

# BUSINESS

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## Cachet Homes' marketing VP provides the woman's touch

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Diane Byrne knows that many women immediately search for a spot to park their purse when they arrive home.

She also knows that phrases like "storage space" and "double vanity" resonate with female consumers.

That's why Byrne, vice president of marketing for home builder Cachet Homes since 2001, influences nearly every aspect of development, from initial floor plans to finishing touches.

As one of 20 female executives in the 31-executive company, she spends much of her time adding traits that put a female-friendly face on Valley homes.

That strategy appears to be working.

The lagging housing market has not had as much of an effect on well-heeled buyers or on luxury products, which comprise a majority of Cachet's sales, Byrne said.

The luxury builder founded in 1990 plans to build more than 2,000 units during the next five years and hopes to generate more than \$1.2 billion in revenue.

It generated more than \$500 million in revenue from 1,252 lots between 2002 and 2006, according to Chief Financial Officer Joe Gilbert.

Depending on the community, homes sell for \$300,000 to millions of dollars.

Many Cachet homes are marketed as a vacation home or a home for couples whose children have moved out. Those often include three bedrooms so buyers can have a guest room and an extra room.

Nationally, women between the ages of 25 to 34 accounted for 22 percent of home purchases from 2005 to 2006 compared with 14 percent a decade ago, according to the National Association of Realtors.

Among Arizona buyers, men are becoming less active in the buying process, said Jody Lee, a sales manager for Cachet Homes.

A man might walk into a house and look for such

dramatic features as high ceilings and big windows, but a woman has different things in mind.

When she walks into a bedroom she wants to know which wall the bed will go against and if the bedroom can fit two nightstands, Byrne said.

The shift has allowed her to pair with interior designers and contractors to attract women with massive walk-in closets, model homes designed in splashes of aqua blues and deep mauves and countertops decorated with cookbooks and pale pink cocktails.

They also revised the utility room, usually located near the garage.

It includes an alcove with a cabinet and electrical outlets so women can abandon their purses, plug in their cellphones and not once have to look at the pile of laundry awaiting them.

It's located in a separate area.

"You don't have to look at your chores until you're ready to look at them," Byrne said. "We want even that to be an experience, because that's what women appreciate."

An avid hiker and bicyclist, Byrne and her husband of nearly 30 years set aside time for trips, from Bright Angel Canyon at the Grand Canyon to Antigua, Guatemala.

"My best ideas come when I get the blood stirred up," she said.

One of the company's latest projects is the Cachet Room.

Located at new-home sites, it is a spot to show buyers what lies beyond the crown molding and kitchen work triangles. They can examine window fixtures to wall insulation. "The exciting part about marketing is there is such a variety of activities," Byrne said. "I love the variety and all the talented people I get to work with."

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