

CUSTOMER SUCCESS PROFILE



**HBA OF GREATER
DES MOINES**



“All in all, this was the best thing that could have happened to us, switching to BuilderFusion for our data management needs. Now everything is easier. As a staff, we are all freed up to do more important things for our members and the association in general.”

-David Vollmar, executive officer
HBA of Greater Des Moines

OVERVIEW

The Home Builders Association (HBA) of Greater Des Moines – 740 member organizations strong spread across a five-county metropolitan area – is a leading voice for local residential construction and affiliated industries. The association offers its members a variety of educational programs, from the refurbishing of existing homes to the latest construction methods that preserve natural resources; and it actively lobbies on their behalf, protecting and promoting their unique business interests. Each year, the HBA of Greater Des Moines also conducts a HomeShow Expo, a Tour of Remodeled Homes and a fall Parade of Homes. This year, nearly 115 properties participated in the fall Parade event. Such efforts, collectively, serve to further its membership’s professional knowledge and development, ensure their success, and raise their profile in the eyes of the buying public.

CHALLENGE

In May 2005, the Board of Directors for the HBA of Greater Des Moines embarked on a significant organizational restructuring, most visibly by hiring a new executive officer (EO) to lead the association. Due to mismanagement – of funds, resources and personnel – by the prior EO, the association found itself in a major bind.

“The HBA was facing severe financial distress and suffered from incredibly low staff morale. It was not a good situation to be in, in any way, shape or form,” commented David Vollmar, the new EO. Having previously worked for over a decade in an association environment running a chamber of commerce, Vollmar felt excited at the opportunity to turn things around; however, he also came to the job fully aware of the many challenges that undoubtedly would lay ahead.

Vollmar soon isolated two primary areas of concern in need of correcting – first, the financial aspects of the association, as its books were in disarray due to poor accounting; and second, its data management practices, or lack thereof. As he described it, “Talk about a mess, we didn’t know anything about anything, couldn’t tell heads from tails. Information was incomplete, redundant or hard to locate.” With the express backing of his Board, Vollmar went about the task of improving the internal operations of the HBA of Greater Des Moines.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS PROFILE

SUCCESS AT A GLANCE

- ⌘ Real-time access to membership data
- ⌘ Monthly updates to NAHB went from a 10-hour process to 30 minutes
- ⌘ Membership directory is now produced in-house, creating new revenue stream

BUILDERFUSION SOLUTION

While attending the 2005 EOC Seminar in Montana, Vollmar encountered BuilderFusion for the first time. Intrigued, he spent considerable time over the next few days evaluating the technology, both attending lectures given by BuilderFusion staff as well as engaging in more personalized, one-on-one product demonstrations. Already a believer in the power of online technology, he especially liked the system's "incredibly easy-to-use user interface" coupled with its "impressive functionality."

"Right away, I could tell BuilderFusion was a complete system, as compared to those I'd come across while working in a chamber of commerce environment," Vollmar said. "Best of all, the technology was tailored to the HBA environment exclusively, making all the difference in the world. It was a system with our name written all over it."

Enthused by what he saw and heard in Montana – essentially, recognizing a real opportunity to move the HBA of Greater Des Moines forward in so many fundamental ways – Vollmar returned to Iowa where he pitched his Board on the system. A short time later, he secured the funds necessary to buy the system. In October of 2005, the association adopted BuilderFusion.

RESULTS

According to Vollmar, BuilderFusion "delivered, and then some." The initial data migration and system setup was largely painless, due to a friendly, knowledgeable and responsive BuilderFusion staff. Once online and up-and-running, association staff were impressed by how fast they could access their membership data. In Vollmar's words, "It blew the socks off of FileMaker," the association's previous contact and project management system. "The difference was like night and day. For the first time ever, we could get to our data real-time, allowing for more informed and speedy decision-making. We now felt on top of it all when it came to running the association."

Data accuracy similarly improved. A good indicator of this turnaround centered on the monthly data uploads to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) via their Web Membership System (WMS). In the past, the HBA of Greater Des Moines' numbers rarely ever matched up with those of National, much to the frustration of both sides. As well, each upload used to require tremendous amounts of administrative paper shuffling, consuming a minimum of 6 to 10 hours of staff time. Now the process is "over and done with" in 30 minutes, according to Vollmar, with a low error rate. Vollmar commented, "It was kind of funny, in a 'how far we've come' kind of way, when the folks from the NAHB in Washington started complimenting us for being one of the best associations in the country when it came to data accuracy and data consistency."

Other benefits cited by Vollmar attributable to BuilderFusion included the ease with which it could now produce its membership directory. In the past, the publication was outsourced at substantial cost to a local vendor. Now it is handled in-house, and easily at that, by an association staff member. More time is now spent on securing revenue-generating advertising. In fact, the staff member responsible for producing the directory recently received a \$2,000 bonus because it has turned into a substantial money-making activity for the association.

Vollmar feels the HBA of Greater Des Moines is on the right track, having surmounted many of their past challenges. "All in all, this was the best thing that could have happened to us, switching to BuilderFusion for our data management needs," he said. "Now everything is easier. As a staff, we are all freed up to do more important things for our members and the association in general. I soon will be hiring another part-time employee because we have become so efficient. Down the road, I expect more of the same – improved operational efficiencies and associated time and money savings – as we continue to leverage BuilderFusion within our association."