

EMERGING PRODUCT FOR NEW HOME BUYERS

Listed below are the needs for an emerging product. This information has been discussed with over 2000 companies throughout the Midwest and the East and we agree there is a substantial, growing need for this type of product. The product detailed below is referencing a *move-down product* for someone who is active; this is not just a retirement product.

In our experience, most builders feel they already have plans that meet this product need to some degree. However, we are not aware of any builder currently building product with the detail listed below. On the following pages you will find a partial summary of the detail we feel is vital in creating a product many new homebuyers are searching for but are currently unable to find.

1. 50-60% of the people who would buy this product type want to have **all of the extras as standard.** They do not want them listed as options or extras. There is a second buyer group that is willing to have options listed as extras, but in this note we will be dealing with the group who wants the house “**loaded to the max.**”
2. The elevations should have a **European-style design.** We have found a couple of architects who do an excellent job creating European-style home designs.
3. The **square footage ranges** from 2700 square feet up to 3600 square feet. There are a few homes that would be accepted under that square foot range as well as a few that would be accepted over the range.
4. 75% of the product is **ranch** or **single-story** and 25% is two-story. This product does not include any 1½-story homes, split levels, bi-levels, raised ranches, once-overs or New Jersey splits.
5. **Shutters** should be made of clear redwood #1 (the very best redwood). They should be sized so that if the shutters actually did work (which they don't) they would cover the window if closed.

These shutters should be triple-stained and screwed together in the back with rust-proof screws. Wood strips from left to right are used on the front with metal brackets that look like they operate, but don't. Curled iron corners should also be put on the shutters. Years ago, these curled pieces were actually used to hold the shutters open and act as a sort of lock for the shutter, but today they are just decoration.

6. This product should have a two-car **attached garage** with a minimum of 24' wide x 26' deep in size. Yes, it can have a front entry in certain market areas and the use of a 16' to 18' garage door or two 9-foot doors is acceptable. The elevation is critical so the garage doesn't overwhelm the front of the house by being too wide. We like the appearance of Classic Carriage House garage doors. (We prefer two 9' doors.)

A person moving down from a \$650,000 or \$1,800,000 home generally owns a larger car and is no longer willing to jump over the bumper to get past the front of the car as is commonly the case in a 22' x 22' garage.

7. We recommend the option for a **third car** “snap on” garage. This third garage should be sized at 14' to 18' wide by 26' deep. This third garage is designed for the “gentlemen's” yard tools or other toys. (It would be a clever marketing addition to state this on the floor plans.)

Some floor plans will also allow for a full bath with shower plus a walk-in closet of substantial size with a louvered door of 2'-8" in size, accessible only off this third car garage. Even the vanity in this bathroom should have quality faucets & Corian, marble or granite tops.

8. The interior **garage walls** should be finished down to the garage floor. This includes wainscoting all of the walls with a tongue and groove, plywood, cedar type material that is designed for this kind of use. It should have a chair-rail on top and should be stained (and installed by a finish carpenter).
9. This product lends itself to the use of **double front doors** with a large recessed porch, which are both critical. We recommend wood-stained front doors with $\frac{3}{4}$ panel brass and glass. First-class Baldwin hardware and a Baldwin kick plate would also be best. We do not recommend the use of a doorknocker.
10. The **lighting package** in the house should be between \$6,000 and \$10,000 minimum.
11. The **formal dining room** should be designed larger than one would normally have in this size home. Most move-down buyers will have an oversized formal dining room set which requires extra space. Each house must have a formal dining room.
12. The **main bathroom** should have a 3' x 6' **Whirlpool tub** made from a product one step above acrylic (not metal). The **second bathroom** should also have a **Whirlpool tub** of a 3' x 5' size; this one may be made from acrylic. The other bathrooms should have regular tubs of the soaker-type size (not utilizing any fiberglass or metal). No fiberglass or acrylic tub surrounds should be used for the showers. The sidewall around the tubs needs to be of marble or Corian or quality tile laid only in mud.
13. **Granite** or a marble product is recommended for all of the counter tops, including the bathrooms. This should not be offered as an option, but rather a standard. **Remember the buyers are looking for almost no options.**
14. **We strongly recommend the latest Moen faucets.** However, Delta and others also have outstanding product. Regardless of the brand, the product must be first class. We also recommend taking it to the next level by including a matching towel bar and paper holder accessories. (Moen has a special kitchen sink faucet filter combination that should be included as standard.)
15. The placement of **outside faucets** is important. We recommend one faucet near the front door, one on the back right, and one on the back left of the house. We also recommend a hot and cold faucet on the inside of each garage close to the house wall.
16. We recommend **first class cabinets**. Use the top of the line product and the best wood grain product instead of the plain white product.
17. Use quality **ball type hardware** inside the house on all the doors.
18. Anderson, Marvin and Pella all have superior **windows** from which to choose.
19. We recommend the use of **12"x 12" tile** for the foyer, kitchen and bathrooms.
20. We recommend that the **sub-floor** be 1 1/8" T and G – glued/nailed/screwed (not $\frac{3}{4}$ ").

