



HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION
of Dayton

Communication and Chemistry: Essential in Home Building

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Just about everything in the home building business has experienced dramatic change over the years, with one exception – the need for frequent and open communication with our customers.

The need for effective communication has only intensified in recent years as buyers become more educated – and more demanding – about the homes my colleagues and I are building throughout the Dayton Region.

Despite the importance of communication, not a month goes by when the Home Builders Association doesn't receive a call from a buyer, or builder, for whom lack of communication has produced very serious, sometimes intractable problems. And even though the HBA has an independent mediation and arbitration program managed by the Dayton Mediation Center, very few problems should ever get that far.

Chemistry

If you are in the process of selecting a builder for your new home, make your selection on the basis of quality, price and *chemistry*.

Yes, *chemistry*. Even if you select the best builder in the world, and obtain a price within your budget, you will have something less than peace of mind if you and the builder cannot communicate effectively.

During the builder selection process, gauge the builder's responsiveness – or that of his or her sales people – the same way you evaluate business colleagues and associates when you first meet them. Are you comfortable with him? Do you find it easy to talk to her? Do they seem genuinely interested in what you have to say? Are his answers to your questions clear and straightforward? Is the firm as customer-focused as it is product-focused? Does her sales office or model convey a sense of organization and professionalism? Does she have a

successful track record and will her previous customers recommend her?

In selecting a builder, in other words, you should always be able to tell yourself: "I can do business with this person."

Managing expectations

Once a builder is properly selected, it is important to have realistic expectations about the building process, and to avoid situations where you blow the top off your personal stress meter!

This is particularly true in the current marketplace, where many buyers follow the construction process as closely and as frequently as investors follow the Dow in the stock market.

For starters, *there will be days when absolutely nothing will occur on the site of your new home*. This doesn't mean that anything is wrong. It may mean that subcontractors are backed up on other jobs, that weather has caused delays or the house is waiting for a framing, electrical or other inspection from the local jurisdiction, or needed materials can't be delivered until the next day, or that the builder can't continue until he discusses a specific issue with you.

Second, buyers will sometimes see incomplete construction in process. Instead of assuming that they are looking at work that has yet to be finished, however, they assume that something is *wrong*. Some even commit a cardinal sin for homebuyers – giving "directions" to subcontractors about what they think should be done or how a particular construction issue should be handled.

Whenever possible, it makes best sense to visit the building site with the builder or his superintendent. They can answer any questions you have about what's going on at the site, and they can effectively address any issues or problems you identify.

In the end, it all comes down to trust and communication. If you have done a good job of selecting your builder, and established an effective framework for communication throughout the construction process, you will find that your builder will be able to focus on building your home – and you can focus on preparing for the day you move in.