

September 2010

BLUEPRINTS

A monthly publication of the Asheville Home Builders Association



SEPTEMBER

General Membership Meeting

Biltmore Park Town Square

Thursday, Sept. 16
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Sponsored by ProBuild through the
2010 Foundation Club.



Upcoming Events

September 8-9

Membership Drive

AHBA Office

9 am - 5 pm

Open to all members!

September 30

Fall Golf Tournament

Black Mountain Golf Club

Shotgun Start: 12 pm

Sign up now!

October 9/10 & 16/17

Parade of Homes

Don't miss the premier
homebuilding event of 2010!

October 13

Parade of Homes Gala

Crest Center & Pavilion

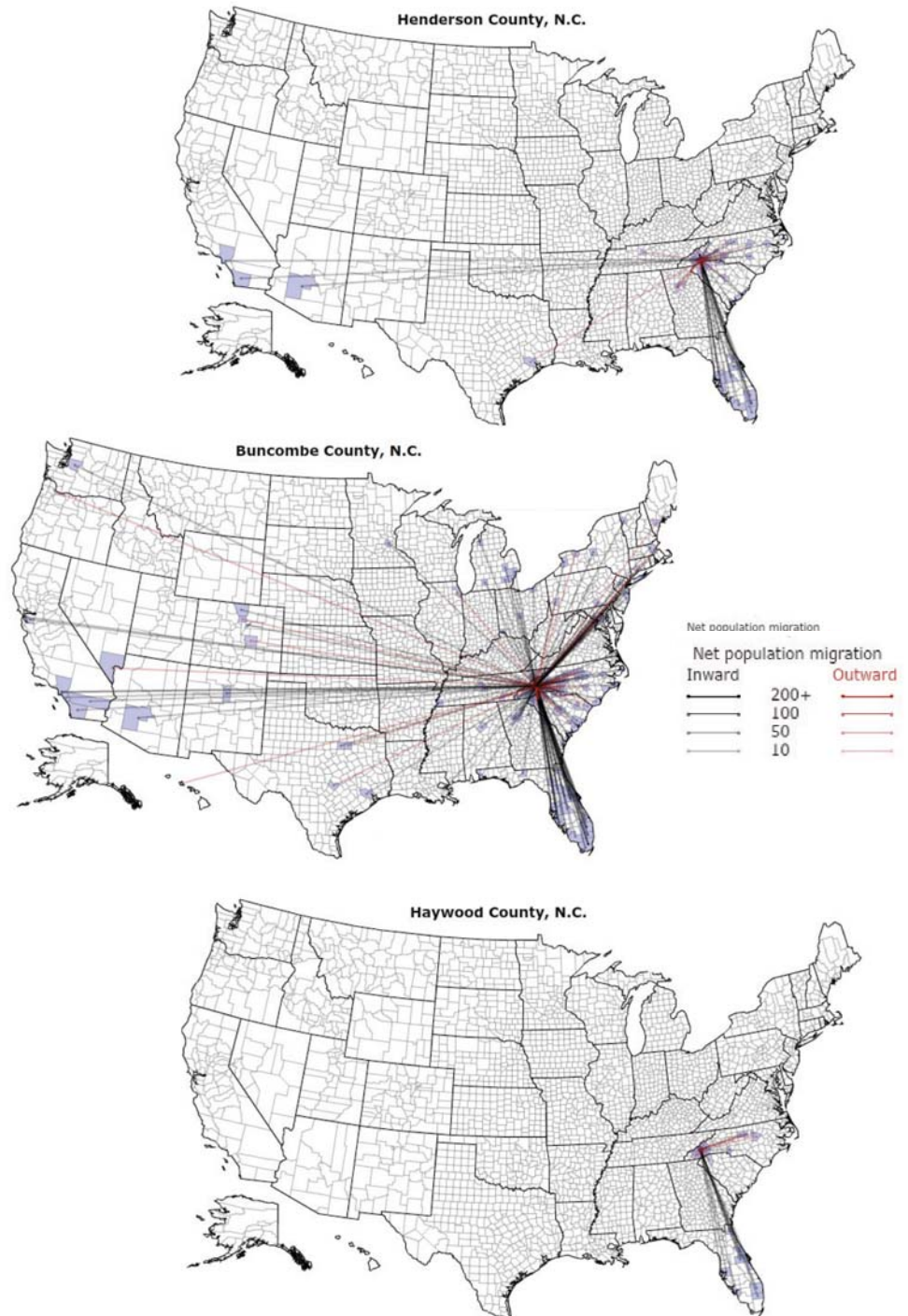
6:30 pm Reception

8:00 pm Awards Presentation

Tickets: \$55

Inward and Outward Migration of Asheville Area

Source: Internal Revenue Service Data



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www.AshevilleHBA.com

Calendar

— Meetings —

Professional Women in Building
Tuesday, September 7 @ 12:00 pm
Location TBD

Tuesday, October 5 @ 8:00 am
AHBA Office

Board of Directors Meeting
TBD @ 3:00 pm

Parade of Homes Committee
Thursday, September 23 @ 3:30 pm

— Events —

General Membership Meeting
Thursday, September 16
5:30 pm - Networking
6:30 pm - Meeting
Biltmore Park Town Square
*Sponsored by ProBuild through the 2010
Foundation Club!*

Membership Drive
Wednesday & Thursday, September 8 & 9
9 am - 5 pm
Open to all members to participate! Win
fun prizes for recruiting new member com-
panies and affiliates!
AHBA Office

Golf Tournament
Thursday, September 30
12 noon- Shotgun Start
One Builder required per team. Register
now for teams and sponsorships!
Black Mountain Golf Club
See page 10 for Sign Up Form

