

TODAY'S STRATEGIES
2010 TOP PRODUCTS

TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS
THE MOBILE BUILDER

RESIDENTIAL

CONSTRUCTECH

Automated Home Technology and Solutions

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Outlook 2010: DOING MORE WITH MORE

IS 2010 GOING TO BE DIFFERENT THAN 2009?
HOMEBUILDERS ACROSS NORTH AMERICA CHIME IN ON
TECHNOLOGY PLANS FOR A NEW YEAR.

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THE PROBLEM WITH CALCULATORS

Taking the time to map your business challenges before investing in technology can save you thousands of dollars and countless hours and headaches.

The information revolution is quickly changing the way the construction industry does business. If you are not taking advantage of the tools that will allow you to process information quickly and more accurately, you risk being left behind—especially in the tight market most builders currently find themselves in.

Technology will solve all your problems, right? More sales, fewer mistakes, better margins—technology is the magic pill—but only if you have solid business practices in place. Investing \$1000, \$10,000, or \$100,000 in the ‘state of the art’ will not automatically eliminate sleepless nights, and without some basic systems in place that technology purchase may actually multiply those sleepless nights tenfold.

Take the example of a calculator. In many ways the earliest ‘personal’ computer was a desktop calculator, which came on scene some 40 years ago. That simple tool has revolutionized the way mankind performs math. It increased speed and accuracy and, in the right hands, has allowed calculations to be performed in seconds that used to take weeks or months with abaci and slide rules (and before that sticks and fingers). But in the uneducated hand, that same calculator becomes a simple paperweight.

If an individual is handed a mathematical problem, a calculator is useless unless that person understands basic arithmetic, algebra, and geometry. In the same way the purchase of technology is not going to make homeowners happier or a business more efficient unless there are good management practices, systems, and repeatable standard operating procedures in place. Technology allows you to perform your daily functions quicker and more accurately. Technology allows you to store more data and

access it quickly and easily. But, if you don’t have a process in place, the most cutting edge technology will simply end up being that same paperweight. So, here are some suggestions to analyze your needs prior to investing in that next piece of technology:

- Write an outline or draw a simple flowchart that illustrates the process and sequence of events that you have identified to become more efficient and/or accurate in your business cycle.
- Define which employee or subcontractor is currently responsible for executing the steps in the process you just defined. Don’t forget to identify if, when, and/or how the homeowner is involved.
- Write out a job description and a ‘standard operating procedure’ that defines how that process should be currently handled.
- Armed with this clearly defined manual process, you can now research and shop for the correct piece of technology to solve your issue; armed with a clear definition of what needs improving, you can now find the tool that will make that improvement.

Failure to perform the above analysis before being exposed to all the outstanding technological tools available to your business can result not only a failure to fix the original problem, but may actually produce new headaches and heartaches as your company gets bogged down with a technology tool that is trying to fix something that may not be broken. Make sure your next technology purchase is made to make your current process more efficient and accurate.

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