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inspiring architects and custom builders

June 2010

Heavy meddle

*Turbocharged teamwork allows
the best ideas to surface
in the Las Vegas desert*

Building your process

Design to the rescue

Software trends 2.0.1.0

Niche the bathroom



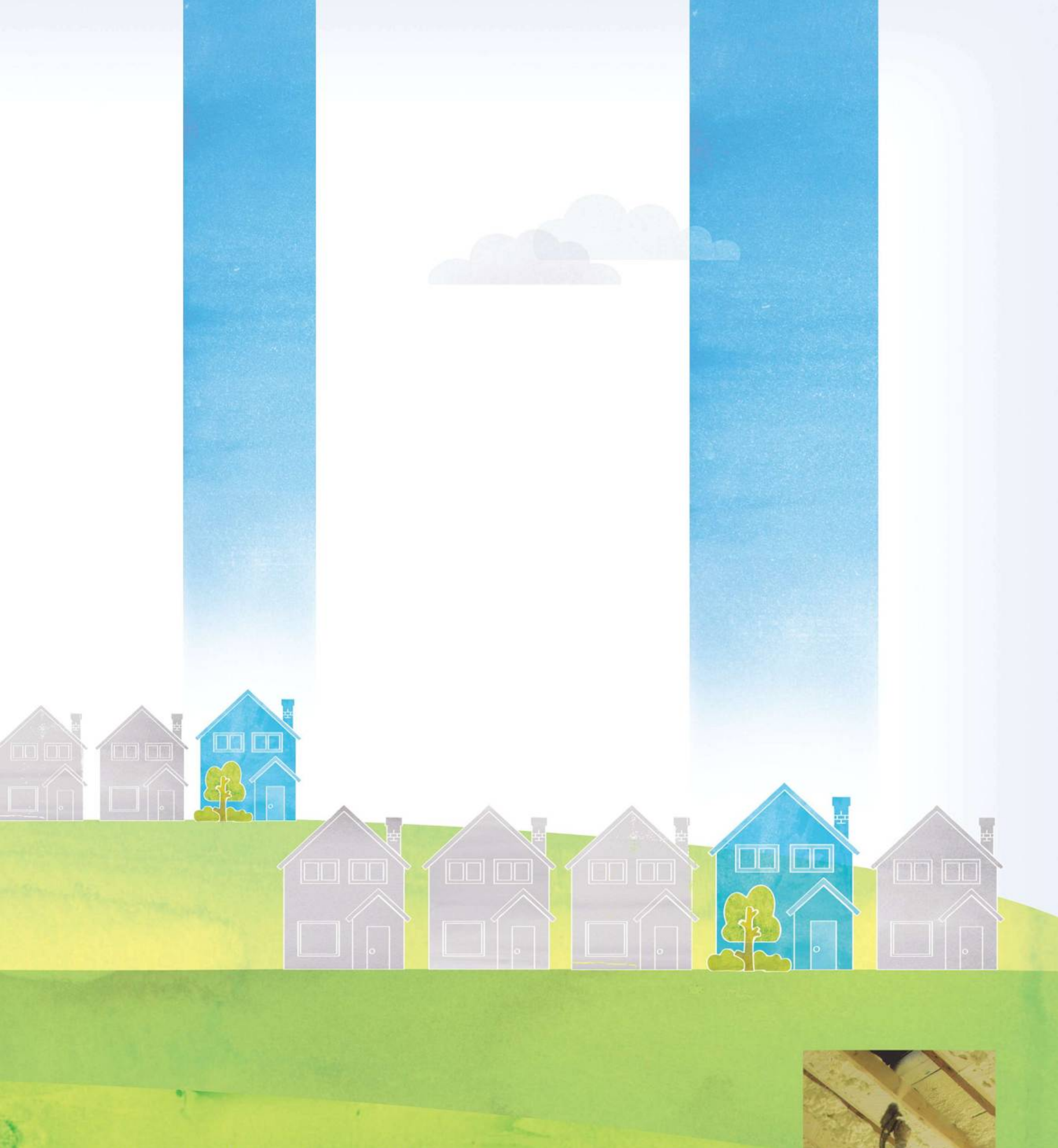
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Generate leads

Leads are king, especially during lean times like these past few years. Generating leads, however, isn't always easy, nor is it always cheap. But it can be both.

Architects and builders can choose one of two main paths that lead to new business. One path generates leads through customer satisfaction, and the other drums up prospects through marketing efforts.

The route through customer satisfaction requires attention be paid to what matters to clients. For example, clients want their homes to remain as clean as possible during the project, and they want to know what's happening at all times. This means it's your job to inform anyone working on site to spend the final 30 minutes of the work day cleaning up the jobsite. It also means clients must have a quick and easy way to reach you or a designated supervisor.

Finally, you must manage your clients' expectations. Tell them what they're in for. Tell them they'll be frustrated, and when to expect it. Tell them when they'll be happy. Tell them who will be on site the next day, and if there will be delays of any kind, and when. If you tell them something will be done, make sure it's done.

Do these things, and do them well, and your clients will be satisfied. Satisfied clients will tell their friends and family members what a great job you do, which translates into referrals and repeat business. Do these things *really* well and you might never need to generate new leads again.

The second path to lead generation involves marketing, which can become expensive. It doesn't have to be, however. Several marketing efforts are free or relatively low cost, and here are a few to consider.

Use social media. Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter are free. Most importantly, they're powerful ways of instantly reaching hundreds or thousands of potential clients. Plus, these sites are built to encourage other people do your marketing work for you.

Get an intern. Contact the local college and offer a marketing internship. You can do this for free, or for close to it. The intern can launch your social media campaign, and handle numerous other marketing efforts. Everybody wins.

Become a class project. Contact that same college from above and ask the marketing professor if they'd take on your marketing program as a class project. That's valuable experience for college students, and free help for you.

Stay in touch. Vow to meet with a subcontractor or other colleague once a week, or once a month. Talk on the phone, get coffee, eat lunch together. You'll generate goodwill, and maybe some referrals.

Speak publicly. Offer to talk at a monthly meeting of your local chapter of Rotary, Knights of Columbus or Chamber of Commerce. Review a case study, or ask them which topics would be of interest. Get your name out there.

Offer a free service for a local **charity auction**. Upgrade your **jobsite sign** to include an artist's rendering.

What you do is not as important as making sure you do *something*. Leads don't generate themselves, so get out there and make things happen.

Have lead generation tricks of your own? Share them by sending an e-mail to editor@rdbmagazine.com.



Rob Heselbarth, Editor

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GROUP PUBLISHER Tim Campbell

E-mail: tim.campbell@cygnusb2b.com

EDITOR Rob Heselbarth

E-mail: rob.heselbarth@cygnusb2b.com

MANAGING EDITOR Jon Minnick

E-mail: jon.minnick@cygnusb2b.com

SENIOR EDITOR Ken Betz

E-mail: ken.betz@cygnusb2b.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Dan Berman, Joe Dellanno, Rob Fanjoy, Elizabeth Gillette, Jay Grant, Luis Jauregui AIA, Chuck Ross, Harry Spaulding, John D. Wagner

ART DIRECTOR Tracy Hegg

PRODUCTION MGR. Steve Swick

CIRCULATION MGR. Dawn Gundlach

READER SERVICE MGR. Rich Hendricks

PRODUCTION SERVICES REP. Kathleen Weaver

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Heidi Riedl

cygnus
Business Media

CEO John French

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER Paul Bonaiuto

V.P. MFG. &

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY Tom Martin

V.P. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Patrick Nadler

V.P. AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT Julie Nachtigal

CORPORATE INFORMATION

TECH DIRECTOR Eric Kammerzell

CYGNUS PUBLISHING

PRESIDENT, PUBLISHING Mike Martin

V.P. CORPORATE Elizabeth Pennell

CORPORATE PRODUCTION DIRECTOR Brett Apold

SENIOR V.P./

CUSTOM MARKETING Patrick Nadler

CYGNUS EXPOSITIONS

SENIOR V.P. Julie Thompson



NAHB



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National Kitchen & Bath Association



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Collaborate to succeed

When architects and builders respect each other's roles, success is practically guaranteed

By Luis Jauregui, AIA

I recently moderated the second annual discussion panel of residential architects and home builders in Texas organized by our local CRAN committee of which I am chair (Custom Residential Architects Network). The topic was the working relationships of each member of the panel, which included three architects and three builders.

Because of the success we had with our first panel discussion last year, as well as the appeal of the panel discussion format, partici-



pation and interest almost doubled. Each panelist expressed in five minutes their individual experiences — some successful and others less positive — working with their counterparts. It promoted plenty of feedback and discussion from the audience about how to improve upon and optimize the architect/builder relationship.

One architect panelist distilled the relationship between an architect and a builder to these insightful points: "Preparation, interpretation, communication and implementation." I was immediately struck by the wisdom of his "big-picture" take on the subject and thought it worthy to pass on his insights. He went on to explain his points as follows.

Preparation begins with the architect. We are the initiator, the creator of the project. We prepare or create the design concept and drawings. We also prepare the construction documentation including specifications and selections. If we don't do it properly and completely, then someone else will do it for us.

I especially direct these thoughts to architects who continue to provide "builder sets" of drawings as opposed to taking the entire project through design completion, detailing and full documentation. It's imperative to the continuance of our profession and quality of our craft that we who are trained, skilled and possess the talent to design well, assume full responsibility for the final product.

Interpretation falls to the home builder, the ultimate purveyor of the project. In order for the well-prepared work of the architect to be realized, it's essential that the builder commit the time required to study, dissect, comprehend and assimilate the extensive drawings and specification book. Without this professional approach from the builder, the architect's best preparation will be nullified and the design intention be displaced with on-site guesswork by unsupervised tradesmen.

Many builders think of themselves as designers and take pride in making design decisions on the spot. It falls on us architects to ensure the builder understands and respects the architect's role, which begins with providing complete documentation so the builder can focus on building the project, not designing or fixing it.

Communication is essential among all players and particularly important between the architect and builder. The architect must convey on paper the essence of the design intention with detailed drawings so the architect's "vision" is understood. The builder needs to consult with the architect during his review and interpretation

of the prepared documents, as well as during construction when variances arise.

A builder should communicate and enforce the specifications with his tradesmen, ensuring the quality of both the design implementation and construction. Strong communication between architect and builder before and during construction will create the working relationship necessary to resolve problems down the line, since no set of drawings is perfect.

Implementation and successful completion is dependent upon each of the preceding steps. It is dependent on good preparation of design and documentation by the architect. It requires proper interpretation of design and documentation by the builder. Communication to all parties regarding design intention and absolute details is essential. Given this ideal foundation, implementation will culminate in a project that is on budget, on time and built to high-quality standards.

Residential architects and home builders can find common ground and complement each other's unique expertise when they respect each other's roles. When professionals are informed and open to discussion, problem solving becomes easier, there's less finger-pointing and everyone remains calm, especially the homeowner. ■



Luis Jauregui, AIA, has been a member of the local and national chapters of the American Institute of Architects for more than 20 years. He is an active leader within the Home builders Association

of Austin, Texas, serving as president, and as director at the local, state and national home builders' association levels. Read past columns at rdbmagazine.com.



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For more info circle #23

Open your business to open-book

Agreeing to open-book project management instantly builds trust with your client

By Jay Grant

When building a custom job, one way to price it is open-book cost-plus including a client/builder agreed-upon profit. The profit can be delineated as a percentage of the job or as a flat fee. The builder's management fee would include all overhead costs, site supervision costs and an established net profit for the job.

Do you think open-book management as a basis for a custom job is better for the client or the builder? Having completed more than 100 custom jobs using this approach, I conclude that it is always a benefit to the client, even though it requires the builder to communicate and educate the client on many details and nuances of construction, scheduling, budgeting and selections.

I am an advocate for bidding most custom residential jobs on a cost-plus management fee basis. It has served me well in both rising and falling real estate market conditions. However, I won't use this approach when:

- A prospect rejects the concept and insists on a fixed-price proposal/contract.
- The job is a relatively simple remodeling project and has few variables such as a small bathroom or a deck replacement.
- I am building on land I own and using a house plan I previously have built, or a spec home which is under construction and the majority of the selections have been made.

In almost all other custom build opportunities, I will suggest and promote the win-win benefits of open-book construction management. Here are several reasons I suggest you consider working with an open book.

To sign up a cost-plus project, you must create and maintain both trust and credibility with your prospect. Since these are essential foundation components in any sales process, you are forced to initiate this key aspect of your relationship early in the sales process. This is a benefit to any credible, trustworthy builder.

You can openly discuss any of your builder costs on past projects and offer pricing examples on similar phases. Today, between the economy and instant pricing on the Internet, your prospect often will know as much or more than you about some of the labor and material costs. So, if your prospect has secured equal or better pricing than you have, simply thank them and agree to professionally evaluate their bidder. There are potential pitfalls inherent in opening your business to new suppliers or contractors but there also are benefits. For example, my three radiant heating bids on a recent job were on average 25 percent higher than the bid my client secured. Following due diligence, the equipment was installed and the work was flawless. Now I have a new radiant heating contractor.

