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Information Technology for Home Builders

Using Technology to Increase Efficiency

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This booklet is part of a series produced by NAHB's Business Management & Information Technology Committee, Custom Home Builders Committee, Single Family Production Builders Committee and Single Family Small Volume Builders Committee.

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Information Technology for Home Builders

Using Technology to Increase Efficiency

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A Powerful Tool for Your Business

By Cory McFarlane

Construction management software are powerful tools for a builder's operations, and, in current economic conditions, ones they may need. Functions such as estimating or drawing a simple floor plan that would usually take a week to complete by hand, with the help of software, that same task could take less than a day. In today's economy, builders are not only faced with the challenges of a slowing housing market, they must also look to improve their operations and become more robust – delivering the same quality with less. The homebuilding industry, for all its glory in creating beautiful craftsmanship from Florida to California, has lagged behind in the acceptance of technology to help support their everyday operations. There is no doubt that running a homebuilding business, either with one custom builder or 1000 person production builder staff, all have the same objective – profit. In order to ensure your company is profitable, detailed organization is paramount in not only delivering a home to a homeowner in a zero defect fashion, but to document the process and have key information at the click of a mouse.

The 21st century builder has many options to find a software package to help him run his business more efficiently. But before a builder takes the jump and just decides to buy an off-the-shelf software program, one must ask, “what do I want to achieve?” Of course we want to make our

home owners delighted in the building process and make profit, but how do we go about it in a systematic approach that can harness the use of technology.

As a first step, the builder ought to pull out an old sheet paper and define the areas in his construction business from top to bottom. A lot of builders wear multiple hats in an organization, but don't take the time to really sit down and write out every function they oversee.

Once it's in a list form, an awakening will instantly happen; one would never believe how much a builder handles on a day-to-day aspect and some with no staff. As you begin to analyze a list there will be some similarities between all organizations. Most builders first list to utilize technology for the accounting function, the entering invoices, writing checks, tracking budgets and looking at job costs. It's the first logical step. But where does one go from there?

On the same sheet of paper, the builder will also list scheduling, estimating, sales, purchasing, warranty, but rarely customer relations management; all of which are necessary to run an efficient operation. Take these items and develop a workflow. All builders know how to create a schedule to deliver a job on time, but developing the workflow is defining the steps in the organization. In general, most builders have a marketing plan, whether it's through e-mail, mail or by word of mouth, which is the best kind of advertising, followed by sales, purchasing, production, accounting and service to round off the major categories found in a typical workflow for a builder.

At this point a builder has fought half the battle to understand the different job functions it takes to satisfy home owners. Now it's time to match software that will help not only make the job easier but an approach that will document processes, reduce errors, increase productivity and streamline the building process which will in return add to the bottom line.

Before going down to the local computer store and purchasing a piece of software, research. The NAHB publishes a Technology Solution Directory at www.nahb.org/tsd that has a host of software vendors that can provide you with a solution who best fits your organization. Many of

them will offer a demonstration or even a 30-day free trial to test their software. Also, at industry trade shows such as the International Builder Show®, software vendors display the latest in technology solutions that can help you grow your business.

True integrated technology solutions combine all aspects of a construction company from sales to warranty, and all of the back office functions in between. Some stand-alone products offer minimal integration with software developed from other companies. In this case, the builder would have to enter the information into different programs multiple times, thus increasing possibility of errors and the time involved would be long. With integrated software, entering the home owner record one time, in one piece of software, makes it available to all areas of the software. Not only is significant time saved, but errors in the design are reduced. Integrating all of this powerful software in back-end office systems can be done with the help of a technology solutions provider.

To dispel a common myth, the process of developing an integrated technology solution for an organization is not only for large home builders. Small builders can take advantage of these systems vary in price and offerings. Integrated construction management software can be purchased as a single package or in separate module form where the builder can enhance software as it's needed from the development partners making enhancements to the system. Web-based solutions also provide products that are quicker to implement and can be accessed from anywhere at any time.

The emergence of technology over the last decade has made the average home owner savvier in researching builders before they purchase a home. An online presence with information and images is necessary in this information technology age. Software solutions are available where home owners can go online to view pictures of their home, check schedules, process change requests and view documents. Delighted home owners and referral business will increase the more a builder uses Internet technology solutions to increase communication.