Parade of Homes
Friday & Saturday
October 9/10 & 16/17
WNC's premier homebuilding event! Pick up
your official guide at the AHBA Office or any
local Chamber to plan your trip!
Homes throughout western North Carolina

SEPTEMBER

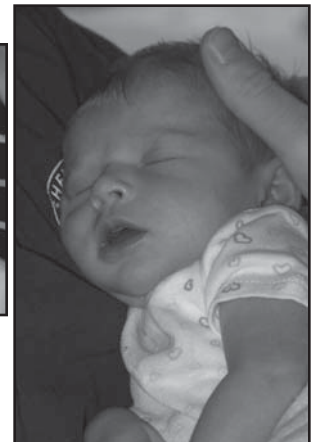
— Education —

AHBI: NAHB Certified Green Professional (CGP) Course
This CGP course to be held during the month of October 2010. Details pertaining to
the date, time, Instructor, etc. are yet to be determined. We will keep you posted as the
course offering is finalized.

If you are interested in this course please notify the AHBA directly by emailing office@
ashevillehba.com.

Congrats to KC & Flave - New Baby Arrives!

The AHBA is excited to announce the arrival of Alyssa Reagan Hart, a beautiful little girl born July 21 at 2:30 am to AHBA Marketing & Communications Director, KC Hart and her husband Flave! Weighing in at 4 lbs. 11 oz. and 17 inches long! The new family is doing great and we look forward to having KC back in the office in mid-September. Congratulations to the Hart Family!



Alyssa Reagan Hart
Born July 21, 2010



AHBA In Motion with Membership Drive & More!

Executive Officer's Message by Caroline Sutton

The AHBA is gearing up for our Annual Membership Drive. Over 80 volunteers will be participating in our 2 week membership drive that will run from September 1st through the 15th! The AHBA is shooting to reach a goal of 80 new members during this year's drive!

The membership drive will consist of 8 teams with 10 members per team. The members making up the teams are people just like you! Those who are members of the AHBA can personally reach out to their contacts and business friends to join the AHBA and start taking advantage of being a member! If you are not on a team yet and would like to help, call the AHBA today! If you're not available to participate on a team you can still recruit new members during the drive dates. Any prospective member that joins during the drive will receive a waived application fee (savings of \$50) and their logo on the AHBA website free for 6 months (\$100 value). New members from the drive and those that have joined in 2010 will have an opportunity to introduce themselves and their company at the AHBA General Membership Meeting on Thursday, September 16th. Think about who you do

business with and remember to do business with a member! Start recruiting today – all membership information and applications can be found online at www.ashevillehba.com under the Join tab!

September is a busy month for the AHBA. In addition to the membership drive, the AHBA is excited to release the 2011 Home & Garden Expo information at this month's General Membership Meeting on September 16th. Join us at the Hilton Biltmore Park Town Square for an evening of networking, great information on the 2011 Home & Garden Expo and a chance to win a free 10 x 10 booth!

The 2010 Home & Garden Expo was a milestone for the AHBA and its members. We introduced an expo to our area that was tied specifically to the housing industry, displaying products and services from over 100 area companies to the over 2000 consumers who visited the expo. We look forward to expanding on this in 2011.

Come out to this month's GMM to meet the new members who join during the drive and to hear exciting new details for the 2011 Home & Garden Expo including the new dates, increased marketing and more!

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[builders tips]

Builders' Tip: Switch to a Safer Work Light, Use Compact-Fluorescent Bulbs

Good lighting is always important when doing repairs.

But some lighting can cause problems. Halogens, for instance, can get too hot, while smaller tungsten-filament trouble lights can be troublesome.

After they have been on for a while, the filament heats up and becomes fragile. Then, the slightest jolt can break the filament, causing the incandescent bulb to go out — even the so-called “rough-duty” bulbs.

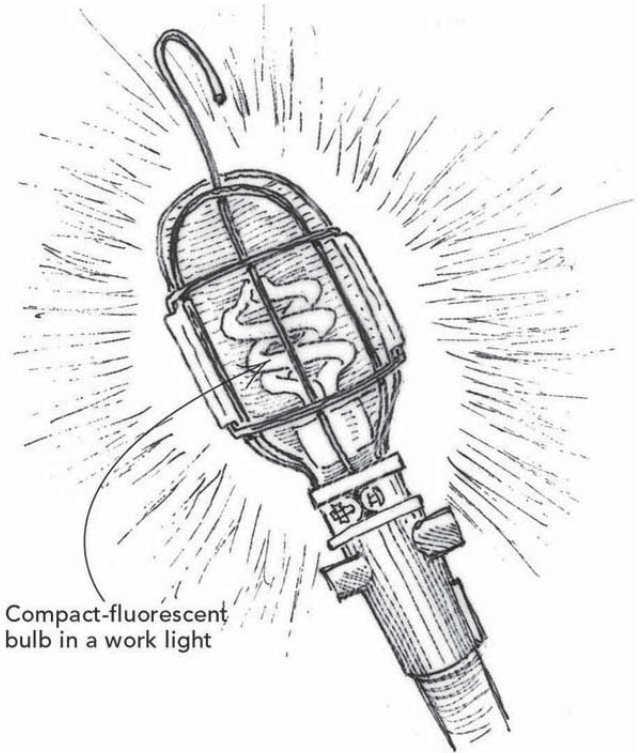
To avoid this problem, I've replaced filament bulbs in all my trouble lights with compact-fluorescent screw-in bulbs, as shown in the accompanying drawing. After having dropped work lights and knocked them about, I can testify that compact-fluorescent bulbs can take some abuse — and still work.

