



3 simple steps to a better relationship with your new homeowners.

For any house builder, it's fundamental to the success of your business to keep your new homeowners happy. In very simplistic terms your customers are the only reason that your Construction business exists.

In today's world of digital connectivity, an unhappy purchaser can do more damage to your brand than ever before. But at the same time, a happy homeowner can help your company grow faster, by spreading the word and referring many more customers to you. Word of mouth marketing is an extremely powerful influence on prospective purchasers.

Too often, customer complaints are something no one in your business wants to deal with. If customers are not happy, internally, we blame the construction team, the technical team for changing the specification or the sub-contractors poor workmanship. If customers are happy, we credit the amazing sales team. My point being, every department should take full responsibility for unhappy customers; share the pain and the success stories as a team.



Customer satisfaction needs to be at the top of everyone's priority list, no matter what department you're in. Too often, I visit companies where the Customer Care department is cocooned in an office somewhere, out of earshot, with little interaction with the other departments who don't want to hear about their customers problems.

It's up to senior management to build a culture based around your purchaser's happiness in their new home.

Contrary to popular belief, the construction Industry is not all about the bricks and mortar; it's all about the Customer Service.

It's a fact, and the sooner you come to terms with this, the better off your team and your construction business will be.

Here are three steps any house builder can introduce to their business today to create a better relationship with their new homeowners:

1. **Answer their questions.**

When they call, answer the phone.

When they email, respond.

When they walk in, greet them and see what they're looking for.

When calls and emails go unanswered, when questions fall through the cracks, people get irritated very quickly.

I have spoken to many Chief Executives and Managing Directors of housebuilding companies over the last couple of months. They have told me that they still have had to get involved and appease their customers (on almost a weekly basis) after receiving an email from very disgruntled homeowners who are complaining that none of their reported defects are being dealt with and the communication has been very disappointing since handover.

When a customer completes on the biggest single purchase of their lifetime, they expect you to be there if they need your help and advice.

2. Ask them what they want.

When an escalation occurs with unresolved defects and snagging items, discuss a reasonable action plan and timescale with the purchaser. Don't just say 'we will get it done when we can', that's not acceptable.

Better Customer care starts with better communication. Even if its bad news, maybe a specific required part has a long lead-time or you have limited availability of resources to respond, let your homeowners know at the earliest possible opportunity. Maintaining radio silence with a dissatisfied purchaser should never be your default position.

Include your past purchasers in future decisions. You can do this with exit surveys about changes to your house types, specification and the sales experience. Talk to your customers and ask them for suggestions. Many will welcome the chance to be involved.

3. Ask them what they thought.

Don't let handover day be the last interaction your purchasers have with your business.

Follow up with them to make sure they got what they expected from the pre purchase experience. See if there is anything else that they need from you. Find out if they have any questions you can answer proactively. This gives you a chance to establish your brand as caring and customer focused house builder, and you can solve any potential problems before they arise.

Not hard, right? These are three simple things any company can implement.

But it's a culture that focuses energies and efforts onto your new homeowners that is needed before change can truly be made.