One often overlooked aspect of the business is a technology solution is Customer Relationship Management (CRM). CRM is software that is

designed to bring all of the home owner's information together to give one, complete view of each home owner in real time. This allows the builder and his staff to document communication, e-mails, review the home owner history in one, quick snapshot and eliminate the disconnect that can sometimes occur when a home owner calls and a staff member is out. All of the history is available with the click of a mouse and informed decisions can be made at the homeowner's request.

The benefits of implementing a technology solution are numerous. The only true downfall is a builder who defeats himself by saying "I can't" or "My guys won't use it" and doesn't want to take on the responsibility. Training is available from most, if not all, software providers at reasonable prices and can be done in person or online. No matter the size of the builder, technology makes the difference in managing not only a job or project, but the entire organization workflow. To survive in this environment, a builder must reduce cost, operate efficiently, and maintain safety guidelines. It is sound business practice that builders must embrace technology and use it as an advantage to grow their business.

Cory McFarlane is a licensed general contractor with a degree in business administration, and more than 10 years experience in the design/build field. He is skilled in business management, project design, project management and construction workflow. McFarlane has been involved in numerous luxury custom homes, public and residential renovation, restoration and renovations and commercial construction. As President of Cory McFarlane, Inc., he oversees all aspects of construction and administration. He can be reached via cory@corymcfarlane.com.



A Builder's View: Integrating Technology in to Business

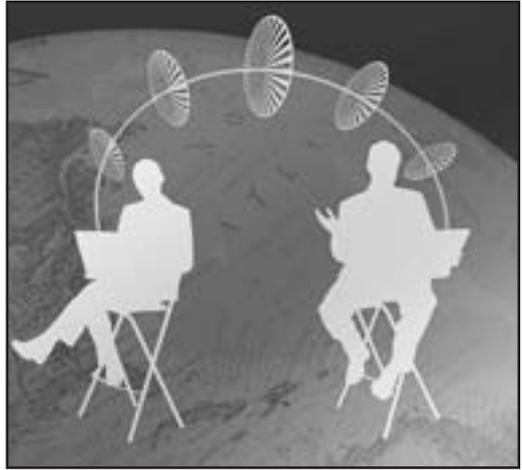
By Erik Cofield, CGA

Although many builders shun the very thought of doing something differently than they have traditionally, other builders are profiting, and don't know how they would function going back to the "old ways." Why the difference? Whether it is emotion, ego, fear, ability or just guts, knowledge is still power. BuildTopia® interviewed two different builders to get their perspective.

Spencer Padgett, Principal, at Arrisbrook Builders of Catonsville, MD uses technology as a "force multiplier."

"Our ability to enter information one time, then rely on it for multiple projects reduces the overall hours we have to spend on both data entry and management. Because our enterprise management system is all-inclusive with regard to capability, we rely heavily on its ability to communicate among its modules and produce reports that require input of several people in a non-technology oriented company. For example, budget accuracy, schedule performance and sales performance can all be tracked by clicking a few buttons, without the need for time-wasting meetings or collaboration of several people in several departments."

Since Spencer cannot yet clone himself, technology becomes a great equalizer: “Technology allows us to increase our geographic operating area while simultaneously reducing our operating costs. Our business management system (accounting, project management, sales and service management, document management, etc) is 100 percent ASP hosted –



or Application Service Provider, Software companies that provide an application you use on the Web. We do not have to invest in complicated systems infrastructure or hire IT overhead to manage our servers. We spend less time at each jobsite by utilizing our in-vehicle reporting capability which is tied to our enterprise management system. Less paperwork means more time for a critical eye toward attention to detail, safety and customer service. We spend more time in the field executing, and less time in the office shuffling paper.”

Accurate real-time information allows builders to make accurate real time decisions:

“We can operate with 100 percent visibility of all of our business critical information anywhere there is a cell phone signal. All of our vehicles are equipped with “Jotto Desk” mobile desktops which our laptops are attached to. We use wireless “air-cards” to access our Internet-based management information from any jobsite, anywhere. When our computers are in the office and we are not, we can use any Internet connected computer and “www.logmein.com” to connect back to our computers.