The fluorescent bulbs cost a little more than tungsten-filament incandescent bulbs, but they provide plenty of light, use a quarter of the energy and last 10 times as long.

They also stay cool, which is helpful in situations where I'm working inside a cabinet or other tight spaces and the light is close to my face or hands.

— Pete Duffy, Mundelein, Ill.

Tips & Techniques provided by
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Compact-fluorescent bulb in a work light

Builders' Tip: Build a 'Birdhouse' Vent Box to Conceal Unsightly Holes

I often remodel or add on to older wood-clapboard sided houses, and when I'm faced with unsightly holes in the walls, such as the dryer vent pictured in the accompanying drawing, I suggest to my clients that I conceal them with a simple bit of craftsmanship — a “birdhouse.”

The birdhouse is made from scrap clapboards and trim stock, takes little time to fabricate and, most importantly, really impresses my clients.

I position the birdhouse so that its roof nestles directly under a clapboard, or I flash it with a thin strip of copper and then size the box to allow the vent flap to open or whatever else I'm covering to function.

To build it:

I first install a vent flap around the hole.

Then I scribe the birdhouse sides to the profile of the clapboards. For the birdhouse pictured, I used 5/4 cedar trim stock.

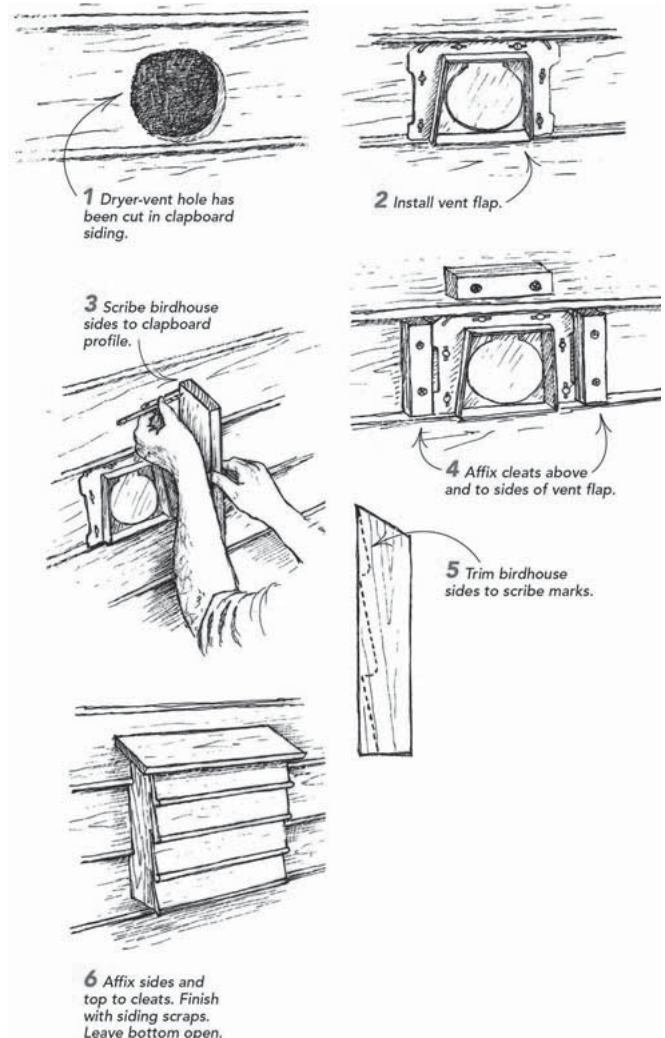
To attach the birdhouse to the clapboard, I first mount cedar cleats above and to the sides of the vent flap. Then I trim and install the sides and roof of the birdhouse.

I use clapboard sized appropriately for the roof of the birdhouse and clapboards with half the reveal of the wall for its front.

These boxes not only solve little problems, they're also fun to build.

— Ed Weber, Locustville, Va.

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Burts Bees and Green Building Connect

For business professionals who are looking to establish themselves in the green home building industry, delivering green products to the marketplace won't be enough, according to speakers at the NAHB National Green Building Conference in Raleigh, N.C. Companies who bill themselves as green builders can expect to be scrutinized by the public for assurances that their operations embrace the same principles of sustainability that are represented by their homes.

“Green goes beyond the product offering,” said Tim Costello, chairman, president and CEO of Builder Homesite. “The purveyor of goods and services needs to be consistent with those goods and services. Builders need a congruent message. There is more that green building companies can do than build green homes,” he said.

If builders don't practice what they preach, “consumers will see the disparity,” Costello said. “Think about your construction activities, the services you use, your office and showroom practices. You have to think green internally so you will be a role model for the industry.”

In a keynote address to the conference, John Replogle, president and CEO of Burt's Bees, described the steps his company took to entirely eliminate waste from its offices and manufacturing facilities in an ongoing effort “to be the greatest personal care product company on earth.”

Despite a 30% surge in its business growth in the 18 months between January 2007 and June 2008, Burt's Bees was able to reduce the waste it was having hauled off to the landfill by 85% — from about 30 tons a month to five tons. To eliminate the remaining waste, the office was closed for a “Dumpster Day” afternoon that started with a free lunch and continued with every Burt's Bees employee sorting the trash into three categories: items that were recycled, those that should be recycled and those that were truly trash.

Today, the real trash that was found in the dumpster is composted, he said, “and we are a manufacturer who sends not a single ounce of waste to the landfill.” As a result, waste has gone “from a cost center to a profit center” and “it's a story I can sell.”