Profit is not a bad word in a sales meeting! Your prospect is curious about how much you are making, even if he is not bold enough to ask you. In open-book construction management, I bring up the topic by stating that as soon as the prospect and I agree on how my profit will be calculated, we are on the same

team, allied with the goal of securing the best design and quality for the best value we can find. If he wants to bring us a competing bid, we welcome the opportunity to keep our pricing competitive.

Once I have described the benefits of seeing my costs on a detailed phase-by-phase spreadsheet, I then can ask for the sale; even if the design is fluid and we know it will change; even if he has not spoken to other builders.

Since I will provide not less than two bids on every significant phase, why should the client invest more of his valuable time researching another builder? Why not stop shopping for a builder and let me do what I am good at? I'm good at assisting him with obtaining the best quality and design his budget will allow, while assuring him he is not being overcharged and that I am making a fair and reasonable profit for the experience and service I am offering. ■



Jay Grant, president of Grant Homes, a residential design/build firm in Mendham, N.J., focuses on building luxury custom homes and renovations/additions. He is the recipient of more than 20 industry

awards including best website for granthomesusa.com. Grant is available for business consulting. Send e-mail to granthomes@msn.com. Read past columns at rdbmagazine.com

A Word From A Builder Who Knows

"We believe today's homes are built to be safe. But we also understand how devastating fire can be. One of our relatives lost their entire home to a fire caused by a candle. The fire spread quickly and they were lucky to get out.

Even with that experience, we never thought about fire sprinkler systems in single-family homes until we were required to install them in an entire development. At first we were concerned about the added cost and what they would look like. Once the development was complete, the sprinkler systems increased the value of the homes and our buyers' insurance rates were lower. The sprinklers are concealed, so you really don't notice them.

We use the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition's free educational material during our open houses and when we do our final walk-through with our buyers. Some of our homebuyers worry that if their smoke alarm goes off when cooking in the kitchen, it will set off the sprinklers. The HFSC materials help us inform our customers that each sprinkler is activated by heat, not smoke, and it takes a real fire to activate one sprinkler.

If we build another home for ourselves, we plan to protect it with a home fire sprinkler system."

Bill and Janet Hall

Goad & Hall Builders, Pleasant View, TN



This program is supported by Fire Prevention and Safety Grant funding through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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The Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC) is a nonprofit and noncommercial educational organization that offers **FREE** information to homebuilders and their buyers. HFSC's *BUILT FOR LIFE* video provides homebuilders with details about the design and installation of home fire sprinkler systems. Builders can request the *LIVING WITH SPRINKLERS* video for people living in sprinklered homes.

For more information about HFSC's free information, visit

HomeFireSprinkler.org.

The green-standard battle

The outcome should be more important than the process, but the process will be critical, too

By John D. Wagner

With the solid grip the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED standard has on the commercial markets, many people ask me if I think LEED will be as successful in the residential space. My answer is a firm "No."

After establishing a foothold in the commercial market, LEED entered the residential building space with a program called LEED-H, or LEED for Homes. It really hasn't taken off, and that's for a number of reasons, I believe.

First, the professional class that drives design in the commercial space is the architect. Even before regulations and laws required LEED compliance, architects had a vested interest in driving LEED because in addition to the energy efficiency and material efficiency of

which design pros spec LEED projects and also offer project management services to comply.

Not so with homes. A small percentage of U.S. homes are architect-designed. Only 6 percent of AIA member-firm revenues is generated by the design of single-family residential homes. So the LEED standard — in the absence of a professional class driving it — actually has to compete on cost, availability of certified inspectors and ease of navigation through the point system. Since roughly 2005, LEED has certified 6,200 homes and a spokesman said they would certify 6,000 more this year using 38 "providers" nationwide.

The National Association of Home Builders — against type, as they come from an anti-regulatory tradition — stepped in with a lower-cost and (relatively) easy-to-navigate alternative to LEED-H with its now ANSI-approved National Green Building Standard. Its rate of adoption among residential builders has been faster and deeper than LEED-H, and it will only get stronger. This is because it is driven in part by the marketing dollars and support of NAHB, one of America's largest trade associations. NAHB does not have as many homes in its program but its rate of acceptance is far greater than that of LEED-H.

That said, does the ANSI standard compete favorably on cost of inspection and green building compliance? The results of a study I commissioned with another publication not long ago made it clear that complying with the LEED-H standard cost builders much more than complying with the NAHB standard, perhaps \$10,000-plus more per house. Since U.S. house prices are calculated on a square-foot basis, it has been difficult for builders to recover those costs for going green in a side-by-side sale with a house of the same size next door that isn't green. So, builders are naturally going to choose a green standard that: A)

provides third-party green rating/verification so they can justify a higher price, and; B) doesn't cost a great deal to do so. The natural choice is the NAHB standard.

The NAHB standard also is a system designed by builders, for builders, unlike LEED. And that builder tradition is reflected in the inspection, the forms, and even the practices required to achieve the various tiers in the NAHB standard. I recognize there are other state and local programs you can access. For example, Built Green has made great strides at various state levels. So my comments here really focus on national-scale programs. I am not focusing on Energy Star because it is focused almost solely on energy performance, and not material sustainability, IAQ, etc.

Now, I can guess your question right now is: Which standard produces the greener house? After all, the outcome should be the determining factor, not the method, right? Well, I have yet to be convinced that LEED-H produces a measurably, meaningfully greener house than NAHB's standard.

Which standard will prevail? I think in the residential space, for a variety of reasons including ease of use, cost of compliance, the power of NAHB's marketing, and NAHB's efforts to embed its standard in traditional standards like ANSI, NAHB's National Green Building Standard is the one home designers and builders should get behind. ■



John D. Wagner is an award-winning author of many books and articles about construction, and a frequent contributor to the industry's leading trade magazines. A sought-after speaker for industry events, he

can be contacted at JohnDWagner.com. Read past columns at rdbmagazine.com



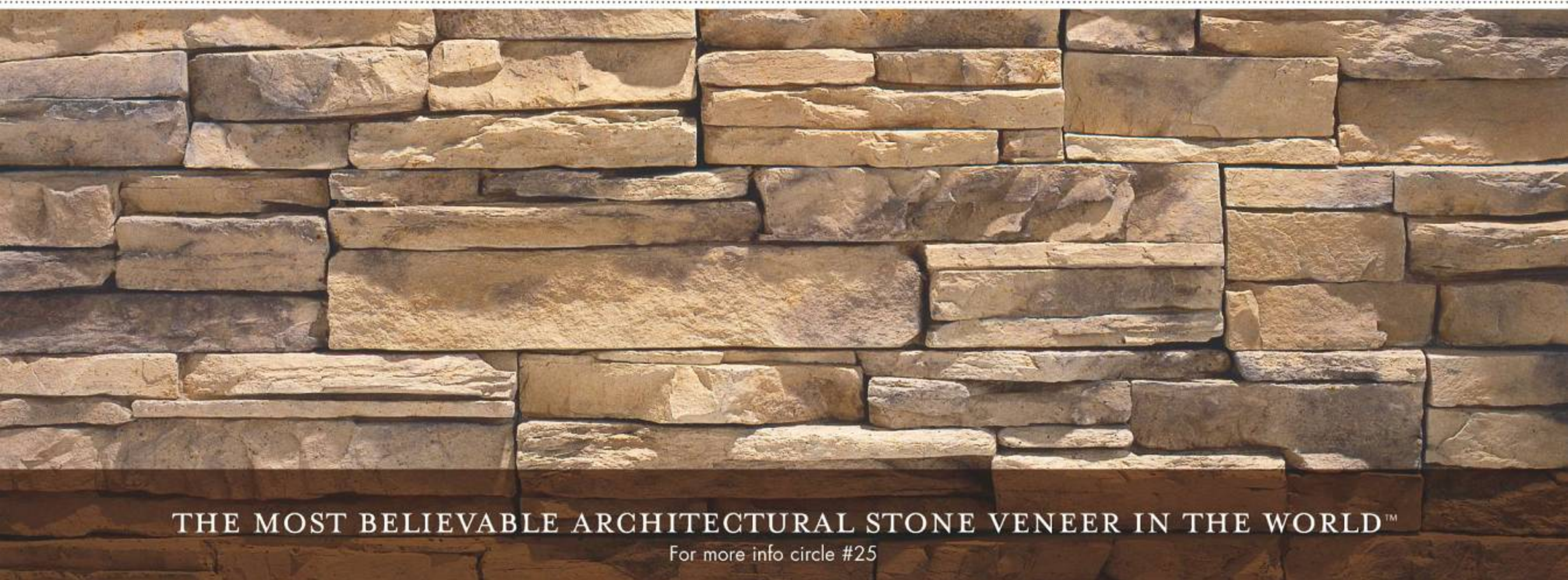
LEED structures, let's face it, there were higher fees available for LEED architects and for LEED APs (accredited professionals).

The LEED standard is a complicated one, and commercial contractors have been willing to pay a premium to have a trained, certified guide to navigate them through the points-based process. In addition, the cost of non-compliance could mean real financial loss to the contractor and the architect if they don't achieve LEED status set forth in contracts. So, there has been a natural feedback loop in



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Market yourself with digital video

Digital video cameras make it easy to document and promote everything in your professional life

By Joseph Dellanno

We live in a visually stimulating world in which it's good to draw attention from a crowd. You probably know people on the cutting edge of fashion and technology, or perhaps you are in fact that person wearing the cool clothes and driving a sweet ride. But what's hip in the design/build community these days? My journey of looking for the best products and services has brought me to the amazing world of digital video.

People around the globe are now uploading more video images than ever before because of the easy process for doing so, and our unquenchable thirst for reality broadcasting. For many people, it's easier to watch a video than scan through pages of text on a website looking for pertinent information. Simply typing a specific phrase or words that you are interested in can lead to great video. We live in an "edu-tainment" world, and video is the perfect medium to communicate your business' potential, so clients can understand how your services can help them.

The digital video industry explodes with new and improved products each year. Often, manufacturers are able to integrate digital video cameras with one of the handheld communication devices we use every day. With this "power tool" in our hands, we must ask ourselves, "Are we using it to its fullest potential?" How can we capture marketing moments, document design and building issues, and become the go-to expert without coming across as an arrogant know-it-all?

If you want to start off with a simple flip-type camera, the Vado by Creative Labs has great value. The cost is less than \$100; it is compact and portable and can record up to two hours of digital video. It has a zoom function and from a user's point of view has very easy functionality. Just plug in Vado's flexible USB tab to post videos online or save them to your PC using its built-in software.

Before you start recording, you first must understand the two different types of people when it comes to video production. There are those who enjoy being on camera and those who will run away. If you have a reluctant cast in your video, the results may not be the best. Remember that other people will be viewing your video and you want the message to connect and resonate with them.

As for your message, choose what best represents you and your company. For example, if you specialize in green building, focus on those projects and clients that truly define your work, product and clientele. Show the details that make your work unique and/or above average. A close-up on the solar panel installation and how it operates may generate interest and trust. No one expects you to win an Academy Award for your movies; however, you should be able to communicate your company vision clearly within a short amount of time.

Recording client testimonials during the design and build phases is another great way to get your future clients comfortable with your professional services. Third-party video stories

are much more effective because they are coming from the customer.

Here are a few things to consider before you hit the record button. Make sure any light source is not too bright because it will affect the quality of the images. Limit or eliminate any background movement as you don't want to draw viewers' attention away from the focal point of the video. Lastly, assure good sound quality by ensuring there are no background sounds that will compete with the quality of the video. If you are recording indoors, make sure HVAC fans are turned off.

Have fun and remember what happens in design/build should be broadcast on the Internet for the world to appreciate. ▀



Joseph Dellanno is the founder of My Design/Build Project, a web communication application for design and build teams, and president of My Design/Build Coach, providing design/build business training. He is also president of Design Solutions Inc., a national design firm. Send e-mail to info@mydesignbuildproject.com. Read past columns at rdbmagazine.com.





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Turbocharged teamwork allows the best ideas to surface in the Las Vegas desert

By Rob Heselbarth, editor

Even after interviewing eight builders, the one chosen to design and build this contemporary Las Vegas home was replaced by the clients before ground was broken. To the rescue came a designer and builder completing a team whose members, including the clients, worked extremely closely with each other.

The home, completed in June 2009, sits in an exclusive neighborhood due west of the Las Vegas strip's bright lights, where Tuscan-style homes are banned. By choosing this neighborhood to live in, the homeowners clearly wanted to be different, but that wasn't good enough. The mission was to stand out within a neighborhood that already stood out from the crowd.

The only way to accomplish this was to truly listen to the clients and invite them to meddle in the process, or at least that's how Walt Lawler, registered architect and president, Walt Lawler Residential Design in Las Vegas, sees it. "I like my clients to meddle. I like them to tell me what they think. If they don't do that, it's not a good project. I need all that client contact; I must interact with them. It makes for a better project. It truly does," Lawler says.

Check the ego

Lawler gets it done by not bringing his ego into the equation. "I'm a capitalist first. I want to make money like we all do. So if the client wants the house upside down, I'll draw it

ARCHITECT

Walt Lawler Residential Design, Las Vegas

BUILDER

Harron Construction Services, Las Vegas
harronconstruction.com

PROJECT STATS

Location: Las Vegas
Size: 5,500 sq. ft.