Trade partners are computer savvy now; are you? Spencer says:

“Almost 100 percent of our trade partners enter their own bid information online through our enterprise management system. This alleviates

us from having to prepare bid packages, fax or mail them, verify they have been received and wait for their return before we hand enter them into a spreadsheet. We can ask multiple suppliers or installers to bid the exact same specifications and enter their prices in the exact same manner so we get real apples-to-apples comparisons between competing bidders. Reports are automatically prepared and all we do is look for the best value, which of course is not always the lowest price!”

Is it too much effort, or does it cost more? No. The return on investment is extraordinary. Builders who are struggling to maintain profitability had better rush to compare business processes, or their own face replacement. Spencer agrees:

“We have a smaller staff, which accomplishes more, is better compensated, and happier with the streamlined process. Technology will not remove the everyday challenges that make homebuilding interesting. It won’t make sure your framer doesn’t frame the windows the incorrect size. It will allow you to focus on the bigger picture while taking over many of the details that can drain time, and therefore profit from a builders schedule. I buy the cheapest laptops we can find, throw in an air-card, and I don’t care if one gets broken or walks away after a year or two. All of our documents are stored online and our computers are purely a gateway to the internet.”

How does technology impact customer service, in an era when referrals still matter? Arrisbrook has the answer to the how of the profitability question:

“Our customers appreciate the details we don’t miss and the options we are able to accurately price and offer because of our use of technology. We don’t worry about selling options at a loss because we know our costs and can confidently price our homes and their options competitively. Knowing our costs, being able to price competitively and having confidence in our profitability is vital in a challenging market. If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it. Our options are consistently priced lower than our competitors; so while we may not make as much on one option, we net more from options because we can provide more perceived value for each option dollar spent.”

Consider a different perspective. Marcus Martin is one of the largest builders in the Jackson Mississippi area, and has positioned himself, not only for business management today, but growth for tomorrow. He was profitable even before he leveraged a software system. If you are already profitable, what benefit is it to go through the “hassle” of dynamically changing your company? Martin offers his insight:

“Systems allow you to set standard processes that are done the same



way every time, which has a return on investment.

Although you have to be prepared for the initial investment and the time it will take to integrate a system, consider your system like an employee. It isn't just about installing or implementing the system. It is about feeling totally comfortable with the system. For an all-in-one system, purchase under the assumption it will be months beyond the implementation until you are completely up and comfortable with the system and training your entire staff.”

Martin also suggests, “Before buying a system,

your company needs to analyze every way they presently conduct business and know what they want a system to do for them. One of the biggest mistakes builders make is buying software and changing their business to the software. You need to have a road map for what you want, and find a system that fits the way you're company works. But also, you should be excited about what the end result is going to be. You are going to get results and a return on your investment, based on your needs, such as: all job cost are controlled and accounted for through

purchase and variance orders. Schedules are accurate and reliable. Staff and trades can count on the schedule. All contact information and job-specific information are in one place for sales, construction and warranty. You can make money on these types of efficiencies.”

Erik Cofield, CGA has leveraged technology and provided business management consulting for all sizes and types of builders, developers and Remodelers since 2000, including volume, multi-family and custom, to help them improve their business. He is the National Accounts Manager with BuildTopia (www.buildtopia.com), a widely used international construction management software company. He can be reached via ecofield@buildtopia.com.

BuildTopia expresses its appreciation to Spencer Padgett, Principal with Arrisbrook Builders from Catonsville, Maryland and Marcus Martin, Owner, with Marcus Martin Builders from Brandon, Mississippi and the over 3500 companies who were not afraid to capitalize on the ability to leverage knowledge by integrating technology in to their business.



Winning the Margin Game

By Dianne Kaiel

Making money in construction can be a challenge in the best of times, and these are not the best of times. Industry slow-downs, financing woes, rising materials costs and skilled labor shortages are all putting pressure on profit margins, and construction companies are feeling the squeeze. And with typical profit margins on construction projects at 3 percent to 5 percent, the slightest error or inefficiency can put a job into the red.

