

Success is No Secret to This Home Builder Despite Economy

Heartland Homes thinks they have cracked the code on what home buyers really want, and the results are in - they just had their best month since the company was founded over twenty-six years ago.

Pittsburgh, PA (prHWY.com) April 26, 2010 - Heartland Homes thinks they have cracked the code on what home buyers really want, and the results are in - they just had their best month since the company was founded over twenty-six years ago. What about the increase in raw material costs, talk of rising interest rates, or the lack of lending from the big banks? Surely with all the national headlines on housing still uncertain at best there can't be any reason for the CEO of a home builder to be smiling - but Marty Gillespie certainly is.

"It's not that there aren't challenges out there," says Gillespie. "We see new ones developing every day in our business, but that doesn't mean we live in fear. We make strategic plans and then execute them." That's something that Heartland has done with amazing efficiency over the last several years. In 2008 when most builders were already posting huge losses Heartland Homes had its best year ever with 508 sales (a record that Marty feels confident will be broken in 2010). What about in 2009 when most home builders were down an additional 30-50%? Heartland dropped by 8%. In 2007 Heartland had a 7% market share, and in 2009 that had grown to over 20%.

It has never been about size or market share to this family run company though. "My father started Heartland in 1984 and had only three sales. He left a large public builder because he wasn't happy with the quality of the homes being built and knew he could offer a high quality home and still make it affordable. Our mission is still the same today, and the market continues to react to it. Our goal has never been to be the biggest, but simply to be the best," says Gillespie. "We use only the best brands we can find - Andersen, Kohler, Whirlpool, Lennox, PPG Paint, etc. Every product we use in our homes is made by a company you've heard of and is known for their outstanding quality."

"Another big key to our success has been consistent innovation," says Gillespie. Every year on of Heartland's stated goals is to develop several new floor plans. "Usually it's anywhere from four to ten new home designs," says Heartland's chief operating officer Scott Blodgett. "Most builders, especially larger ones will do everything possible NOT to design a new house. It takes a lot of hours and dedicated skills to make it happen and they'd rather just keep selling the same house year after year. To us that just doesn't make any sense. What other successful industry do you see where the product remains mostly unchanged year after year? Not autos, not clothing, not much."

It's not only the product that continues to innovate but the way the builder goes to market. "We keep the best of the old while forcing ourselves to try new things," says director of marketing Kevin Oakley. "It's not just using the newest tools like Facebook, Twitter, or even having a blog - it's changing the very product that we are offering in unique ways and having conversations about it. We have over four hundred current Heartland homeowners that have opted-in to be on our Customer Advisory Board. We ask them what they like, what they don't, and how we can make everything better from top to bottom." Oakley believes it is this attention to the customer combined with the high end quality of their product that resonates with home buyers. "For the last three years survey conducted by a third party has shown that our market would prefer to buy a Heartland up to 30% more than any other single builder."

One final thought from Mr. Gillespie rings true for any industry though, not just home building. "When it all comes down to it you have to have the right people working for you. I've been lucky to find fantastic people who share the same passion for excellence and are able to execute it. Business is all about people and not taking short cuts." With nearly three hundred sales since last November it's hard to argue with him.

About Heartland Homes

Heartland Homes is Pittsburgh's #1 custom home builder, and is still family owned and local after 26 years. Heartland's goal is to create custom homes of the highest quality, at an affordable price, & with excellent customer service in the Pittsburgh area and beyond. For more information, visit <http://www.LoveHeartland.com> or read their blog at <http://www.HeartlandToday.com>

###

Contact Information:

Kevin Oakley
Heartland Homes, Inc
412-779-8758