seen in the U.S. in the past 50 years are geared more to pulling into a garage and isolating this opportunity of neighborhood.”

Builder-Friendly, Higher Ceilings

In the interests of builder efficiency, the floors of the attainable home stack, with plans that are “underbuilt,” Lehnert says. Concerns during development included achieving volume, so the home doesn’t feel like stacked boxes and the spaces feel good to buyers. In one plan, the kitchen nook has been revived; in another, an angled master bedroom with a barn door creates an outdoor room; yet another features a deck over the garage; while a different layout offers a double-height kitchen, dining, and great room, providing the volume that disappeared from many production homes during the downturn.

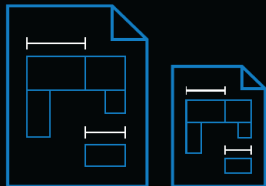
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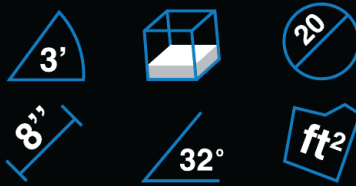
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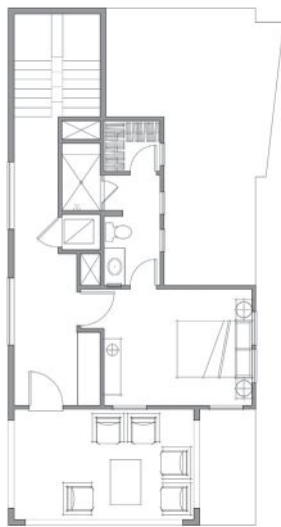
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[FIRST LOOK]

PLAN 2



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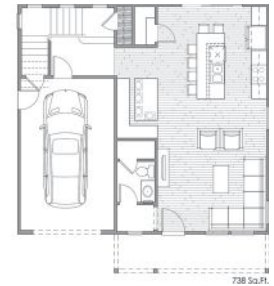
PLAN 1



PLAN 5



792 Sq. Ft.



738 Sq. Ft.

Based on market research on young buyers, attainable homes prioritize appealing spaces instead of upping room count. At 1,235 square feet, Plan 2 (upper left) has a deck over the garage, delivering a private outdoor area. Plan 1 (lower left) measures 1,172 square feet, with a double-height ceiling over the kitchen, dining room, and great room. Plan 5 (lower right) measures 1,530 square feet; the kitchen includes an old-fashioned breakfast nook.

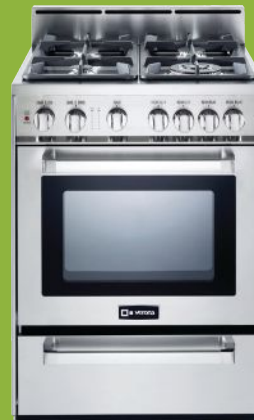
Responding to Pushback

Despite this type of configuration being an old idea reexamined, cities are up in arms about folding design for density into today's regulations and standards, says Geoff Graney, director of planning for KTG Architecture + Planning.

Managing the resulting pushback from planning departments and neighbors is an educational process that involves forging a relationship with the city you want to build in. "Take them to places where the concept is working, and get them to buy into it," Graney advises. "Making sure they know that you'll do your best to build to current codes, like two parking spaces per unit, and minimum setbacks, will help them to feel comfortable."

Dan Gainsboro, founder and principal of Now Communities, in Concord, Mass., advises talking "early and often" to local jurisdictions, "and, maybe more importantly, to abutters." Gainsboro recommends presenting density in terms of the upsides for the community, be it more green space or meeting

Stepping Up and Scaling Down



In compact homes, every inch counts. Increasingly, manufacturers are on the trend, bringing out appliances and fittings that are scaled down, great looking, and hard-working. Fridges, wall ovens, and ranges that measure 24 inches in width, an 18-inch dishwasher, a 4-by-4-foot soaking tub, a 23-by-18-inch freestanding sink vanity, and an elongated toilet use small scale to big advantage. Manufacturers that are stepping up include Bosch, Kohler, Fagor, Verona, DXV, BlueStar, and Summit.

requirements for energy efficiency or inclusionary housing.

Including imagery, Gainsboro says, is also essential to a presentation. "Most folks," he says, "have a hard time visualizing density." To get buy-in for Riverwalk, an award-winning community in Concord, Now Communities had Chapin come to present similar and successful projects to town officials and to adjoining neighbors, including historical data on increased property values. "Listen to concerns, demonstrate that you have heard their concerns, and be ready to respond to concerns," Gainsboro says.