EXTERIOR

Roofing: Berridge standing seam
Garage doors: Wayne Dalton

INTERIOR

Tile: laufen, ICM, Hakatai
Fireplace: Montigo

KITCHEN

Countertops: Caesarstone
Sinks, faucets: Kohler
Appliances: Gaggenau
Washer/Dryer: Bosch

BATHROOM

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Tubs: Aquatic, Kohler
Toilets: Kohler, Toto
Sink faucets: Hansgrohe
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HOME TECHNOLOGY

Home control: Control4
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OUTDOOR LIVING

Grill: KitchenAid



Photos: Byron Mason, Las Vegas

A big challenge while building this home in Las Vegas was supporting the angled "halo" that surrounds it, a problem solved with the home's framing system. Because of all the glass, much of the rear wall is steel to support the halo that seemingly floats around the entire home.

upside down. I do what my clients want and don't bring my ego into it, which works pretty smoothly. I modify my behavior to fit theirs. I have to be flexible," he says.

"I also like to keep in contact with my clients. I don't get a permit and disappear. I'm involved from inception through occupancy," he adds. In this situation, the interaction worked beautifully because one of the clients has a passion for architecture. "She studies it, she knows it, which makes it easy for her to communicate what she wants because we talk the same language. This is not the first house I've had to straighten out, and it has always bothered me that 50 to 75 percent of the time the client is mad at the architect at the end of the day. That's not what I want to happen," Lawler explains.

Elise Harron, development manager, Harron Construction Services in Las Vegas, agrees with Lawler that client communication plays an important role in a successful project. She likens it to a short-term marriage. "There



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The homeowners were insistent that the floor plan remain open. An overlooked wall was removed in the design stage to ensure the view seen here.

was an awful lot of communication. Our goal was to make sure the client's vision was actually what we constructed, and that required daily communication and hundreds of phone calls," Harron explains.

Trust is another key ingredient in a successful client relationship, Harron says, and this client appreciated her open-book management style. "They knew what every invoice was and were comfortable with everything. It wasn't always perfect, and mistakes were made, but we maintained a dialogue which made it work out in the end," she says.

Contemporary Vegas

This project was different in many ways. It was a different style for Las Vegas. It was a different style for the owners. And, it was a style Harron had never worked on. Her husband and business partner had experience with it, which calmed her worries. "I thought it would be too cold and impersonal. Sure, I had fear. But I trusted my husband and the client."

Construction of the home was not without challenges, Harron says. "It was a challenge

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Through the client's eyes

The clients on this project, Katie and Charles Reibel (at right), were instrumental in its success. Fitting, then, that we hear from Katie, who helped drive the effort.

ON HER HOME'S STYLE

"The driving force for this home was a quote by Aerin Lauder Zinterhofer, who said; 'Simplicity is the purest form of luxury and elegance.' It was really important that it was unique. Even though homes are custom around here, many times they still look similar. This one had to be unique and functional. Those two must go hand in hand. We didn't want a weird floor plan. This one has a wonderful flow."

ON SUDDEN CHANGES

"The house was supposed to have a completely open concept. Then my husband noticed an X on the floor in our dining/living/family room. [Lawler] said the X would be a wall to create an intimate living area. We insisted there was to be no wall there, so we made the change."

HEART STOPPER

"The entire back of the house is steel because of all the glass back there. When it was nearly done, an inspector realized no one had checked the bolts in the wall. So we thought everything would be delayed



who knows how many weeks. But because of [Lawler] and [Harron] knowing the project so well, they knew exactly where to cut open the wall for the inspection. They saved everyone a lot of time and headaches."

HER FAVORITE SPOTS

"We like the master bedroom; it's an incredible sanctuary for us. When we're lying in the bed, we face a glass wall which looks out at the mountains. And then the kitchen. As you walk down the entry hallway and see the pool and mountains out the back, and then you see that kitchen, it brings a smile to everyone's face, every time."



It was the client Chuck Reibel's decision to add this splash of orange to the kitchen, a color carried throughout the home.



The architect was given the freedom to change plans for this wall. Originally a stone wall, value engineering resulted in this custom creation which the architect was asked to autograph for the homeowners (see inset).



getting those angles to work — specifically with what we all referred to as the ‘halo’ around the exterior of the home. The challenge was transferring an angled load across the width of the house and make it appear as if it is suspended.” The solution is rooted in the home’s framing system, she adds.

As the designer, Lawler faced a different set of challenges than Harron. When a design is unbuildable like the original plan for this home, changes must be made. “I moved windows around so they make sense. Now, every window has a view. You can even see the

strip while sitting on the toilet in the downstairs bathroom. We paid attention to the details,” Lawler says.

Minor changes were made in various spots. A ledge was removed in one room, window proportions were altered, and the rear elevation was redeveloped, which was significant, Lawler says. “We also added an elevator, and adjusted a balcony that wasn’t right.”

Applying the design/build process to this project allowed for the incredible level of interaction among the team. Surprising things can happen when open minds are at work. Lawler points attention to the black, gray and white mural wall to the left of the main entry (pictured above). The original plan called for a stone wall which would have been more expensive than what evolved. “We hit the value engineer-

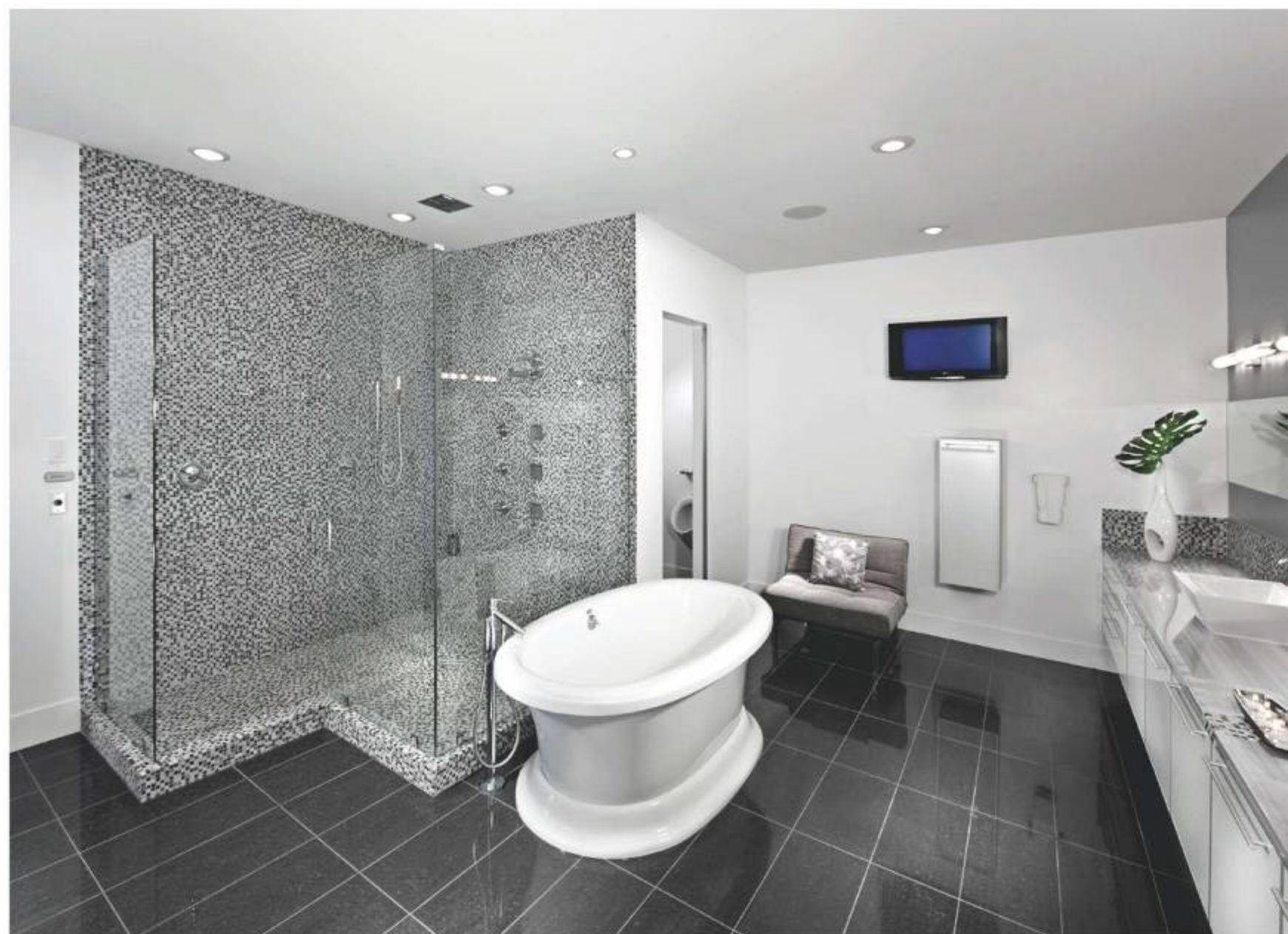


WEATHER OR NOT,
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ing stage so I designed what you see with drywall and metal expansion joints painted gray. This was one of those things that saved the client a little money. They liked it so much they made me sign it," Lawler recalls.

As much as Lawler enjoyed working with Harron, she enjoyed Lawler's style, too. "He's a professional with fantastic ideas, but he doesn't have the ego such that he won't listen to other input. A good example is the large wall in the entry space that spans two stories. I couldn't tell you who came up with the idea first, but within a day Walt sketched it up and ran it by [the owner]. He took what would have been an expensive rock wall and turned it into something more interesting and unique," Harron says.

She adds, "If you don't communicate with your customer, and you keep things moving without their input, they will be angry or disappointed because you will not have given them a chance to change their minds when they could have. We explain to our clients that we're not going to build what is approved on paper and in the contract. We will build according to how they change their minds." ■



This is not a black-and-white photo. The color scheme is accented throughout the home with carefully selected splashes.



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Build your process first

Before setting out to build a client's dream home, document the entire process in writing

By Nate Schoen

The other day I was reading an article by a builder lamenting about his homeowner who refused to play by the rules stated in the building contract. It was obvious from the tone of the piece that the homeowner was "one of those clients" — we all have seen them before. But what if we could ensure the homeowner would play by the rules and be part of our system and team instead of an adver-

sary? Maybe the homeowner was not following the rules because the rules were never clearly defined.

Looking back on that problem client, what could have been done better? As a professional home builder we know what it takes to successfully build a home, but why do we assume the homeowner understands the same? They are not builders. Homes are not their business. That's why they hired you.

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Most builders have clear procedures spelled out in their building contracts. They have probably added paragraphs and addenda over time to address specific problems that have arisen over time. But once that contract is signed, how many homeowners (or builders for that matter) have a copy of it available for quick reference? The contract usually is filed away and rarely referred to once the ink is dry. Under the best of circumstances, "quick reference" can be an oxymoron because the contract is written in the language of legalese.

The solution

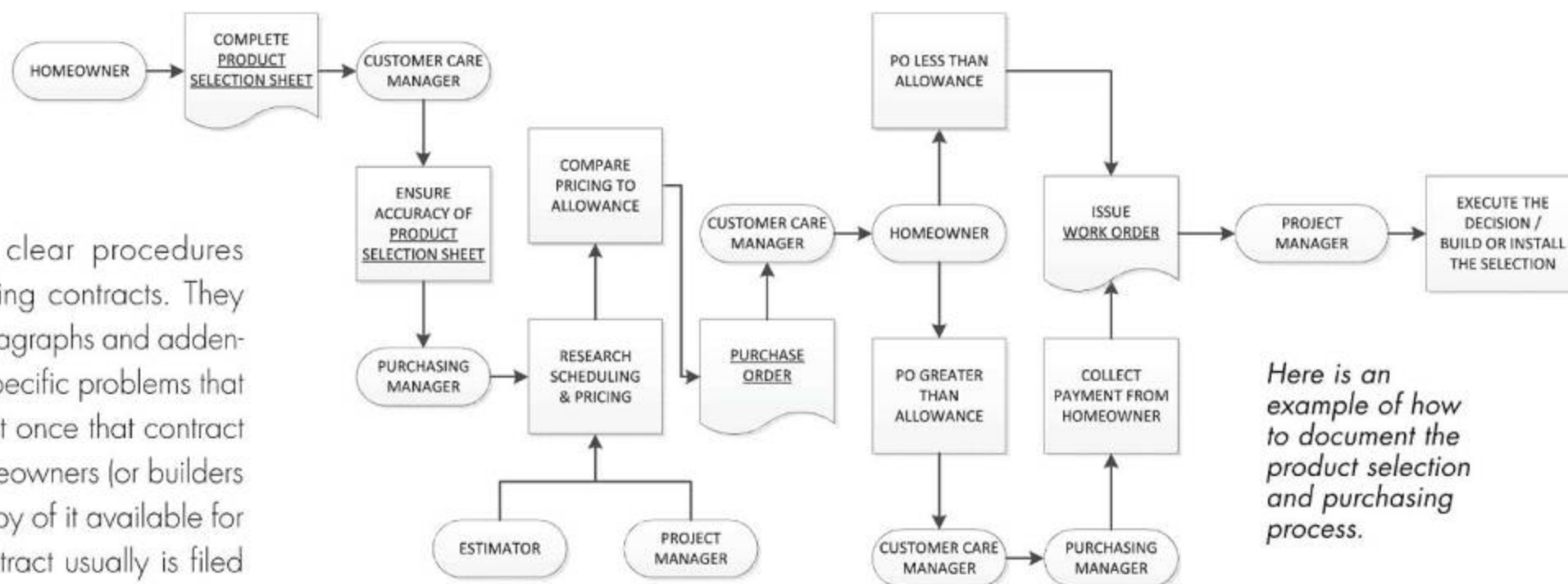
So what is the solution? As experienced professionals we owe it to our clients to define the actual process we follow to collect information about the home and execute a finished product. Our obligation is to pull the thoughts

and dreams of our clients out of their heads and help them articulate their hopes for the finished project. It is up to us to make sure the process is clear and easy for the homeowner to follow.

