

### Highlights

#### Customer Profile

- Kent Homes
- Southeastern North Carolina
- Approximately 18 homes per year
- High-end clientele

[www.kenthomes.net](http://www.kenthomes.net)

#### Business Challenges

- Competing in new markets
- Avoiding miscommunications
- Preserving reputations

#### Solution Overview

- Web-based collaborative project management platform
- Integrated project scheduling, online selections, change order tracking and more

#### Business Benefits

- Streamlined selections process
- Personalized product
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Cost and time savings

## Kent Homes Creates New Production Line, Automates Selection Process with Help from BuildLinks

### Background

Kent Homes and Associates has designed and built homes in and around the beautiful Wilmington, NC area for over 15 years. With projects throughout two large counties in southeastern North Carolina, the company has built over 150 homes on lots ranging from breathtaking waterfronts or golf courses to quaint residential neighborhoods. Historically, they have built approximately 18 homes per year, in the \$500,000 to \$1 million range.

### Challenges

#### *Competing in new markets*

Kent Homes has traditionally focused on high-end custom homes, but president and owner Dan Kent wanted to expand his business to include production homes in a new waterfront community. While homebuyers in this community would have only three home plans to choose from, they would have more than 1500 selections available for consideration. To aggressively compete in this new market, he would have to streamline and automate the entire selection process.

#### *Avoiding miscommunications*

Kent Homes typically deals with 75-100 trade contractors on each project, and has 12 full-time employees. With so many parties involved, the chance for human error was great and could be costly. Kent wanted to do everything he could to make sure that updates were readily available, details were clear and orders were complete. All too often, Dan had seen the frustration felt by both homebuyers and builders when details were not clear or plans and schedules were incomplete. He knew that these miscommunications led to wasted time, energy and money for everyone involved.

#### *Preserving reputations*

Kent had worked hard to build a solid reputation in the custom home building market. Now, he had to protect that hard-earned reputation as a custom builder while establishing a new reputation in the already crowded production home market. To accomplish this, Kent wanted to do everything he could to improve every aspect of the building process. He wanted to create internal efficiencies and give clients more control, with an end result of excellent craftsmanship - on time, within budget, exactly as promised, every time.

### Solution

Kent Homes turned to BuildLinks, a web-based, collaborative, project management tool for residential builders that integrates project scheduling, online selections, and change order tracking into one single platform. While Kent Homes had taken advantage of BuildLinks for years in the custom homebuilding business, the company recognized it could leverage even more of BuildLinks' features as it ventured into the market of production community home building.

### Results

#### *Accelerating Pre-sales*

Kent Homes introduced BuildLinks as a pre-sales tool to streamline the process and close deals more quickly. With BuildLinks, it was easy for homebuyers to understand what home models, standard selections and upgrade options were available. Homebuyers could immediately walk away with a record of their choices and the associated costs. As a result, several homes in the initial section of the community sold on the very first day.

#### *Personalizing Production Homes*

BuildLinks' Professional Services Team worked closely with Dan Kent to execute his vision of an online design center. Together, they developed a strategy and implemented a plan to create a database of more than 1500 selections including detailed descriptions, pricing, and upgrade options. Many of those selections are also accompanied by photos. The BuildLinks team helped Kent determine how to present these selections to the homebuyer and allocate the time and resources necessary to complete the project. The team also made reporting tools available to Kent to make tracking the options even easier.

Today in Kent's new production home line, the online design center is available through BuildLinks and includes everything from paint and grout colors to lighting fixtures, cabinets, doors, windows and more.

#### *Streamlining Selections*

The automated selection process has benefited everyone. The homebuyers can personalize their homes online in BuildLinks rather than visiting a showroom each and every time. When homebuyers approve their selections, trade contractors and suppliers have access to new and accurate information immediately and avoid mistakes.

"The entire homebuyer's selection process for the first section was completed in less than three weeks and the folks at Kent Homes didn't have to lift a finger," said Kent. "Completing that process manually without BuildLinks, would have been a completely different process – one that would have taken a tremendous amount of time and effort."

#### *Increasing Customer Satisfaction*

Kent enjoys using what he considers to be a state-of-the-art tool for homebuilders. He believes that BuildLinks has helped him differentiate his company in two very competitive markets and establish credibility with customers.

"Homebuyers want to do business with a builder that does everything he can to eliminate the pain associated with the building process," said Kent. "Our customers really appreciate having access to a centralized method of tracking for all information, change orders, schedules, pictures and more."

"We can't even begin to count the ways BuildLinks has helped us save time and money," added Kent. "We are convinced that the system has saved the cost of at least one employee in the production (community) home environment alone. BuildLinks has been a wonderful asset for us,"

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