



Dave Brown, Regent Homes Homes with a **Difference**

Maybe it's their fresh take on a vintage architectural style. Or the quality they build into every aspect of a home, from its foundation to its finishing touches. Or it could be the personal interest the company owner takes in you and the way he walks your home to check all the details for himself – Regent Homes offers the differences that make their homes and their process stand out.

Company president Dave Brown who founded Regent Homes seven years ago, says his philosophy can be summed up in a response he gave to a newspaper reporter in 2002 who asked about his company's philosophy: "It's simple – quality, customer service and relationships."

Quality is at the top of Regent Homes' priority list. Buyers find high caliber workmanship in the company's construction techniques. Elements that are usually classified as options are standard at Regent, including engineered floor systems, poured concrete foundations, 100% OSB sheathing high efficiency mechanical equipment, concrete drives and full front porches

Craftsmanship is ensured by Regent's ultra-organized approach that includes the effective systems, paperwork and checklists that keep his operation flowing smoothly.

"Whether it's a \$175,000 or \$400,000 home, for the buyer it's the

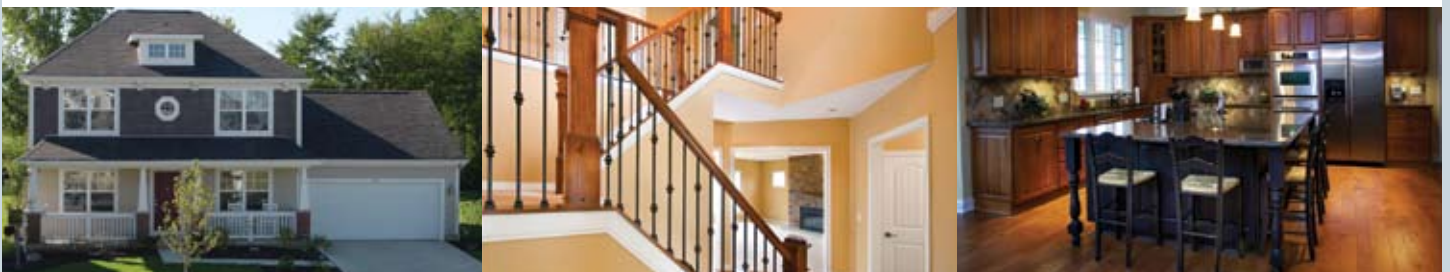
biggest purchase of their life," says Brown. "The materials may vary but the quality should always be the same."

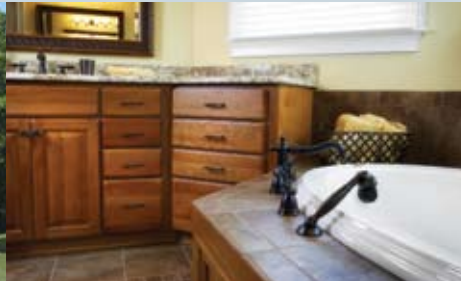
He and his team hone in on the details of each project. "I walk every house that we build and I have a checklist for every phase of construction," says Brown. "I walk the homes with my superintendent regularly and before the buyers final walk, to be certain every home meets my quality standards first."

Regent Homes built its first homes in Johnstown and Delaware in the below-\$200,000 price range. Today the company builds in communities closer to Columbus and at higher price points. They now offer homes in Lewis Center priced in the mid to high \$300's and Hilliard in the mid \$300's. They also build in Marysville, London and southern Marion County in the \$200's, and on scattered sites. Additionally, the company does remodeling throughout central Ohio.

Wherever he builds, Brown is committed to being available to his buyers. He gives every buyer his cell phone number so they can get in touch with him quickly if they need to.

"Communication is the key, You can talk to the owner of the company whenever you want, and I tell every one of my customers I want them to be on a first name basis," he says. "I want them to feel comfortable. Once





we get them to that point the process becomes easy – we try very hard to make it enjoyable for them.”