Construction businesses need ways to improve efficiency, accuracy and profitability, and construction management software can be a big help. Construction-specific software that's designed for functions such as estimating, costing and service management can streamline operations and reduce errors, and integrated and automated management and accounting functions can provide greater visibility and control over all aspects of a job.

It's hard to justify new investments when the market is tight, but this is a problem your construction businesses can't afford not to solve if you want to stay competitive and profitable. Fortunately, the solution can be less painful and less costly than you might think.

The Staged Approach: Foundation to Finish

Many construction businesses hold back from software investments because they're concerned about the cost, as well as the possible disruption to their business as they train people in new tools, migrate their data and change processes. But just as a construction project happens in stages, one building on another, construction processes can be automated in affordable, manageable stages. You can start by automating processes that offer the most immediate return and lay a foundation for other improvements.

We recommend a three-stage approach to adopting construction-specific software tools:

1. Choose tools that boost productivity and streamline discrete tasks such as estimating. These tools will also capture critical data at the front end of the construction lifecycle, so it can be leveraged throughout a project and across projects.
2. Integrate operations tasks such as project management and accounting to speed processes and improve accuracy. Integration gives a unified view of project and financial information and real-time visibility across all aspects of a project, so you have greater control over schedule, quality and profitability.
3. Improve collaboration with business partners and suppliers to increase efficiency and prevent mistakes and delays.

Building Productivity

Speeding up individual tasks lets you compete more effectively in a tough market and handle more business when times are good. The right tools put information on design, costs, job schedules, status and costs, vendors, etc. at the fingertips of the estimator, project manager and accounting manager, so they can work faster and more accurately. The beauty of this is that productivity improvement goes right to the bottom line: faster, more accurate estimates can help you win a job, streamlined accounting improves your cash flow, and fast answers to cost and schedule questions can help ensure your profit margins at the end.

The key to productivity is to use construction-specific tools instead of generic spreadsheet software, accounting software, etc. While there will be a learning curve with any new tool, software designed for construction quickly saves time versus generic business software:

- Construction-specific tools are “expert systems” that help you work more accurately. For example, estimating software can use industry knowledge to fill in standard pricing, and it can leverage design information to prompt you for materials that should be included, so nothing gets missed.
- You don’t have to work from scratch: construction-specific tools give you access to industry-specific, pre-built databases and to databases of your own projects, so you can use historical data and real-time pricing information to bid and manage new projects and to improve results.
- Construction-specific tools have built-in reporting and analysis, so you can make rapid decisions based on accurate project and financial data.
- Document management tools allow you to quickly search and find a variety of documents for decision-making, regulatory, or legal needs.

For immediate productivity gains and bottom-line results, start with:

- Estimating tools that leverage industry knowledge bases and “wizards” to automate estimating and bidding processes
- Personalized desktop tools that give you fast access to commonly used tasks and documents
- Automated invoice creation, billing and collections software where you can use professional contract and billing forms to save time and avoid disputes
- Automated payroll creation, HR compliance and benefits management tools that speed payroll generation, simplify compliance management, and reduce errors

- Integrated reporting tools that let you track all aspects of a project from one screen, and let you track cost variances on a job-by-job basis
- Document management tools that automatically create an audit trail for regulatory compliance

Integrating Operations

As you automate tasks such as estimating, you will be building a construction-specific database of information on your jobs and your business. If your software tools work together, you will be able to share all of that information in real time. Information can be entered once, and it immediately becomes available in multiple modules for multiple people, saving time and avoiding re-keying errors.

With a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate picture of the job, plus historical data on past jobs, operations and financial managers can make decisions that save money and avoid errors and delays. They can also deal promptly and effectively with the inevitable delays or cost overruns to put projects back on track, schedule-wise and financially.

Making the move to integrated operations is relatively easy, because integrated construction management tools automatically share information from one task to another. You can import budget information from a project estimate into accounting and project management systems to aid in detailed job costing and to help track budgets vs. actuals. You can also share project and costs data in real time between project management and accounting applications, to help you optimize cash flow and profitability.

Sharing information between project management and accounting systems also lets you manage inventory, equipment and cash flow more effectively across jobs.

- You have the visibility to save money. For example, you can quickly locate extra inventory from one job and send it to another, or you can re-sequence tasks on different jobs, so you don't have to rent extra equipment to cover them all.