Yes, the building contract defines the rules of the legal relationship, but homeowners must have a clear, written checklist to back it up. We should explain their responsibilities. It's

what good communication is all about.

Clients are looking for guidance and direction; we fail the homeowner if we have not defined a clear road map to success. Many builders don't have a road map. Many builders don't have a process. If you think you have a process, ask yourself if it is clearly defined and written down. If it's not, then you don't truly have a process.



Here is an example of how to document the product selection and purchasing process.

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Building the process

Step one is to write it down. It is not enough to give the homeowner a schedule for making selections. Before you do this, answer these questions: How do clients make those decisions? Who does the homeowner talk to?

At the end of the day, your process road map — or lack thereof — will define your success as a custom builder.

Where do they shop? Who is the contact at that vendor? Which employee on our staff is responsible for assuring a complete decision is made? What constitutes a complete decision? What other decisions have to be coordinated with that initial selection?

A homeowner's guide or homeowner's manual given at the beginning of the project is an easy first step to creating a black-and-

white process for the client to follow. Explain what happens during the entire construction cycle. Explain when decisions have to be made. Explain why the decisions need to be made at that time. Explain what constitutes a complete decision. Explain what the builder does with the decision and how your team executes that decision. Explain it all. Make the homeowner part of the system and part of your team.

Once the process is defined and written down, give it to your client in a simple narrative or checklist format. Assign a specific individual on your staff to ensure the homeowner adheres to the process and understands the system. Hold the homeowner's hand if necessary; provide professional guidance and an understanding shoulder to lean on but always make sure the process is followed. This is your responsibility as the leader of your company.

At the end of the day, your process road map — or lack thereof — will define your success as a custom builder. An additional benefit is the ability to show the process to potential clients, and the chance to use the process as a

sales tool. Ultimately you will sell your process instead of your product and you will attract clients who understand the importance of the rules and structure, and they'll be more likely to follow them. ■



Nate Schoen grew up around his father Bill's design/build company, Bridgewater Construction, spending summers as a laborer, mason and carpenter apprentice.

After graduating from John

Carroll University, he spent six years as a Marine Corps Field Artillery Officer. Returning to Bridgewater, Nate and his father co-authored the Custom Builder Management Solutions Program. Since then, Nate has worked as a consultant and business coach with a client base of more than 250 custom builders in 32 states and three Canadian Provinces. For more information visit CBMSolutions.com. Schoen's blog about his experiences building a custom home utilizing his techniques and tools can be viewed at cbmssystems.com/buildingmybuildingcompany/.

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Design to the rescue

Architect's experience helps salvage a major renovation by establishing a design theme to carried throughout the home

By Rob Heselbarth, editor

The original owner of this home bragged that he built it out of the telephone book. Winn Wittman, the architect called in to salvage the complete renovation of this 13-year-old structure, puts it another way: "He threw a dart at the phone book and ended up with what he got."

As it turns out, it might have been easier to knock it down and start from nothing, but the new owner thought it would be a minor fix-up and it turned into something more comprehensive, Wittman says. "They went through a few architects and at least one contractor before we were involved," he adds.

A major flaw of the home, as Wittman sees it, was the 1980's McMansion look of the home's front exterior. "The roof was painted bright blue. It also had these four round windows on the front of the house that were hated by myself and the owner. I was looking for a way to introduce an element that could cover the windows and be replicated throughout the project so there would be some continuity that ties the whole house together," Wittman says.

The solution was to install custom water jet-cut 1/8-in. thick aluminum panels over the windows. "There were a number of possible patterns we chose from, but the one we used I had seen by



Architect Winn Wittman (sitting, right) and builder/homeowner Gary Robinson discuss design details. Wittman was called in to salvage the renovation of this 13-year-old lakefront home in Austin, Texas.

Photos: ©Coles Harston

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The cutout pattern from the front window panels is seen above the back patio (inset left). The wind coming off this Texas lake can be fierce, which required custom anchoring systems to be created.

a Dutch designer. I always say if you're going to steal, steal from the best," he adds.

Against the wind

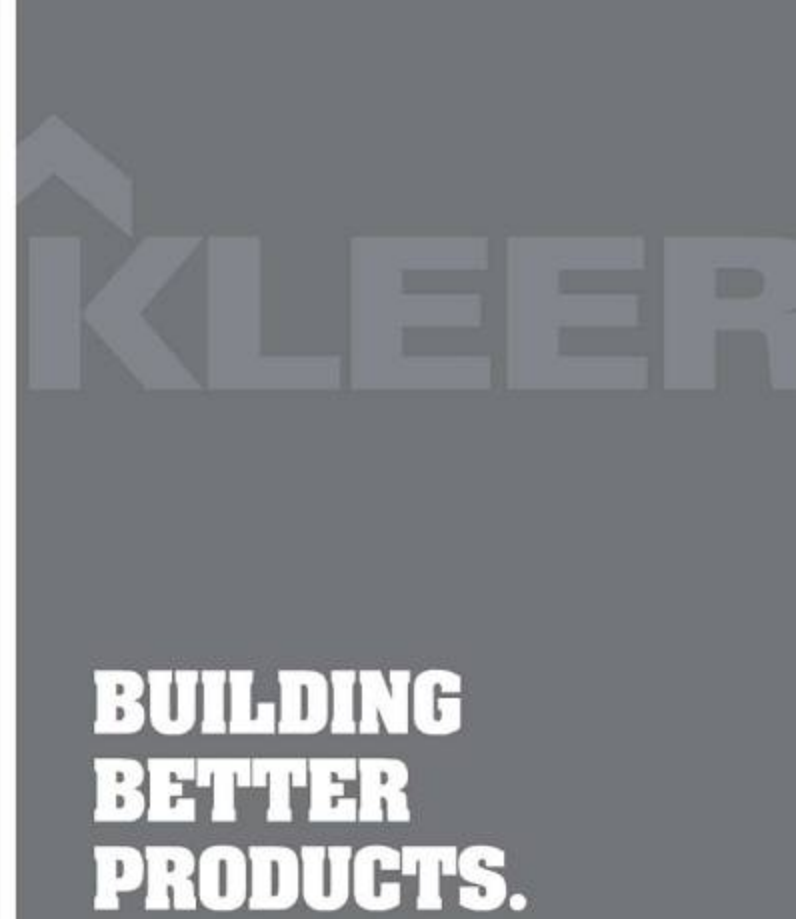
The home sits on a lake where incredible wind forces are experienced, so an engineer was hired as a consultant to the mounting system. Being perforated, the panels don't catch the wind as much as if they were solid, but the strong wind forces required an even stronger anchoring system. "We used a special epoxy system with stainless steel threaded rods and proprietary hardware. It is so strong a man can hang off these panels. Each anchor can hold 220 lbs. and we used four to six anchors on each panel, and each panel weighs only 60 lbs.," Wittman says.

The panels were so successful Wittman is setting up a business to manufacture them. "We can either customize these panels with a pattern or tailor them to a specific application. They're a great way to dress up an existing structure," he says.

Wittman says he would not take this approach for every client, but this one wanted something unique which resonated with his sensibilities. "He pushed us to come up with something that was different. The client is someone who likes to continually work on things, so



This custom glass screen illustrates the continuity inside of the pattern on the window panels outside.



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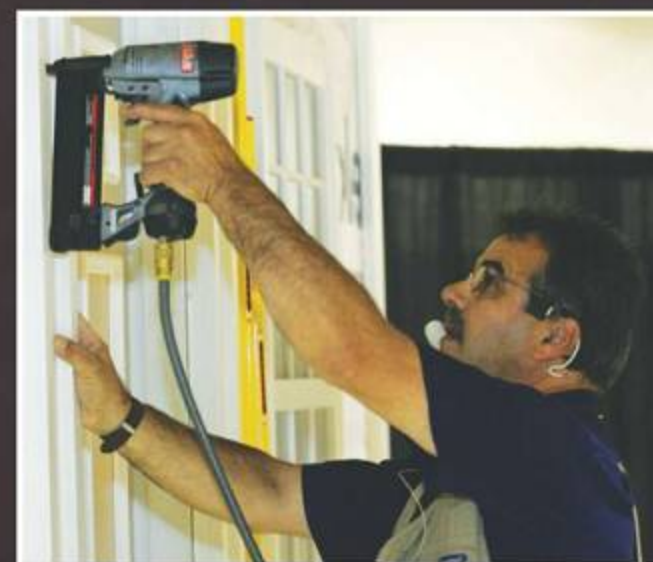
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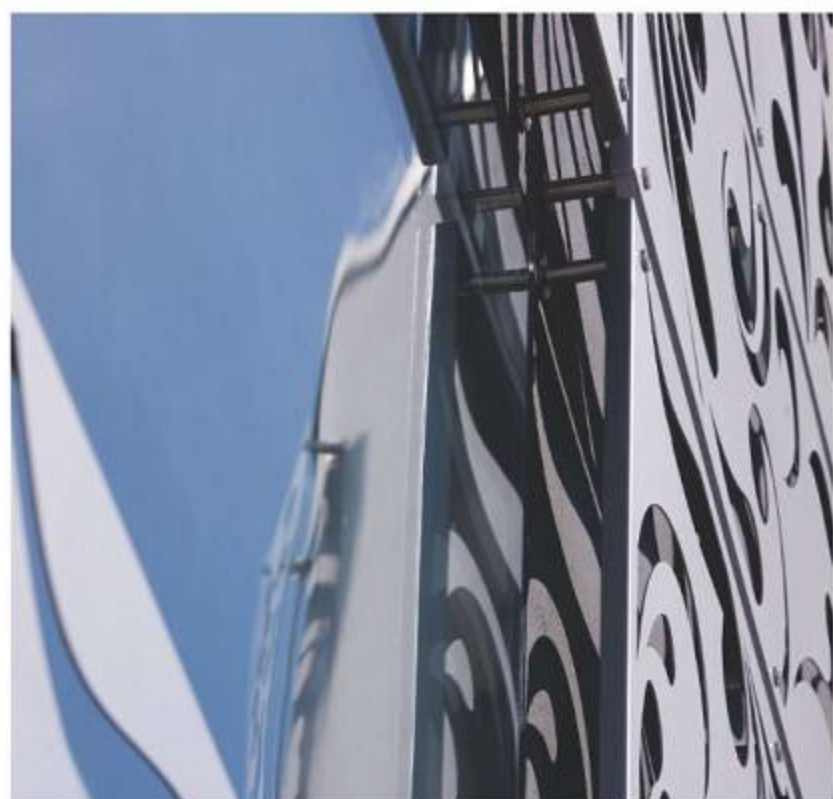
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it was challenging when trying to sequence the project. It was like working on a car while it's driving down the road," he says.

The in-house resources at Wittman's shop allowed him to apply the design/build approach to solving this client's problems. "What I think is critical to design/build is having certain in-house resources for the construction of the house. We've built up a number of subs over the years who aren't scared by some of the crazy stuff we do. They're really essential. They're not in-house but they're working with us in a design/build capacity. It works nicely." ■



Customized water jet-cut aluminum panels were installed over windows on the front of this Austin, Texas, home. The panel design is carried throughout both the exterior and interior to establish design continuity. A customized anchoring system (pictured at left) was designed to fasten the decorative panels onto the house. Each anchor can support 200-plus lbs., and each panel has a minimum of four anchors holding it in place.



Views out the rear of the home over the lake are captured everywhere possible.



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Building Information Modeling creates efficiency, accuracy, collaboration and better structures

By Maureen Alley

Building information modeling is one of those terms with a changing definition. In the residential construction world, it's a holistic process that solves many challenges in a building's evolution including timelines, accuracy, minimizing files, collaboration and eliminating waste.

"BIM is such a misunderstood term. BIM is not a software; it's a process," says Jay Moore, business development director, Ameri-CAD, an ITW company based in Allen, Texas. "If you are sharing information up and down the chain, you are sharing BIM data."

Asking so many trades and personalities to cooperate is like gathering players from the NFL, NBA, NHL, MLB and telling them they now have to throw the ball the same way.

Using Ameri-CAD's VisionREZ software, designers can create 3-D models, construction documents, add products such as windows and doors into a design, export a bill of materials and share that file with the manufacturer. "We created a link to export our model into manufacturers' solutions," Moore says. "We populate the architectural model with the manufacturer's data

and create a bill of material. It's a bidirectional link, collaboratively sharing data with the supply chain."

