



**Dickson Development Corporation**  
*A Tradition of Innovative Quality Construction*

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## Your Role as the Project Leader

Homebuilding has changed significantly over the last hundred years, with the greatest changes occurring since the 1950s when the housing industry boomed following World War II. In many respects, construction has evolved from a trade or craft to a systematized process. Building a home, in a classic, hands-on sense, is far from standard practice these days.

We want to thank all of you for referring friends and neighbors to Dickson Development. We really appreciate referrals and look forward to working with new customers for the design, renovation or construction of their home.

Modern homebuilding is shaped by the mass production of almost all building materials. Today, builders manage pre-made construction materials and coordinate highly specialized trade partners and suppliers in a context of inflexible building codes and other regulations. The complexity of these processes naturally distance homeowners from the actual building process and can cause uncertainty as to their role.

In fact, a homeowner's role during construction is more important than ever, if vastly different than it was a century ago. The homeowner is still, ultimately, both a leader and a guide. By gaining a solid understanding of the building process, owners can set a standard of professionalism for the rest of the team. Consider the following "leadership training" tips that help define an owner's role during a construction project:

As you know this newsletter is distributed twice a month and covers a wide range of topics relating to homebuilding and homeownership. It also provides periodic reminders on commonly overlooked home maintenance items. Please forward the newsletter to others who may be interested in having work done or are just interested in the construction process.

- **Education is key.** Even though you won't be wielding a hammer or acting as the general contractor, you can get educated about the home building process and gain an understanding and respect for the pace, phases, and materials that go into a home's construction. (That is one of our purposes in offering this newsletter.) Buy a book! Do some Internet research at such sites as <http://www.nahb.com> (National Association of Homebuilders). This knowledge helps you communicate with your builder, avoid the discomfort of unrealistic expectations, and will give you confidence as your home moves through progressive stages of completion.
- **Meet deadlines.** Builders set deadlines for certain decisions so that materials and labor will arrive on the job site at a certain point during construction, enabling steady progress and on-time completion. As the owner, take responsibility to negotiate reasonable deadlines for decisions you'll have to make, such as the selection of cabinets or flooring, and then stick to them. This will go a long way in helping to keep your project on time and on budget.

We at Dickson Development value our current relationships and value building new ones as well. We look forward to using our newsletter to keep in touch with all of our friends, both old and new!

- **Respect the change order process.** Make sure that your contract includes a formal and dedicated process for managing change orders, which generally are decisions made (or changed) after an agreed upon deadline. Change orders always cost money and sometimes affect the schedule. It may take time to remove one product, wait for the delivery of its replacement, and then to install it. As professional builders, we do our best to accommodate customer changes. For their part, owners must respect the impact a change order has on costs and schedule and take the responsibility for requesting and accepting the trade-offs involved in such a change.
- **Communicate.** Communication is critical, so avoid keeping a concern, issue, or idea to yourself. Come into the process with an open mind and don't be shy about asking questions. Keep a list and present your questions during our scheduled meetings or on-site conversations, but call us up sooner (during business hours) if you need an answer more quickly.

As builders, we are proud of our business operations and systems. We try to create a partner relationship with each of our clients. Our savvy customers meet us part of the way by educating themselves, sticking to deadlines, and asking quality questions. By working together, we are most likely to succeed in building a beautiful and satisfying home for you and your family.

Warm regards,

*Richard*

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