In its efforts to create “a sustainable business model,” the company occupies space that is LEED-certified; makes a product that is 100% natural, with recyclable packaging; uses 100% renewable energy and has reduced its energy consumption by 40%; has cut the use of water not going into its products in half; and is working with Habitat for Humanity to produce affordable green housing for the local community that can hold utility costs to as low as an average of \$26 a month.

Replogle advised builders to make sure their “words and actions match.” This is conducive to “building trust, which is the definition of a brand: communication between you and the customer.” With concerns over personal and environmental health becoming more deeply rooted in the lifestyles of consumers, now is an optimal time for builders to go green, he said. There will be “winners and losers,” he said, “but those who are more efficient with resources will gain.” He added that, “We are now in a conserve-cash mode, but now is the time to prepare for what's coming next.”

Builders were told to take a “systemic approach” in recasting their companies and to look for opportunities where there is a market imbalance. For instance, an estimated 30% of prospective buyers may be in search of a green home, but only 2% of the housing stock is green. Also, improving the use of construction science can reduce waste, materials costs and even marketing costs.

And green consumers are well worth pursuing, in his estimation, because they tend to be better educated, research what's on the market and are more affluent, highly loyal and less price-sensitive. And, they're ringing up \$200 billion worth of goods annually, \$50 billion of that related to green building. costs.

For information about green resources, e-mail Calli Schmidt at NAHB, or call her at 800-368-5242 x8132.

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A Pause in the Recovery or a Double Dip?

A recovery from the Great Recession was never expected to be swift or strong, but recent economic weakness has raised questions about the recovery's sustainability. Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, a man of few words, described the situation as "an invisible wall, which we have run into here. This essentially is a typical pause that occurs in an economic recovery."

The recovery is not being pulled along by housing, and other components of growth are becoming more fragile as consumers worry about credit and jobs. However, the basic recovery path remains positive even if slightly less robust than before oil started seeping into the Gulf of Mexico and Europe decided to pull back from its expansionary efforts.

The June employment report ignited concern when non-farm payroll employment was reported down by 125,000 jobs at a seasonally adjusted annual rate, following a 431,000 increase in May. But both the May and June numbers were distorted by Census Bureau hirings and firings, which were up 411,000 in May and down 225,000 in June.

More importantly but still disappointing, the private sector added 33,000 jobs in May and 83,000 in June. Although these were hardly robust numbers, June showed the sixth consecutive month of private job gains. During those six months, however, private temporary workers, who comprise less than 2% of private sector jobs, accounted for almost a third of the job gains, indicating that businesses are still hedging their bets, uncertain about the recovery and, in particular, how long the growing demand for their products and services will last. If demand is sustained — as NAHB is forecasting — many of the temporary positions in the private sector will become permanent.

The one apparent bright spot in the employment report — the decline in the unemployment rate from 9.7% in May to 9.5% in June — was actually a negative since it was not due to employment rising but job seekers choosing to leave the labor force, presumably because they considered their job prospects dismal.

NAHB is projecting that the unemployment rate will be around the current 9.5% by the end of the year based on the assumption that there will be sufficient net job creation to absorb the increase in the labor force as more workers return in search of employment.

Employment stability and job growth are keys to a housing recovery. In addition to alleviating workers' fears about losing their next paycheck, improving employment measures help boost the confidence of households that are considering buying a home. Residential construction continues to shed jobs, albeit at a slower rate than a year ago. In June, 6,100 jobs were lost, down from the 36,900 job losses a year earlier and from the 81,700 residential construction jobs lost in November 2008.

Total construction employment — including non-residential jobs — fell 22,000 in June, down from a loss of 30,000 in May. The overall unemployment rate for construction jumped to 23.7% in June from 20.6% the month before, reflecting the problems both residential and non-residential construction continue to face.

While the May employment report along with weak housing numbers increased speculation over a potential "double dip" in economic activity, several factors favor the continuation of modest growth.

First, states have been slower than expected in distributing the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, which could also explain some of the current softness. The longer lasting impact will support growth later this year.

Second, consumption has been contributing about half of what it would normally contribute to economic growth, but disposable personal income has been moving up and we expect this to continue. Avoiding a double dip depends on this, along with improvements in household balance sheets that took very heavy hits during the Great Recession.

Also, the Federal Reserve's household balance sheet estimates for the first quarter of this year show the fourth consecutive advance in household net worth. The gain was due primarily to advances in the stock market and paying down debt, mainly home mortgages and consumer credit.

We expect household wealth to trend up gradually over the balance of the 2010-2011 period. Consumers' debt burdens have been improving since the end of 2008 and are at levels last seen at the end of 2000.

Third, productivity has increased for eight quarters as companies reduced their labor force more than output. Permanent hiring will have to occur to keep output ahead of demand as businesses reach an end to productivity gains. On the housing front, with inventories of single-family houses at a 40-year low, any increase in demand will require new building.

Difficulty in obtaining business and consumer credit has remained a significant drag, but there have been some minor signs that this may be turning around. Non-revolving credit from commercial banks — which excludes credit card debt and mortgages but includes auto loans — has risen in four of the last five months.

With bank balance sheets in better shape, it is likely there will be a slow improvement in credit availability over the coming months.

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Local Perspective: 10 Rules for Marketing to the Green Consumer

By Tim Costello, CEO, BDX, AHBA Member Company

Green is already big business. In fact, the US Green Building Council predicts that green building will contribute \$550 Billion to the US economy over the next four years. But what how do you effectively communicate your green benefits to consumers? Here are 10 Rules that green marketers should consider.

Rule #1: Green is not a single market.