Tiny homes capture hearts and minds for a reason. "Think about the Mini-Cooper, the Smart Car, and the Fiat," Lehnert says. "If that's happening in the auto world, I guarantee you that something between a tiny home and a regular home will have to happen in our world." As Graney puts it, "When we design something like this, it's addressing demands that we're seeing out there in the marketplace—smaller units and less yard is not just some wacky idea." **PB**

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CUSTOMER



By Charlie Scott, Contributing Editor

The savviest home builders are the most customer-centric home builders, and the savviest of all have a strong Voice of the Customer (VOC) program in place. That's because when it comes to finding out what the customer wants, it pays to ask. Trying to save money by guessing is often an expensive mistake.

The financial benefits of customer satisfaction were well documented in a 2009 study of 200 home building communities by Kenneth Merchant of the University of Southern California and Clara Chen of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It does a great paint-by-number picture of customer satisfaction benefits in general, but my colleagues and I wanted more. So, we assembled a panel of 18 customer-centric home builders to give a real-life view of how tracking and using Voice of the Customer feedback has enhanced the customer experience, changed the company culture, and improved financial performance measures in their organizations.

MEETING CUSTOMER NEEDS

The goal of receiving unfiltered customer experience information is to find what does and does not serve the customer's needs. Quality control in customer service requires a detailed awareness and analysis of how well the home builder is succeeding at each step in the complex home building process. For builders that haven't gone through this step-by-step before, it can be a wake-up call. Areas they thought were going well may have serious performance deficiencies, where other functions in the home building and buying process may be hidden gems.

"Most of the time, we know when we have fallen short of the customers' expectations, but we are sometimes surprised at the things that we didn't know," says Tom French, owner of French Brothers Homes, in Alamogordo, N.M. "Honest feedback from our customers helps us target the areas that we most need to improve on," he says. "Our builders have come to realize that no one knows how they're doing as well as their customers. It's just smart business to ask them."

David Bailey, founder of Destination Homes, in Salt Lake City, agrees. "You can't know how you're doing as a builder by gut

FEEDBACK IS ESSENTIAL TO YOUR BOTTOM LINE

SEASONED BUILDERS SHARE WHAT HOMEBUYERS HAVE TAUGHT THEM ABOUT DELIVERING THE BEST POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE

feel,” he says. “The Voice of the Customer helps us know where to focus our efforts to improve the home building process.”

The truth hurts, but it’s essential. While everyone enjoys the feel-good messages that often come through in more casual customer-service reviews, “smile sheets” don’t really make a difference when it comes to improving your approach to business. A customer who takes the time to complain is doing you a favor by providing insight into a problem that you may otherwise never discover on your own. That understanding can give you an edge over competitors that don’t bother to ask their customers anything meaningful. “Remember ‘Mirror, mirror on the wall ...’ in Snow White?” asks David Grounds, president and CEO of Dorn Homes, in Prescott, Ariz. “The Voice of the Customer is that mirror, always telling the truth—even if it hurts.”

But smart builders realize that gathering this information is just the first step. To become truly customer-centric, you must use that feedback to make the right adjustments to the way you do business. Joliene Weiss, executive vice president at Vantage Homes, in Colorado Springs, Colo., understands that, and the company’s customers reap the benefits. “Listening to customer

concerns gives us an opportunity to improve our overall process and enhance their total buying experience,” she says, adding that the consistent benefit she sees is in defining processes and delivering a positive experience that comes with no surprises to the buyers. Mark Willis, CFO at Baessler Homes, in Greeley, Colo., agrees: “Without VOC feedback, we’d likely replicate poor behavior or miss touchpoints that are essential to building a good relationship with all of our customers.”

CHANCES FOR IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT

If you really listen to what your customers are saying and make an effort not to slap your preconceived notions on top of their words, you have a better chance of getting it right. Every improvement you make in how you do business leads to happier customers, but it has to start with listening. Once you honestly hear what your customers are telling you and are clear about the problems, fixing things can be pretty darn immediate.

Jeff Czar, president at Armadillo Homes, in San Antonio, explains, “It forces us to reflect on what we’re doing wrong. But,



INSTEAD OF LETTING PERFECTION BE THE ENEMY OF THE GOOD, STRIVE FOR A PROCESS OF CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT.

most importantly, it helps us figure out opportunities for improvement. Our business is much more than building homes; it's about creating the best homebuying experience." Czar emphasizes that the home his customers move into is the end result, but that he and his staff are realizing that consistent good results are about the pathway to getting there.

"It tells us where the customer experience fails," says Saun Sullivan, co-owner and CEO of DSLD Homes, in Denham Springs, La. "You can't deliver a good experience without finding out what customers care about." An example is conducting a post-closing follow-up on open punch-list items. One common mistake that home builders make originates from their not understanding the importance of providing an immediate response to open punch-list items. Even if a problem is eventually fixed, a week-long wait time can lead to dissatisfied customers. VOC feedback helps to identify project superintendents who do and do not have a consistent sense of fix-it urgency after the homeowner takes occupancy.

