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**CONSTRUCTECH**

Trade Power

It's becoming more worthwhile for subcontractors to come online. Web-based collaboration tools are becoming more affordable and simple to use, bringing the homebuilding industry one step closer to realtime collaboration.

BuilderMT, [www.buildermt.com](http://www.buildermt.com), Lakewood, Colo., recently launched Trade Portal, which allows builders to share workflow data with subcontractors and allied trading partners. This Web-based service enables builders to maintain a single database for all schedule, workflow management, and other transactions. In the same manner, subcontractors can access detailed information regarding purchase orders, work orders, schedules, warranty, and payment status via the Web.

Perhaps most attractive about the release is the fact BuilderMT is offering Trade Portal to companies for \$1 per month per user for the first six months. With Trade Portal, each subcontractor or supplier has a unique Website that accesses a record of their activity with builder clients. A customizable "dashboard" showcases any builder updates or events that impact the subcontractor or supplier.

Viewing screens contained with the product allow users to access approved, issued, or cancelled purchase orders. Event schedules can be viewed by projected dates, scheduled dates, or completion dates and schedule notifications can be triggered through the Trade Portal's scheduling tool and delivered to any individual Web portal or redirected to email or a wireless device.

Mark Buschman, of Buschman Homes, [www.buschmanhomes.com](http://www.buschmanhomes.com), Gurnee, Ill., says his company recently deployed Web-based technology from BuildTopia, [www.buildtopia.com](http://www.buildtopia.com), Rockville, Md., to manage multiple facets of the homebuilding process. Online collaboration with his trade partners is something he hopes to take greater advantage of as his subcontractors begin to realize the ease of using the technology. BuildTopia also offers a flexible pricing structure to get subcontractors up and running with its technology.

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"The capability to collaborate online with the trades is there and most are starting to use it," says Buschman. "Today almost all trades have access to the Internet and I anticipate that with online collaboration, they will find it easier to pick up plans, bid work, view the schedule online, (among other tasks)."

As the costs of online collaboration continue to come down, many subcontractors will realize the complexities associated with using these tools come with down with it.

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