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At Home with the Enterprise

November 2004



PRINT ARTICLE

Constructech Staff

Enterprise tools are rapidly finding a comfortable niche in the homebuilding market. Generally applied in many commercial projects, enterprise software has been uncovering a wealth of benefits for residential contractors as well.

Debbie Kilhafner, assistant vice president, Kipling Homes, www.kiplinghomes.com, Shorewood, Ill., believes there is no way her company could operate without enterprise applications—particularly project management. Building custom and track multifamily and single family homes in the Chicago area, Kipling sells approximately 200 homes annually and has made project management from BuilderMT, www.buildermt.com, Lakewood, Colo., a vital piece of its operations.

"We've been told by consultants that we really push the envelope with our software but we believe that it provides us with easy-to-use tools that help us operate," says Kilhafner.

One option that Kipling uses with the system allows it to take direct cost price and profit margin on a particular home and show a selling price in order to see the profit within each subdivision it is building in, says Kilhafner. This is tied to its online marketing from Builder 1440, www.builder1440.com, Baltimore, Md., which pushes out the sales price to the customer.

"Your sales people can no longer pull the wrong sheet to sell a product or option because they are looking at the most update information and not a sheet that is a couple of months old," adds Kilhafner.

The fact that the system is integrated with its sales tools, as well as production management information from Timberline, www.timberline.com, Beaverton, Ore., makes Kilhafner believe the system is that much more critical in the way Kipling conducts business on each project.

The validity of project management in the homebuilding space is growing by leaps and bounds recently. Software providers such as Intuit Construction Business Solutions, www.intuit.com, Santa Rosa, Calif., recently unveiled its latest version of its complete business management solution for contractors, Master Builder 10.

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New information-sharing capabilities, communications features, and its diverse network of integrated suppliers, everything from estimating/bidding to mobile applications, has allowed Master Builder to become a key business-solution option for many in the homebuilding market.

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