Another benefit of a detailed feedback system is the ability to see the items that, though they are important to customers, your staff may not be paying attention to. If you don't know that something is important, you probably aren't tracking it and making sure your people are accountable for it. Many home builders, for example, focus on getting the job done, with less emphasis on timely and complete customer communication. James V. Clarke, president of Robertson Homes, in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., explains: "I always encourage others to use Voice of the Customer feedback because it is actionable data on parts of the company you can't see," such as returning phone calls, following up on email, and circling back to ensure that a given issue has been resolved to the homeowner's satisfaction.

MEETING EXPECTATIONS—AND MORE

While home builders recognize that delivering a clean and complete home is Task No. 1, they know that the experience plays a key role, too. Defining, executing, measuring, and continually improving the customer experience leads to higher customer satisfaction and future referral sales.

Grounds, of Dorn Homes, understands this. "The promise when a customer chooses us is that we will build a great home and delight them," he says. "If we don't delight them, we need to know—immediately. The Voice of the Customer delivers this

feedback." Identifying and removing unsatisfactory events (such as dirty home delivery) and staff behaviors (such as slowness in returning calls) from the experience leaves satisfying processes and behaviors—a win-win for both customer and company.

BUILDING A CUSTOMER-FOCUSED TEAM

Our studies show that the customer's perception of teamwork is highly correlated to future referral sales. One fundamental requirement of team-building is defining each team member's role, measuring it, providing feedback on a job well done, and sharing potential improvement points. In addition to individual roles, each member must also be focused on working together as a team for the benefit of the customer. "One of the VOC program's greatest benefits is that the whole company sees what our customers have to say about the experience, the individuals, and the entire team," says Dusty Boren, owner of 4Corners Homes, in Edmond, Okla. "There's no pretense when you're reading it in our customers' own words." Boren makes sure to include celebrating successes as a part of team-building.

Using real-life customer experiences helps to teach your team that the customer's homebuying experience is not a relay of hand-offs but is more akin to a large rowboat in which everyone must be in sync. If you can identify which rowers (that is, process or people) are out of sync, then your chances of improving future customer experiences exponentially increase.

Rather than letting perfection be the enemy of the good, the aim should be a process of continual striving for better. "I find it hard to believe that any builder has a perfect process," says Steve Krasoff, president of Scott Felder Homes, in Austin, Texas. "There is always room for improvement. Consistent customer satisfaction eliminates the roller-coaster ride within the company operations."

J.D. Espana Jr., president of Piedmont Residential, in Atlanta, sums it up: "A Voice of the Customer program is just as important as a building schedule, purchasing and estimating software, and a good sales program. We do not allow ourselves or our company to excuse away the bad and only embrace the good. We allow the VOC to stand on its own, learning from our mistakes and celebrating our victories." **PB**

Charlie Scott is principal partner at Woodland, O'Brien & Scott. Write him at charlies@woodlandobrien.com.

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THE BEST HOMES FOR OLDER BUYERS NOW OFFER A PLACE TO BE FOR A LIFETIME—NOT JUST ONE LIFE STAGE

By Teresa Burney

a curious thing happened when builders started designing houses, communities, and advanced-care residences to court the gigantic wave of older homebuyers: They ended up creating homes that live better for young, old, and everybody in between. Open floor plans with wider doorways and flat or slightly sloped garage entrances into the house may be prescribed for older homebuyers, but they're just as handy for baby strollers, grocery toting, furniture moving, and getting through the door after you break a leg skiing.

