



Mark Heinauer and

Barrington

HOMES



HOMEBUILDING IS IN MANY WAYS FAR REMOVED FROM THE RETAIL TRADE BUT MARK HEINAUER, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF BARRINGTON HOMES BELIEVES HIS COMPANY HAS PROSPERED DURING RECESSIONS AND BOOMS BECAUSE OF A GUIDING PRINCIPLE THAT GIVES A NOD TO A LOCAL GROCERY STORE.

“I HAVEN’T ACTUALLY TOLD THIS TO MANY PEOPLE BUT I CALL IT THE ‘FOODLAND FACTOR,’” LAUGHS HEINAUER. “THERE WAS A FOODLAND WHERE I LIVED AND I ALWAYS MADE SURE I CONDUCTED MYSELF IN BUSINESS WITH INTEGRITY SO WHEN I WALKED DOWN AN AISLE AT FOODLAND, I NEVER HAD TO AVOID A CUSTOMER.”

Barrington Homes is a custom homebuilder so ensuring customer satisfaction would seem a natural impulse, but executing a “Foodland Factor” is not as easy as it sounds. Customer’s Wish Lists aren’t always in line with their targeted price point and builders - even great ones - tend to develop the skills it takes to put a house together well, not necessarily the skills needed to meet a homebuyer’s needs. To do that, a builder must be part designer, part realtor, part contractor and maybe part psychologist, a combination that is pretty rare. The real estate professional who handles Barrington’s sales thinks Mark Heinauer fits that bill to a ‘T’.

“Succeeding as a builder is a price/product/quality issue,” says Bill Dietrich, who manages Coldwell Banker’s residential sales. “Mark has the experience of being in real estate and working for a production builder, which really helped him learn what people want when they are looking for a new home.”

For Heinauer, that experience started in the latter stages of the real estate boom in Houston. He had gone there in 1981, like many young people chasing the prosperity of the oil boom in the late 1970’s, when skyrocketing energy prices had created a recession across the globe but meant good times in the oil patch of southeastern Texas.

During his time in Houston, Heinauer discovered a knack for designing homes and moved back to Pittsburgh in 1984 as a home designer. Over the next five years he gained experience designing but also got the opportunity to work on residential development projects and worked as a multi-million dollar top producing realtor.

In the late 1980’s, the Pittsburgh economy was still healing from the loss of the steel industry but the shift from a manufacturing to a service-oriented economy was creating demand for new homes in bedroom communities in the South Hills.

Heinauer decided in 1989 that he enjoyed building homes more than anything else and launched Barrington Homes, focusing on the growth occurring in the southern Allegheny County suburbs like Jefferson Hills, Bethel Park and Upper St. Clair. That same year, the Parkway North was opened from Downtown to Interstate 79, creating opportunities for builders in new communities from Franklin Park to Cranberry. For Mark Heinauer the growth meant a new generation of buyers who were looking for homes that were different from the traditional center hall Colonial that dominated residential architecture in metropolitan Pittsburgh.

His experience had shown him that Barrington Homes could be successful by building homes that had attractive features that could be built in an affordable way. Because Barrington was strictly a custom builder the company wasn’t going to build inexpensive homes, but Heinauer was determined that they build homes that were accessible to the market.

“You can design a home that’s fabulous but if it’s too expensive no one can afford it,” he says. “There are only so many ways you can put a house together but that doesn’t mean you can’t do it in a stylish way and a way that is cost-effective.”

Heinauer’s approach to designing homes is to understand the lifestyle needs of the buyer and respond with ideas that match those needs. While he’s well

known for his kitchen and bath designs, Heinauer knows that the homeowners’ satisfaction over the long term will depend on how well the home fits their lifestyle. And doing that means paying attention to more than the high profile features.

“I think everyone focuses on the kitchen and bathrooms but really there are little things – nuances that are everywhere throughout the home – that make a difference,” he says. “Don’t get me wrong. We like to design the splashy things too, but we’re just as proud of the little things that matter over a long time in the home.”



Grant and Mark outside a new construction project in Lake MacLeod.



A Barrington Home in the Lake MacLeod development in Pine Township.

“...He’s very attentive and all that information lets him be very responsive to what the homebuyer is saying, regardless of the price point.”

“Finding out what customers need is just a matter of talking to them about what they’re looking for,” Heinauer explains. “An owner may not know exactly what they want but if you listen closely enough they will tell you what they really want, even if they don’t realize it.”

Bill Dietrich says it’s more than just listening closely that sets Barrington apart. “Mark is amazing with the amount of information he brings to the first meeting,” he says. “He brings floor plans, samples of materials and carpentry, photos and catalogs. That’s very respectful of people’s time. He’s very attentive and all that information lets him be very responsive to what the homebuyer is saying, regardless of the price point.”

Heinauer also has help in the design phase from a well-trained resource, his son Grant.

“Grant has been a big part of that process for the past several years,” he says. “He graduated from Penn State and has a real knack for learning from customers and designing what they want. He’s designed some terrific houses that are great selling



homes. It's not just a help for me but it doubles the personal attention we can give to our customers." The capacity for attention has now tripled. Younger son Brock graduated from Duquesne University this spring and has now joined Barrington Homes as well.

Creating a legacy business wasn't necessarily part of the original plan for Barrington Homes – Heinauer says he didn't ask either of his sons to even work for him – but the founder knows the prospect of passing the business on influenced how the company grew.