Brown, a Certified Public Accountant by education, combines the meticulousness and detail-orientation of his financial training with the communication skills of a savvy company leader. He continually asks for feedback from his homeowners – and he listens closely to what they tell him. Brown gets to know his buyers well and he works closely with them throughout the process.

Distinctive style

When Brown was first planning to go into business, he knew he wanted to offer buyers a beautiful and unique style of architecture. Visiting his sister in Nashville, he was struck by the graceful Craftsman homes in the area. Brown had an Aha! moment – he'd found the style that would set his company apart.

For days he drove the streets of Nashville, taking pictures and studying the unique architecture. Today Regent builds houses that incorporate the charming vintage style that impressed Brown. The homes always include picturesque features like full front porches, dormers and attic windows, cedar shakes and tapered columns. In keeping with the homes' distinctive and peaceful exteriors, he always gives his homeowners a pair of white rocking chairs for their front porch as a housewarming gift.

Regent Homes' signature style fits perfectly into its newest community, Avonlea in Lewis Center, where the company builds 2,200 - 3,200 square foot homes. With a gentle pond and a serene country setting, Avonlea is also set apart by its convenient location close to Polaris Fashion Place and Alum Creek State Park and the outstanding Olentangy School district.

Brown believes in continually improving his homes; every year he tries to add new plans and improved features. “We're always finding the best possible materials and finishes at our buyers' price point,” he says. To get ideas and stay ahead of the market, Brown regularly tours upscale homes to see their custom finishes and features. He also networks with other builders, reads up on upcoming housing trends and attends classes with his staff.

By constantly making his product better, Brown's goal is to build a highly loyal customer base. “We always try to run our business in such a manner that people would build with us again,” he says.

Expertise in building and business

Originally from Mentor, Ohio, Brown grew up the only boy in a family with six sisters which, he jokes, gave him an early understanding of what females want and how they communicate, which is critical in our business. After graduating from Ohio State University in 1986 with a degree in accounting, he took a job with Deloitte Haskins and Sells CPA's.

Although Brown started his career as a financial expert, he grew more interested in making the organizations he worked for stronger. He moved on to a Controller position at Red Roof Inns, and then became the Chief Operating Officer and President of Gemstar Homes. At Gemstar, Brown developed his knowledge of the building business as he oversaw single family home and condominium construction and sales.

Capitalizing on his expertise in both homebuilding and finance, Brown started Regent Homes in 2002. When asked what he does for a living, Brown is quick to make the distinction: “I'm not just a homebuilder, I run a business that builds homes,” he says.

Brown takes the business of running a business seriously. His budgets and financial statements are always current and accurate, and he uses tight controls throughout his operation. He farms out those services that take time but don't make him money such as payroll, HR functions and tax preparation, which allows him more time to focus on the business.

Although Brown brings many talents to his business, including his abilities as a licensed Realtor, his greatest strength is creating and running an effective company. Finances remain one of Brown's chief strengths. Cost control is a major key to his success, and he can tell with a high degree of accuracy where his numbers are at any point in a project or for the year. Additionally, he is very astute at managing his cash flow while minimizing his expenses.

Brown also pays attention to the people side of his business. He puts his personnel in positions that will make the most of their strengths, respects them and makes sure they get the training they need. Regent Homes also has weekly staff meetings to discuss production status, sales and review service letters. At the meetings, Brown engages his staff in discussions on how to make their processes run even better.

Brown says relationships are critical to his company's success and he creates trust with those who work with Regent Homes – vendors, contractors, city officials, bankers and clients. To maintain this trust, he builds a consistent product, makes sure his paperwork is accurate, pays his bills on time, keeps his pricing fair and always has his jobs ready to go. “I have a fairly high expectation level in everything I do, but I always try to remember a lesson my parents preached to me from a young age; treat others the way you want to be treated,” says Brown.

“Whatever happens with my business, at the end of the day, I'll walk away from it knowing I treated my contractors fairly, treated my customers fairly and treated my employees fairly. To me, that's the reward,” says Brown. “When my customers come up to me at the closing and say, your company was a pleasure to work with your employees were great and we truly love our home – that's what it's all about.” ■

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