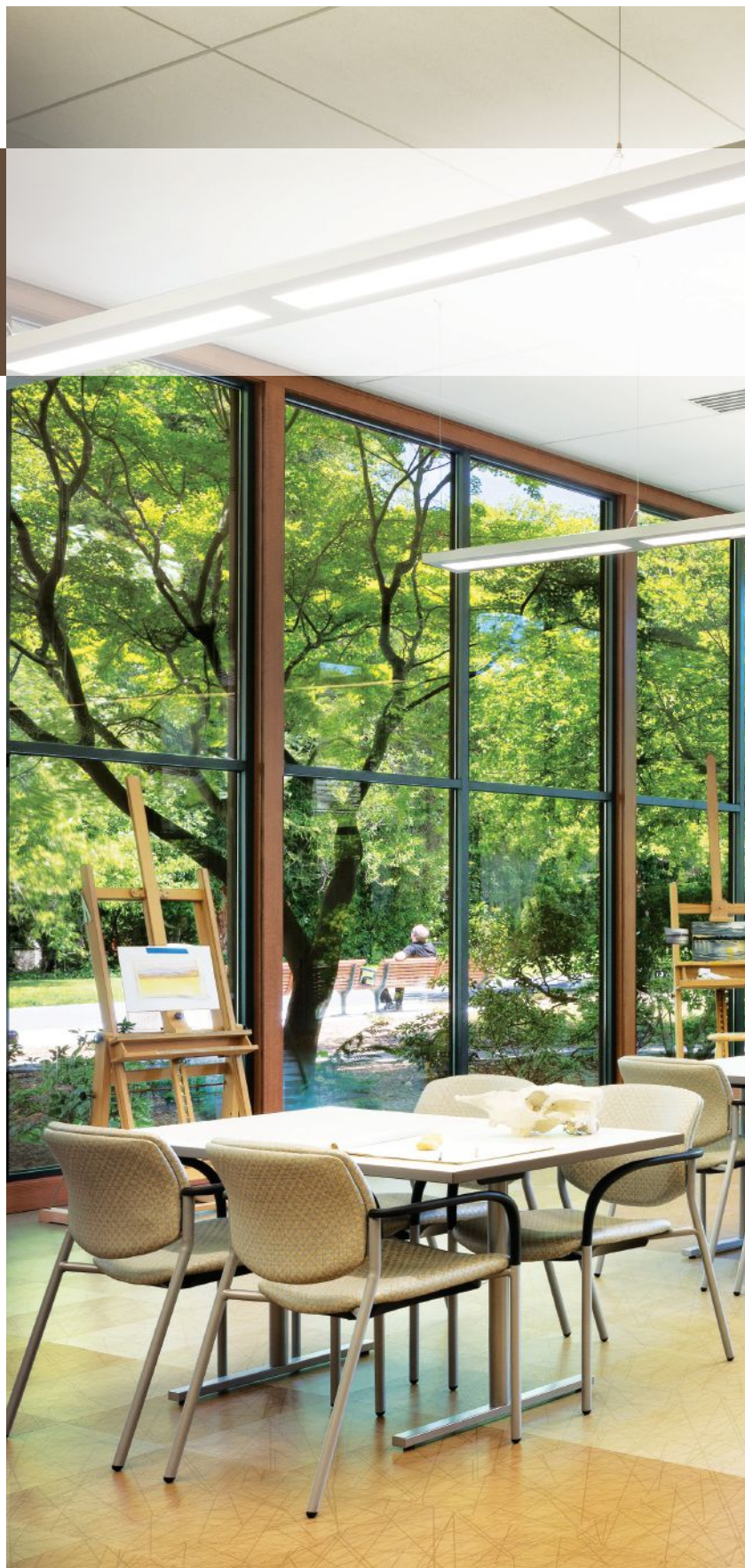
The same is true of bathrooms with roomy zero-edge showers equipped with grab bars as sleek as they are helpful—practical for less-than-sure-footed users, whether they're toddlers at 2, pregnant at 32, or wobbly at 92.

big strides

A decade ago builders fretted over building homes for older buyers. They wanted houses that would accommodate inhabitants as they aged, but worried that the sight of a grab bar by a toilet or in a shower would turn off Boomer buyers—famously in denial about being less than healthy and mobile—by reminding them of their mortality.

Architects and designers found some answers, making these accommodations vanish into high design. An example of how seamlessly accommodations for aging can be incorporated into new homes is the award-winning Victory at Verrado, an age-qualified development by DMB Associates outside of Phoenix within the Verrado master plan—arguably a poster child for how to build for an aging population. The homes won multiple awards in the NAHB's 2016 Best of 55+ Housing Awards. Rather than hide them, the developer promotes the Universal Design elements that are knit into the fabric of the homes, including showy showers, easy-reach cabinets and appliances, and variable kitchen counter heights for sitting or standing.

It took a long time for these changes to occur, especially in bathrooms, which are critical spaces for aging-in-place design. Mary Jo Peterson, a Connecticut-based aging-in-place



PHOTOS: CHRIS COOPER

golden aging



Spring Lake Village, in California wine country, offers soup-to-nuts accommodations, airy spaces, walking paths, and gourmet dining. NAHB's 55+ Awards, given by NAHB's 55+ Housing Industry Council, named it Best Repositioned Community. Developer/Builder: Cahill Contractors; Architect: Perkins Eastman



specialist and certified kitchen and bath designer, worked with architect Manny Gonzalez, of KTG Architecture + Planning, in Los Angeles, on Verrado's age-friendly bath designs. The big glass showers are luxurious and spa-like; large enough for anybody to easily use, with zero-threshold entries that further eliminate boundaries. "I've been trying to get builders to do that for the last 20 years," Peterson says. And she's now taking on design features that are barriers for some. For example, in a small powder room with a toilet, Peterson suggests that builders make sure there is an adjacent area, perhaps a linen closet, that can later allow for expansion of the space, if needed.

universal, or just good design?

Homes incorporating Universal Design principles have become much more common in 55-plus communities, says Dr. Margaret Wylde, CEO of ProMatura Group, a consumer research firm based in Oxford, Miss. Wylde eschews the Universal Design label, simply describing it as "damn good design." And she's finding sensible design for aging showing up more in her practice these days. "Developers today are building very livable homes," she says. "Many are single-story and low-maintenance in neighborhoods with a good sense of camaraderie."

integration vs. isolation

As Universal Design in age-qualified communities makes homes more livable for the long-term, the decision about where to put age-qualified communities within master plans is also undergoing a big change.

