

NATIONAL HOMES

Bright ideas come out of National Homes' Blueprint Design Lab



The Forest Phase 2 Model Home.

Society is undergoing a time of groundbreaking change. Advanced technology, Green initiatives, smart cities, robotics; it's all taking place as the largest single demographic, Baby Boomers, are handing the reins to Millennials, a group with very different perspectives and needs.

To steer a successful course and to thrive, the team at National Homes has deeply leaned into their core philosophy and longtime tagline: You are the Blueprint. One of the GTA's most celebrated names, National Homes is renowned for its customer focus, as they design, build, market and sell homes based entirely on their understanding of clients' needs.

This promise inspired the company to create a new and experiential concept, The Blueprint Workshop. National Homes wanted to re-imagine the way the company listened to its customers and design their homes. Having employed

traditional focus groups and online survey methodologies for more than 20 years, National's goal in creating the Blueprint Workshop series was to find a new way to engage participants far beyond the standard notions.

The vision was to revolutionize the way new home consumer research is accomplished, thereby raising the bar for innovative thinking around home design, with a particular focus on the fast-developing "smart home" connectivity technology of the future.

National's inaugural Blueprint Workshop event was held at the IBM Innovation Space, welcoming globally recognized leaders in the fields of technology, product development, and design, who participated in group interactions and the co-creation process. Also taking part were dozens of past and potential National buyers of varied ages and demographics: National staff architects, designers and engineers; and students from York University's

Schulich School of Business real estate master's program. The group then rolled up their sleeves and held deep discussions, presentations, interviews and educational sessions, all in a thinktank format.

Many groundbreaking ideas from that first Blueprint Workshop are already working their way into homes of new National communities. For example, when new-home buyers indicated that they want more input into the building of their homes than just choosing cabinets and countertops, the builder responded by launching a new customer service initiative that combines the best use of technology, with hands-on involvement.

At National's new forward-looking Blueprint Design Lab, customers can personalize their new home to reflect their style using the Virtual Interior Design Tool that makes the decor selection process more fun, creative, and efficient. National's R&D Department regularly tests products, materials and



IBM Blueprint Workshop.

techniques in the Blueprint Design Lab, particularly with sustainability in mind, and this is where future Blueprint Workshops will also be held.

To provide blueprint-to-welcome mat updates for customers, another innovative use of technology by National is The Homeowner Portal that connects buyers to the design and construction of their home from the moment they decide to buy until long after they move in.

The builder is constantly pushing the envelope to source the latest and the best, with a commitment to use advanced thinking to make a real difference in the way people live in their home. National calls these Bright Ideas. Things such as smart thermostats to keep costs low, smart locks and cameras to keep residents safe, and built-in recycling areas to make responsible waste sorting easy. Incorporating these Bright Ideas and others make National homes smarter, more responsive and energy-efficient, a very Bright Idea in itself.

New-home buyers care about energy efficiency, sustainability, carbon footprint, smart home products and much more. They also care about functionality, convenience and comfort. Many Bright Ideas take comfort to a whole new level. Imagine a closet organizer with revolving shoe rack in the dressing room, pull-down cupboards and motion sensor faucets in the kitchen, a voice-activated smart shower in the spa ensuite that controls on/off, water temperature and flow, and a convenient pull-down drying rack in the laundry room. Simplifying life is a Bright Idea, too.

It's already happening for National buyers at The Forest Phase 2, who will enjoy many Bright Ideas as standard features. Residents will benefit from a main door smart lock and Wi-Fi video doorbell, and the ultimate help to stay uncluttered: a drop zone with storage,

shelves and hanging hooks, and a family centre with desk. This is fitted with a whiteboard and shelving to display and store messages, school forms, family calendar and various other odds and ends with no place to go in a typical home, this exciting Bright Idea also has a hidden charging station for multiple smart devices.

Involving buyers in the process, National aims to provide innovative new solutions by thinking ahead and designing the homes of the future, today. Interested potential purchasers can sign up online to participate in scheduled Blueprint Workshops related to upcoming new National communities in the early planning stages.

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For more on National's Bright Ideas, Blueprint Workshops, Blueprint Design Lab, current and upcoming communities, visit:

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