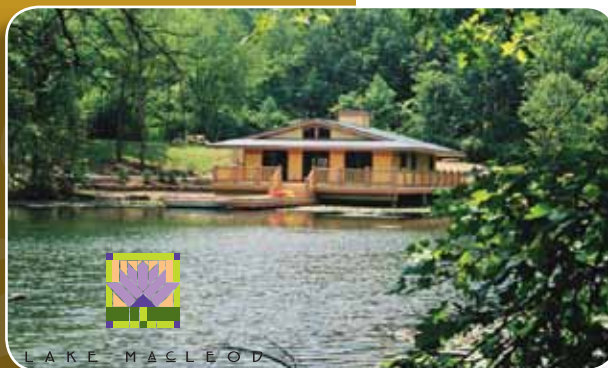
"I've known that I had two sons for a long time now," he laughs. "So my process for building this business was about creating something lasting for them. It sounds corny but those are the people that mean the most to you. I always let the kids know the business was there but never pushed them. I always told them they had better love it. My father always drilled into my sisters and me that you should love what you do because you're going to do it a lot."

The extra help is coming at a good time for Barrington Homes too because the builder is as busy as ever, with 17 homes currently under contract or under construction at some stage.

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About the Builder **Barrington Homes**

Barrington Homes is a team of dedicated and respected custom homes professionals led by President Mark Heinauer, who brings over 28 years of residential construction experience on over 550 single family custom homes to the Barrington Homes Team. Outstanding floor plans, unique custom interiors, and the flair and drama of their custom personally designed kitchens have contributed to unparalleled customer satisfaction at Barrington Homes. Most importantly, Barrington Homes prides itself in their 100% on-time completion and customer service satisfaction statistics.

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Construction of new homes has been slowed in the region since 2006, falling drastically during the recent recession but Barrington has built more homes in the past three years than any other period. Some of that volume can be attributed to being in great locations – Heinauer took advantage of falling lot prices to invest in some of the best lots in the city – but the high percentage of repeat clients suggests that other factors are behind the success.

“We build a lot of homes for people that we built for before,” Mark Heinauer explains. “We probably build a couple of those a year but this year we have three going on already.”

Heinauer tells of a customer who bought a spec home of his in Treesdale a few years ago because he wanted new construction but had to find a home in a hurry. The homeowner called Barrington after he had the time to live in the area and assess the best place to build. “He said he called because his wife was really tough and if I could keep her happy for three-and-a-half years I was the guy to build his home,” he says. “He ended up building on the lot across the street from his house.”

Barrington’s spec homes are a big part of their success story. Heinauer’s prudent management of the company’s finances has



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... experience working for a bigger builder taught him important lessons about keeping customers happy.

allowed him to maintain a supply of three specs at most times, even during the past few years when lenders were reluctant to finance even a single speculative project. Aside from providing a ready inventory, the spec homes have ended up serving as models of a sort. In fact, many of Barrington Homes' contracts come from prospective buyers of their customers existing homes.

"They are doing specs that people really want to buy," notes Dietrich. "One house he is building in the Enclave is already sold and he's got a contract from another buyer who didn't get that one."

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"It's great when one of the homes we have built goes on the market as a re-sale because it generates more business for us from the people who have viewed the home. Barrington Homes has become synonymous with quality, desirability, and customer service. Therefore, when a realtor advertises a Barrington re-sale, the home sells quickly and the prospective buyers who missed their opportunity contact us to build for them. Our brand recognition has helped us sell as many as four contracts from one re-sale home!"

Barrington Homes is proud of their quality and the many standard custom features that they provide in their homes, but keeping the customer happy before, during and after is a big part of their success.

"When I worked in Texas, warranty service was a big business," he explains. "There were builders on every corner and our company kept track of the service calls and took it very seriously." In new construction, the attention paid to correcting problems in the warranty period separates good builders from the rest of the field. First-time buyers of new homes find out soon enough that problems do pop up and they expect service. "I don't think people expect a house will be perfect but when something goes wrong – a drippy faucet or whatever – if you take care of it in a timely manor they are happy."



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The reputation of Barrington Homes and Mark Heinauer's management approach has paid dividends. The builder is currently in some of Pittsburgh's most desirable neighborhoods, including a few of the region's limited communities of million dollar homes. In addition to the Enclave in Fox Chapel, Barrington is building at Park Place in Indiana Township, Whispering Creek and Stonebridge in Hampton Township, Scarlett Ridge in Franklin Park, Indian Meadows and Meredith Glen in Adams Township, and in Lake MacLeod and North Park Manor

in Pine Township. In fact, at Lake MacLeod, Heinauer recently increased his presence by purchasing 15 more lots, bringing his total share to 25 of that phase's 36 lots. Combined with the five homes under construction or previously built there, Barrington Homes will complete the lion's share of the homes in that prestigious neighborhood. There aren't many million dollar homebuilders in Pittsburgh and even fewer who are busy, but Barrington Homes is prospering in that niche.

Heinauer's vision for his business - whether to build a legacy for his family or to remain true to the 'Foodland Factor' - created a homebuilding company that made decisions with a long horizon in mind and the market has rewarded his approach. Like all builders, Mark Heinauer welcomes a return to better conditions for residential construction, but he's confident that Barrington Homes will endure regardless.

"I think the recession may have helped our business," Heinauer says. "With the drop in home values - even if Pittsburgh didn't experience it - customers look more closely at what they are getting and they like what we're doing. They like that we make the homebuilding process fun and easy and they appreciate our 100% on time completion record." **NH**