Rather than the old model of creating islands of gated, age-restricted housing out in the suburbs (the thinking being that older buyers want isolation from other age groups), developers are rethinking that model, integrating age-qualified communities within all-age developments, siting in or near town centers, and giving residents easy walking access to shops, restaurants, and grocery stores.

"We have found that older homebuyers don't necessarily want a completely segregated everything," says Wylde. As an

example, "You don't have to have two fitness centers [in a master plan], one for the older buyers and the other one for everybody else," she says. "One center with a good spectrum of equipment will do."

The amenity that age-qualified communities aren't willing to share is their pool. Kids' cannonballs, it seems, are a disruption to poolside peace for older residents. But that doesn't mean they don't want access to the development's all-age pool, which comes in handy when the grandchildren visit, Wylde says. CalAtlantic Homes also offers an integrated active-adult community called Gavilán that's woven into its Rancho Mission Viejo, Calif., neighborhoods.

trading the golf cart for hiking shoes

The ability to walk to shopping, leisure activities, and places to exercise is a top desire for many new-home buyers, but it takes on extra importance for 55-plus buyers who may want to drive less or need to give up driving altogether. Riviera Walk at Riverstone, by Active West Builders, is another winner of several 55-plus awards and offers single-family detached homes close to downtown Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, where the builder is based. Residents can stroll to movies, shops, and restaurants and have private access to North Idaho's Centennial Trail, which offers 24 miles of multiuse recreational land.

But walkable communities aren't limited to single-family developments. Often it's even easier to create them in urban areas where density has already provided sidewalks, mass transit, nearby shops, and entertainment—all that's needed for a car-free life. But some builders of 55-plus homes have created suburban venues that allow for easy access to shopping.

Azulón at Mesa Verde apartments, which won NAHB's Best of 55+ Housing Award for Market-Rate Rental Community, was built on a lot that was supposed to be the second phase of a shopping center. Instead, the market-rate apartment complex was built on the lot and a short paseo between the two was created, says Manny Gonzalez, its architect. "The No. 1 amenity demanded by the 55-plus market is proximity to a grocery store," Gonzalez says. "It's a killer as a sales point—the

Walking into Balfour at Riverfront Park, in Denver, feels more like stepping into a country club than an age-restricted community. Yet it serves a variety of residents' needs, from independent living to assisted living and Alzheimer's and memory care. It was Best of 55+ Continuing Care Retirement Community for 2016. Developer: Balfour Senior Living



ability to walk and get your groceries and know your butcher and produce people.” And a close population helps guarantee the shopping center’s success as well.

light and warmth

As Universal Design has begun to transform single-family homes targeted for older buyers, ideas borrowed from high-end

hospitality have begun to inform assisted and independent living developments, says Jerry McDevitt, principal and director of senior living at GGLO Design, in Seattle.

The newest, best communities are a universe away from the dreaded nursing homes etched into the memories of Baby Boomers who agonized and often regretted relegating their loved ones to those places. “Many people live within elegant glass walls with good vistas now,” McDevitt says. One such



Sagewood at Daybreak, NAHB's Best of 55+ Housing Awards 2016 Community of the Year, in South Jordan, Utah, offers the appeal of a luxury hotel. Developer: Kisco Senior Living; Architects: GGLO Design and Beecher Walker Architects

example is Sagewood at Daybreak, in South Jordan, Utah, just outside of Salt Lake City, designed by GGLO Design. It won both the Best of 55+ Independent Living Community award and the 55+ 2016 Community of the Year. Flooded with natural light, Sagewood includes independent living, assisted living, and memory care help.

McDevitt says long, dark hallways are anathema in the newest designs, which have daylight available to all. Rather than a central area for all caregivers, small individual "household" units are clustered together, with caregivers dispersed among the units. Access to outdoor areas and gardens is a high priority, and individual units have doors that open to the outside—fresh outdoor air is welcomed—and indoor lights are LEDs with dimmers. Residents aren't tied to one dining option; there are several, including quick-serve offerings for midnight snacking.