21. A **security system** (with video) connected to the police and fire department should be included as a standard. The system should also have a panic button in both the kitchen and master bedroom. Carbon monoxide detectors should also be included in many different locations throughout the home.
22. **Security lights** should be included on all the corner eaves. A switch to turn the lights on/off should be installed in the kitchen, the master bedroom, and both garages.
23. A **central vacuum system** should be standard. We recommend the use of a Hoover product or similar quality. All the attachments for the system should be included as standard.
24. We recommend wiring the house with **five telephone lines** (3 phone lines, a fax line and an internet line). The locations of the telephones are critical and should be carefully designed. For example, the use of a telephone in the garage would be important. Some of the telephones may be portable and some stationary, but all phones should have the capability to put people on hold and transfer them to another phone in the house.
25. On the deck, an upgraded, Texas-type, expensive **gas & charcoal grill** should be included as standard.
26. We do not recommend that a builder furnish the washer and dryer or the refrigerator. For the dishwasher, stove and oven we recommend the use of first class products.
27. **For storage**, this housing product should include a **hard stairway** that goes up to additional storage in the attic. These buyers do not only want storage in the basement or crawl space but they want dry upper storage. The attic could be called your upper basement and should include approximately 700 to 900 square feet of storage area. The floors should be constructed of 11/8 inch, T and G, glued, nailed and screwed plywood with the ceiling joists already reinforced so you don't get any cracks in the ceiling.

On all the edges of this plywood area, there should be a 2" x 12" piece of wood securely nailed through the plywood and into the ceiling joists. People are irritated when their suitcases and other storage items fall off into the insulation. This 2" x 12" piece of wood will somewhat help that situation.

This attic space needs to be designed no differently than regular floor space. Attics have always been an afterthought and should be put in correctly and included on the finished, labeled **floor plans**. (An attic floor plan should show storage for Christmas decorations, another area for summer/winter clothes with two excellent cedar closets, and a third area for general storage.)

28. At the bottom of the storage stairway going upstairs there should be a light switch and at the top of the stairs safe **adequate lighting** in the attic area. Also, there must be a secure handrail that goes up the stairway wall that is made of something other than 2 x 4's (professional finish).
29. There should be **no pull down stairway** in the house.
30. The **HVAC system** should be professionally-designed and should be pre-approved (after engineering) and become part of the house plans. We recommend the HVAC system include a top of the line humidifier electronic air cleaner as standard.

