



6 Keys to Effective Quality Assurance in Home Building

Maintain construction quality and customer satisfaction

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Quality Assurance Programs

The “Why” and the “How”



Quality issues and callbacks can have a detrimental impact on a builder’s brand and profits. Investing in a Quality Assurance (QA) program can create savings for builders by addressing common issues, resulting in less callbacks.

While investing in QA programs can yield significant returns, building an effective one can be challenging. Most builders require guidance in this area. This toolkit aims to provide builders with essential keys to developing an effective QA program, ensuring construction quality, customer satisfaction and brand integrity are maintained over time.

6 Keys to Effective Quality Assurance in Home Building provides an alternative to developing your own program by tapping into the QA system offered by a national home building franchise, [Epcor Franchising](#).

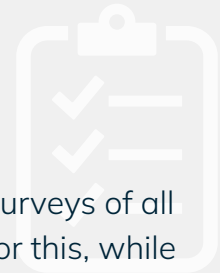
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Keys to an **Effective QA Program**



1 Buyer Surveys

An effective starting point is conducting customer satisfaction surveys of all home buyers. Some builders opt to hire an outside survey firm for this, while other prefer to do the work in-house. The survey findings help identify recurring issues or concerns that require immediate attention and correction.



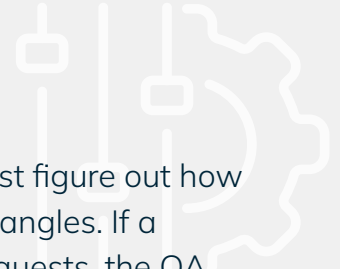
2 Site Inspections

Ensure that issues identified in the customer satisfaction surveys are addressed by developing a checklist of items for job supervisors to inspect on each home. Assign someone to review these checklists, often a QA manager, to review these checklists and identify patterns.



3 Solution Analysis

Once a problem has been identified, the quality team must figure out how best to solve it. This means looking at it from all possible angles. If a specific assembly is generating more than its share of requests, the QA manager can meet with everyone involved—design, purchasing and trades—to explore alternative designs or details.



4 Trade Training

A typical callback issue could involve cracked stucco. Upon conducting site inspections and meeting with subcontractors, it might become apparent that installers are not installing the number of control joints required by ASTM standards. Alternatively, they might be using too much sand or they're not keeping the stucco hydrated long enough after installation for proper curing. The manager may then schedule training with the installers to educate and help prevent future issues.



5 Better Plans & Specs

The right documentation is critical in spotting problems and communicating requirements to trades. The best specs clearly define how each part of the home needs to be detailed. While some of the details are readily available from manufacturers, like the right way to flash a window or door, others may need to be developed. In the stucco example, the job supervisor might work with the architect to spell out these requirements in the subcontractor's scope of work.

Effective documentation reduces defects and can accelerate the construction process by several days. Detailed plans and specifications help trades complete their work according to schedule. For example, when plumbers and HVAC installers consistently meet their deadlines, the electrical contractor doesn't have to build dry-run costs into their bids.

6 Ask for Help

The saying "if it were easy, everyone would be doing it" certainly applies to QA. Developing detailed plans for each floor plan and establishing systems to ensure everything is done correctly can be a massive effort

Fortunately, support is available for builders who want it. For instance, IBACOS offers a library of best-practices that show installers how to build a variety of assemblies in various climates. They also works with builder clients to establish standardized processes that ensure every home is built in exactly the same manner.

How Becoming a Franchise Builder Solves QA Challenges



Builders across the country have found that franchising has given them a blueprint to solve the challenges that come with building and managing a QA program.

Quality home building franchises, like [Epcon Franchising](#), supply their franchise builders with a field-tested QA system and support options, helping them provide the best work possible.

“ *[Epcon does] a great job evaluating a range of products, and recommending those that have been shown to last longer and generate fewer callbacks.* ”

-Pat McKee, Owner of McKee Homes

Raleigh, North Carolina Franchise Builder

Pat McKee, Owner of McKee Homes



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[Pat's video](#)

The Raleigh, NC home builder became an Epcon Franchise Builder in 2007 and has since grown his business from 20 to 300 homes per year.

The support he enjoys includes all the critical elements of a QA program: pre-engineered floor plans, a library of best practices for use by installers, and survey results from each homebuyer.

To help implement the suggestions from those surveys, Epcon provides access to its proprietary QualityMark® program. Independent third-party inspectors systematically inspect the home several days before closing and provide a punch list of items that need to be corrected. The goal is to deliver a defect-free home to the buyer.

McKee says that Epcon also helps him select products that won't cause defects. "They do a great job evaluating a range of products," he says. "Then they recommend those that have been shown to last longer and generate fewer callbacks, whether that's exterior siding or hardwood flooring." And because Epcon provides such a big market for product manufacturers, we can negotiate stronger warranty performance standards.

One of the biggest advantages of the franchise system, according to McKee, is the advice he can gain from other builders in the network. This includes one-on-one meetings and phone calls, periodic group gatherings to discuss best practices and an online forum where franchisees can trade advice. "The ability to network with peers who have experienced a similar growth path has been a huge help," he says.

An Efficient Road to Quality Assurance

Paul Scarmazzi, Owner of Scarmazzi Homes



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[Paul's video](#)

Epcon's QA program is especially beneficial for new franchisees, particularly those transitioning from different industries and facing a steep learning curve.

That was the case for Paul Scarmazzi, a home builder in Houston, PA, who has a background in real estate finance. He had not built any homes before starting his business in 1999. Paul credits the opportunity to network with other builders, as well as in-depth support from Epcon's staff, helping his company build quality homes out of the gate.

"With their help we were able to sort things out pretty quickly," he recalls. "Within about 18 months we were pretty good."

From there, his business improved with Epcon helping the company continually raise the quality bar. Scarmazzi Homes has won several national GuildMaster awards from his customer survey provider, GuildQuality, since 2008. In 2015, the company achieved a perfect five-star rating after 95 customer reviews. The company maintains a five-star rating on the GuildQuality website, with 96% of their surveyed customers saying they would recommend it to friends and family. In addition to happy customers, Scarmazzi notes that Epcon's QA support and organizational process has made for a healthier business.

“When you do things very well, and have excellence in your organization, process, procedure and strategic vision, the rest just falls into the bottom line. It's a natural outcome.”

-Paul Scarmazzi, Owner of Scarmazzi Homes

Get Started at [EpconFranchising.com](https://www.epconfranchising.com)



Learn about the steps to becoming an Epcon Franchise Builder.

Epcon Franchising provides a business blueprint for builders to capitalize on a large and underserved segment of the new home market, allowing them to build more, smarter and faster. Call 888-909-2430 or visit [EpconFranchising.com](https://www.epconfranchising.com) to learn more about what we offer and get your questions answered specific to your business and market.

Sales Disclaimer: The offer of a franchise can only be made through the delivery of a Franchise Disclosure Document. Certain jurisdictions require registration prior to the offer or sale of franchise. We do not offer franchises in jurisdictions where we are not registered (or exempt from registration). Epcon Communities Franchising, Inc. 500 Stonehenge Parkway, Dublin, Ohio 43017. Minnesota Franchise Registration No. F-3531.

400 Stonehenge Parkway Dublin, OH 43017
888.909.2430