

BUILDER - Best Practices

Pre-Construction

1. Identify the program you will use for the project (include this info with your bid packets). Use a program that promotes teamwork & emphasizes getting jobs done correctly and on time. Examples: TQM, Six Sigma, ISO 9000, NAHB's Certified Trade and Builder Program.
2. Require trade contractor QC Program to be identified in trade contractor bids.
3. Require Quality & Performance Standards to be identified in trade contractor bids. Provide incentives for achieving quality benchmarks.
4. Provide detailed and specific bid documents and a clear scope of work for each trade (clearly identifying special conditions & exclusions).
5. Require a Mediation Agreement in all contracts and require every party on the job to provide same (including subs, consultants, suppliers & fabricators).
6. Require document evaluation before bidding:
 - a. **Soil Analysis:** Review by soils & structural engineers of soils report, site, foundation slab design, concrete mix, reinforcing, compaction. Review for sulfates, chlorides, ammonia, radon, methane, & protect underground utilities if soils are corrosive.
 - b. **Architectural:** Review all bid documents for code compliance, complete and effective details and specifications, coordination of trade conflicts & cost-effective design strategies by a qualified architectural plan review consultant.
 - c. **Waterproofing:** Review by waterproofing consultant of architectural drawings and details and specifications to ensure bid documents cover all waterproofing conditions including exteriors, below grade and interior conditions (showers, tubs, sinks).
 - d. **Acoustics:** Review by an acoustic expert of architectural plans and structural drawings to ensure that noise levels will be acceptable and field-testing of each model before roll-out.
7. Provide proper notice of job-readiness to trades, including description of any special conditions.
8. Contract with civil engineer to provide certification of lot and drainage prior to buyer closing escrow (per lot disclosure plan). Avoid locating swales on common property lines or along fences.

Construction

1. Require QC checklist for each house from all trades. Review & remedy identified problems.
2. Set up regular job progress meetings w/ subs promoting open communication about issues.
3. Resolve problems as soon as possible.
 - 1st: Provide a non-critical, single point of responsibility and rewards it's use.
 - 2nd: Work aggressively to resolve problems rapidly with a positive, teamwork approach (without stopping the job, if possible). Use mediation for fast and fair resolution of disputes.
 - 3rd: Be accountable. Verify the problem is fixed and provide opportunities for further review.
4. Qualified, independent 3rd party QC inspections should be done for problematic issues such as:
 - a. Civil Engineer should certify lot & drainage, per lot disclosure plan, before close of escrow.
 - b. Foundations & Slabs: Concrete footings & slabs, masonry, grouting, reinforcement, embedded anchors, utilities & below-grade waterproofing.
 - c. Framing: Sill plate anchors, shear wall panels, shear transfer, fire stopping, posts & beams.
 - d. Roofs: Roofing, felt/membrane, flashings, soakers, penetrations & transitions.
 - e. Exterior Waterproofing: Building paper, lathe, weep screed, window and door flashing, deck flashing, waterproofing, drains and scuppers, skylights, horizontal projections & penetrations.
 - f. Interior Waterproofing: Showers, tubs & counters.
 - g. Plumbing Review: Pipe sizing, cleanouts, venting, slope and shading of below-grade pipe, protection of pipes from concrete, support & attachment connections, seismic restraints, and pressure-testing of copper pipe to 200 psi. Include videotape record or certification of main drainage lines prior to turnover.
 - h. Mechanical: Equipment verification, sizing and balancing. Duct layout, support, connections, leakage testing. Field-review upon completion.
 - i. Paint: Review by paint manufacturer representative of project requirements, site and environment & provision of project-specific paint specs.
 - j. Spot Checks: Review by 3rd party inspectors of framing, waterproofing, and other critical items.

Post Construction

1. **Customer service comes first:** Provide rapid and effective customer service. Use reps that are courteous, knowledgeable, able to listen & relate well to HOA's, and give them the resources to resolve problems.
2. **Provide an HOA Maintenance Manual & an effective Maintenance Program,** especially for attached housing & mater planned communities.
3. **Provide an adequate DRE budget** to allow for operation of all line items.
4. **Hire professional managers** (Certified and CACM members).
5. **HOA Liaison:** employ HOA specialist who oversees declarant Board Members, hiring HOA Community Manager/Team and assures HOA Manual implementation.
6. **Provide Reserve Study** with funding.
7. **Turnover to the HOA** should be by a 3rd party. Walk common areas prior to turnover, & record all drains, underground features & utilities in the turnover package. Store builder photos in project file.
8. **Provide a comprehensive warranty** with clear maintenance guidelines for interiors, exteriors & site.
9. **Work together** with the HOA as a team, avoiding an oppositional "us vs. them" attitude.
10. **Have a plan for mold remediation.**
11. **Provide a handbook on community living.**
12. **Participate in mediation promptly,** to correct and eliminate problems before they become larger.
13. **Have Plaintiff Attorney** peer review homebuilders risk management plan.
14. **Litigation search:** don't sell to attorneys who have history of suing their builder.

TRADE - Best Practices

Pre-Construction

1. Identify in your bid what QC program you will use for the project. Use an effective program that promotes teamwork & that emphasizes getting jobs done correctly and on time.

Examples: TQM, Six Sigma, ISO 9000, NHQ Certified Trade and Builder Program.

2. Incorporate quality & performance in your bid, know the job and avoid low-bidding.
3. Review plans thoroughly prior to bidding and notify builder of design conflicts or defects.
4. Include a Mediation Agreement in contracts, and require every party on the job to do the same including consultants, suppliers & fabricators.
5. Pre-walk the site for job readiness and notify builder of any unacceptable conditions.
6. Provide notice of job readiness to builder.

Construction

1. Respond to 3rd party QC inspections by builder.
2. Participate actively in job progress meetings with the builder. Keep communication lines open.
3. Inspect shower/bath assemblies, including lath, vapor-barrier and other critical areas.
4. Inspect prior work by other trades thoroughly before starting & reject unacceptable work. Do not cover up defective work done by others.

5. Resolve problems as soon as possible:

1st: Ask for help promptly. Raise red flags.
Communicate concerns effectively.

2nd: Acknowledge mistakes, be accountable, and then solve the problem as a team (without stopping the job if possible). Use mediation for the fast, fair resolution of disputes that cannot be solved without outside help.

3rd: If a problem persists or if the solution is not acceptable, request additional management help.

Post-Construction

1. Customer service comes first:
Provide rapid and effective customer service. Use reps who are knowledgeable, courteous, patient, able to listen & relate well to homeowners and give them the resources to resolve the problems.
2. Provide a comprehensive warranty.
3. Provide maintenance recommendations (in writing) that are clear, project-specific and will effectively prevent problems if used properly by homeowners and HOA's.
4. Participate in mediation promptly to correct problems fairly and efficiently before they become more complicated.

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