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Building Success 101

Q: What is a "structured" or advanced wiring?

A: The combined growth of personal home computers, consumer electronics, entertainment systems, and home security products - not to mention the dynamic evolution of the technology behind them - has prompted builders to increasingly offer wiring schemes that enable whole-house communications, data and audio-visual sharing, and other features. Typically consisting of Category 5 (or "Cat-5") wiring and coaxial cable, structured or advanced wiring schemes allow homeowners to customize their use of technology to meet their lifestyle needs.

A Home that Works When Working at Home

Today's home offices have changed residential design forever. They are now a mainstream feature in nearly every type, size, and price of new home. Professional, market-sensitive builders know that the majority of families need a separate space to conduct business from home. The successful integration of work and living environments is critical to meeting individual family needs.

While estimates vary, studies suggest that more than 4 million people work full time from home; many more part-time. When budget allows and the need arise, professional builders are making space in their floor plans to provide a work space that is both separate and private. Many builders provide more than one room in which owners can conduct business, and the floor plan placement, access, and other features of current home offices are increasingly sophisticated.

Compared to the adapted work spaces in dens, libraries and even garages just a few years ago, home offices are now specifically designed for office use. Builders often locate these rooms on the main floor, frequently just inside the front door. This allows privacy by separating the office from other public areas. In addition, the office might share a powder room or full bath (with its own door) and provide built-in bookshelves, extra storage and surfaces for files and office equipment. In model homes, home offices are marketed to make sure that potential homebuyers are aware that the builder offers a dedicated office space in addition to the bedrooms within the floor plan.

Luxury and custom homebuilders may provide a secondary office niche near or adjacent to the master bedroom or in the kitchen. These smaller office areas work well for home management tasks, such as paying the bills or maintaining the family schedule. Such space can also be carved into a long and wide hallway or included in a second-level loft between bedrooms, providing family access to a computer or homework area for school-age children. The floor plan may also provide a similar space near the kitchen or family room so that parents can supervise schoolwork, craft projects, or oversee Internet access.

In some cases, the home office is a separate building, outside the main footprint of the home's floor plan. A separate building allows at-home workers to come and go and greet clients or visitors without disturbing or being disturbed by household activities.



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Regardless of the context and however accommodated in the floor plan, there's little doubt that home offices have changed basic housing design. They are now a common feature in nearly every type, size, and price of new home. This trend is sure to continue as work and home management evolve in response to advances in electronic and communication science. Market-savvy builders will be ready to meet the needs of each client family.

Warm regards,

Brian

Brian Gentry
& the Gentry Family



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