

New Software Make Operations Seamless for **Van Metre Homes** and Its 400 Starts

*BuilderMT WMS, Sales Simplicity, Punchlist Manager, Jet Reports, and Microsoft NAV
Are All Implemented in One Fell Swoop*



New homes, condos, townhouses. There's almost nothing that Van Metre Companies won't build in the expansive Virginia markets where they operate. But the busiest aspect of the Company is the Van Metre new homes division, which will start more than 400 homes in 2017.

Those 400 starts (across more than a dozen communities) will be a big step up over the 227 starts the company reported in 2014, when Van Metre was the 141st largest home builder in the US, according to Builder magazine's Builder 100 list.

In the latest 2016 Builder 100 list, Van Metre Companies has climbed to be the 92nd largest home builder, with 454 starts in 2016, and an astounding \$341 million in revenue.

With that status has come a growth in demands placed on Van Metre's software solutions. So, in an effort to modernize its solution set, Van Metre Homes recently engaged in a wholesale reappraisal of what they were using, what was working, what was not, and what software was on the market that was up to the tall task of managing such large complicated operations.

HOURS AND DOLLARS WASTED

Van Metre had been using another widely known enterprise software system, which was written in Progress. Even though the old system was ported to MS SQL, it still proved to be antiquated by today's standards, and lots of time was taken up by the staff as they processed data manually.

"We really needed to consolidate our operations into one software platform, in large part because we were exerting an enormous amount of manual labor to do the integration that our software should have been

Van Metre Homes: Software Summary

Software:

- BuilderMT WMS
- Sales Simplicity
- Punchlist Manager
- Microsoft NAV
- Avid Ratings

doing,” said Chase McNelis, Van Metre’s Production Manager & TSS Director of Operations.

“For instance, we were pouring untold hours into manipulating the takeoff to obtain accurate purchase orders and then manually handing that information to our vendors to make sure the materials were trucked to the right lot at the right time,” McNelis said. “Then we expended even more manual effort converting the purchase orders into work orders. It went on and on. It was time for a modernizing of our software solutions.”

SOFTWARE UPGRADES: REACH FOR THE TOP SHELF

“With the old system, it had its own accounting system. But it did not have Take Off Assemblies, integration with CAD, CRM, or a robust sales system, all of which we needed,” McNelis added.

“For sales, Van Metre had a home-grown sales software system based in SQL, but it couldn’t readily integrate with the old system we were using, and it was just barely serving our needs. Plus, it was maintained by one employee, who is the only one who really knows the code, and that’s a fragile connection for a company as large and complex as ours.”

“Van Metre also owns a supply company called Total Structural Solutions (TSS), which makes all the roof trusses, floor trusses and wall panels. We ‘sell’ the home building operation its various materials like trusses, cornices, doors, and windows. Total Structural Solutions runs Epicor (Activant ECS) for its ERP, and MiTek’s SAPPHIRE™ Suite for its component design and production management.”

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We needed a true Take Off and Estimating system, as well as CRM, robust sales, an excellent purchasing and financial system, and we could find this only with BuilderMT.

- Chase McNelis

“Our desire to get off our old software system forced us to take a real close look at the competitive field of homebuilding software solutions, and I really want to compliment our leadership for getting behind this effort wholeheartedly,” McNelis explained. “We settled on a set of solutions that are truly integrated, and with these in place, we can finally cut out the time, labor, and resulting data mismatches. That’s what we were experiencing by having to physically carry data between our older software programs, shuttling information to

accounting from sales, and scheduling to purchasing and work orders...to say nothing of how cumbersome our CAD takeoffs had become.”

PICKING THE RIGHT PACKAGE

“To pick our new software package, we engaged in a wide, thorough review of all the solutions out there, and we settled on these solutions: BuilderMT WMS for our workflow solution, and Sales Simplicity for our sales and CRM solution.” (Van Metre has been a long-time user of Avid Ratings.) “We are also putting Punchlist Manager in place for customer care, as well as Jet Reports and Microsoft NAV (implemented by Western Computer) for our accounting solution,” McNelis explained.

“These solutions are very tightly integrated, and it’s obvious that a great deal of thought and work has gone into making these systems operate together. The integration and digital handoffs enabled by these systems will save us vast amounts of labor and hassle. Additionally, we were enormously pleased to see that MiTek® has acquired BuilderMT, and we look forward to even tighter integration between MiTek and BuilderMT’s purchasing and schedule management,” McNelis added.

THE BENEFITS

“We are seeing immediate benefits with our new software. For starters, we will no longer have to hand write delivery tickets for materials that go to our 400+ starts,” McNelis said. “At an enterprise level, an even better example of what we will be able to do concerns budgeting.”