An important part of successful BIM is working with manufacturers. "SoftPlan allows you to place real manufacturer objects in a house. Fixtures will show up accurately in the construction documents, 3-D model and on the material list," says John Jones, vice president, SoftPlan.

Cadsoft's Envisioneer residential BIM tool works with other BIM solutions on the market to create a complete system. "We integrate with other leading BIM solutions in the market including iLevel's Javelin software for engineered wood and MiTek Sapphire Structure for trusses and structural components," says Brad Finck, vice president, Cadsoft. "We also integrate with Keymark for whole-home analysis. Most recently we created a bidirectional link with 20-20 software for communicating with kitchen and bathroom design specialists. They can do the full kitchen or bathroom design and send it back to us."

Learning curve, challenges

As with any new technology or business practice, there's a learning curve. Design software creators offer support to minimize the curve. "We offer free seminars to our current users — several webinars every week from introductory-level to very specific. We also offer an extensive video library with more than 400

training videos," says Scott Harris, vice president, sales and marketing, Chief Architect. The company also provides support staff with building industry background.

Ameri-CAD's VisionREZ is based on Autocad, so familiarity with Autocad equates to an easier time learning VisionREZ, Moore explains. The company offers two-day training sessions and users should feel comfortable with the software after completion of four to six drawings. "The key to learning BIM is how much you are using it," Moore adds.

BIM may be the next generation of home design, but this doesn't mean there aren't some challenges or limitations. "The problem with BIM is it relies on collaboration for it to work. The person who needs to start [the process] is the architect or designer. But because they are so concerned with legal liability, most architects won't share. They think if they share and there is an error in the field, they will be held accountable," Moore says. "The industry has to address the legal limitations of BIM — who is going to own an error. Until then, it will be difficult for designers to initiate and pass it down the chain."



The mere fact that multiple people are involved can be another challenge when working with BIM. "You are taking different trades, personalities, standards and now asking them to cooperate," Moore adds. "It's like putting a bunch of players from the NFL, NBA, NHL, MLB and telling them to throw the ball the same way."

So what's the solution? Moore says it lies with who is in charge of a project. "They need to say, 'I understand your concerns but this process allows my organization to create better design, a more accurate house and fewer resources. If you don't use it, then I'll find someone else,'" Moore says.

Demands and benefits

As with many aspects of home building, consumers are driving the demand for BIM. "Consumers are tired of having homes built and getting surprised by the finished product. Even with TV shows, they are showing 3-D images so consumers are starting to expect it," Finck says.

The economy has also had a great influence on the use of BIM. Producing more accurate products and using fewer materials, BIM has allowed building professionals to stay competitive and be more cost-efficient.

Before purchasing a BIM solution, consider the following. "On the surface, people think that all the packages are the same, but you need to do your research on what the differences are," Harris says.

"Three-dimensional design is now essential, but you also need it to be robust enough to produce drawings and material takeoffs," Finck adds. "You should also consider something that [can] communicate with a material supplier and other facets of the construction industry."

Because successful BIM relies on collaboration, make sure the programs are compatible with other software. "If I am creating my drawing with Brand X software and need to share with others, I need to ask, 'Can they open it, read it and manipulate it?' It's also important to consider legacy drawings. Asking them to go to a different file format from what they've been using could be cost-

ly because of the legacy data they have," Moore says.

BIM for the win

Change isn't always easy, and changing a process that involves so many people can be even harder. But using BIM ultimately will eliminate human error, jobsite errors, material waste and streamline the entire process. "It's a tremendous change for everyone," Moore adds. "We moved from pencil to mouse in the '80s. This is a new paradigm shift — a new solution that will further elevate the knowledge from CAD, create better drawings, greater accuracy and build a more sustainable structure with fewer resources."

The amount of digital information in the design and construction process will continue to grow, and those professionals who take advantage of what BIM offers will be successful even in a depressed market. "Times are competitive. The people who aren't paying attention aren't very busy and are struggling," Harris says. "The people who are staying in tune with the right tools are the ones who are surviving." ■



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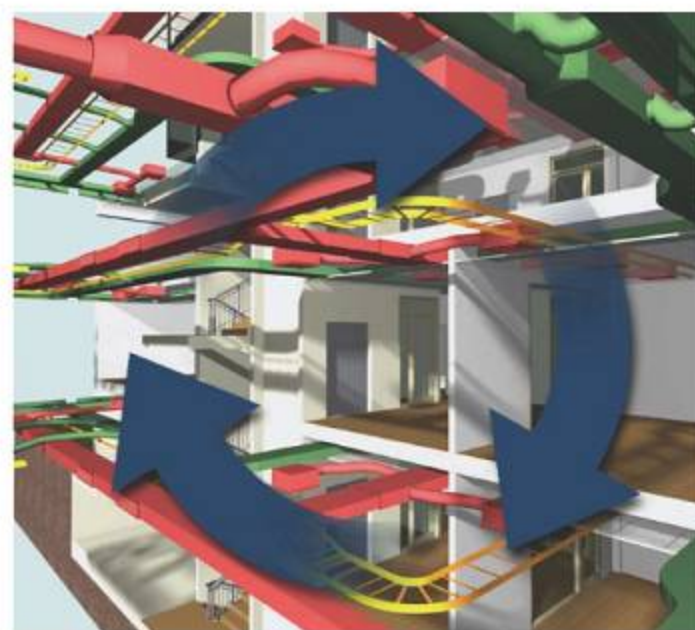
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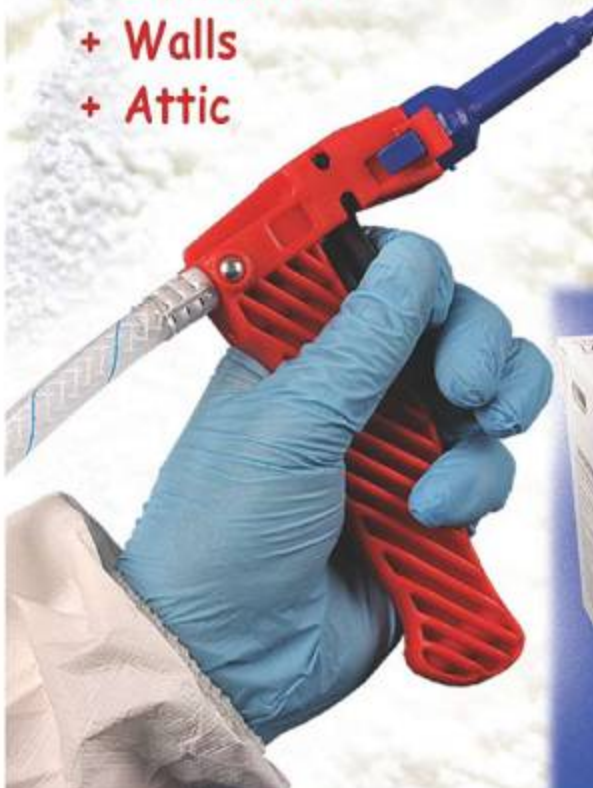
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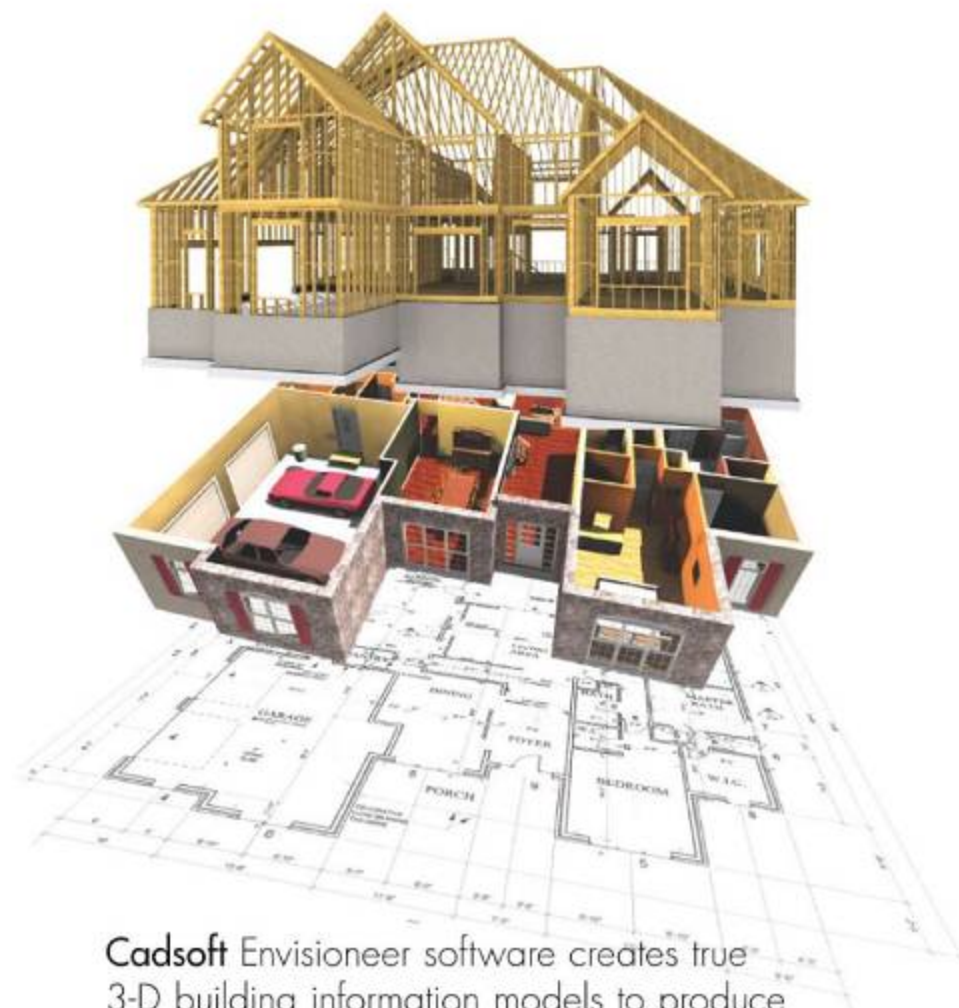
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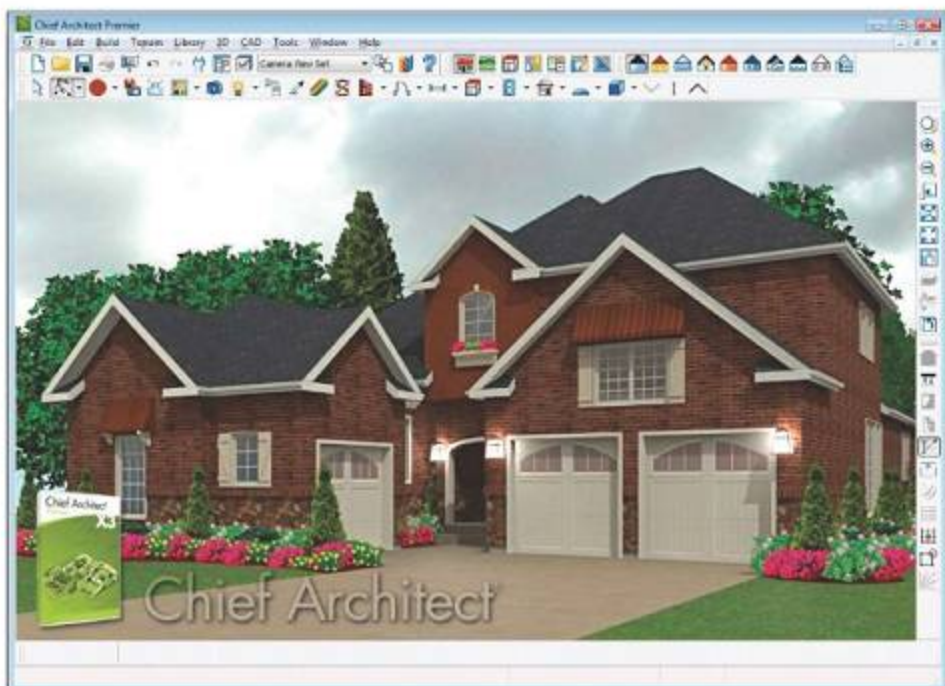


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Autodesk Revit Architecture 2011 software is purpose-built for Building Information Modeling. Users can explore design concepts and forms, and better maintain design data through documentation and construction. With parametric change technology, any change made is automatically updated throughout the model, keeping design and documentation coordinated and more reliable. For more info circle #19



Google SketchUp Pro is 3-D modeling software for professionals. It is designed to be easy and intuitive, allowing anyone to model in 3-D quickly and accurately. Use it to quickly explore design ideas, presales visualizations, create professional documents, communicate with clients and contractors, create accurate floor plans to scale and submit bids. For more info circle #20



Chief Architect is specifically designed for the residential and light commercial design professional. Its 3-D visualization tool is designed to help sell projects to clients. In addition, users can produce construction drawings that allow for more cost-effective design work. For more info circle #21



SoftPlan Architectural Design Software is residential and light commercial CAD software. Users can draw fully assembled items such as walls, windows, beams, rafters and foundations. Once floor plan designs have been completed, it automatically creates elevations, cross sections, framing diagrams, material lists and much more. The software package impacts bottom-line profits by increasing the speed at which designs can be created and edited. For more info circle #22

