

Good communications helps to minimize mistakes



HOWARD BOGACH
**YOUR
NEW HOME**

History has shown us that miscommunication can result in unexpected consequences. In 1999, for example, miscommunication among NASA scientists led to the destruction of a satellite and the failure of a Mars mission.

It turns out that engineers on the ground were using computer calculations in imperial measurement and the satellite was programmed to use metric so it entered the atmos-

phere too low and disintegrated.

While far less destructive than a disintegrating satellite, miscommunication between homeowners and builders over the dimensions, appearance or location of cabinets, fixtures, electrical outlets and other items can lead to frustration and ‘unexpected’ results.

Recently, I visited a home where the homeowner had requested that the builder extend her cabinets by two feet. The builder did as she asked however the cabinet doors on the extended portion were not the same width as the rest. She wasn’t happy with the result because the cabinet doors weren’t a consistent size and it wasn’t what she was expecting.

There was nothing wrong with the workmanship so the item was not covered by warranty.

If there had been a little more communication between the two, they might have been able to reach a more satisfactory solution — for example, extend the cabinets three feet so the cabinet doors would have all been the same width (18 inches).

Or the builder could have explained ahead of time what the homeowner could expect so she could have decided whether or not she really wanted to make that change.

Problems can also arise when homeowners do not understand certain terms — for instance, the differ-

ence between ‘hardwood’ and ‘engineered hardwood’ — or the builder does not advise them ahead of time on the impact of the location of various features in the home. These are situations that ideally could be avoided with clearer communication.

Many new home buyers have never bought a pre-construction home before so they rely on the expertise of the builder to help them through the process of choosing a floor plan, selecting finishes and making the countless other decisions required. Ideally, a builder will discuss the implications of those decisions before the work begins so the homeowner can make a more informed choice.

If you’re buying a new home, Tarion offers tips and advice via our website, blogs and our mobile-friendly MyHome Planner app. Our goal is to equip purchasers with important information to help with the various steps in the process and with what questions to ask.

Clear and frequent communication between homeowners and builders can help manage expectations on both sides and will hopefully result in a finished home with no unexpected surprises.

— Howard Bogach is president and CEO of Tarion Warranty Corp. which protects the rights of new home buyers and regulates new home builders. Visit www.tarion.com.