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CASE STUDY: WINCHESTER HOMES

Winchester Homes Embraces a Digital-Collaborative Future

Driving Down Costs and Cycle Times While Using Outsourced and In-House Digital Plan Services from CG Visions and Vertex BD, Winchester Homes Merges Custom and Production Homebuilding Practices

Over years of successful operation, Winchester Homes has built more than 18,000 homes in the Washington, DC area. Today they have an enviable reputation as a high-quality, award-winning builder in three housing categories: upscale, mid-market, and active-adult.

What's more, especially for other builders in their market, Winchester's great reputation isn't the only thing that gets noticed. The company has weathered the housing downturn far better than most. Alan Shapiro, Winchester Homes' President, stated that the company will settle more than 300 homes in 2011, up from 230 in 2010. Not bad, in any market. The average price of a Winchester Homes is around \$600,000, but that figure masks the diversity of their product offerings, because Winchester Homes has three separate brands: First there is Camberley Homes, which offers custom luxury homes to an upscale clientele, with homes up to \$2 million. Next there is Winchester's Artistry Collection, aimed at the 55-year-old and up active-adult market, and its typical offering is single level living homes. Finally, Winchester Homes itself offers single family attached and detached homes in the \$500,000 and up range.

Software Maintains Order

To maintain order among 300 starts across three brands, Winchester Homes runs well-known, mainline software systems: For its ERP, they run Oracle EnterpriseOne (E-1). For its customer relationship management system, Winchester runs Computer Presentation Systems ("CPS"), which automates the sales and contract processes. But for its CAD design systems, Winchester Homes has to run systems and processes that can accommodate the idiosyncrasies of its market and the niche that Winchester has so successfully carved out. Here's why: "Practically every one of our homes is a one-of-a-kind custom project," explains Winchester's Alan Shapiro. "In our Camberley and Winchester Homes offerings, we offer unbridled customization, including a range of structural options. You wouldn't even say that we have a set of 'base plans' per se. That said, once we close out the design and options-selection

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Alan Shapiro,
President, Winchester Homes

processes, we treat the home like a production homebuilder, bringing manufacturing efficiency to its construction. However, since every home is different, every home is – for lack of a better term – a ‘prototype.’ If you’re not careful as a manufacturer of ‘prototypes,’ you get real problems.

“For our design services, we used to run Argos BD. But we saw a proliferation of plans and documents. In fact, each page for each trade in Argos had companion pages and those pages had little or nothing to do with what we were going to build. Our subs, trades, and suppliers got confused, and mistakes escalated.”

CG Visions Steps In

With the help of a CAD systems integrator, CG Visions, Winchester Homes surveyed the competitive landscape of solutions, and ended up implementing Vertex BD, a comprehensive CAD software solution. That technology opened up a wide range of planning and operational efficiencies for Winchester.

“With our old CAD system, it used to take 200+ days to develop a new product, but now with CG Visions’ support of the Vertex platform, our design and start processes take, max, 16 weeks,” Alan Shapiro explained “It’s usually more like 13 weeks. Once we are out of the design stage, our building cycle time is typically 16 weeks.”

“With CG Visions’ help – often they work as a truly integrated extension of our design department; sometimes they serve as our design department – we were able to set up a hosted plan-set document repository,” Shapiro said. “Now nearly all our trade partners are accessing single-version-of-the-truth plan document sets. We rarely print anything off, except for county and code approval, and even then we are printing far fewer documents than before, at a huge saving of staff, time, and money.”

“Using Vertex BD, CG Visions also set up a 3D visualization and fly-through capability that makes for dramatic sales presentations – owners can virtually walk through their homes – to say nothing of how it helps our subs and suppliers visualize what they bidding on and building.”

“Another item that CG Visions helped us set up was automated Bill of Materials (BOM),” Shapiro continued. “That alone has saved us a great many man hours and made us more competitive and efficient.” CG Visions’ unique ability to bridge the gap between the historically disparate departments of architecture, and purchasing has resulted in the efforts of one department truly supporting the other.

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About Winchester Homes

At Winchester Homes™, we take great pride in every aspect of homebuilding. That doesn't just make us different from other builders; we believe it makes us better. More importantly, over 18,000 homeowners throughout metropolitan Washington, D.C. believe it makes us better, too.

Award-winning Home Designs: As the first large builder to earn the National Association of Home Builders' National Housing Quality award, we have established a standard of excellence unparalleled by any other luxury homebuilder. Our dedication to quality has been recognized by our customers and peers within the industry through many awards.

Learn more: www.whihomes.com.

About CG Visions

For the home building industry in North America, CG Visions is the leading provider of turn-key outsource CAD and Building Information Modeling (BIM) solution implementation and consulting. As a “technology agnostic” systems-integrator, CG Visions offers BIM software consulting, back-office software integration, panelization, home plan input, training, media services, option management, digital marketing services, and its flex floor plan configurator, e-HomeInVision.

Learn more: www.CGVisions.com.



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