When you are defining a green consumer, remember that because green buyers are motivated by a variety of issues: national security, social justice, energy costs, and environmental responsibility to name a few, these potential customers don't meet one specific profile. Today's green buyers are concerned mothers, patriots, conservationists, penny pinchers, self global citizens, etc... You get the picture.

It is important to keep these different perspectives in mind as you create your green marketing messages and tailor your green messages to your audience.

Rule #2: Consumers Possess Little Real Knowledge of Green

Research has shown that while consumers say the environment is important to them, very few are informed about Green products and resources. For example, one study showed that while 55% said that having a green home was "important" or "very important," when they were then asked to name a green home feature unaided, 42% couldn't.

Rule #3: Consumers Don't Walk the Walk

In a recent Simple Green/Seventh Generation survey, when asked, "How much, if any, does a company's environmental record and/or practices impact your decision whether or not to buy its products?" 49% said "somewhat" or "very much."

However, when asked the specific follow-up, "Have you ever chosen one product over another based on the environmental record/practices of its manufacturer?"

Only 21% said yes. And out of that 21%, only 28% provided a specific product brand example.

Rule #4: Consumers Have Trusted Sources of Info

It is important to recognize that consumers have resources that they trust and use repeatedly to gather information. The Web rules for trust, use, access and economy.

Rule #5: Green has low green brand awareness

The majority of people can't name a specific green company when asked. Marketers must create green messages that connect with consumers and are prevalent throughout brand messaging and identity.

Rule #6: Understand What Your Customers Mean By Green

What factors are influencing consumer decisions? Do they want to save money on energy bills? Are they looking for a healthier home? Do they hope to reduce their impact on the environment? Understanding customer motivation is key to crafting strong messages.

Rule #7: Don't Undersell Green

Roughly half of all options are not covered during the design center appointments and roughly half of what is said about products is wrong or misleading. Some best practices to help overcome this are to:

- Integrate online content from the manufacturer into the virtual design center. This has resulted in 50% increase in technical option sales.
- Create green option bundles to limit overall choice and avoid confusion.
- Be specific with your claims and advantages.
- Provide guarantees and financing incentives.

- Allow customers to compare green products 24/7 at their convenience.
- Brand your green programs
- Leverage third party certifications

Rule #8: Green Consumers Want Others To Know What They're Doing

Consumer purchases serve multiple purposes. They have functional uses and serve a symbolic purpose. When consumers purchase a home with green features it says "I'm different." "I make smart choices." "Take Notice." and "There's a new approach and thinking at work here." Brand your green programs and give customers something to talk about.

Rule #9: Avoid the Information Paradox

Sometimes providing more information may not help people make good decisions. People want to feel in control of their lives and resist the feeling of helplessness. More information may not help them in fact it may have the opposite effect. Keep it simple.

Rule #10: Green Goes Beyond the Product Offering

Your business must embrace green practices, not just offer green solutions in order to gain consumer trust. Here are some things to consider:

- Develop corporate sustainability policies
- Understand impact of construction activity and materials selection
- Use hybrid vehicles
- Make green lighting and recycling decisions in offices and showrooms
- Use green promotions
- Offset carbon emissions for 10 years
- Track green progress through a company "green" blog

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[member news]

Builders Give Voluntary Energy Efficient Rating System a Thumbs Up

A voluntary energy efficiency rating program for existing housing is an excellent idea, NAHB told the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

By understanding how much energy an older home needs for heating, cooling and other uses, consumers can make more informed choices — whether they are in the market for a new home or thinking about making improvements to their own.

However, the plan will meet with greater success if it avoids certain pitfalls, NAHB told the agency. Among the association's recommendations:

Labeling. NAHB suggests that DOE look at its own Builders Challenge EnergySmart Home Scale (E-Scale), an easy-to-read tool for home buyers and home owners to determine the energy efficiency of the home and that is uniform, credible and marketable.

NAHB also urged the agency to use a modified E-Scale as the basis for an energy performance label for existing housing, including broadening the scale to a score of at least 250 to incorporate more older existing homes.

NAHB also suggests that DOE employ commercially available software rather than developing specialized software and to require the National Renewable Energy Laboratory to establish a benchmark to meet specific criteria for retrofit energy analysis.

Auditing and Testing. The DOE rating program does not envision the addition of blower door, duct blaster or other testing, but if testing should be needed, NAHB suggests sampling — rather than before-and after tests of each home — to reduce the expenses associated with retrofit projects.

"DOE should recognize that any requirement for two energy audits (test-in/test-out) per home would be an expensive process that would consume a considerable portion of any rebate," the comments said.

In addition, any list of contractors approved to do the testing should encompass a number of approved providers, including the Home Builders Institute, RESNET (Residential Energy Services Network) and established state programs, as well as the Building Performance Institute (BPI), as named in the proposal.

"NAHB would also urge DOE to evaluate and approve a retrofit training curriculum using quality assurance metrics developed by HBI, BPI, RESNET or a state-approved equivalent," the comments said.

Home Registry. DOE has proposed creating a National Building Performance Registry to make detailed information about a home's efficiency available to lenders. "NAHB can support a national registry if it is not duplicative of existing provider (RESNET, BPI, HBI, etc.) registries/databases," the comments said.

"NAHB also wants to minimize administrative burdens on contractors, auditors and providers as they fulfill the data-entry requirements by making certain that DOE specifies the minimum data requirements for registries," the comments said.

In addition, "NAHB supports allowing the data to be available to all and not become the sequestered or proprietary property of DOE. There is a great benefit in DOE providing access to national registry/databases for retrofit data analysis and program review purposes," the comments said.

