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JIM SCHUELLER, PRESIDENT

PROFILE

BLOOMFIELD DEVELOPMENT CO.

www.bloomfielddevelopment.com / Revenue: \$20 million

Headquarters: Chicago / **Specialty:** Custom and spec homebuilding

Home Sweet Home

Bloomfield Development Co. builds its clients' dreams. **BY JANICE HOPPE**

Bloomfield Development Co. owner Jim Schueller lives and breathes real estate. After spending years as a real estate attorney for a large law firm and developing a few properties in his spare time, Schueller realized his passion was in homebuilding. In 2003, he founded the Chicago-based custom homebuilding company.

“I was involved heavily on the legal side of things from commercial to residential development and got to know a lot of developers, architects, engineers and brokers in Chicago as their lawyer,” he says. “I eventually decided to follow my passion to start my own company.”

Bloomfield Development is an industry leader in craftsmanship, innovation and architectural significance, he says. The company not only incorporates technological and environmental advancements in its custom and spec homebuilding and renovations, but it also ensures the highest standards of construction and design.

The company's reputation is its greatest asset, Schueller says, which has been achieved through unparalleled service and uncompromising quality. “I am involved with the clients on all projects,” he explains. “We stayed small so I could be involved in all our projects. And because I come from a legal background, our clients appreciate the way I manage their projects, looking at it in an organized, professional manner.”

The company mostly builds custom homes ranging in price from \$500,000 to \$3 million for clients on the North Side of Chicago and on the North Shore, which consists of many affluent suburbs north of the city that border the shore of Lake Michigan. “Quality to our clients means attention to detail,” Schueller says. “That means attention to their project, their concerns and their budget, and simply caring enough to pay attention to them as clients. They come to us because they want a quality builder who listens, answers the phone and cares.”

FIVE STEPS

Bloomfield Development sees itself as both its clients' adviser and builder, guiding them through all aspects of the homebuilding process. “When clients make changes we roll with the punches and whatever they want is fine, but we advise them about the change in cost and time,” Schueller says. “I never say no to clients.”

The company divides its custom homebuilding process into five manageable phases. An initial consultation is phase one, which involves listening to the client's ideas about architectural design and determining what floor plan fits their lifestyle. This first step opens the lines of communication and builds trust.

Phase two is focused on finding the perfect location based on critical elements, such as lifestyle, schools and transportation. After the neighborhood is chosen, Bloomfield Development helps its clients choose the right lot by considering size, zoning, setbacks and utilities.

During phase three, the client works with the company to design their new home. This process determines the number and placement of bedrooms, bathrooms, whether they want an attached garage or not, storage needs and mudroom options. "The trend right now is mudrooms," Schueller notes. "Everyone in the city and suburbs wants a mudroom. I've also had clients choose cork plank flooring instead of carpet because it looks like wood, but is still soft and warm." Other trends include sustainability features such as LED lighting, efficient HVAC systems, foam insulation and ultra-efficient gas water heaters such as the Rheem SPIDERfire series.

Phase four begins after the architectural plans are complete with the company obtaining proper permits, surveys and municipal approvals. The final stage is building the client's new home.

STAYING SMALL

Bloomfield Development is optimistic about the future of the real estate market because of an increase in demand for high-end residential homes. Schueller attributes this change to an increase in buyer confidence now that banks have loosened their financing restrictions. "Small to mid-size banks have started opening up," he explains. "Their requirements were much stricter a few years ago and now they are easing, which is allowing more people to build."

Bloomfield Development fared well during the recession and was building homes valued between \$2 million and \$3 million. "I am most proud of our reputation and that it carried us through the recession," Schueller says. "Most of our clients are referrals."

Bloomfield Development plans to continue growing, but will do so slowly and only by performing its work in good locations around the city and suburbs. "I've seen too many people grow too fast and the quality of work suffered," Schueller says. "We will carefully manage our growth and continue investing in Chicago." ■



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