

# Management Basics for Small Builders

by Pete Young

For small builders who need to improve the business side of their companies, Dorn Fowler's *Basic Business Management: A Guide for Small-Volume Home Builders* (\$60, Home Builder Press, 1201 15th St. NW, Washington, DC 20005; 800/223-2665; [www.builder-books.com](http://www.builder-books.com)) can help light the way. Fowler keeps the book easy to use by organizing it into eight sections — management, sales, legal issues, estimating and scheduling, supervision, accounting, financing, and warranties — with subsections that clearly lead you through the topics. Financing, for example, begins with financial planning and analysis, then moves to cash management, and ends by exploring banking options. At the end of the book, there is a useful sample chart of accounts as well as a detailed sample business plan.



## Step by Step Door Hanging

For professional tips on installing doors or choosing the appropriate door and door hardware, try *The Doorhanger's Handbook* by Gary Katz (\$35 from Taunton Press, P.O. Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470; 800/888-8286; [www.taunton.com](http://www.taunton.com)). Organized into eight chapters with more than 30 subsections, nearly everything is explained in conjunction with a picture or detailed drawing. Jigs, templates, and plans for a practical doorhanger's bench are just three of the installation techniques Katz homes in on. The final two chapters deal with uncommon doors, unusual hardware, and strategies for weatherproofing exterior doors.



## Blocking Out the Noise

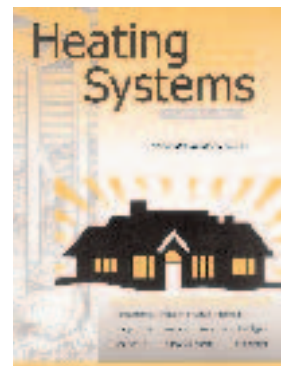
Airports, busy roads, loud neighbors, household appliances, and even people watching TV while others are trying to sleep are all common residential noise problems addressed in David

Harris's *Noise Control Manual for Residential Buildings* (\$55 from McGraw-Hill, 11 West 19th St., New York, NY 10011; 800/262-4729; [www.books.mcgraw-hill.com](http://www.books.mcgraw-hill.com)). Although almost 400 pages overall, builders will find the most help in the first 100, which cover site planning, building design and construction, and residential equipment that can minimize the noise residents have to live with once a home is built. Drawings, pictures, and tables help to summarize the complex factors surrounding noise transmission. For those not familiar with the dynamics of noise control, there are some surprising recommendations, such as a section that details how steel studs transmit less sound than wood studs and therefore can be the best choice for building affordable and quiet interior partition walls.



## Heating Systems — Lite

Although written for prospective homeowners, home builders can also benefit from Richard Kadulski's *Heating Systems for Your New Home* (\$20, Solplan Review, P.O. Box 86627, North Vancouver, BC V7L 4L2, 604/689-1841). Good illustrations and charts support the primary topics of heating background information, choosing a heating system, and providing adequate home air ventilation. Each type of heating system is clearly described, along with a summary of specific pros and cons. What makes this book stand out from others is an easy-to-follow visual layout. Each page is divided into two columns — one wide inside column with the text and one narrow outside column with illustrations, charts, and summary notes. Against this general layout, the full-page advantage/disadvantage boxes provide eye-catching quick reference.



*continued on next page*

## FREE & CHEAP

### Affordable Housing Primer

HUD's *Builder's Guide to Marketable, Affordable, and Durable Entry-Level Homes (MADE) to Last* (\$5 to HUD User, P.O. Box 6091, Rockville, MD 20849; 800/245-2691; [www.huduser.org](http://www.huduser.org)) gives 85 pages of useful information on the business of building low-cost homes. The *Guide* covers land development, design and building material choices, construction details, and sales advice. It also includes case studies of several affordably built homes that give dollar estimates of the savings created by using various innovative designs or building materials. An appendix provides specific information on putting together a homeowner's manual for buyers of affordable homes.



### VoTech Clubs

If you'd like to help local vocational students learn about opportunities in construction and assist in their graduation from school to work, get a free copy of *How Your Business Can Work With VICA* (Vocational Industrial Clubs of America, P.O. Box 3000, Leesburg, VA 20177; 703/777-8810; [www.vica.org](http://www.vica.org)). This pamphlet describes VICA programs and the ways business owners can help introduce teens to future work options. VICA has more than 13,000 chapters at schools around the country.



### Southern Pine Siding

Put out by the Southern Pine Council, *A Guide to Southern Pine Siding* (\$2 from SPC, P.O. Box 641700, Kenner, LA 70064; 504/443-4464; [www.southernpine.com](http://www.southernpine.com)) begins with a description of the various grades of siding; then provides installation procedures that include nailing schedules, finishing instructions, and refinishing recommendations. A final section gives tips on preventing mildew, or removing it if it has already become a problem.



### Design Guide for Copper Gas Piping

The Copper Development Association (CDA) offers a free design guide and slide rule sizing calculator for copper gas distribution piping. *Fuel Gas Distribution Systems* (CDA, 260 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016; 212/251-7200; <http://piping.copper.org>) details how to choose the correct type of copper tubing, how to determine the best diameter to meet the anticipated gas requirements and building design, and how to properly install the piping. The pamphlet also discusses specs for the right brass fittings to use with copper and testing a system after it has been installed.