Training and Certification. NAHB asked the agency to ensure that a variety of different certification programs be qualified for a remodeler or contractor to do weatherization work and energy-efficiency improvements to ensure "a sufficient number of certified contractors, as well as to recognize the variety of factors, expertise and competencies needed for retrofit activities across the country," the comments said.

The goal of any training program should be to ensure that the activities are performed correctly, without requiring unnecessary certifications for activities that will not be performed, or that are already well understood. DOE should accept any energy-efficiency program accepted by a state energy agency or offered by a state or local HBA to be deemed sufficient under any federal energy-retrofit program," the comments said.

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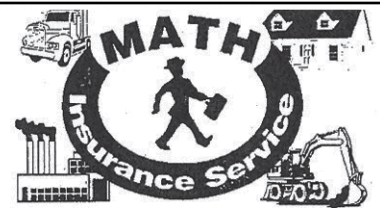
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Focus on Universal Design for Age 50+

During a recent webinar on universal design by the 50+ Housing Council and NAHB Remodelers, builders and remodelers offered strategies on how to encourage reluctant home owners to incorporate features that will make their homes easier to use — even though most home owners balk at what they term “institutional-looking grab bars for old people” and few will admit they actually need such features.

Tracy Lux, the moderator, said that builders and remodelers should stress that universal design is, first and foremost, good design — and that good design is not only functional, it is also attractive.

The goal is to make a house seem as if it had always had the added universal design features and improvements installed.

First discuss the wish list for the home and how the owners intend to live in it. Then discuss their current physical requirements, followed by a discussion about any future ones.

When broaching accessibility and ease-of-use, Panelist John King said he often mentions the possibility of clients being visited by aging parents or friends — so that clients can focus on aging issues and how they affect other people, not themselves.

King said he then discusses the current condition of the house and the clients' personal style before finally suggesting what improvements can be made that will enable the clients and their guests to get full use out of the home.

The third panelist, Dan Bawden, suggested that since few clients actually can accurately define universal design, builders and remodelers should set the parameters of the discussion and define universal design for them.

Lux and Bawden also suggested that builders and remodelers should “talk around” universal design terms when discussing its features and benefits. Instead of pointing out the need for an unobstructed pathway for wheelchair users, they suggested that builders and remodelers discuss “open concept” kitchens with roll-away islands.

If home owners want to continue to work from their home, they said, that can lead to discussions on “energy-efficient skylights” that bring in more natural light and help avoid eyestrain. This type of discussion will avoid pointing out that older people need more light.

Lux also suggested describing features using phrases such as, “making entertaining easier,” or “good for everyone from grandkids to grandparents.” According to research by the AARP, Lux said most home owners want to stay in their homes but do not like to talk about “aging in place.”

Bawden suggested that builders and remodelers should tell clients that designing for the long term will add very little expense to the project, especially in new construction.

He also stressed that CAPS builders and remodelers explain their designation as well as mention that their designation is recognized by AARP. Most people are more familiar with AARP than they are with NAHB, he said, noting that mentioning AARP adds credibility.

When discussing universal design, Bawden said the most important tool a builder can have is a photo portfolio of beautiful projects that also demonstrate universal design features. Bawden also recommended that designers make themselves known to their local medical community, because medical professionals want their patients to live in safe, comfortable and livable homes.

Lux said that with skill, and a working knowledge of universal design and the products that make the designs come to life, builders and remodelers can create “a unique selling premise” that will build client loyalty and produce referrals. ~www.nahb.org

DOE Showerhead Rule:

Makes Shower Stalls Less Accessible for Elderly
NAHB has petitioned the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to rethink a new “interpretive rule” that changes the accepted definition of a showerhead and limits the usefulness of additional hand-held devices designed to improve a shower's accessibility for the elderly or disabled.

With the new interpretation, the allowable gallons-per-minute flow applies to the entire shower stall, rather than individual showerheads.

“DOE said the change is intended to improve water efficiency, which is a goal we support. Unfortunately, the solution goes too far,” said NAHB Chairman Bob Jones.

“Most people want to stay in their homes as they get older, so it's very important to be able to identify and then remove any barriers within the home that can restrict these older home owners' ability to live independently,” Jones said. “Modifying a traditional shower stall with a single showerhead by adding a flexible hose is one such improvement.”

Similar modifications — included in NAHB's Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) designation — are also helpful for the disabled or others who take seated showers. Created in partnership with AARP, CAPS provides a curriculum and educational designation for remodelers and designers serving the “baby boomer” population. More than 4,000 housing professionals have now earned the designation.

Under DOE's proposed definition, a shower with two showerheads — each with fully pressure-controlled and anti-scald control valves and individual shutoffs that are easily accessible from both inside and outside the shower stall — would not work effectively under the new definition because the total amount of water pressure would have to be split between the two heads.

The rule potentially bans the installation of spa-style showers and similar features popular with many new home buyers — limiting consumer choice, but not necessarily saving water.

“DOE would have to come up with a ruling regarding the number of showers people are allowed to take and how many minutes they can last — and I don't think the agency is prepared to go that far, for good reason,” Jones added.

“Had the agency gone through the typical notice-and-comment process in which manufacturers, suppliers, builders and consumers have an opportunity to review and offer suggestions for improvement — DOE might have addressed these concerns in a more equitable and informed manner,” Jones said. DOE may review comments submitted by NAHB, plumbing and fixture firms and other advocacy groups, but it is not required to consider them in its final decision.

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What Young Women Want Is Key to Emerging Housing Demand

The housing market is about to see a major youth infusion from members of Generation Y moving into households of their own, but what kind of homes they will want or be able to afford are among the open questions that will be especially challenging for established builders who may be ill-equipped to respond to the magnitude of the changes likely to characterize the recovery period that lies ahead.