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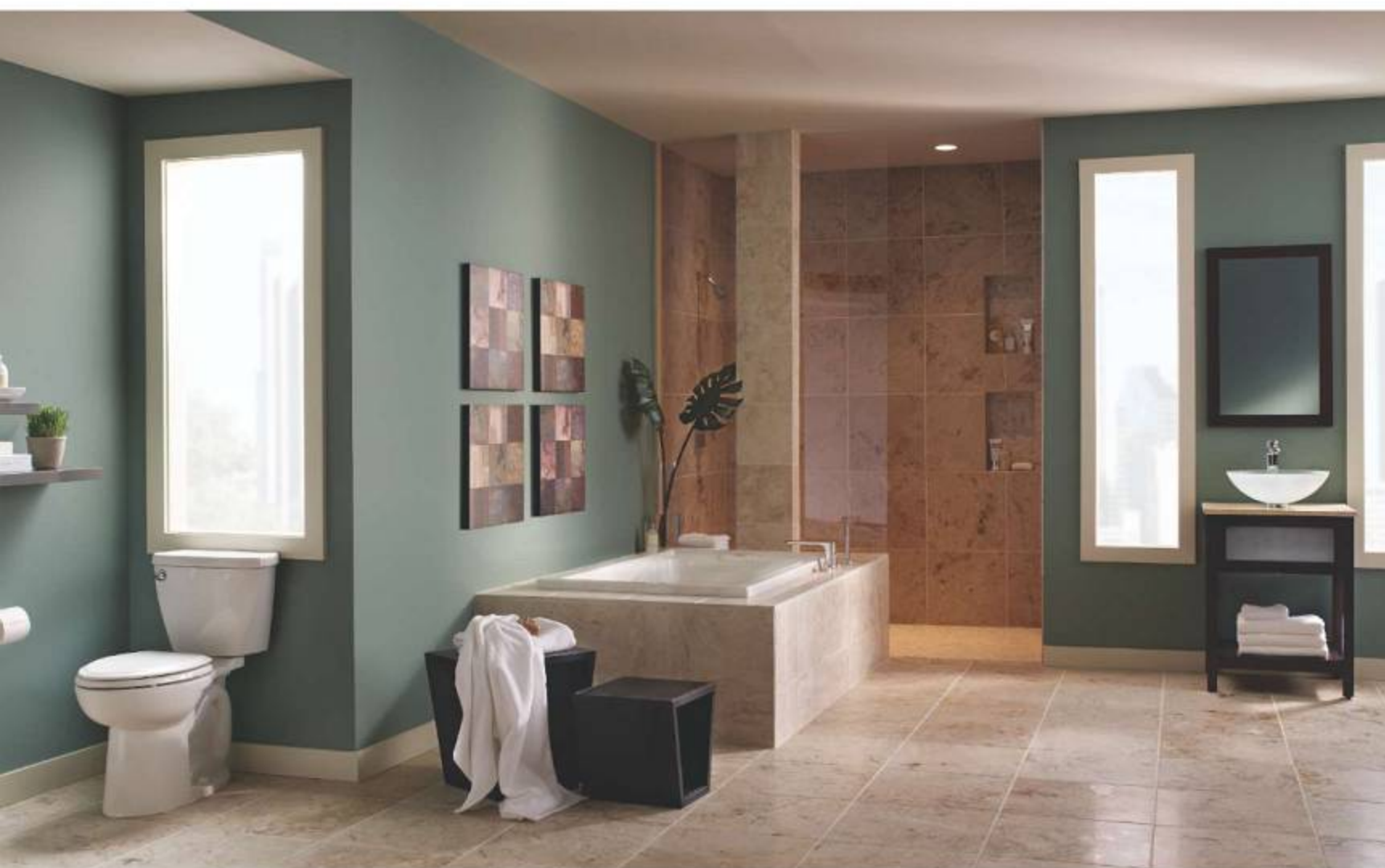
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Niche the bathroom

Dividing the bathroom into task spaces can improve traffic flow and improve efficiency

By Jeffrey Holloway, CKD, CBD



Multigenerational and multichild households can benefit from bathrooms designed with compartments for different tasks, including a separate space for the toilet.

compartment, a minimum centerline distance from the wall to the center of the toilet is 15 in. (this is code). Remember that during planning and rough-in stages, wall thickness including interior coverings is considered to establish this centerline measurement.

When this compartment is shared by a bidet, there must be a minimum of 15 in. from the side of the toilet to the centerline of the bidet. Again the NKBA recommends a minimum of 18 in. here. If a bidet is installed it should have a towel ring along with a soap dish located within reach.

Once the width is determined, consider the compartment's length. The minimum code requirement is 60 in. The toilet usually runs parallel to the length of the compartment, and the minimum code requirement from the leading edge of it to another obstruction (typically a wall or vanity) is 21 in. We've used the 21 in. measurement successfully, but it is tight. The NKBA's 66 in. recommendation for the length of the compartment works better. Their minimum recommendation of 30 in. off the leading edge of one fixture to another is also a little more realistic. Remember most toilets set 30-in. off the back wall of the compartment. With this standard the designer is left with 30 in. in front of the toilet in the 60-in. long compartment and 36 in. in the 66-in. long compartment.

If planning for wheelchair accessibility, the compartment's minimum dimensions should be 60 in. in width and 59 in. in length. There must be a 30 in. by 48 in. area parallel to the side of the toilet in this space so an individual can transfer from the wheelchair to the toilet.

Compartmentalized bathrooms allow multiple people to share the bathroom at the same time while providing privacy for individual tasks within the space. This is more consistent with kitchen design than with bathroom design. Much like the standard kitchen work triangle, we have begun to establish separate tasks or zones within bathrooms.

Most bathroom tasks can be broken into individual elements: the vanity area; the shower and tub area; the toilet and bidet area; an exercise area; and walk-in closets. The designer must think about these specific areas with an emphasis on aesthetics second. Remember that not all areas of the bathroom need to be sanctuaries.

Compartmentalized doesn't mean physically partitioned. We can create work areas without introducing walls. The limitations of square footage should not prevent the designer from

coming up with good solutions. Simply think in terms of point of use, the space around each fixture and how each fixture will be accessed.

Toilet space

The toilet area is the one most commonly compartmentalized. For a busy family, partitioning the toilet area, which may include a bidet, can create form and function. If designing a compartmentalized area for the toilet, follow simple standards recommended by the National Kitchen and Bath Association. In all instances remember that your local codes will always take precedence.

Finding room for and creating a compartment is the first priority. The minimum code requirement for a compartmentalized bath is 30 in. by 60 in. The NKBA recommends a minimum of 36 in. by 66 in. I challenge the designer to create an even wider area of about 42 in. Regardless of the width of the

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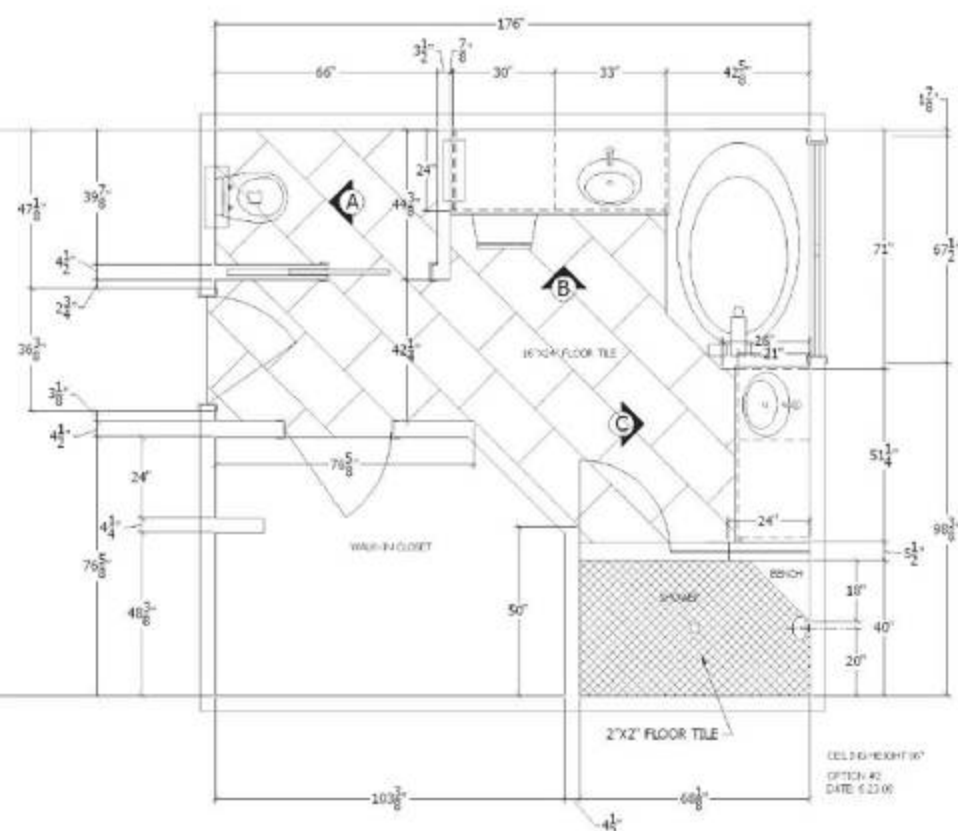
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The challenge to incorporate all of these minimum requirements into a toilet compartment can be overwhelming, so be patient. A designer must understand available fixtures and be confident to specify them.

Toilet choices

Designers can choose from three basic toilet configurations. One choice features an elongated bowel. Unfortunately, it takes the most amount of space off the back wall. The elongated bowl usually finishes at about 29-in. to 30-in. off the back wall. Some manufac-



This is an example of how a bathroom can accommodate multiple users while maintaining efficiency.

turers provide "Compact Elongated Toilets" which can finish around 27 in. off the back wall. The second and probably most practical choice for a toilet compartment is a one-piece round-front toilet. Installed, it usually finishes around 26 in. off the back wall.

Wall-mounted toilets provide additional space and flexibility. They might be the best choice for a compartmentalized bathroom because they take up the least amount of space within the compartment. Most wall-hung toilets finish between 22½ to 23 in. off the back wall. This style of toilet also provides for flexibility in the height of the product. Try asking your customer how high off the floor they want their toilet to be. With two partners sharing the same space it is always interesting to see who gets their way.

Remember, that if you are designing with a wall-mounted toilet, certain considerations must

be addressed. Wall-mounted toilets require a minimum 5½-in. wall cavity for the tank to occupy, and they require more time for installation during the rough-in which adds cost. The designer is also limited in the selection of finishes available for the actuator (flush mechanism). They also, in my opinion, require an impervious surface between the wall and bowl for sanitation, something manufacturers' glamour shots fail to portray.

One other way to maximize the space in the toilet compartment is to source one that has a minimum rough-in off the back wall of 10 in. American products use a standard 12-in. centerline for the rough-in but some European toilets are also smaller in scale and many of them are more attractive than their American counterparts.

Because the toilet area is specialized and separate, it is important to remember that ventilation and point-of-use storage are required. The minimum requirement for ventilation is either an operable window of 3 sq. ft. or an exhaust fan with a minimum 50-cfm rating.

Storage in the enclosure requires planning and products that are frequently used at the toilet. The designer has the option of open or closed storage and can be recessed in a wall cavity to preserve the length of the room. The NKBA recommends accessibility at 26 in. to 59 in. off the finished floor for people who are standing or 15 in. to 48 in. above the floor for universal design. Storage for feminine hygiene products, ointments and toilet paper should be within the universal range and accessible while sitting on the toilet. Remember that a magazine rack may also be in order and it's fair to ask your client if they would like one.

Grab bars also should be considered for the space. A minimum bar of 24 in. should be provided behind the toilet and should be centered. If space allows, a 36 in. bar should be provided behind the toilet with the additional length added to the transfer side of the toilet. A grab bar should be placed along the side wall too. It should be a minimum of 42 in. in length and should be between 12-in. to 54-in. off the back wall. These bars are available to the designer in styles and finishes that prevent them from looking institutional.

The toilet compartment should have a door

that swings out. This way, if the occupant of the compartment fell and landed in front of the door, the compartment would still be accessible. Pocket doors can be a useful solution for this area, too. However, because pocket door hardware can be difficult for a child or older person to operate, it is important to consider user age and their ability to operate it. Remember the door opening should be a minimum of 32 in. wide with an ideal standard of 36 in. being more practical.

Lighting within the compartment is also important. Many people read while using the toilet so provide enough lighting with a decorative ceiling-mount fixture or standard recessed fixture above the toilet. We also install automatic night lights in these compartments to light the way during early morning hours. The simplest sensors are installed in a duplex outlet in a wall or can be specified in better-quality exhaust fans.

Probably the most important design consideration within the toilet compartment is its proximity to other rooms. Many of our clients are up frequently during the night to use this space. If it is in a master bedroom suite it should be as close to the bed as possible. Limit obstructions between the bed the compartment.