SCHEDULING IS EASY NOW TOO

“On the scheduling side of things, especially with the communication required of our supers, we were really hobbled when trying to link our in-house sales system to the software system we had been using,” McNelis explained. “Communication was very challenging. It doesn’t matter where the information originated – BuilderMT, Sales Simplicity, Punchlist Manager – it is all part of one integrated system, even though there are multiple software vendors; the software acts as one.”

“We are no longer asking vendors and trades to go to our SharePoint account to get information on delivery schedules or when payments were made or when they will be made,” McNelis said. “All the information is available to them on a dashboard presentation through the various modules of BuilderMT, which reciprocally accesses information from all the other systems.”

ACCURATE BUDGETS

Now, when we round trip data among the various software systems we are installing, we are simultaneously getting our takeoffs, grabbing all of our pricing in BuilderMT’s WMS (or, if need be, getting prices from our supply company, TSS), and they automatically appear in Microsoft NAV. It couldn’t be smoother, and it’s a vast improvement over what we had in place. We couldn’t be happier with our choices and the quality people that all of these companies have dedicated to us for the implementation.”



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ABOUT VAN METRE COMPANIES

Van Metre Companies is one of the area's most successful private multi-disciplinary real estate developers having constructed over 16,000 houses and several thousand apartments, as well as office buildings and shopping centers in Northern Virginia. Van Metre communities include our own master-planned developments, as well as neighborhoods in smaller subdivisions and third-party planned communities. We can truly be a resident's "builder for life", with home designs for every stage in life. Ask about our special programs that can help renters in our apartment communities apply a portion of their rent toward the purchase of a new Van Metre Home. Learn more www.VanMetreCompanies.com

ABOUT BUILDERMT

For the home building industry at large, BuilderMT (a MiTek company) provides highly-customizable workflow and building-process-management software that works in tandem with leading accounting systems and other wireless and jobsite productivity tools, such as CRM and warranty management. For 20 years, BuilderMT systems have been purchased by more than 1,000 home builders and cumulatively used as a desktop workflow tool by upwards of 10,000 home building professionals. BuilderMT is widely recognized as a leader in process-driven, best-building-practices for home builders, as well as customer service, warranty applications, online training and innovative wireless applications. To learn more, visit www.BuilderMT.com, or call (888) 757-1991 ext. 271.

ABOUT SALES SIMPLICITY

Sales Simplicity's highly intuitive CRM system offers features similar to SalesForce.com, but Sales Simplicity's CRM is tightly integrated into Sales Simplicity's award-winning, Cloud-based, sales-automation platform, and the entire system has been specifically envisioned for home builders. Since Sales Simplicity is already linked deeply into Facebook, Twitter, and other social media systems, users of Sales Simplicity's new CRM features will immediately benefit from single-platform, dash-board-driven campaign management tools linked directly to web analysis, eMarketing, lead management, follow-ups, and new prospects. More info: www.SalesSimplicity.net

ABOUT MITEK

MiTek is a diversified global supplier of software, engineered products, services, and equipment to the residential, commercial, and industrial, construction sectors. MiTek Industries' passion for its associates' well-being and its customers' success is the company's hallmark. A Berkshire Hathaway company (NYSE: brk-a, NYSE: brk-b) since 2001, MiTek has operations in more than 40 countries on six continents. Learn more: www.MiTek-us.com and www.MII.com.

ABOUT WESTERN COMPUTER

Western Computer has designed and implemented business solutions that work well for a wide array of industries since 1987. Over 140 resources across North America provide deep knowledge that is unmatched for Distribution, Manufacturing, Advanced Jobs, Rentals and many more. For the past 3 years, Western Computer has ranked among the top 15 of Account Today's 100 most powerful Top Accounting Resellers. More info: www.westerncomputer.com

ABOUT PUNCHLIST MANAGER

Based in Denver, Colorado and founded in 1993, Service Software, LLC was created to meet the needs of the Home Building community. Inspired by design recommendations from the builder community over the last 23 years, the product has evolved into a flexible and adaptable service and warranty management tool that combines field collection devices such as Laptops, Tablets and smartphone devices with web and desktop based solutions. Punchlist Manager ensures your customer service organization is responsive and consistently providing the highest level of customer satisfaction to the buyer. Learn more: <https://punchlistmanager.net>

ABOUT AVID RATINGS

Founded in 1992, Avid Ratings Co. is a full-service customer experience (CX) firm dedicated exclusively to helping residential construction companies maximize customer value, increase sales velocity, and grow market share. Avid develops and implements end-to-end voice of customer (VoC) and integrated marketing technologies for attracting, delighting, and activating loyal homebuilding and remodeling customers. Avid Ratings currently serves over 2,000 residential construction companies throughout North America and is ranked among the "50 Most Influential Tech Companies in Residential Construction" by Constructech magazine. More info: www.avidratings.com