31. We recommend using **9-foot ceilings**. We do not recommend using cathedral ceilings. Yes, tray ceilings are acceptable.
32. We recommend using brick or Hardie Board for the exterior of the homes. A stone-stucco combination with the brick is acceptable as well. We do not recommend using regular siding.
33. We recommend using **wood decks** with a minimum size of **22' x 28'**. We prefer the use of pre-finished material rather than the pre-treated wood. (Part of this is best as a screened-in porch with a fireplace.)
34. We recommend giving an option for a hidden—not gaudy—**home theater system in the living room** rather than converting the bonus room into a theater. We recommend offering two packages; a standard package for \$9500 and an optional package for about \$18,000. We recommend offering a first-class built-in music & intercom system throughout the house & garages as a standard feature.
35. We also recommend offering an option for a **home office**, generally located over the garage. (Ask us for the Home Office research, plus design standards.)
36. We recommend using **French doors** by Marvin Window Company, Anderson or Pella (we do not suggest using sliding glass doors).
37. **Three dimensional** roofing shingles should be standard unless you are building out west where tile may be standard.
38. Most likely you will find your **buyers only want to move** 3 - 8 miles from where they are currently living.
39. The **aesthetics** of the subdivision should encompass safe walking trails with numerous rest benches on the trails. Remember the trails are not there for walking, but for mentoring. In fact, you could call them mentoring trails or discussion trails. On these trails should be a huge berm, well-landscaped & set up for taking pictures, to the point of designing a concrete pad on which the photographer can stand & put his/her equipment.

Yes, there should be playground equipment although this subdivision will generally not have children. It is a place for grandpa and grandma to bring their grandchildren. However, avoid playground equipment designed for children over age five.

Yes, there should be a pool with the understanding that it will not be used very much. The larger pool should be minimal, scaled down and not considered the primary focus. The wading pool for the grandkids is the primary issue.

Again, this is only a minimal summary of our research. It should, at least, get builders thinking in the right direction to satisfy the future move-down market.

OFFICE PACKAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend changing the name from bonus room to office on the floor plans and include the below items in your office package:

1. A dormer if necessary for light and air.
2. Separate electrical meter for office space.
3. Separate gas meter.
4. Separate HVAC.
5. A 10" PVC paper-shoot that goes from the upstairs area down into the garage below into a bin for discarding paper (with wood sealed covering and door in upper office).
6. Five incoming telephone lines. Three for office lines: one for fax, one for the internet.
7. All incoming calls would come in on the regular telephone lines which are also house lines.
8. An increased lighting fixture allowance.
9. A ceiling fan with remote control for lights and fan.
10. The exterior door should be a regular 3 3/4' brass and glass, first-class front-entry door, with hardware similar to what might be used on a front door. Then there should be a good porch on the outside with a possible wrought iron handrail. The stairs that go from that exterior door up to the office over the garage are wider than normal—a full 4 feet inside the wall to inside the wall by the stairs. As you go up the stairs a little, the wall becomes a 1/2 rail. It is also possible to raise the entry doors higher than other doors so that the bottom of the door trim on the outside of the garage is still underneath the overhang. The entry door is possibly higher than a service door in the same general area by as much as 2 to 2 1/2 feet. This will allow you to enter by going up two or three steps on the outside and walking in on a little higher plane, so when you walk in the area or the hallway to go over the garage you are already part of the way up. This lowers the actual feeling of the inside office & gives an immediate sense of openness. For instance, putting in a 3/4 panel glass door, a shorter stairway, and an open rail opens up the area where you walk up. You may have to put a dormer but I do not recommend skylights.
11. Use a similar lock from the office to the upstairs house area so that the house is secured from the office area by a separate lock. Dead bolts should accompany the locks on the office. Many people will want an employee to stay when they are gone from the office so the locks have to be different.
12. The doorbell should ring in the office and house, but have a different ring tone than the house doorbell.
13. The carpet in this office area has to be more along the lines of office carpet. Berber carpet is more appropriate.
14. Plan for a coat closet or coat tree in your design.
15. The office floor joists will need additional support as well as the header over the garage door if the joists are sitting on that header (use steel on steel posts). We recommend engineered steel beams & flooring.
16. In many cases, we suggest going to all steel beam headers and substantially overdoing the floor system to a minimum of 2"x 12," 6 inch on center.
17. Because it is built as a home office and not a public office, it doesn't necessarily have to meet the wheel chair codes, but you should check into this.
18. A double handrail going up the stairs will be important for safety.
19. As an alternative, consider adding an extra car onto this garage to expand the office.
20. Include a built in 5-foot coffee and lunch wet bar type area. Include a smaller refrigerator and a small cook top, cabinets over and under, plus a sink (class cabinets). Also include a water cooler.
21. The office must be extra wired with separate electrical circuits.
22. High tech internet hook up is necessary.
23. Include quality HVAC engineering.