Balfour at Riverfront Park, in Denver, an NAHB Best of 55+ winner for a CCRC (continuing care retirement community), is nearly indistinguishable from a high-end hotel with its entry hall and spaces flooded with natural light. The public rooms are luxurious, with bright pops of color. Balfour provides independent living, assisted living, and Alzheimer's and memory care. Balfour Senior Living developed the CCRC, and Klipp, a division of Irvine, Calif.-based multinational construction firm Gkkworks, designed it. Unfortunately, these appealing options are likely to be out of reach for many seniors because of cost.



affordable options are scarce

"Whether it's rural or in the cities, my experience is that when you build something that's affordable and senior, you are going to have no trouble leasing it up and there will be a waiting list," says John Perfitt, executive director of nonprofit Restore Neighborhoods LA, a developer of affordable housing. Need further proof that it's a pressing need for seniors? Take a look at the eight-year waiting list for an apartment at Angelus Plaza in downtown Los Angeles. With 1,100 units, it's the largest age-qualified community in the country and within walking distance of mass transit, a farmers market, a park, grocery shopping, and the Walt Disney Concert Hall. "It used to be five years' [wait]," says Niché Perry, a program assistant at Angelus Plaza. But because people are healthier and living longer, the shortage is only going to get worse, says Gonzalez, who has been working on renovating Angelus, "just because of the number of people who are getting older and are on a fixed income." **PB**

Teresa Burney writes about business, home building, design, real estate, and development.

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Even the most popular house plans can benefit from a makeover

By Larry W. Garnett, FAIBD, House Review Lead Designer

Although some home designs have lasting appeal, many of those ever-popular plans could still use an overhaul. While some may require only minor adjustments to update exteriors, most could also benefit from an overall interior redo. Because the kitchen remains the focal point of the home, many older designs need to be completely reworked to create an open relationship between the kitchen, dining, and family areas. But proceed with caution regarding such openness: Recent surveys indicate that some sort of definition for these rooms is preferable. To accomplish this, consider variations in ceiling heights or the use of large framed openings. Traffic patterns may also need improving; creating logical paths from the foyer to the bedrooms eliminates the need to travel directly through the family room, dodging furniture as you go. The following revisions of best-selling plans range from a major retooling of the interior layout to simply incorporating space for basement access.



- A** Adding a staircase allows access to a basement
- B** An open living/dining/kitchen arrangement makes each area seem more spacious, while columns and half-walls define the spaces
- C** Optional living quarters above the detached garage provide extra space for guests, relatives, or a tenant
- D** Wrap-around porch offers an inviting exterior living space
- E** Enclosed by a fence and an arbor entry, the side yard features an outdoor cooking and dining area

PLAN 30502

Designed for a narrow lot with rear access to the garage, this plan has all the essential ingredients of a best-seller. However, in some markets, a basement is a must-have. Besides adding this option, we also provided optional living quarters above the garage. This independent dwelling space is ideal for guest quarters or for an older child who is moving back home. In areas where codes allow it, this can also be used as an income-producing rental unit.

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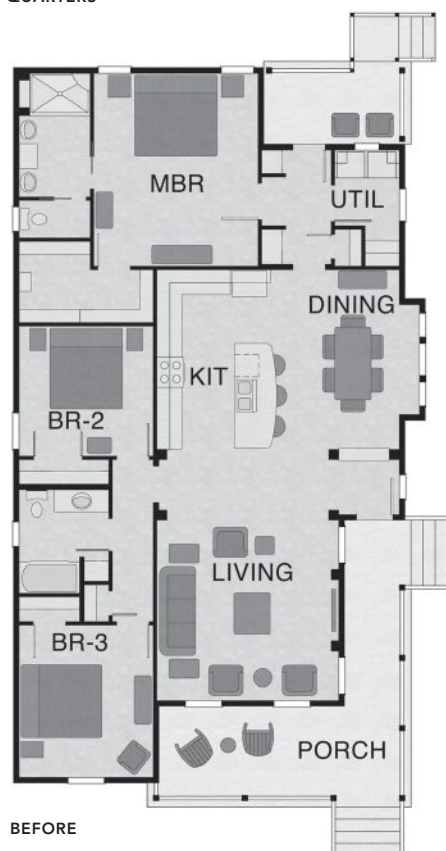
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PLAN SIZE

Width: 42 feet
Depth: 95 feet
(with garage)
Living area: 1,795 sf
(main house);
460 sf (quarters above)



OPTIONAL GUEST QUARTERS



BEFORE

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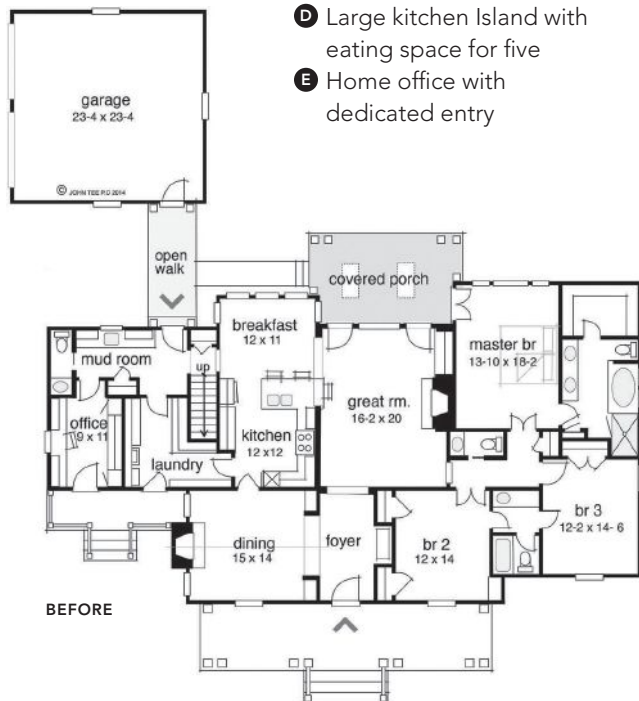
PLAN SIZE