- You can feed change orders directly into project management and accounting systems for fast, accurate processing and prompt payment.
- You can structure and time purchase orders to manage cash flow, and you can avoid over-payment mistakes by quickly checking invoices against PO amounts and payment history.

Integrated operations software puts so much information at your fingertips that your greatest challenge may be in figuring out all the ways you can leverage it to improve the business.

Streamlining Collaboration

Once your internal information and processes are fully integrated, you can begin to automate interactions with your business partners and vendors. By automating information flow and communication with suppliers, partners and sub-contractors, project managers can schedule work more accurately, avoiding disputes and unexpected cost overruns, and financial managers will become more productive in dealing with labor and materials suppliers.

Information flow is widely recognized as a major issue for the construction industry. In a recent survey, McGraw-Hill Construction found that on average more than 3 percent of construction costs are related to software non-interoperability (which translates as the ability to share data across different systems). Think about that. Typical construction project margins are 3 percent to 5 percent, and 3 percent of today's costs could be avoided with software interoperability. What would a 3 percent savings do for your margins?

Complete information sharing among partners such as owners, architects and engineers, vendors, and suppliers is a long-term goal. But in the short term, you can gain immediate benefits from applications that automate day-to-day communication and financial transactions with business partners.

- Purchasing can automatically generate purchase orders and use them to schedule sub-contractors, so crews and materials are on site when they are needed

- Project managers can automatically generate and deliver schedules, project notices, and schedule changes to ensure timely communication
- Automated billing and professional contracts can speed transactions and minimize disputes
- Single-entry change orders will speed approval and billing, allowing work to move forward and improving cash flow.

Getting Ahead of the Curve

In the short term, life in the construction industry isn't going to get easier; the financing picture should improve eventually, but energy and materials will continue to rise, more skilled workers will be retiring, and regulatory requirements will continue to grow. The most sure and cost-effective way to protect your business is to do what other industries have done over the last two decades: use information technology to gain every ounce of productivity and competitive advantage. You don't have to do it all at once, but the sooner you get started, the sooner you'll experience the payoff and the better you'll be positioned to take advantage of new tools as they become available.

As long-time leaders in the construction industry, Sage Construction and Real Estate offers solutions and services with local representation and an award winning customer support program. Beyond integrated, construction-specific software we provide consultation in solving business finance and operations issues. Sage CRE partners with customers helping them lay the foundation of building their business through turbulent times.



Streamlined Selling: Secrets of Sales Success

By Steve Lewkowitz

Builders have been on a roller-coaster the last few years, from record highs to painful lows. Whether the housing market is booming or contracting, one thing remains consistent: as market conditions change, companies need to adapt. Builders who don't take the time to review and adjust their processes may regret it later.

Take your sales process, for example. Probably the most critical process of all, it may nonetheless be an area that did not receive a lot of scrutiny while homes were selling in record numbers. When the going is really good, there's little reason to critically examine the way things are done or implement any new methodologies. With changed market conditions, this is no longer the case. Fewer buyers mean fewer leads, and fewer leads mean builders have to increase the number of leads converted to sales in order to sustain growth. With a smaller pie, you need a bigger share just to keep afloat.

Get sales and marketing to work together

A good first step in addressing this issue is to home in on the lead-generating part of the process – marketing. Automated marketing systems can be effective to help pull in more leads at a lower cost, even in a slower market. But marketing and sales work best when treated as an

integrated process, and builders also need to be aware of what happens to leads once they enter the system.

The next step toward increasing sales conversions is a joint initiative between sales and marketing. Regardless of the quantity of leads being generated by marketing, the quality of these leads also counts. Sales and marketing must work together to determine lead-qualification criteria and processes. Customer Relationship Management, or CRM, applications that contain both marketing and sales modules can prove very useful in automating this process, ensuring the right leads are delivered to the right salesperson at the right time according to predefined criteria. Timing is critical to sales success, and if lead processing is inefficient, salespeople might miss their chance to make a sale. Classifying leads according to readiness to buy and delivering them instantly allows sales agents to prioritize more effectively and make more sales.

