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# CONSTRUCTECH

**October 1, 2006**

## **It's All In the Touch**

Adding all the right touches can make the difference in building the homes of today.

Building a house is more than erecting four walls and a roof. It means providing buyers with the little luxuries that make a house feel more like a home.

Today those little luxuries include technology that aids in the safety, security, care, and comfort of a person's lifestyle. Automated home technology continues to provide an enhanced comfort of living for today's homeowners. No longer suited just for the multi-million dollar homes, such things as audio, video, lighting systems, security, and whole house control options are tailored to fit just about any type of home in any type of community. And it appears the sky's the limit when it comes to available products.

Throughout the past year, Constructech has detailed the progression of homebuilders embracing these products as a way to differentiate themselves from the competition, improve customer satisfaction, and increase margins.

In April Constructech helped define the market for these products [April, '06, Are Your Homes Automated?, p27], and in June outlined some basic marketing and selling strategies for these products [June, '06, Modeling the Right Sales Strategy, p18].

It is safe to say a growing majority of homebuilders are cognizant of the value these products bring to the table. They understand the profit potential associated with these options, as well as the competitive advantage they provide to their business model.

For those who have decided to move forward and include these options, there is still the question of brand awareness. What are some of the most reliable and cost-efficient products on the market today? Which products are providing other builders with the most bang for the buck? How can I be assured my customers are satisfied with the products I have decided to install in the home?

The audio, video, security, and lighting options available on the market can often seem overwhelming to even the most technology-savvy builder. Constructech has identified a group of manufacturers whose products continue to pop up time and time again in conversations with readers.



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## **It's All In the Touch [continued]**

There is a plethora of great products on the market today. We are not saying these are the only viable products on the market. Rather these are the ones that have made an impact for Constructech readers.

### **Safety and Convenience**

Beyond entertainment, the automated lifestyle for many homeowners encompasses such actions as lighting, security, motion detection, and climate control.

Companies such as DSC, [www.dsc.com](http://www.dsc.com), Concord, Ont., and Honeywell, [www.security.honeywell.com](http://www.security.honeywell.com), Minneapolis, Minn., are leading the way on the security front, providing highly sophisticated touchpanels and motion detector technology.

HAI, [www.homeauto.com](http://www.homeauto.com), New Orleans, La., has some of the most comprehensive products on the market in the area of security. Its Omni-family home control system is a fully-functional security system that monitors and alerts homeowners of intrusion, fire, carbon monoxide, water leaks, and other events. Combined with HAI's Web-link II software, the system can send emails to alert homeowners of events.

Beyond security, HAI provides whole home control to owners, linking security with lighting, temperature control, and audio, among others. The company has its own line of lighting control, which includes dimmers and switches, and controllers for individual rooms as well as for the entire home.

Eric Rose, managing partner with E.M. Rose Building Co., [www.emrose.net](http://www.emrose.net), Branford, Conn., builds high-end custom homes in Fairfield County, Conn., and Westchester County, N.Y. Lighting control is atop his list of strong recommendations to customers.

"I say from a value point of view you are a fool not to do it," says Rose. "Whether you are comfortable or not, it adds an incredible amount of value and flexibility to the house. In the high-end market, it means you get more for your house when you sell it."

Among the lighting control products he feels most comfortable working are those from Lutron, [www.lutron.com](http://www.lutron.com), Coopersburg, Pa., Leviton, and LiteTouch, [www.litetouch.com](http://www.litetouch.com), Salt Lake City, Utah. Vantage Controls, [www.vantagecontrols.com](http://www.vantagecontrols.com), Orem, Utah, is another company that has piqued his interest as of late.

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