



## Building Success 101

Q: *What is "millwork"?*

A: Millwork is an industry term that refers to items -- usually wood-based -- that are "milled" from larger pieces of wood into finer, more detailed pieces, or items that are produced in a specialty saw mill. Examples of millwork are interior and exterior doors, cabinets, stair parts, and trim materials, such as crown moldings or exterior shutters.

## Finishing Touches

Regardless of a home's size or style, all construction follows a consistent pattern and pace. Excavation and foundation work will be followed by the framing phase, which will be followed by rough mechanical, electrical and plumbing work. As soon as those stages are complete, insulation will be installed. These steps follow each other quickly and are easy to see. The progress is exciting!

But when our crews and subcontractors begin to focus on the interior finishes of your home, the pace seems to slow down and daily progress is more difficult to follow. To the homeowner, it might seem that we are losing focus or paying less attention to the project. In fact, the opposite is true. The apparent pace of work has slowed because finishing work is much more detailed than the previous stages. We must be *more* focused and pay *more* attention to the finishing details.

For example, cutting, building, and fastening the pieces of a complex crown molding profile along the ceiling-wall joint of an upscale kitchen requires several hours of painstaking work by a skilled finish carpenter. Likewise, finishing newly built walls to a smooth, uniform surface is a process that takes multiple cycles of application, drying, sanding, and cleaning to accomplish properly.

There also are more products to install. The number of cabinets, faucets, light fixtures, door handles, and outlet and switch covers in a modern new house continues to increase as homes become larger and more luxurious. To get some sense of that task, count the number of outlets and switch covers in your kitchen and family room alone (or in the whole house, if you're more ambitious), each of which must be installed by hand before you can move in.

Finally, finish work signals the last stage of the building process. Both we and our clients are anxious to finish the job after several months of anticipation and hard work, not counting the time spent planning before construction began. It is hard for clients to remain patient when the work appears to be moving slowly.

By the very nature of its exacting, hand-applied work, the finishing phase of homebuilding is necessarily slow. That does not mean that the work is being neglected! During this final part of your home construction, remember that we remain focused on the highest quality installation and application of your home's interior finishes.

Warm regards,

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