

# HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR CUSTOM HOME BUILDING EXPERIENCE

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## *HENSLEY HOMES*

Written by Margee Moore • Photography provided by Hensely Homes







**OPPOSITE PAGE:** This home in Long Cove in Mason, Ohio provides the timeless beauty of white brick with white sand and mortar mixed with black exterior trim and windows for a fresh look.

**ABOVE:** Large open great room with beams and plank ceilings adds a unique and spacious feel to this home with a covered porch with barrel vaulted ceilings and a fireplace.

**RIGHT:** This Indian Hill custom estate has large spacious rooms and an open floor plan.



For more than 33 years, the Hensley Custom Building Group has built some of the finest homes in the Greater Cincinnati area. Because of their meticulous attention to detail and pride in product, they only work on a limited number of homes each year. That lets them partner with each client from the innovative design-build process with workbooks to the final finishing touches.

Their numerous awards attest to this experience, including multiple first place wins in Homearama Luxury Edition Home Show Awards, Excellence Awards from Residential Design & Build Magazine and more.

Hensley Custom Building Group is an expert in helping homeowners get the most out of their experience. Here are some insider tips for building a great partnership:

**TIP 1: Learn about the design-build process**

Hensley provides a Design Workbook and guide at the first meeting. By using the guide as a framework, they familiarize the owner with the steps and questions they may have during the process.

“People love how we walk them through the entire process,” says Tim Hensley, founder and president. “It really helps people feel at ease and also in control of the project. They appreciate that we listen every step of the way. The workbook helps them prioritize the features they want the most.”

The discussion starts with the review of the site or lot selections, and steps them through design considerations, preliminary plans, job estimates, schedules, approval and selection processes. “Being a good listener is a very important part of the process,” says Hensley. “The initial conversation helps us start the project right. We enjoy sharing our knowledge with our customers.”

**TIP 2: Educate yourself about finishing touches and prices**

Each detail, from cabinets to light fixtures to mirrors, has a different cost. To stay within your budget (and to create an accurate budget in the first place), people should account for their personal tastes.

“This is a great time to learn about all the suppliers and brands out there,” said Joe Bryson, estimator and manager at Hensley. “Talk to different local suppliers of cabinets, appliances, light fixtures and more. Educate yourself on what you like and prices, so you know. For example, one recent couple knew what they liked from their tile choices down to drawer hardware. They added it up and added a lump sum for their ‘allowances’ to their home loan. They were taking out a loan anyway, so they bundled it to be able to get exactly what they envisioned.”





**ABOVE:** Beautiful front elevation of Indian Hill home with natural stone veneer ties the exterior to the home's surroundings.



**LEFT:** Additional view of the Great Room and the natural stone fireplace as the focal point of the room. A wet bar (to the right of the fireplace) is great for entertaining guests in both the kitchen and great room.

**TIP 3: Communicate early and often what you want the finished product to look like**

A homeowner might know what they want, but it is important to get that vision from their head to the building team. There are many tools available from Houzz to Pinterest for saving inspirational images. Sharing your vision for the exterior finishes, color selections and everything in between helps the project go smoothly.

“Inspiration books and boards help put us inside the buyer’s heads,” says John Hensley, vice president of sales. “When we can see it, then we can deliver.”

“One customer came in with four gigantic project boards that looked like a science fair,” says Tim Hensley. “But they knew what they wanted and all the costs. It helped put us all on the same page.”

**TIP 4: Have a timeframe and keep it in mind**

Based on their experience, the Hensley team provides timeframe estimates at the beginning of every project. As a good partner, they want people to keep that goal in mind.

“Typically, changes during the build phase can slow down or delay the finish date,” says Tim Hensley. “It is best to make all changes during the design phase. So we just ask people to keep that in mind.

“For example, we just had a client who wanted to change a lower

level bath into a shower, however the slab was already poured for the foundation. We needed to go in and cut the concrete to re-locate the drain. Things like that cost time. But they were flexible with their move-in date, so it worked for them.”

**TIP 5: Look for a team you will enjoy working with**

The Hensley team partners closely with clients, bringing in knowledgeable professionals, home designers, artisans and material specialists at each phase. “We take a team approach,” says Tim Hensley. “It’s a hand-in-hand process. We are on the same team and we are going to be together for a long time.

“We are going to help them build their dream home as a partner. They give us the vision of what they want to build. And we make it a reality.” ❖

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