Refine the sales process

Once leads are in the sales agents' hands, it's on to the sales process itself. In the heat of a seller's market, the discipline of selling may have become more lax. Under today's market conditions, rigor and consistency must be brought back to bear on the sales process. A CRM system can help out in this area as well, allowing builders to embed sales steps and stages into the system, ensuring every salesperson is following approved processes. A good CRM system should be flexible enough to allow you to determine the details of these steps and processes – this allows you to apply your market knowledge and reflect your corporate culture within the system, even modeling on the proven processes of your company's top sales performers.

Using automation technologies to drive your sales process takes the guesswork out of home sales – especially important to “greener” sales agents – and ensures your sales force is following best practices. It also allows salespeople to take a more organized and strategic approach to selling, something that is increasingly important in a cooler market. CRM systems allow salespeople to develop clear action plans for interacting with prospects. And because the CRM system is also a central repository of prospect information, sales agents can tailor these action plans to individual prospects based on demographics and preferences. For example, potential buyers in the “active adult” segment

could be invited to a weekday barbeque at a target community, whereas busy young professionals might respond better to evening or weekend telephone contact that takes less of their time. Knowledge about prospect interests and life stages can help salespeople better target their pitches and communications – should they send the prospect news clippings about SAT performance at local high schools, or brochures from nearby golf courses? And details about client preferences – Do they prefer e-mail, postal mail or phone calls? Do they want to be contacted about alternative properties or communities? Would they prefer communications in Spanish? – help salespeople personalize the process and create memorably enjoyable buyer experiences. All of this adds up to smarter, more strategic selling, and ultimately to higher sales conversions and happier homeowners.

Help your salespeople be more productive

While the quality of a sales team's strategic approach is indispensable to increase sales, sales performance can still come down to basic productivity. No matter how hard they work, there's still a limit to the number of activities a salesperson can fit into a day. Accordingly, a building firm serves its sales force best by providing tools that will save time and increase productivity.

Again, technology-supported approaches can prove valuable in this area. If they are sufficiently robust, CRM systems can become salespeople's central resource, making homebuyer information quick and easy to access at any time. They can also become the engine that drives the sales process – the home of the action plan and sales steps. So CRM systems are natural sales hubs, and the more sales productivity tools they can pack in, the better. Some systems, for example, offer personalized dashboards that list top contact information, pending activities, new leads in order of priority and deadlines (mortgage and contract contingencies, for example, or deposits due), all in a single screen that the user can set as their homepage. In addition, systems that link to users' computer-based calendars can integrate appointments and other scheduled activities for easy reference on the same screen, without switching programs. These time-saving features keep sales users productive and organized.

Administrative tasks are important to company operations, but they

take away from selling time. Good technology support helps salespeople cut time spent on paperwork, reporting and communications, freeing up time for more productive uses. Because sales steps and details are tracked in CRM systems, for example, managers can monitor sales progress accurately without taking up the salesperson's time. Furthermore, some systems offer interfaces that can be accessed by mortgage companies and design centers, allowing the builder to immediately share information such as options qualification figures and mortgage prospects without any further effort. Two-way links to options selection features and design centers from the CRM system can also streamline and simplify the home-configuration process.

The process of generating quotes and contracts and obtaining management approvals can be another impediment to an efficient sales cycle. CRM workflows and tools can help progress deals through the quote-to-contract process more quickly by automating the assignment of steps to the appropriate stakeholder and notifying managers of needed approvals without any effort from the salesperson.

Keep the customer experience in mind

Each of these CRM productivity tools and process-support features is capable of increasing the ease and efficiency of the sales process. Together, they add up to a significantly smoother, faster sales cycle and increased sales productivity. Furthermore, a CRM-supported sales process is a smarter, more strategic one, with a higher chance of sales success, resulting in increased sales conversion rates. Finally, and most importantly, despite increasing efficiencies and accelerating the sales pace, a CRM-supported sales process does so without cutting corners in customer service or sacrificing the customer experience. In fact, it does just the opposite, infusing the sales process with a more personalized tone and approach. With this strategy, everyone wins.

Steve Lewkowitz is Professional Services Director at CDC Software, providers of the award-winning Pivotal CRM for Home Building and Real Estate. Steve can be reached at slewkowitz@pivotal.com or 732-297-4060.