Turning the tables on young men, young women will be the demographic group to watch, as they come to the housing market better educated and with higher paying jobs than their male counterparts.

James Chung, president of Reach Advisors, cited some demographic statistics about the U.S. population that ought to have an especially upbeat ring in the ears of the developers of multifamily rental properties. However, he cautioned that the dynamics of the marketplace will be dramatically different.

Less Money to Spend on Housing

Nobody quite knows for sure how the emerging economy will color the behavior of consumers, but as the U.S. population begins to get back on its feet financially it is unlikely that typical housing consumers will have the wherewithal they once had to spend on housing.

In terms of household income, statistics from the Census Bureau depict a decade in which the top 10% captured 50% of all U.S. earnings and the top 1% landed 25%, he said. In inflation-adjusted dollars, from 2000 to 2008 incomes were down for every age group up through the younger half of the baby boom, those aged 45 to 54, who saw their median income plunge almost 12%.

The younger baby boomers, the large majority of whom are well-established home owners, will be able to soften that blow by falling back on healthy amounts of home equity, according to Chung. But that won't be the case for Generation Y members, who have feet planted in both the 15-to-24-year and 25-to-34 age groups, both of which experienced a decline in median household income in the 7% to 8% range through 2008.

Born roughly in the 1980s through 1990s, members of Gen Y had actually been spending more than prior generations at their age even though they had less income than those who had preceded them, Chung said. But their high-spending ways began fizzling out with the onset of the recession, he said, as the subsidies they had been receiving from their parents started "shrinking fast."

The nation's current job situation remains at detrimental levels for housing. With roughly 20% of the workforce out of work, underemployed or so discouraged that it has dropped out. Returning to full-employment will need some time, maybe not as long as the decade or more the Japanese took to recover following the collapse of their financial institutions in the 1990s, he said, but that scenario is a more likely outcome for today's precarious U.S. economy than the rapid job creation that used to occur in the aftermath of recessions.

What young women are able to earn in the period ahead and how well they fare on their career paths will have implications for housing, he indicated, perhaps enabling them to pass more quickly than expected through the upper end of multifamily rentals into the first-time buyer market.

U.S. Population Keeps on Growing

The best news the demographics have to offer housing is that the U.S. population, unlike in most other industrialized countries, will continue on an upward march, growing from 300 million five years ago to 350 million 15 years from now and 400 million in maybe 25 years from today.

However, part of the challenge, he said is that this boost will be coming from segments of the population that don't have the highest incomes. The number of individuals of mixed race will be growing the fastest — by about 150% — over the quarter-century span when the population

shoots from 300 million to 400 million. The mean household income of that group is below the income of whites and Asian Americans. The second fastest growing group by race will be Hispanics — with a surge of about 120% — and they earn far less even than Americans of two or more races.

Appearing prominently in this population mix along with aging baby boomers, multifamily developers definitely have to pay attention to Gen Y because it is accounting for the bulk of demand in the rental housing market. Those in the prime renting age bracket of 22 to 30 will grow 17% from 2000 until 2020, when they will peak at more than 40 million strong, higher than the previous peak in 1985 fueled by the boomers.

Gender Counts

Gen Y is where gender comes into play and women are achieving more than men, reversing the income gap between the sexes in the workplace. In 1972, men were 1.5 times more likely to earn a college degree than women; today it is the exact opposite, he said.

Women working full-time receive only 79% of the pay men earn on average, but single women in their 20s working in an urban environment are earning 105% of what their male counterparts are earning, and in some markets their paychecks are 120% of the men's, he said.

As a result, multifamily builders can expect to see more young women popping up, especially where they are renting a higher-end premium product, Chung said. Additionally, these women are taking a longer time to get married and have children, and this is "dramatically shifting the demand and need for housing, reshaping rental housing demand as they go through the cycle."

Multifamily rentals will also be running into some competition from homeownership among Gen Y women, part of a more general trend in which single women are accounting for 20% to 25% of first-time home purchases. As the job market tightens up, Gen Y women are likely to be a primary market for first homes.

Despite their higher incomes, "their preferences are different," he said. In studies of their values "they are much more willing and thoughtful about making tradeoffs and less willing to spend more." They are more fiscally conservative than young men. They are also responsive to housing that provides security and that enables them to create their own environment.

Little details are also important. "Young women are many more times likely to read for pleasure than young men," said Chung. "As you shrink space, this has implications for what built-ins you want to have, what you put on the coffee table in marketing."

Consumers Are Up in the Air

With men and women alike, builders are going to have to grapple with "fissures in consumer behavior," according to Chung. Consumers are rethinking their prior brand preferences, their aspirations, where they want to focus their spending and where they are shaving it.

Also bridging gender differences, members of Gen Y have "technological expectations well beyond the rest of us," he said. "They are using that to customize their lives on line and off line; their relationship to the digital world is different."

The real correlation is between home building and the availability of credit, which is notably lacking at the current time. "People are on the sidelines waiting to build," he said, and when the necessary capital does arrive there will probably be a spike. "Capital availability will open up faster for multifamily," he predicted, "because the fundamentals in many markets are better for multifamily."

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To educate and engage new members within the association, we have a New Member Orientation. AHBA Members are required to attend the one hour New Member Orientation as the final step in the application process.