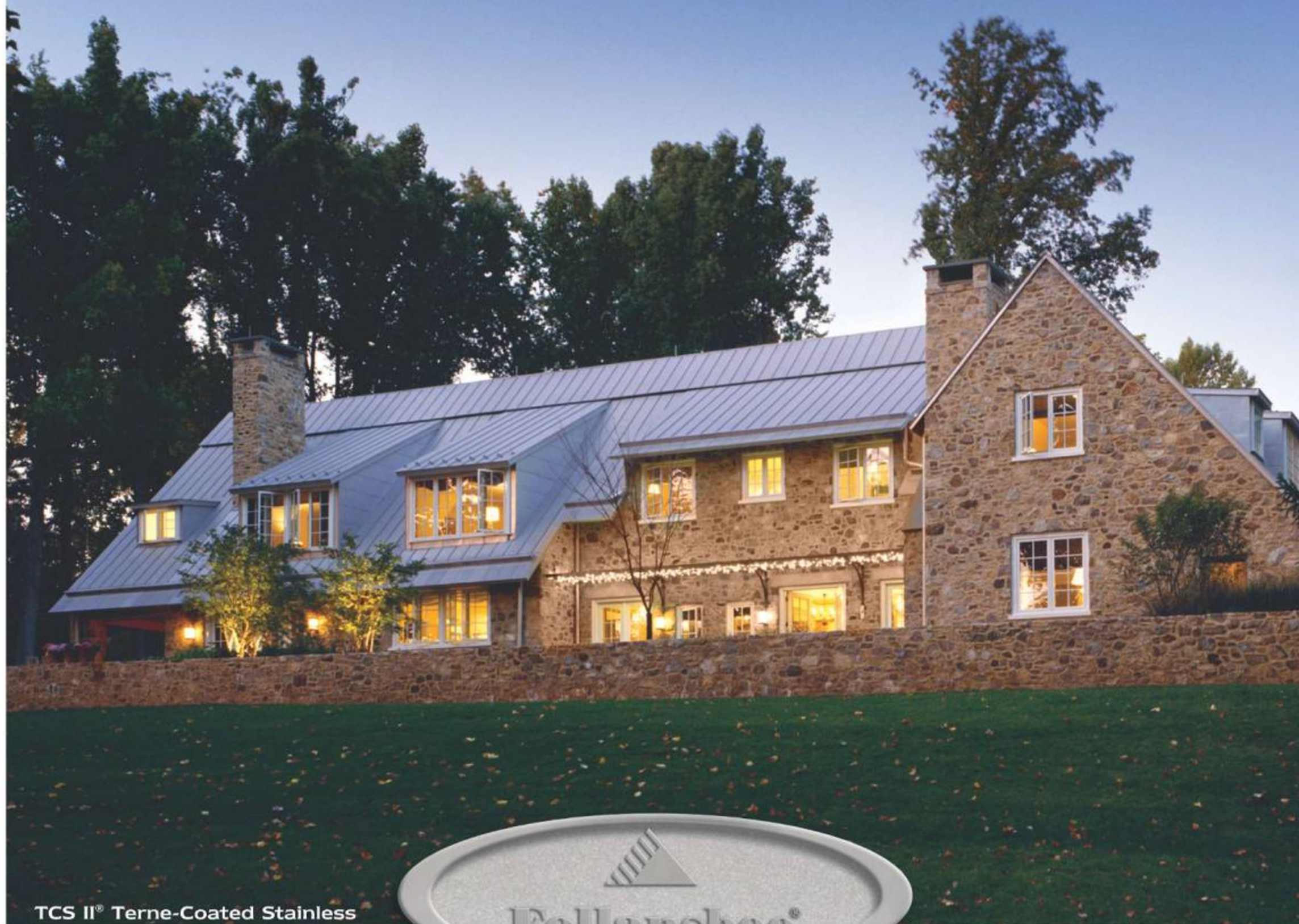
Careful planning along with the proper selection of products will provide customers with a compartmentalized toilet area that performs well and looks great. Make time early in design to plan each of the elements described above. Specify dimensions and products with confidence and you will provide your client with a toilet compartment that performs well and provides profitability for your business. ■



Jeffrey Holloway, CKD, CBD, has been designing kitchens and bathrooms for more than 22 years and has received numerous awards. He has been recognized by the National Association of the

Remodeling Industry as a regional contractor of the year. Holloway provides instruction to individuals and business owners that want to learn more about kitchen and bath design, sales and installation. He is an instructor for the NKBA and can be reached at jpholloway@comcast.net, at hollowayhomeimprovement.com or 609-390-4812.

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For more info circle #31



Retro 1900s design meets 21st century water-saving standards in this white porcelain pull-chain water closet from **Sunrise**. With a 10-in. rough-in, it is ideal for small bathrooms and powder rooms. The height to the top of tank is 82 in. above the floor, but pipes can be trimmed down on-site to make it lower. For more info circle #33



A highlight of this new Cobal Collection from **Danze** is its two variations of high-efficiency toilets (1.28 gpf): two-piece elongated option and one-piece compact elongated option. Both toilets include an elongated bowl and a 16 $\frac{7}{8}$ -in. rim height. Fixtures will be available in white or biscuit colors, and available through the company's distributors by summer 2010. For more info circle #34

The redesigned Saniflo from **SFA Saniflo** is designed to offer faster cutting action and a quieter performance. It features a 20 percent smaller, yet more powerful pump, sound-absorbing silent blocks and anti-vibration studs. Like its predecessor, this toilet uses above-floor plumbing technology to handle waste not only from a rear-discharge-type toilet, but also from a sink and a tub/shower. For more info circle #35



Caroma's Walvit industrial-strength, classically styled, range of wall-hung, dual-flush high-efficiency toilets are designed to add classic style and water conservation to any bathroom. The Round Front Plus and Elongated toilets are available in standard height and adjustable to Easy Height. The Walvit range averages 0.96 per flush. For more info circle #37



The one-piece Chapeau high-efficiency toilet from **Porcher** features a concealed trapway, a flattop tank and decorative edging to match transitional design. The toilet uses 1.28 gpf and features an engineered flushing system that prevents clogs and overflows. Also included is a slow-close toilet seat with an easy lift-off feature for cleaning. For more info circle #38



Laufen introduces its Ilbagnola series dot matte black ceramic toilet. The finish features a smooth leather-inspired texture. Its design was inspired by circles, squares and linear lines and includes asymmetrical shapes. For more info circle #40



is WaterSense labeled. For more info circle #41

Kohler Co. offers its Persuade Curv Toilet designed for small spaces. Operated by a user-friendly, two-button actuator integrated into the top of the toilet's tank lid, it can flush either 1.6 gal. or half that amount — 0.8 gal. The toilet

Toilet options from **Geberit** include single- and dual-flush systems with actuators designed to accentuate any bathroom. The company's carriers and dual-flush tanks for wall-hung washdown toilets offer two water-saving flush choices: 1.6 gpf (6 lpf) and 0.8 gpf (3 lpf). Other systems support the installation of urinals and bidets. For more info circle #39



Gerber Plumbing Fixtures announced the availability of its latest high-efficiency toilet, the new Avalanche 1.28. The company's most sophisticated and powerful single-flush gravity fed toilet, it uses only 1.28 gal. A three-in. flush valve, Fluidmaster fill valve, uniquely designed jet feed, rim structure and trapway configuration all contribute to this unit's performance. For more info circle #42



Coway's BA-17 bidet features technology that generates electricity from water flow to run the electronic bidet functions. It includes a self-cleaning nozzle that automatically creates a spray to ensure it is clean before using the bidet, and remote control convenience. For more info circle #43

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For more info circle #32



WAC Lighting introduces the energy-saving InvisiLED Classic 24-volt outdoor system of LED tape lights. The fixtures are IP-68 rated for submersion in water up to 5 ft. in depth, as well as UL and CUL Listed for wet locations. It offers an extremely low-profile and is virtually invisible with a 1/8-in. thickness and 1/2-in. width. For more info circle #50



The Fullback Thermal Support System by **Progressive Foam** is an insulating foam underlayment placed behind vinyl siding during installation. The rigid foam backer is custom-contoured to match the profile of siding, filling the gap between the siding and the home to deliver maximum energy efficiency. For more info circle #54



Schlage introduces its SecureKey bump- and pick-resistant residential door locks. Its locks and deadbolts employ a new high-security design that enables them to be rekeyed in seconds without removal from the door and without compromising security. Security is actually enhanced through the use of a pick-resistant Grade 1 cylinder and a special locking sidebar that protects against lock bumping. For more info circle #56

ProMar 200 and ProClassic Waterbased Acrylic-Alkyd coatings from **Sherwin-Williams** provide durable, smooth, high-performing finishes with minimal environmental impact. These new coatings bring together the best performance benefits of alkyd and acrylic paints, offering: application and finish of an alkyd coating; non-yellowing properties of an acrylic coating; and, VOC content of less than 50 grams per liter. For more info circle #51



Viega's Climate Panel System can be installed over wood subfloor or concrete and under any type of floor covering. Made of aluminum-backed plywood with specially designed grooves for ViegaPEX Barrier tubing, it is a clean and responsive radiant system for new or retrofit construction. For more info circle #52



Town & Country Fireplaces has unveiled its new Clean Face Power Vent Termination for the gas fireplace market. Fitting within a 14 3/8-in. x 14 3/8-in. wall opening and sitting flush with the outside wall, the device can be painted any color to match the outside exterior and blend into the outside wall. For more info circle #53



Combining the green properties of fiberglass with customer desire for real wood, **Milgard** now offers its Essence series of windows and doors that feature fiberglass exterior and wood interior. The system keeps the fiberglass window looking like real wood on the exterior, while creating channels to keep water away from the interior wood. It comes in 15 different colors in lead times of three weeks or less. For more info circle #55

Maestro Wireless from **Lutron** is designed to provide lighting solutions where users need them by choosing the pieces that fit the application. Homeowners can control lights from couch or bedside with a Pico wireless control, or place a Pico wireless control in a car to turn lights on as they arrive home. Occupancy sensors turn lights off when rooms are empty. For more info circle #57





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For more info circle #48



Modern Fan Co. introduces its contemporary Pensi fan, designed by Jorge Pensi. It's an assemblage of cylinders that house the motor, blade rotor and lighting in the simplest possible shapes. It meets the highest EPA and green standards in terms of air moved per watt of energy consumed. For more info circle #58



American Clay introduces its Lime Putty, a gauging material that can be added to all of the company's applications. The addition of the product to original earth plasters lowers the working time of the plaster, but the end result is a harder finish, achieving near maximum hardness in six months. For more info circle #59

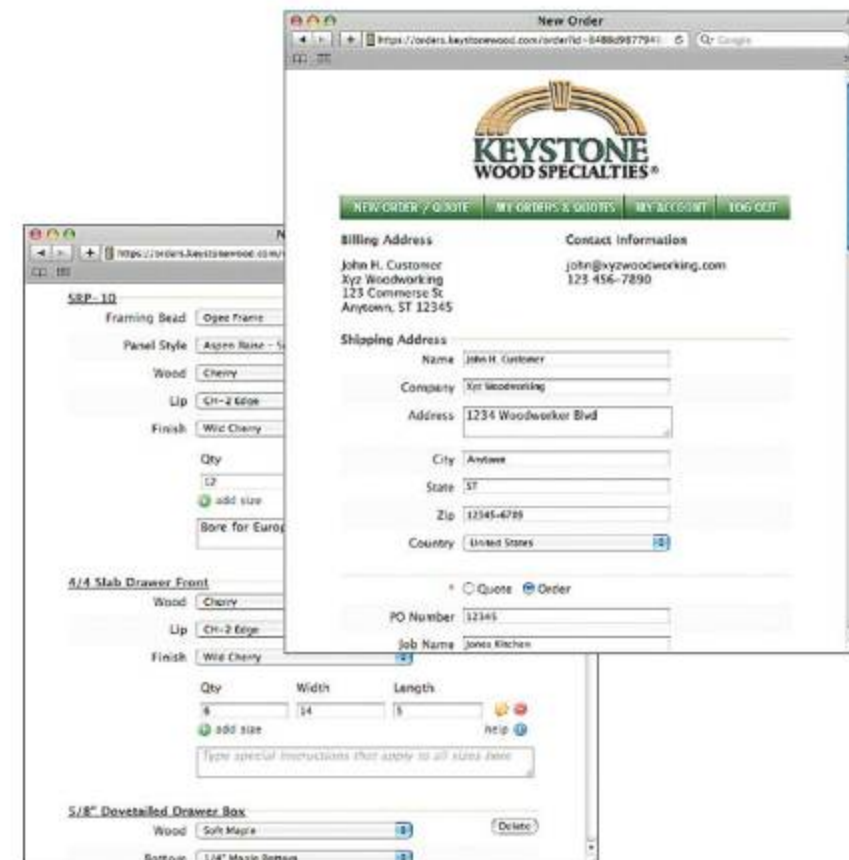


Radiant Glass Industries collaborates with **Busick Insulated Glass** to develop an energy-efficient and energy-generating product. Power**e* Glass units utilize low-voltage DC power that warms the inside of the glass pane — creating a system that is nearly 100 percent efficient. The units use up to 40 percent less power than conventional heating systems. For more info circle #60



Inclinor elevators are individually hand-crafted to customers' specifications. Numerous car styles, wall finishes, custom features, accessory options and drive systems are available and can perfectly match a home's custom cabinetry or wall finishes, modern to traditional. Custom designs are possible with inlaid wood. For more info circle #62

Sashco introduces eXact Color Sealant, a fast and easy way to create custom color sealants to match any job or to create beautiful contrasts. It requires no special tools or mixers; mix in three minutes using latex paint, water-based solid stain, or universal pigments. For more info circle #63



Keystone Wood Specialties' interactive order form now allows customers to quote and order their products completely online. Request a single door, or components for an entire kitchen. Information goes directly to the company's order entry system, and is processed accurately and efficiently. For more info circle #61



The Design and Architectural Series flooring from **BR-111** is designed for those desiring an edgy spin on traditional hardwood. This series utilizes end cuts and waste strips, both byproducts of producing traditional hardwood flooring, to create a variety of mosaic wood patterns for the floor, wall and ceiling that offer homeowners high design. For more info circle #64



Armstrong Cabinets adds a new five-piece drawer style to its Rutledge line. Clean lines and basic forms characterize this full overlay door style, which features solid maple panels with true Shaker width stiles and rails. The door and drawer front is available in all-maple finishes. For more info circle #65

Build a Home Theater Before Building the Home – with Help from the Products and Professionals at Harman

Harman delivers precise, consistent sound for true theater quality on a much more intimate scale

A good starting checklist for a new home should include: Builder – check. Architect – check. Designer – check. Home theater – check.

