

Infinity Home Collection Uses Technology to Stay Hot in Denver Markets

With True Wireless Scheduling, Infinity Lops Fifteen Days off Its Cycle Time...And Finally Gets a Grip on What's Happening in the Field.

by Tom Gebes

Infinity Home Collection builds around 140 starts in the southeast Denver market. They had a strong year of growth in 2005, and they want to stay on a growth path, even as the Denver market runs the risk of softening. So, Infinity has recently focused as much on building system efficiency as they have on sales and the quality of their homes. They have a lot to track.

Infinity builds seventeen home models in seven communities, and each home averages around 3,000 square feet. Retail value of these properties is between \$500,000 and \$600,000. With a back-office staff of 10 employees (with lots of crossover of duties), and 45 total employees – including six site supers who carry around 10 houses each – Infinity keeps track of its growing business with three core software systems: Sage Timberline® Office for accounting, Builder 1440 for sales, and BuilderMT's Workflow Management System (WMS). To drive the processes and bring true wireless connectivity to the scheduling process, Infinity runs WMS, which manages the company's workflow. WMS is "pre-integrated" into the various data silos of Timberline Office, and it brings life to the otherwise static repository of building data held in accounting. To put it plainly, this means that WMS cross-links, consolidates, and makes sense of the data created by jobsite superintendents, estimating, workflow management/scheduling, work orders, accounts receivable/accounts payable, change orders/variances, warranty management, general ledger accounting, and sales.

"To access WMS, our jobsite supers run BlackBerrys on the Verizon data network. It was easy to get started; we just downloaded BuilderMT's "Wireless Scheduling" application," said Jeff Walsh, Systems Manager for Infinity Home. "We switched from Nextel because we felt it was much easier on our supers from a coverage standpoint, not to mention synchronization speeds over Verizon's network. Now, a super can change the schedule in the field and that information flows back across all our other software systems. If we have a drywall delay because of inspections, everyone can know about it immediately. The jobsite super's schedule change triggers a series of messages and e-mails to the appropriate people."

Before Infinity ran BuilderMT's Wireless Scheduling, the supers actually logged schedule changes on a note pad and someone in the office wrote those notes on a larger piece of paper that was taped to the wall in the main office. The crews and managers would have to refer to that to detect a delay in the building process. "Now we really rely on BuilderMT's weekly reports, which are fed and updated from the field by the super's wireless tools," said Walsh. "They make a

schedule change and it updates the back office report functions automatically. At a glance, anyone with access can see the disposition of the house and the schedule."

If the house has a schedule variance, it's immediately evident, and management and sales can plan accordingly. Previously, Infinity depended on bank progress reports, but the information was always stale by two weeks. Unless Infinity management did an actual walk-through of the home, they were flying blind and a house could be ten or twenty days late without their knowledge. Today, wireless scheduling presents "ears and eyes" on the ground, in real time, all feeding information back up to all the other software systems.

"The result of our using Wireless Scheduling is that we have lopped easily 10 to 15 days off our cycle time, and perhaps more importantly," says Walsh, "we are able to focus on quality control and not damage control. We are not expending lots of man hours trying to figure out where we are. We know where we are now, and we can focus on making better houses. As BuilderMT rolls out its Trade Portal in coming months, our trades and subs will all have the same visibility to the schedules, work orders, purchase orders, and even the status of payment."

About BuilderMT's Wireless Scheduling

When BuilderMT released its Wireless Scheduling application, it reshaped the competitive landscape of builder software systems. Competitors offer so-called "wireless scheduling," but it is invariably dependent on "hot sync" or "cradle sync" methods to coordinate data between field and office-based software systems. Today, a builder running BuilderMT's Wireless Scheduling can easily download a Blackberry or PDA application, and through standard linkages to a data network like Verizon's, he can engage in true, real-time, wireless scheduling in the field. The changes made on the Blackberry - approvals, schedule changes, punchlist notations, quality control checklists, the list is endless-are automatically fed up to the back office systems, which issue messaging to appropriate management, crews, and allied subcontractors. Wireless Scheduling can run the Verizon network with BlackBerrys, Tablet PCs, Smart Phones, or Palm OS PDAs and in September, Windows Mobile applications.

What's best is that Wireless Scheduling (indeed, all BuilderMT functionality) preserves the integrity of the back office data within Sage Timberline® Office, so that you are not proliferating databases with middleware. Every transaction from the field integrates into the

various software platforms, populating data and triggering messaging where required, or specified by the BuilderMT user.

"To be perfectly frank," added Jeff Walsh with a laugh, "what we got from BuilderMT was a 'mental health' package. We not only have control over our processes now, but they are transparent to every level of management, and for the first time we can see exactly what we are doing."

Here is a list of the functionality that can be performed with BuilderMT's Wireless Scheduling:

- Schedule specific activities from the field
- Log in completion of individual activities from the field
- Trigger payment approval to Accounting for pay points
- Setup reminders and notes on scheduling activities
- Note variance assignments from the field
- View supplier contact information from the field
- View owner (buyer) information from the field
- Complete quality control checklists assigned to scheduling activities before completion of an activity
- Generate updated projected completion dates for the project and send back to accounting for liability tracking and report of project cash flow.
- Send Text Messages, e-mail, or Direct Connect™ suppliers from the field.

About BuilderMT

Before introducing Wireless Scheduling, BuilderMT was already the homebuilding industry's most-advanced project management software. BuilderMT offers "Click to Learn" training (which can be done from the builder's desktop) and one-click software "auto-updates," where the latest version of BuilderMT is available for instant download through a convenient desktop link. BuilderMT also plans to introduce a customizable, user-defined "BuilderMT Workflow Management Suite" desktop dashboard for controlling a builder's operations.

For large and medium-size homebuilders in the \$250 billion homebuilding industry, BuilderMT provides highly customizable building process management software that works in tandem with Sage Timberline® Office Accounting and Estimating software, systems used by one in four of the Builder 100. BuilderMT has been purchased by over 550 corporations and 3,800 individuals to manage over 185,000 housing starts annually, more than 16% of the new home market. BuilderMT is widely recognized as a leader in process-driven, best-building-practices for builders, as well as customer service, warranty applications, online training, and innovative wireless applications. Since its inception in 1999, BuilderMT has maintained its status as a debt-free, highly profitable company that puts its profits back into the infrastructure and software development. To learn more, visit www.BuilderMT.com, or call (888) 757-1991.

Tom Gebes is President of BuilderMT, the building industry's best-selling workflow management software solution. BuilderMT works in tandem with Sage Timberline® Office Accounting.

