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**SLEDGE**  
CUSTOM HOMES

**Let's Talk: Communication Makes Building Process  
Transparent to Sledge Custom Home Clients**



# Let's Talk: Communication Makes Building Process Transparent to Sledge Custom Home Clients



**By Kathy Bowen Stolz**

Spencer Sledge is not just a builder but also a communicator. As owner of Sledge Custom Homes, he makes 40 to 50 phone calls and sends or receives 150 text messages daily to keep his clients informed of the progress on their homes. That's in addition to visiting each job site in the morning and end of the day to connect with his construction manager and subcontractors.

Why? Communication is important when creating trusting relationships with his clients, he said. He wants them to be tuned in to each step of the construction process to help manage their expectations of staying on schedule and on budget. He prefers to build under a cost + contract model

because he thinks it provides the most bang for the client's buck. And because he dislikes change orders, he prefers to create an all-encompassing budget at the beginning of a project.

"I want the client to be comfortable with the project, to be as much a part of the project as they want to be." For some clients, they need full-service design while others are comfortable making their own selections. He enjoys working with different families to meet their needs because each family is different. He also enjoys getting to know the clients as people.





Almost all of his clients gravitate to him through referrals because they're attracted to the company's "personality," he explained.

He describes the company's personality as honest with integrity, refusing to sacrifice quality while building lasting relationships. The company's personality is Sledge's personality, it's safe to say. "I don't have anything except my reputation," he stated.

After three years in business, most of Sledge Custom Homes' work is in Oak Forest, where Spencer and his family live, and the Heights, with the surrounding

neighborhoods of West University, Memorial and Spring Branch being frequent job sites. However, Sledge said he is willing to work anywhere in Houston if it's the right project.

Much of the work is for new homeowners who are buying an existing home and want to have it fully updated before they move in. With a majority of these homes built between 2000 and 2015, Sledge finds the mechanicals are up to code and the house's "bones" are in good condition. He is frequently hired to do cosmetics work, such as new cabinetry, new flooring and new paint.





“We’ve thrived in doing really quick turnarounds for major cosmetic remodels, while being able to stay within the original budget,” he explained.

The company additionally does a lot of bathroom and kitchen remodels, starting in the \$10,000 range. Sledge is also building a \$1.8 million speculative home, with eight projects ongoing at this time.

He thinks a key to his success is being available for a wide range of projects, which also include remodels, renovations and additions. He finds it necessary to work with a large group of contractors to stay flexible with the variety of

projects he handles. “I like building a team of contractors who know how to work together.”

He said he enjoys being a problem solver who works really well under pressure. And “it’s almost guaranteed there’s a new problem every day! I look at it as a challenge, not a problem. I’ve learned that if I put off a problem, it’s compounds itself very quickly.”

When he started in building, his plan was to construct four custom and three speculative homes each year, but he said the current higher interest rates are causing families to remodel instead of build. He’s okay with this adjustment to





his business plan, although he anticipates expanding to the \$1.7 - \$3.5 million price point of custom and spec homes in the next few years, if only because the neighborhoods where he works have that price point.

All the “moving parts” of building appeal to him—the constant problem-solving, coordination, and progress. He enjoys traveling to job sites across Houston and values the flexibility that comes with running his own business, especially now that he has a growing family. His wife, a former teacher, has transitioned into a dual role as a mortgage loan officer and real estate agent. Together, they

are raising three children.

As owner, Spencer handles sales and client relations in addition to helping with scheduling. A contracted construction manager hires the subcontractors and works with scheduling. His office manager deals with permitting, payroll and material ordering. He plans to add a job site manager in the next year to allow him more time to grow the business, but in the long term he hopes to build a bigger team of 10 employees who can manage 20 custom projects at a time.





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