

## ***Builder & Client- Working with Your Architect***

Great! Your client has **decided to build** a new home. That is a wise decision because of the new technologies and innovative design ideas of today. A new home **has many advantages** including:

- Designs that help the family interact with the open kitchen, family room & nook concept.
- Brighter homes with more & better placed windows to let in natural light.
- Energy efficient heating and air conditioning units.
- Better insulating methods and materials.
- Lower maintenance construction.
- And many other reasons.

But you already told your buyer that.

Now your client gets to meet the first team member, your Architect. With the proper information your Architect can be a valuable member by helping the direction of the design to **fit the budget** and expectations of your client.

Now, how do you and your client work with your Architect in the process of designing the new home? A **good Architect** is not only a talented designer with knowledge of market trends, construction techniques and costs, he or she needs to be a **detective**.

The first meeting or conversation should be with the builder so the Architect understands the **limits of the budget**, level of finish, lot information or other information that will help the Architect create a successful design. The last thing a builder and client need is a design that is too expensive. This will only lead to disappointment and possibly a lost sale.

The Architect's first step in dealing with the client is to find out what the homebuyer wants and needs in their new home. This process involves a **personal meeting and/or a written survey**. I like the personal interview because an answer to one question may lead to another question that might not be asked otherwise. I can also gauge if there is excitement, hesitation or confusion about the topic of discussion. This conversation goes back and forth with the Architect asking questions, offering ideas, explaining options, sometimes playing devil's advocate and even getting couples to **communicate** to each other about the new home.

To make the interview process more productive the client should think about the basic design items they want and be thinking of their life style. With this information the Architect can probe further and help them think of things

they never thought of before. Remember, it is just as important to know **what the clients do not like** as what they do like. Some of the basic questions and information the Architect needs follows:

- Survey of your lot.
- Family profile - # of children & ages.
- Approximate budget (from builder )
- Approximate size of the new home (from builder )
- One or two story?
- Number of bedrooms?
- Number of living areas?
- Special rooms?
- Life style - entertain or private?
- Work out of the home?
- Space for guests or live-in parents?
- What do you like and dislike about your current home?
- Style of exterior design.
- And other questions that may be on the Architect's survey.

With these needs, wants or pieces to the puzzle, as it were, your Architect can add imagination and innovation to design their **dream home**. The Architect can also make suggestions and avoid certain design elements to reach the budget. He can also inform the client when they are adding costs but should refrain from quoting how much more or less. (That is the builders responsibility since the Architect can not know each builder's costs.) This also keeps the **communication flowing** between all three parties. The Architect should also relate to the builder any important information he gathered during the client meeting.

To get a successful design, the trick is to **communicate, communicate, communicate**. You and your client will find the results very rewarding.

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