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PLEASE READ

In compliance with our Bylaws and the policies which have been put in place by our Board of Directors and the Membership Committee, Association procedure is to have new member applications approved by the Board of Directors and by the General Membership. Please look at the lists of all Members. If you know of any compelling reason that any applicant should not be considered for membership, please contact any AHBA staff member at 828-299-7001 or email your comments to the AHBA at info@ashevillehba.com. **All information given to the AHBA is held strictly confidential.**

[member news]

Get Your Tickets Now for the 2010 Annual Parade of Homes Awards Gala

We are excited about this year's Parade! Mark your calendars for October 9/10 and 16/17 to visit the homes listed in our 2010 Event. Below you will find a list of our participating builders as well as the 2010 Sponsors! The Official Parade magazine will arrive to the AHBA on September 15th and will include all entry locations, sponsor information and more. Copies will be available at the AHBA Office, any entry location, the local Chamber of Commerce or through CWB Technologies.

The Parade of Homes Committee is working diligently to prepare for the Parade of Homes Gala, to be held at the Crest Center Pavilion. Be sure to join us on October 13th for this special AHBA Event- cocktail attire and outstanding food and drinks. We will be sitting theater-style for the main event this year- as we pay our respects to the ultimate in homebuilding craftsmanship for 2010.

We would like to thank our sponsors, without these dedicated companies, the Parade of Homes would not be possible! Special thanks to our featured Builder with the coveted front cover photo shot, C.Skip Brewer, AB, CGP and our Presenting Sponsor will be CWB Technologies.



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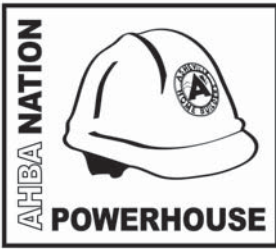
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Public Relations: a Cost-Effective Marketing Tool

Now that the jolt from the home buyer tax credit has subsided, the real estate industry once again finds itself on its own battling a flat economy.

When facing stressful market conditions in the past, builders and real estate professionals would typically increase their traditional, and often expensive, advertising, but the tools they used then are not as effective in today's market. For instance, because of declining circulation, newspaper advertising does not seem to create the draw it once did. The Newspaper Association of America cites a 28.6% drop in print advertising revenue for 2009, with the average daily U.S. newspaper circulation declining 8.74% during the six months ending on March 31, 2010, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations. Under these circumstances, many builders are turning to public relations to increase their marketing impact.

The cost of a month's worth of full-page color ads in the Saturday real estate section typically may pay for several months' worth of dedicated PR. And a few well-placed stories can sustain buyer interest across local print, television and online media. So, whether you're already working with a dedicated PR team or contemplating such a move, here are a few insights designed to help maximize your investment in public relations:

Advertising Provides Complete Control, Public Relations Does Not.

While advertising in major local media outlets comes at a cost, you do get exactly what you pay for. The materials delivered by your marketing team are published in your local newspaper or broadcast on the radio. You know exactly when and where those assets will appear and you can closely track their impact on sales center visits and home sales over time. With PR, however, once a reporter expresses interest in covering your project's story, it's difficult to control the story or whether a competitor will be included in it. Forces outside your control also may conspire against you with PR. The morning crew assigned to broadcast from your sales center may be called away at the last minute to report on storm damage, a crime or accident — and suddenly your best-laid plans for a weekend sales promotion are thrown into doubt.

Public Relations Is More Credible Than Advertising.

There are risks to PR, but the benefit of credible, hard-hitting exposure for your product easily outweighs them. Home buyers rely on advertising in newspaper real estate sections and on radio, television and websites to help them determine what communities are available in their price range and geographic area. However, they regard stories in the newspaper or on a local newscast as more credible than advertising and these stories can actually influence their decisions. Public relations is also an effective branding tool. For instance, if a development's proximity to top schools is a key selling point, then a TV news story on a school's charity drive that is being sponsored by the developer is going to help viewers connect the developer's brand with supporting local schools. This method of branding has a higher impact than advertising because it gains an extra level of credibility through an independent source.

Implementing an Effective Public Relations Strategy Is a Long-Term Process.


Pitching reporters is more of an art than a science, and it may take weeks or even months to place the right story in the right media outlet. Relationships are critical to successful PR. So, when considering hiring a PR agency, be sure to ask about the successes the agency has had in placing stories with reporters and editors, particularly regarding real estate. Even with the right relationships in place and a killer pitch, timing is everything. A story on home landscaping in a local development is more likely to run in the spring, when home owners are working on their landscaping. While not every story will gain traction online as a viral hit, even only a few mentions on Twitter, Facebook or local blogs are beneficial and help magnify the exposure of the story originally placed by your PR team.



Public relations is not a "magic marketing bullet." But then again, neither is advertising. The ideal marketing approach should involve investing in both.

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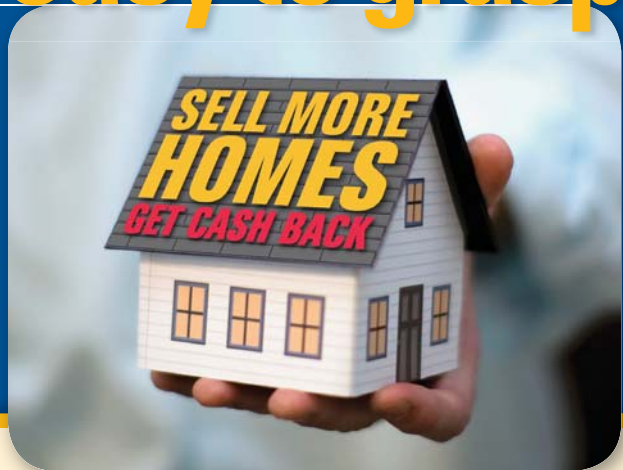
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