

Building Success 101

Q: What is the role of a superintendent?

A: A superintendent, or "lead," is the person in charge of managing the day-to-day activity and progress on the job site during construction, and is typically the homeowners' primary point of contact with the building company. Depending on your builder, the 'super' could be the owner or his representative. Often, builders hire superintendents to manage the day-to-day activities on the site. This frees the business owner to stay connected with a number of customers and concentrate on business management issues.



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What Makes a Builder Tick?

Let's face it: Homebuilders don't always have the best reputations. The prospect of building a new home can cause a lot of anxiety, stemming from a combination of mystery, misperceptions, myths, and illusions most people have about the homebuilding profession.

While some builders earn that reputation, the professional builder successfully exposes any preconceived notions a prospective buyer might have about the building business and the construction process. They work hard to clarify their motivations and approach to construction. They seek to view the project from the client's perspective and meet their needs and desires.

Getting to know a builder can foster a greater respect and a higher level of confidence for a company's ability to deliver a high-quality new home.

First, it is important to understand that professional builders are business people. They build homes because it's their chosen profession, how they seek to earn a living. Of course, like anyone, they are interested in making money; a professional builder, however, makes money honestly, and seeks to earn a reasonable profit.

Like other successful builders, we constantly refine our approach to business, adhere to predetermined building schedules, and establish reliable and lasting partnerships with building products suppliers, financial institutions, and specialty trade contractors. We live in the areas where we build and are active in our communities. We rely on a strong local reputation to continue to build our business.

Some builders, though, lack the business and communication skills to be successful, resulting in dissatisfied customers and ruined reputations that often blanket the entire industry. This is not an industry-wide scheme to separate homebuyers from their money. Rather, it's just an unfortunate slice of society that both buyers and professional builders have to endure.

Unlike almost any other industry, a builder's work is exposed to the public; while cars and washing machines are assembled in factories and seen only on the showroom floor, a house is on display from foundation to finish. This can lead to misinterpretations or misunderstandings between a builder and a homebuyer. Often, however, what looks to be incomplete or irregular during the stages of construction is quite different from the eventual finished product.

Given those circumstances it is also important to understand that builders are engaged in the home building process every day and over many years. They gain experience and have a unique perspective. They have a vision of a home's progress that extends well beyond daily progress, one that few owners can truly share or comprehend.

As a result of that perspective, a builder may occasionally appear unconcerned or take a casual approach to what a nervous homebuyer perceives to be a problem on the job site. Simply, the builder has likely seen or heard about it a million times during his career, knows implicitly how he'll deal with it (assuming it needs to be dealt with), and has significantly less emotion invested in a home than a client does.

Successful builders listen closely to their buyers' concerns, respect an owner's questions and patiently communicate solutions. They understand that building a house is a considerable emotional investment, a potential source of anxiety, and a financial risk, and work to ease those burdens.

By the same token, an informed and understanding homebuyer recognizes that the construction process is second nature to a professional builder. When both a homeowner and a builder respect each other's roles and approaches to the business of homebuilding, it fosters better and more open communication, the opportunity to develop trust, and the prospect of achieving a successful and satisfying project.

Warm regards,

Brian

Brian Gentry
President



**Landed Gentry Homes
& Communities**

504 E. Fairhaven Ave,
Burlington, WA 98233

(360) 755-9021 - office
(360) 755-9029 - fax

info@landedgentry.com
www.landedgentry.com

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