

## Highlights

### Profile

- Silver Stone Homes, LLC
- Founded 2004
- Edmond, Oklahoma
- Semi-Custom/Custom Homes
- 40+ homes per year

[www.silverstone-homes.com](http://www.silverstone-homes.com)

### Challenges

- Launching a new business
- Erratic schedules
- Labor-intensive selections
- Losses from misplaced change orders

### Solutions

- Web-based construction management software
- Centralized communication
- Fully documented selections & change orders
- 24/7 customer interaction

### Results

- Shorter, consistent project completion times
- Consistent change order execution
- More upgrades
- Smooth closings

### Background

Silver Stone Homes was founded in 2004 by Martin and Tiffany Teuscher in Edmond, Oklahoma. The company specializes in semi to fully custom homes in the \$300k - \$600k range, and is currently closing over 40 homes per year, including a small number of tract homes starting at \$190k. The Teuschers grew their business from four homes to its current size in three years and secured a solid reputation in their market with a "Best in Show" Parade Home award in 2006. Aside from building quality homes, they credit their success to using Internet technology to streamline operations and control costs. The company continues to focus on improving efficiencies and delivering on their tagline: "When ordinary is not an option."

### Challenges

#### *Launching a New Business*

Four years ago, with 15 years experience in construction, Martin Teuscher was ready to start his own business. He bought part of the company he was then working for, including four homes under construction. He knew the challenge of his first year would be ramping up operations and marketing without compromising quality. In addition, he wanted to overcome the costly operational issues he had struggled with at his previous job.

#### *Erratic Schedules*

Teuscher recalls one of the biggest challenges he struggled with as a project manager were the erratic schedules. "We were using Excel for schedules and having problems with one house being done in four months and another house in nine months. We constantly struggled to create some consistency to keep costs under control."

#### *Labor-Intensive Selections/Change Orders*

Another issue Teuscher had struggled with was a manual, paper-based selections process that was prone to error and miscommunication. "Everything was a paper trail and frankly, it was just chaos," says Martin. "We were trying to do everything via myself, the realtor or the superintendent and we didn't have a system. The realtor or the superintendent would write a change order and we wouldn't get it."

#### *Losses from Misplaced Change Orders*

Ultimately, the lost paperwork for change orders and upgrades reduced profits. Teuscher recalls, "In my last year we closed 33 homes and I'd conservatively estimate we lost an average of \$3000 - \$4000 on each home due to miscommunication. Overall, that adds up to \$120,000 for the year and that would probably be an underestimate."

**"...I'D CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATE WE LOST AN AVERAGE OF \$3000 TO \$4000 ON EACH HOME DUE TO MISCOMMUNICATION," SAYS MARTIN TUESCHER, SILVER STONE HOMES**

### Solutions

#### *Web-based Scheduling, Selections and Communications Software*

In late 2003, the Teuschers looked for a solution to improve operations and retain profits. "We looked at several vendors that offered scheduling and selections packages. "Most of the good ones were accounting and take-off-driven. We didn't need to change our accounting then and we still don't need to change it today," recalls Martin.

The Teuschers saw BuildLinks' web-based construction management software at the International Builders Show and learned they could manage schedule and selections information from any computer using an Internet browser. They could also share a project calendar, documents, photos and project-related emails with their homebuyers. "What really set BuildLinks apart was that our customers could login and see the project and approve their selections," says Teuscher. "No one else had anything like that and we knew it could help us eliminate mistakes and miscommunications."

When Martin launched Silver Stone Homes later that year, he purchased his own BuildLinks license and completed training in 45 days. "With only four homes under construction we were fortunate to have the time to get everything set up the way we wanted it," says Martin. "And, the folks at BuildLinks were 'Johnny on the spot' whenever we needed additional help. There was one upgrade in 2005 that was pretty tough – we had to re-enter some data – but the BuildLinks support team helped us get back on track and I honestly believe it made our bond stronger."

#### *Fully documented selections and change orders*

Today, Silver Stone Homes has moved to a larger location with an in-house design center. From there, their customers can make their selections choices and Jennifer Masters, the office manager, enters the details into BuildLinks. The customers then have two weeks to approve their selections and can do so from the comfort of their home. To Jennifer, BuildLinks has made a big difference. "I currently have 13 customs on my board and I can't imagine my job without BuildLinks; I think there'd have to be two of me to handle the current workload without it, and the beauty is that everything is documented including the approval. They can easily see a running total of expenses. There are simply no misunderstandings, surprises or missing paperwork." says Masters.

### Results

#### *Shorter, consistent project completion times*

After using BuildLinks for several years, Martin has no plans to change their operations. "It's hard to tell you how much money BuildLinks has put back in our pocket so far. Our homes are built on time, which is saving us interest, the selections process is error-free, and our customers love accessing their information and are buying more upgrades. It's probably hundreds of thousands of dollars BuildLinks has saved us since the beginning," says Teuscher.

#### *Smooth closings*

Silver Stone also works with realtors and their feedback on BuildLinks has been overwhelmingly positive. Realtors can login to BuildLinks and see the available and approved selections in moments, increasing their ability to service their customers tremendously. They can pull an up-to-date approved selections report immediately prior to closing without delays. "We've made sure our entire team knows how BuildLinks works and the payoff has been fantastic," says Teuscher. "Just as I wouldn't frame a house without a hammer, I wouldn't build a house without BuildLinks."

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