Width: 75 feet
Depth: 80 feet
(including garage)
Living area: 2,853 sf



To give builders and potential homebuyers a more modern twist on a classic design and annual top seller, this floor plan opened up the central living areas of the home to create a family-friendly layout. A large island with seating for up to five is the hub of this space, with an expanded family dining area and expansive views of the great room and an outdoor room with a fireplace. A separate home office offers creative lifestyle opportunities, while a large and convenient utility room makes house chores easier and more efficient.

- Ⓐ Display niche in foyer
- Ⓑ Outdoor room with fireplace
- Ⓒ Sunny family-dining space
- Ⓓ Large kitchen Island with eating space for five
- Ⓔ Home office with dedicated entry





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[HOUSE REVIEW]

248 ABBEVILLE ROAD + 248 BROUSSARD ROAD

DESIGNER

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ourtownplans.com
770.692.2929

PLAN SIZE

Width: 74 feet, 8 inches
Depth: 45 feet, 5 inches
Living area: 3,538 sf
(Abbeville Road);
3,050 sf (Broussard Road)

The original plan, 26 Monroe Avenue, is a familiar vernacular style with a first-floor layout that resonates with plan buyers. Requests for three- and four-bedroom plans with a Low Country aesthetic led to tweaks in the floor plan and exterior elevations that resulted in new plans, 248 Abbeville Road and 248 Broussard Road. The Abbeville Road home is a four-bedroom Creole design with a large, simple, hipped roof and deep overhangs. The upper floor hosts three bedrooms with private baths, plus a convenient study. Broussard Road is a three-bedroom Generational Farmhouse style typically seen throughout the South. The efficient upper floor includes two bedrooms with private baths and a study at the top of the stairs.

MAIN FLOOR

- A** Open interior living spaces are perfect for today's lifestyle
- B** Hard-working kitchen layout with ample storage and prep space
- C** Reconfigured master bath with added closet space

UPPER FLOOR (ABBEVILLE ROAD)

- D** Interior transoms bring borrowed light to the upper hall
- E** Sitting room and walk-in attic storage on second floor

UPPER FLOOR (BROUSSARD ROAD)

- F** Efficient layout with sizable rooms and closets

SECOND FLOOR



248 ABBEVILLE ROAD



FIRST FLOOR

SECOND FLOOR



248 BROUSSARD ROAD

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PACIFICA MODEL

ARCHITECT

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407.650.8770

PLAN SIZE

Width: 60 feet
Depth: 70 feet
Living area: 2,853 sf



Revitalizing old plans and elevations is the name of the game in today's market. Featuring the same old plans will no longer win over buyers. Those looking for a new house are more savvy than ever, thanks to a proliferation of home design sites and 24-hour inundation from HGTV. (Who knew that shiplap would be an everyday term in 2016?) Some changes are minor but make a big difference. Others are simply mandatory for today's buyers.

- A Gone are the days of walking through the laundry room from the garage; buyers want a drop zone back-door entry
- B Secondary suites need to be bigger than 11 feet by 11 feet. We aim for 11 feet by 13 feet as a standard, so every bedroom can accommodate a king-size bed, not to mention larger closets
- C Gourmet kitchen with a large island
- D Luxurious master bath with a freestanding tub
- E Adding a full bath to the den/guest suite offers more flexibility; the hall bath can easily double as a powder room



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PLAN SIZE

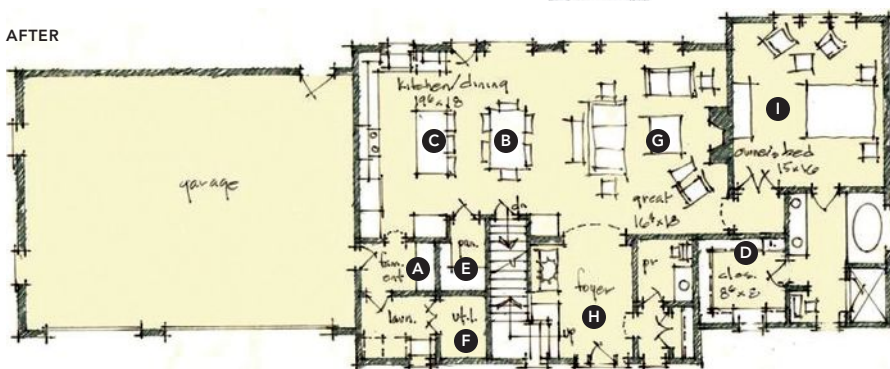
Width: 54 feet
Depth: 34 feet, 8 inches
Living area: 1,708 sf
(garage: 900 sf)

With Millennials entering the housing market—finally—housing trends are morphing faster than ever. Designs that worked well just a few years back may sputter and stall in today's market. This redesign of a 1,575-square-foot home opens up the connections between rooms, visually enlarging the space, increasing its utility, and making it perfect for entertaining.

