



Report from the CHBA National Marketing Committee

Submitted by: Miles Kohan

Date: June 2011

Ottawa, Ontario

The National Marketing Committee met on May 27, 2011, in Ottawa, ON. The brief description of the presentations is provided in this report.

1. Designing for the 2011 Canadian Home Buyer

By Tim Bailey, AVID Canada

Knowing what features home buyers value most in a new home is a real challenge for builders. It is a moving target that changes all the time. AVID's annual study of "design drivers" offers insight into which features and amenities are currently most wanted by home buyers, as well as changes in preferences and trends year over year. It is a detailed North American-wide study that provides a "macro-level" view of the appeal of many design elements to six different buyer groups, from first-time purchasers to custom home purchasers. Before launching new projects, builders should do research in their own marketplace to ensure that they are adding the right design elements and, therefore; the greatest value to their homes.

Overall, today's new home buyers are pragmatic and cost-conscious and look for utility and functionality. Small is the "new big". People want spaces rather than rooms, pushing builders to come up with creative design solutions within less square footage. Energy efficiency is now a "must". The five top features across all buyer groups include both walk-in and linen closets, large kitchen space, energy efficient appliances, and an overall energy efficient home. At the same time, there is still a luxury market for big, lavishly appointed homes.

To see the full presentation, visit the Members' Area of the CHBA Website, [under Committees](#). Also check [Good Business Tips](#) for highlights.

2. Equilibrium™: Healthy Housing for a Healthy Environment

By Sue Ann Rothwell, Policy and Research, CMHC

Ten Equilibrium™ Housing projects are now in the monitoring stage, following the completion of the demonstration period, while two homes are under construction: the Harmony House in Burnaby, BC and the Moncton VISION Home in NB.

Toronto's Equilibrium™ Communities Initiative project, Regent Park, is 90% built and sold or leased, thus; monitoring of water consumption has begun. In Ottawa, Minto has started construction of its Ampersand project. In Tofino, BC, the district energy system for the Ty-Histanis community is in place and the first houses are under construction.

CMHC has a number of new publications on accessibility available as part of the About Your House and Research Highlights series. In other recent research, working with the CHBA, CMHC conducted a series of interviews with developers and new home builders to identify information gaps and priorities for sustainable residential developments, in order to determine additional information requirements.

To see the full presentation, visit the Members' Area of the CHBA Website, or [click here](#).

3. EQUILIBRIUM™ HOUSING: MARKET RESEARCH OVERVIEW

By Brett Dietrich, Corporate Marketing, CMHC

CMHC has conducted a significant amount of market research in conjunction with the EQUILIBRIUM™ HOUSING initiative. The key objective is to track the diffusion on the initiative through consumer awareness and interest, and through industry dispersion of elements of EQUILIBRIUM™. The research includes “pre-launch” focus groups with green consumers and builders, pre and post demonstration interviews, industry surveys, questions in the CHBA’s Pulse survey, and more. The results to-date indicate that builders are familiar with and aware of EQUILIBRIUM™ HOUSING and aspects of EQUILIBRIUM™-type housing, while public awareness of the initiative is low. According to the Pulse survey, almost 80% of builders have changed their construction practices in recent years, improving the building envelope and mechanical/electrical systems and installing renewable energy systems.

On average, 91% of consumers say they are either “somewhat interested” or “very interested” in energy efficiency. Exit surveys indicate that their interest increased significantly (40%) or somewhat (40%) after visiting an EQUILIBRIUM™ demonstration home. Their project favourites were solar energy systems, energy savings, overall design and rainwater recycling. The main barrier to choosing sustainable housing is price, availability, unfamiliarity with the technology and maintenance.

To see the full presentation, visit the Members’ Area of the CHBA Website or [click here](#).

4. WHAT DOES “GREEN” MEAN?

By David Foster, CHBA

“Going green” is an important business decision for new home builders, and a significant investment in training, technology and marketing. To be successful and protect their investment, builders must understand what’s going on in the marketplace and what home buyers expect and want.

Consumers today are literally inundated with green labels and claims. There are hundreds of “green” labels tied to thousands of products, including labels that don’t mean anything at all. TerraChoice, a private Canadian organization originally established by Environment Canada, analyzed thousands of green products (4,744) against established criteria, and found that more than 95% of products claiming to be green are guilty of at least one “sin” of green-washing, with lack of proof and vagueness being the main culprits.

Not surprisingly, consumers are sceptical and becoming more so every year. US research shows that more than anything, people want honest and credible information, so they can make informed purchasing decisions.

In order to assist members in making informed green business decisions, the CHBA has developed a set of criteria for assessing green labels and rating systems for new and existing homes. This will also be extremely helpful in meeting consumers’ need for solid, substantiated information about the environmental attributes of a home.

To see the full presentation, visit the Members’ Area of the CHBA Website or [click here](#). Also check [Good Business Tips](#) for highlights.

5. Trends in Home Automation

By Marc Leidig, Ambiance Systems/CEDIA

Earlier this year, the Custom Electric Design and Installation Association, CEDIA, conducted two surveys of custom home builders, remodelers, architects and designers to learn about the latest trends in the industry and the use of home automation. Overall, energy-efficiency became significantly more important to customers in 2010, and the use of home technology increased as well. Both builders and architects use home technology to differentiate their business, with many building it directly into the design process to enhance the design of the home, providing integrated systems control, increasing the aesthetics of the home, and anticipating future needs.

To see the full presentation, visit the Members' Area of the CHBA Website or [click here](#). Also see [Good Business Tips](#) for highlights of the survey findings.

6. Manufacturers' Council Website

By Aaron Latimer, All Weather Windows

The CHBA Manufacturers' Council represents a number of Canada's leading producers of building products and materials. The mandate of the Council is to work with the CHBA on common issues and concerns and support the residential building industry. The Council's *Solution Providers* website, located in the Members Area of the CHBA website, is a prime example. The site offers quick access to information on products, technology and design, and shows what each manufacturer has available in terms of education and training, onsite assistance, point-of-sale materials and other marketing support. A separate "Helping You Go Green" section is designed to make it easier for builders and renovators to specify products for their green projects.

To visit the Solution Providers website, you can go directly to www.chbamanufacturers.ca