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# Constellation **BLUEPRINT**

## **Differentiate Yourself**

Chuck Miller

In one of my early Institute of Residential Marketing courses, the instructor said something that really hit home with me as a Builder and Remodeler. He pointed out that marketing is about differentiating yourself in the marketplace and stated that you can differentiate yourself by product or you can differentiate yourself by process and procedure. He then pointed out that if you differentiate yourself by product and you have a great product – great floor plans, unique trim details, energy-efficient building practices – eventually everyone is going to copy what you’re doing. Thus, you constantly struggle to find new ways to differentiate yourself. But then he emphasized that if you differentiate yourself by process and procedure, others are far less likely to copy what you do.

Previously featured authors have discussed the value of best management practices like using purchase orders and work orders and eliminating billing errors to save money and improve your bottom line. But there are a number of best management practices and implementing any or all of them will save you money and improve your bottom line. More importantly, implementing best management practices will increase your sales. I believe that everything we do is marketing and the best, most cost-effective marketing is referral marketing. I emphasize that our customers include not only the people who hire us to build or remodel their homes but also our trade contractors, vendors, and service providers. Particularly in today’s market, buyers are hesitant. They have read and heard all the news stories about builders and contractors facing financial problems or filing bankruptcy. But people are still buying new homes and remodeling their existing or newly purchased used home. If you follow best management practices in your business, it can go a long way toward reassuring them that you are not like all the others.

Differentiate yourself by implementing best management practices like creating critical path schedules for all of your jobs and updating those schedules at least weekly; using work orders and purchase orders that not only set the price but that are also tied to your job schedule; having a system in place to notify your trade contractors and suppliers when they are expected to be on your job and when they are expected to complete their work; ensuring that your jobs are ready for them when they show up as scheduled; managing your accounts receivable and accounts payable so that trade contractors, vendors, and service providers are paid in a timely manner; and providing your lenders with accurate financial statements on a monthly basis. Not only will you receive preferential service and pricing from you trade contractor and vendor partners, but I guarantee that if you do all of these things, the word will spread.



## **Constellation HomeBuilder Systems**

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Your trade contractors, vendors, service providers, and lenders will become some of your best sales people. You will become the Builder or Remodeler of Choice in your market.

Integrated software programs make it relatively easy to implement most of these best management practices. But like any good tool, you have to take it out of your tool box and learn how to use it. I encourage you to do so.

### **About the Featured Author:**

Chuck Miller is a Graduate Master Builder (GMB), a Member of the Institute of Residential Marketing (MIRM), a Certified New Home Marketing Professional (CMP), a Master New Home Sales Professional (MCSP), and a Certified New Home Sales Professional (CSP). In addition to his role as President and CEO of Chuck Miller Construction Inc. Chuck is an instructor for the National Association of Home Builders University of Housing Graduate Builder, Graduate Remodeler, and Institute of Residential Marketing programs. Chuck has been a Buildsoft user since 1992. You can learn more about Chuck and his company at [www.chuckmillerconstruction.com](http://www.chuckmillerconstruction.com).