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The work groups usually meet the day before the standing committee meetings begin. You don't have to be a committee member to attend.

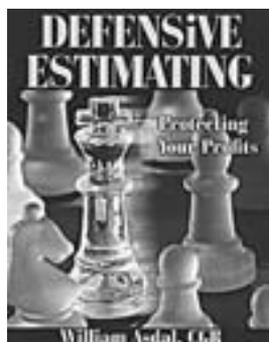
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ESSENTIAL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT BOOKS

Defensive Estimating: Protecting Your Profits

by *William Asdal, CGR*

More than a few residential builders and remodelers have walked away from closings with less money than they deserve. Performed correctly, estimating is your key to keeping more of your hard-earned profit. Master builder and business expert Bill Asdal's unique approach to estimating gives readers user-friendly systems to improve the process and provides hundreds of ideas and simple suggestions.



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Check out the Accounting and Financial Management section of www.nahb.org/biztools. From accounting methods to profit equations to tax strategies, you'll find a variety of tools — including NAHB's Chart of Accounts (www.nahb.org/chart) — to manage the financial aspects of your business.

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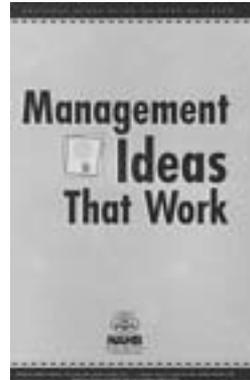
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Each month, twelve times a year, count on Business of Building e/Source to provide you with articles, interviews, and links that give you guidance on how to run your company more productively and profitably. It's free for NAHB members and packed with tips and tricks for contractors by contractors—tested information right from the field that you can incorporate into your business immediately.

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ARE YOU LOOKING FOR TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS? DO YOU HAVE TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS?

NAHB's new online **Technology Solutions Directory** is your one-stop shop to learn about product developments, exchange information, and compare vendors of hardware, software, and other related products and services to help you move your business forward. More than 50 companies are there to assist builders and remodelers with expertise in accounting, estimating, data backup, paperless, wireless, and other vital technology-based solutions too numerous to touch on in this brief guide.

Check it out at www.nahb.org/TSD.



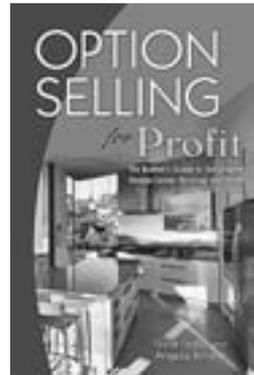
PRO BUILDER: Business Planning *by Steve Maltzman and Mike Benshoof*

You don't have to let your business control you. This great resource will show you how to do market research, forecast sales, allocate resources, control costs and more.

Option Selling for Profit: The Builder's Guide to Generating Design Center Revenue and Profit

by Gina Gulla and Angela Rinaldi

Increase your revenues and profits through capitalizing on your options and upgrades programs. Learn how to create an options program that not only builds customer loyalty, but, motivates them to buy! Includes 19 downloadable forms and tools that can be customized.



Information Technology for Home Builders

Using Technology to Increase Efficiency

In the fast paced world we live, staying on top of technology may make or break a business – but certainly technology will increase efficiency.

This guide is comprised of useful articles to show you the possible benefits you can reap by investigating the many technologies available geared specifically to you – the builder. NAHB Business Management Department has a unique resource to help you find the technology solutions on the market called the Technology Solutions Directory. There you'll be able to sift through the most up-to-date vendors on the market. Check it out at www.nahb.org/TSD.

This booklet is one piece of a broader effort NAHB-wide to help the builder navigate through this market. The Business Management Department offers an array of materials on its BizTools site at www.nahb.org/biztools. There you'll find more articles like the ones contained in this booklet.

The guide also includes a handy list of other business planning tools NAHB has available to you just by picking up the phone or going to www.nahb.org.

This booklet is part of a series produced by NAHB's:

- Business Management & Information Technology Committee
- Custom Home Builders Committee
- Single Family Production Builders Committee
- Single Family Small Volume Builders Committee