BEFORE



AFTER



- Ⓐ Family entrance can accommodate a built-in bench or cubbies, acting as a drop zone
- Ⓑ A well-positioned dining area allows for a clean floor break
- Ⓒ Kitchen with workable island has a strong connection to dining and great room
- Ⓓ Closet now has much better proportions and feels larger
- Ⓔ Kitchen has a large walk-in pantry for bulk items
- Ⓕ Setting utilities and laundry on the front saves room on the rear for view-seeking rooms
- Ⓖ Great room is afforded a view to the rear of the home
- Ⓗ Well-defined foyer makes for a beautiful entryway
- Ⓘ Owner's suite is now positioned to the rear of the home, allowing view-seeking and maximum privacy



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Cindy Harvey on how Gen X has been misunderstood and overlooked



Cindy Harvey
Associate
Principal
RNL Design
Denver

People born between the early 1960s and early 1980s have been categorized as a lost generation steeped in Nirvana lyrics and indifference, but marketers and builders may be ignoring Generation X at their own peril. Cindy Harvey, with more than 20 years of experience working with developers and creating master planned communities, shares her take on why this group can be a formidable force of homebuyers.

Q Generation X was written off as the group that had its earning and homebuying capacity hurt most by the recession. What's happened to Gen X since then?

A Boomers and Millennials stole the spotlight from this smaller generation mostly due to sheer numbers. But Gen X still consists of 65 million Americans and is a significant portion of the consumer market. All generations felt the impact of the recession, but Gen X in particular is wired to recover. Most Gen Xers were in their 30s and early 40s when the housing crisis hit—the time in life when you typically purchase a first home and may even be contemplating moving up. By 2009, many Xers had mortgages that exceeded the value of their home, or worse, were forced to foreclose. The recession hit bottom in

Q2 2009 and the ripple effect and subsequent recovery made 2010 feel like a protracted bottom. Gen X lost 45 percent of its wealth, according to a Pew Research report. Xers also dropped nearly 6.5 percentage points in homeownership rates, going from 65 percent to 59 percent during that time—the largest drop of all generations.

However, Gen X is motivated to get back in the homeownership game and shouldn't be written off. Now in its peak earning years, Gen X is in high demand given the gap created by retiring Boomers.

Many builders are focusing on the Millennial market, but the Associated Press recently reported that one-third of all Millennials live with their parents and continue to delay homeownership. Millennials' homeownership rate is only at 34 percent, according to 2016 first-quarter Census Bureau numbers. In contrast, the National Association of Realtors' Homeownership Opportunities and Market Experience Survey report notes that Gen X makes up over 25 percent of recent homebuyers. Also, Gen X has an average household income of \$104,700, the highest among all generations of buyer types. Gen X also makes up the largest percentage of sellers, at 25 percent, which indicates they are recovering and looking to trade up to larger and more expensive homes. Yes, Gen X has had setbacks, but its future is bright.

Q What are some other myths about Gen X?

A Numerous stereotypes and myths abound for all generations. Just as Millennials will have a hard time shak-

ing the "entitled" label, Gen X has had to disprove the "slacker" label. An Ernst & Young study noted that 70 percent of respondents ranked Gen X as the most effective managers compared with managers from the Boomer or Millennial generations. Xers also ranked the highest for possessing traits of adaptability, problem-solving, and collaboration. Millennials are often touted as being the most tech-savvy generation. Mark Zuckerberg is a standout Millennial in that regard. However, Gen X has its share of tech leaders as well, including Jack Dorsey (Twitter), Elon Musk (SpaceX and Tesla Motors), and Sergey Brin and Larry Page (Google). While an Xer hasn't made it to the White House yet (Obama is a tail-end Boomer, not an Xer), this "slacker" generation is ready to lead—and includes several presidential candidates and Speaker of the House Paul Ryan.

Q What do they want in a home and community, and do those attributes differ from what Baby Boomers and Millennials desire?

A A lot comes down to the different life stages for these generations. Boomers are looking to downsize their empty nests and are even gaining interest in urban living. Millennials are in their 20s with less income and fewer commitments; they're looking for affordability, proximity to work, and social engagement. Gen Xers are in the middle of raising families and many are starting to care for their aging parents.

For the complete interview with Cindy Harvey, see probuilder.com/harvey.



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