Home theater?

A lot goes into today's home theater

Absolutely. A home theater is as important to a new home's design and construction as anything else.

The home theater professionals at Harman know that it's far more cost-efficient to make it part of the home's initial design. That way, it eliminates the need to retro-fit a home theater, which includes tearing out walls, redoing electrical work and other unnecessary work.

Plus, it allows for the selection of the ideal home theater equipment, and to build the room so all the components blend seamlessly into its design for optimal performance.

Pro sound comes home

Harman crafts products that strive to accurately reproduce the cinema experience, designed, engineered and tested to ensure superior quality, the purest sound and enduring performance.

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Lexicon®'s BD-30 Blu-ray Player delivers brilliant video imagery, high-fidelity audio and complete media format support for superb theatrical enjoyment, while its ZX-7 amp powers the finest listening systems with exceptional sonic performance.

Revel®'s speakers consistently outperform higher-priced competitors in double-blind testing for best-in-class audio right out of the box, such as the Ultima Salon2



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An industry leader in audio systems, JBL Synthesis® speaker systems are specially designed to duplicate the same sound characteristics of such acclaimed venues as the Samuel Goldwyn Theater and the Sydney Opera House, and feature THX®-certified surround-sound processors.

With these and so many other award-winning Harman products, working with a Harman home theater professional before construction begins creates a far more satisfying result for the homeowner.

Plan an acoustical utopia

Architects know that each room in a home must adhere to the principle of form follows function. That's especially true with a home theater. Therefore, partnering with a Harman home theater professional leads to creating a theater room that blends perfectly with the overall sophistication of the entire home's design.

By doing so, the completed home theater will be a showcase room where the homeowner can revel in the form of their new space, and delight in its function.

Build the ideal theater

The builder can ensure the home theater is completed as desired. Wiring, cabinetry, carpeting and essential construction elements install easier to serve the needs of the system components, such as high-performance speakers mounted unobtrusively and

exemplary amplifiers and disc players placed where they can be easily accessed.

Once completed, every sound, every image, is more natural and realistic, allowing the homeowner to feel the unsurpassed clarity, power and calibration from every seat in the room.

Design an exceptional experience

Interior designers will also be able to increase their client satisfaction by considering the design of the home theater from the outset. From the seating, to the colors, to the lighting, the designer can bring out the best of the room's aesthetics in order to fully complement the extraordinary sonic purity of Harman home theater systems.

The best seat in the house

A lot of planning goes into each home before construction starts in order to make it the best. Why not turn to Harman to plan the best home theater as well?

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Ever wonder what a home fire sprinkler system looks like behind the walls?

The nonprofit Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC) has developed a 3-D animated movie to give homebuilders a better understanding of fire sprinkler installation in new houses. The comprehensive online presentation provides an interesting, behind-the-walls perspective of typical

national standard: NFPA 13D, Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems in One- and Two-Family Dwellings and Manufactured Homes.

It's proven to be a big hit with the homebuilding industry. HFSC shared an advance copy with homebuilders, developers and architects and 125 participated



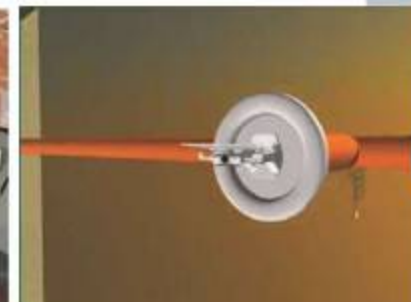
installations, and addresses water supply, system components and their function, and other aspects.

"Our goal in developing this free tool was to provide an interactive presentation that would answer the most common homebuilder questions," says HFSC Chair Gary S. Keith. Production of the virtual movie was funded in part through a grant awarded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The video is available online at no cost and can be accessed on demand. The content explains the types of sprinklers used in houses and covers systems that comply with the

in an online survey. The majority of respondents (81%) agreed that HFSC's 3-D movie improved their knowledge about home fire sprinklers; 77% felt it helped them understand how fire sprinklers work and are installed. Eighty-two percent said it was interesting and worth watching, while 62% said they would be likely to recommend sprinklers after watching it.

A builder from Purcellville, VA, said he hadn't considered home fire sprinkler systems before watching it: "...seeing these videos helped me realize the benefits, the ease of installation, and effectiveness of such a system. It also...would reflect on the quality of my



homes, and more importantly, convey that I am indeed interested in my customers' families and their safety."

The animated presentation has value beyond the industry, according to this Tabernacle, NJ, builder: "This should be promoted on television. The potential to save lives is tremendous." Many others seemed to agree, and some planned to utilize it as part of their marketing strategy: "Interesting presentation, thanks. I'm always looking for new ideas to introduce

to clients." (Andover, MA) "Very well done. I will keep this link to pass on to clients." (Minneapolis, MN)

Its interactivity makes it easy for users to watch it all or only those sections of immediate interest. It, and a variety of other free materials and tools are available on HFSC's website: HomeFireSprinkler.org. From the home page, click on BUILDERS in the center of the screen. You'll find the 3-D movie in the Builders section when you click on Videos in the left column.

Fire Sprinklers: They're Good for the Environment!

HFSC recently partnered with FM Global to undertake a landmark research project to identify, analyze and evaluate the environmental impact of fire. The study included test burns involving identical structures to replicate a typical living room. Just one structure had a fire sprinkler system.

FM Global scientists determined that fire sprinklers reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a fire by 98 percent. In addition, sprinklers reduce the amount of water pollution released into the environment, reduce fire damage by up to 97 percent, and reduce water usage to fight a home fire by upwards of 90%.

"Now we know with scientific certainty that sprinkler technology offers valuable environmental benefits in addition to saving lives, preventing injuries and protecting property," says HFSC Chair Gary S. Keith.



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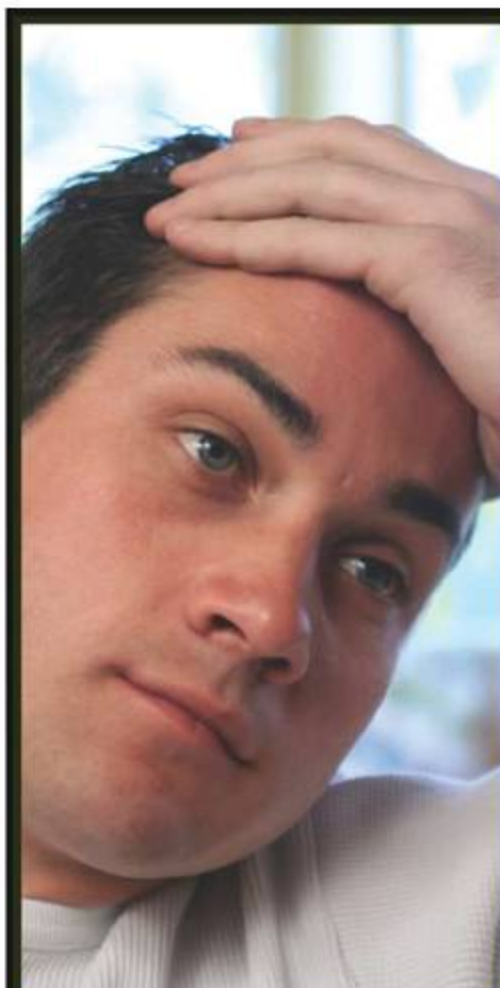
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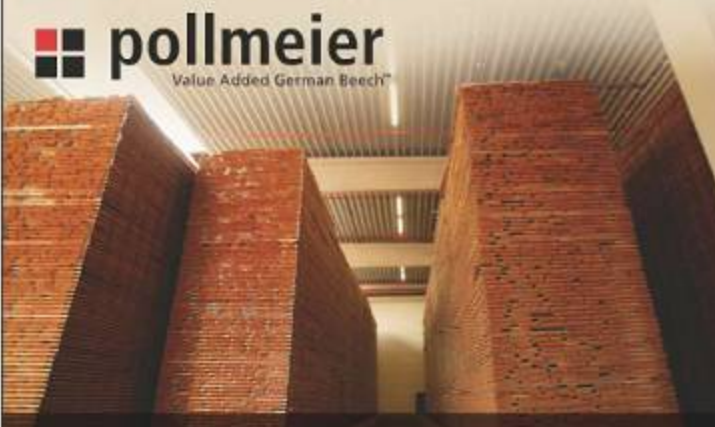
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GROUP PUBLISHER Tim Campbell
tim.campbell@cygnusb2b.com

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

1233 Janesville Ave.
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538
Phone: (800) 547-7377 Fax: (920) 563-1707

SALES OFFICES

WEST

Joshua Lentz
5012B 40th Avenue, NE
Seattle, WA 98105
Phone: (206) 283-6762 Fax: (206) 428-9114
E-mail: joshua.lentz@cygnusb2b.com

MIDWEST

Paul DeGrandis
Accelerated Media Solutions
1213 Wilmette Ave, #210
Wilmette, IL 60091
Phone: (847) 920-9510 Fax: (847) 920-9206
E-mail: pauld@accelmediasolutions.com

EAST

Beth Emerich
500 Bedford Street, #240
Stamford, CT 06901
Phone: (203) 353-9318 Fax: (203) 683-6512
E-mail: beth.emerich@cygnusb2b.com

INTERACTIVE/ONLINE

Tim Steingraber
3030 Salt Creek Lane, Suite 200
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
Phone: (847) 454-2723 Fax: (847) 454-2759
E-mail: tim.steingraber@cygnusb2b.com

INSIDE SALES/LITERATURE GALLERIES

Nancy Campoli
5 University Plaza, Suite 310
Hackensack, NJ 07601
Phone: (201) 487-7800 x127 Fax: (201) 487-1061
E-mail: nancy.campoli@cygnusb2b.com

CIRCULATION & SUBSCRIPTIONS

Phone: (920) 563-1761 Fax: (920) 563-1704
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LIST RENTAL

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(800) 547-7377, x1392
patricknadler@cygnusb2b.com

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Multitasker must-have

If you can't multitask, you can't prosper in America. This is why Blue Vision TV Mirror in Lake Zurich, Ill., combines two activities vital to the success of anyone looking to gain an advantage in life — watching TV and making oneself presentable.

The popularity of the TV mirror in the home began with its popularity somewhere else, says Tim Johannes, vice president. "The reason we're so strong in the residential market is the commercial presence. These products are in many hotels and that's where architects and designers first see them," he says. Blue Vision

sells to architects, designers, custom home builders, technology integrators, as well as kitchen and bath designers.

Many opportunities exist to hang a TV mirror in the home, including walk-in closets, and the backsplash in the kitchen as well. "Everywhere you can physically hang a TV, homeowners want to put one there. For example, in one kitchen there wasn't a good spot to hang a TV, so we incorporated it into the backsplash," Johannes says.

"Most of the installations we've seen are in a bathroom, but we also see them in the bar

area or above the fireplace. These products can be concealed in a custom frame that is adapted to the interior décor. Many interior designers can design a room around a frame much easier than a black box," he adds.

One limit to all TV mirrors is bright, direct light such as the sun shining directly on it through a window. "It will give it a glare and wash it out," Johannes says.

Customization is available, including heated glass to prevent moisture buildup in a steamy bathroom. Dimmable LED lights can be added behind the frame to create a vanity mirror if desired. "We've added IP cameras behind the glass with sensors, so clients can videotape a room or activate the TV as people approach. We're also getting into touch-screen technology as well." Blue Vision now offers Energy Star-rated models.

Blue Vision will be happy to supply its go-to TV brand, but will work with any brand clients want. Predetermined sizes ranging from 19 to 65 in. are suggested for different applications such as kitchens and bathrooms.

"Interior designers like being able to disguise a TV, but they're also interested in how the TV mirror is hooked up," Johannes says. "They're simple to hook up. A mounting bracket is included."

For more information circle 27 or visit online at bluevisiontvmirror.com. — Rob Heselbarth





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