A Marketing Advantage for Developers

Residential Steel Framing: It’s the Wave of the Future

Marketing new homes has never been tougher. Every survey of trends in home construction and home purchasing show costs, competition—and inventories up. There is understandable concern among this nation’s builders and developers.

What is needed is a way to break through this clutter. Consumers do want to be offered more home for less dollars, but they also want something more. If you’re a developer, you must find a way to attract home buyers by offering solid and unique reasons to see—and buy—homes in your project.

Ironically, this may be found in the framing of your next development. Steel Framing Could Be the Answer

Builders of commercial projects have known for years that there are advantages to using steel framing instead of wood. Anything that can be constructed out of wood can be built out of steel. However, there are a great many advantages to steel. For example, steel has the highest strength to weight ratio of any building material. This allows steel framing to use less material and therefore take less time to construct.

Overall, steel framing requires less labor in the field—on average, a three-man crew is sufficient. Steel arrives 95% pre-cut to fit, tagged, with instructions, and ready to assemble.

“Galva-Frame Steel homes are mechanically fastened with self-tapping screws,” points out Gary Payton, president of Los Angeles-based Cali-
fornia Building Systems. “Contrary to some builders’ fears, no welding is ever required with Galva-Frame systems.”

**Dollars and Sense**
Coupled with the lower construction costs of steel is another cost advantage: it is much easier to establish prices using steel framing. Payton points out that his firm will “guarantee steel costs through June of 1992.”

**Signs point to a growing reliance on steel framing for residential use.**

With wood costs proving to be very volatile, there are no guarantees that the price you are quoted for wood today will even be close to your cost a few weeks or even a few days later. “Wood costs vary widely based on market conditions, weather, and natural calamities,” Payton says. “Steel framed houses cost less to build than wood framed houses, enabling developers to legitimately offer buyers more home for the money.”

An additional savings may result from lower builders risk insurance because steel framing is a non-combustible material.

**Attractive to Consumers**
Steel framing enables developers to attract home buyers with several distinct advantages over wood framed homes. Galva-Frame homes are engineered to a seismic-four rating, the highest earthquake-resistance ranking in building design.

According to Peter I. Yanev, chairman and co-founder of EQE Engineering, “Steel framed buildings have an excellent record of protecting life, as well as minimizing economic loss.” This is a unique degree of protection...
provided by steel framing, as is the fact that steel doesn’t contribute fuel to a fire and may result in lower homeowners’ insurance premiums.

Developers can now offer buyers “termite and pest proof framing.” A home made with wood framing is susceptible to termites and carpenter ants. Galva-Frame homes are not. Steel frame homes may be advertised as “free from rot,” since rot can only affect wood frames.

Additionally, steel framing resists warping, splitting, cracking and creeping. In every respect, steel is tougher and longer lasting than wood.

Steel Framing Offers Environmental Advantages

Today, many people are “thinking green.” They go out of their way to buy products from companies which are environmentally responsible. Imagine the goodwill and favorable publicity which may be garnered for a housing project which allows hundreds of acres of trees to keep growing, keeps tons of air pollution elements out of the air, eliminates a hundred cubic yards of landfill area and saves thousands of kilowatt hours of energy.

The record for recycling in the steel industry is excellent. Joseph H. Cannon, chairman and CEO of Geneva Steel Company, speaking at the annual meeting of the American Iron
and Steel Institute, pointed out that, “Each year, the steel industry recycles more than 100 billion pounds of used steel products. That’s more than double the recycled materials of all other industries combined, including paper, aluminum, glass and plastic. Through recycling, American steel companies save an average of 600 trillion Btus each year—enough power for more than 18 million households.”

**Steel Offers Design Flexibility**

Every housing project offers unique challenges to the architect, designer and developer. Many of these challenges are matters of cost effectiveness, and many are site-specific. Whatever the concerns of an individual project, steel framing—with its ability to adapt to many shapes—offers the flexibility necessary for an efficient solution.

Galvanized steel provides floor plan flexibility for detached homes, condominiums, townhomes, multiplexes, or apartments. Steel framing construction also offers extremely flexible
Steel’s unique strength-to-weight ratio allows tall structures to be built at costs comparable to wood framing, with better quality and durability characteristics.

foundations--slab, pier and beam, piling, or basement foundation--and is compatible with all conventional roof and floor construction.

The research and development which was required to effect these solutions has already been conducted by galvanized steel manufacturers such as California Building Systems, manufacturers of Galva-Frame Homes. Tests in literally thousands of residential buildings have shown there is no degradation in the quality of a steel framed house as compared to a wood framed one.

In every measurable instance, steel framed houses have been shown to be stronger, straighter, and longer lasting than the same homes made with wood. And once a home is built, consumers cannot tell the difference.

With its experience, California Building Systems can assist in communicating with building departments to develop a better understanding between developers, planning departments and building inspectors.

As a one-stop shop, California Building Systems can convert existing wood plans to steel or make new plans utilizing steel. They fabricate and cut steel to the proper specifications, then ship it to the construction site, complete with color-coded assembly instructions. The company also offers on-site assistance as well as trained consultants to advise on any type of project, offering the largest variety of residential steel framing available. Galva-Frame Homes have been designed for single family or multi-family dwellings up to three stories with 16”, 24”, 48” and 60” “on center” construction.

So confident is California Building Systems in their Galva-Frame systems and capabilities, they will guarantee designs to meet any building code in the world. In addition, they will provide marketing materials to help developers sell homes built with their steel framing.

**Summary**

Homes with steel framing offer attractive pricing opportunities, speedier construction times, and a host of environmental and consumer advantages which translate into sales. These indications point to a growing reliance on galvanized steel framing throughout the 1990s and beyond.

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