

Designer Harry Mangsen (left) and Builder Greg Burrill outside WGB Homes' Brookmeadow Village model home in South Grafton.

IN GENERAL

It was late
on a Friday
afternoon when

Harry Mangsen received a call from the cabinet manufacturer's representative with news that a replacement cabinet for WGB Homes that had originally been damaged in shipment was on its way and would be delivered on Tuesday or Wednesday of the following week. With the house closing scheduled for that Monday, Mangsen knew he needed to act quickly.

"Had it all happened before the weekend, I might have been able to ask the manufacturer to do something about it," he recalled. "But when it comes to customers, you can't just settle for better luck next time. You have to fix problems when they arise."

With that, Mangsen cleared his schedule, hopped in a Kitchen Views truck and set out to intercept the cabinets at a freight hub in Connecticut and drive them back to Brookmeadow Village.

William G. "Greg" Burrill, founder and president of WGB Homes, remembers the episode well.

"In a day and in an age when quality customer service has been replaced with automated and technology driven solutions, it is comforting to know that if a question or a problem arises I can still pick up the phone and call Harry. His devotion to Kitchen Views and supporting his customers is what sets him apart."

Mangsen adds that it helps to work for a company that supports its designers in trying to mitigate trouble, and one that has grown its reputation by setting realistic expectations for customers and delivering on them with relentless consistency.

Mangsen and Burrill both say the business partnership they've built over the last decade has been outstanding.

"There are many details that are involved in building a multi-home project," says Mangsen. "It's my job as the designer to make sure all of those details are addressed and any problems that may arise are attended to immediately."

The people who run WGB Homes, a family business operated out of Mendon, Mass. for the past 38 years, know success is all about building and maintaining relationships in a competitive, ever-changing industry.

"We build neighborhoods; it's important for us to have a positive reputation throughout the community," says Erica Burrill, who came to work for the family business after two years in sales and marketing with the New England Patriots.

Over the nearly four decades WGB Homes has been in business, kitchens have evolved to be central focuses of homes — going from practical basics to fashion-forward showpieces that are as much of a reflection of their owners' tastes and personalities as anything else inside the home.

"The kitchen is the focal point of the house. Harry has helped us incorporate the needs and wants of the customers while keeping in their price range, and this takes a great deal of skill and creativity," Greg Burrill says. Mangsen says it's all about the personal touch — no small feat when working with a company that has built over 25



IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

A developer and his go-to designer reveal their secret to a highly successful ten-year business relationship.

Janelle Nicole Randazza

neighborhoods in Central Massachusetts and the Metro-West communities outside Boston.

“We can do about 95 percent of what even the most high-end customer is looking for, but can deliver our product at a fraction of the cost of a lot of boutique designers,” he adds.

WGB Homes offers nine different models at their newest site, Brookmeadow Village, a single family, Energy Star Neighborhood in South Grafton, Mass. The company is committed to making changes to plans that many other builders aren't willing to make in order to create dream homes for their clients.

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“There are a lot of things that can actually go wrong on a large multi-home project,” admits Harry. “It’s my job as the designer to minimize those problems and to take care of them as they arise.”

“In the past, cabinets were simple designs. But now they are an important focus in the kitchen and in every project we do. As kitchens have become more valued, Harry’s been central in getting what the customer wants,” says Greg’s brother, Steve.

Kitchen Views General Manager Suzi Kaitz cites WGB as a key link in the creation of Kitchen Views at National Lumber.

“No matter what kind of home you’re building, the people building that home have a lumberyard where they do business,” says Kaitz. “As value added to business partners like WGB Homes we opened Kitchen Views at National Lumber and Kitchen Views Custom so builders and their customers could experience kitchen design in a more home-like showroom environment.”



Above: Harry Mangsen with Vanessa (left) and Erica Burrill review plans for a prospective home buyer.

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

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“People are willing to spend much more money on the kitchen to customize it than they will for other areas of the home. That says how important it is to the customer,” Steve Burrill notes.

Erica Burrill adds, “The relationship that has developed between Kitchen Views and WGB Homes over the years is key in providing functional, spacious and luxurious kitchen and bathroom layouts for customers at an affordable price.”

In an environment where customers are looking for unique designs and upgrades. Harry makes us feel comfortable that we can accommodate anyone,” she says.

“With him, we’ve never had to turn away a buyer because we don’t have the exact kitchen or bathroom layout they are looking for. Harry and the team at Kitchen Views work closely with our company to design a plan that is specialized to meet the needs of each of the customers we work with,” she said.

WGB’s relationship with Kitchen Views and Harry

has helped WGB stay on time and on budget.

“I think the reason we work so well together is that we have a shared interest in satisfying our customers, and we understand the importance of value,” says Vanessa Burrill, who came to work for the family business after graduating from Babson College almost three years ago.

“Value is important. It’s about integrity. It’s aiming to deliver the highest possible quality at the lowest possible price, and never deviating from that mission” says Greg Burrill.



Harry Mangsen began working in lumberyards at age 15. In 1984, he designed his first kitchen and soon became one of the first to design using a computer. Harry’s work can be seen in subdivisions throughout Central Massachusetts.



Above: The model home at Brookmeadow Village displays an upgraded gourmet kitchen. Standard options are displayed in a selection showroom on the lower level of the model home. Cabinetry by Schrock; door style, Brantley Maple Square; finish is Amaretto Creme; countertop is Black Impala Granite; hardware is by Amerock.