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CONSTRUCTECH

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Custom Guidelines

When it comes to custom homebuilding, the sky's the limit when equipping a home with automated home technology. Yet there still needs to be some proper guidelines established in order to best execute the process.

Eric Rose, managing partner with E.M. Rose Building Co., www.emrose.net, Branford, Conn., builds high-end custom homes in Fairfield County, Conn., and Westchester County, N.Y. Through the years he has developed some basic measuring points to working with product vendors and contractors.

"Typically it is treated as another trade on the job, but everything is a function of the magnitude of what you are adding to the project," says Rose. "On the lower end, electricians are the ones installing, which means you are not adding another trade and you may not be impacting the schedule at all. But once you get to the high end you end up with a consultant crew of six people or so, programmers, lighting designers, sound technicians, acoustic engineers, etc.

"It gets to the point where we need to have coordination meetings (with these professionals) that are separate from normal construction meetings because the technologies are so varied and the integration is so important that everyone needs to sit together and get the bugs worked out and figure out what we are capable of and how we are going to deliver this to the owner."

He stresses builders to negotiate with the vendor on how they will service the product after installation. He believes product vendors should be obligated to return a fixed number of times post certificate of occupancy to perform any troubleshooting needed.

"We need to build that cost in upfront to make those changes because politically if you tell the owner that we will gladly change something, but it will cost you 'x' amount of dollars, (they will not be happy)," says Rose. "You cannot give them something and then tell them that they need to pay more in order to get the value they had hoped for. Tell these vendors upfront how many times you want them back within the first 12 months, for example. What this is telling the client is that if we don't hit the mark when you first move in, don't worry about it, we will come back and get it right. You need to build in that service side upfront."