

Selling Against the Competition:

The Competition: VINYL SIDING



Vinyl siding is a plastic material made from a variety of resins and polymers, most commonly polyvinyl-chloride (PVC). It is formed in sheets that often resemble wood grain.

BRICK vs. VINYL SIDING

Vinyl Siding's Strengths

LOW MAINTENANCE

It can imitate many traditional wood-siding looks, but because it's plastic, it never rots, becomes pest infested or needs painting.

LOW COST

It's very inexpensive to produce. It's also cheap to put up, as semi-skilled labor is all that's required for installation.

SPEEDY INSTALLATION

Vinyl comes in long sheets which are simply nailed into place against the sheathing and studs of the house.

Vinyl Siding's Weaknesses

“CHEAP” APPEARANCE

Consumers in focus groups routinely use words like “cheap,” “cheesy” and “flimsy” when asked to describe vinyl siding.

POOR STABILITY

Unless perfectly applied, it has the tendency to bulge, buckle and warp. It is also more susceptible to damage in violent weather.

POOR SECURITY

Vinyl provides little barrier to entry, and can be easily cut with a utility knife.

HIGHLY COMBUSTIBLE

Vinyl siding is made from plastic, and so is highly flammable. There have been cases of vinyl-sided homes melting when the home next door catches fire.

LIMITED DESIGN OPTIONS

While vinyl can simulate a number of wood finishes and clapboard sizes, its color range is usually limited to a narrow range of pastel colors, unlike brick, which literally has an unlimited color palette.

RELATIVELY SHORT HISTORY

Vinyl siding has only been in regular use for about 25 years. This means that while most vinyl siding looks good today, the long term effects of weather—freeze/thawing, sunlight, UV—have not been fully determined.

BRICK VS. VINYL SIDING

Overcoming Objections

"Brick is more expensive than vinyl siding."

Brick is more expensive than vinyl siding, but brick is also perceived by every consumer to be a higher quality finish material. In focus groups, the first thing consumers say about vinyl siding is, "It's less expensive than brick." The second thing they say is, "It's cheap and flimsy." Remember, the homes you build create your image. Do you want to be known for "cheap and flimsy" homes?

"Vinyl is just as low-maintenance as brick."

This is not true. If you want your vinyl siding to stay looking new, it needs to be periodically power-washed (approximately every four to five years) to remove the dirt and environmental pollutants that accumulate, especially if the vinyl has an imitation wood grain with cracks and crevices. Brick, on the other hand, never needs washing, and actually tends to look better with age.

When Going up Against Vinyl Siding Remember...

"You are what you build." Builders should be reminded that while vinyl siding offers initial savings in the price of materials and labor costs, the end product—the home—is viewed by most consumers to be of far less than premium quality. "Cheap" and "flimsy" are words right at the tips of their tongues, and they will associate the builder with those words. Add to that vinyl siding's poor stability in rough weather, high combustibility and its limited color range, and builders should be

wary of vinyl siding's siren song of "low up-front costs."

Brick on the other hand is highly regarded by consumers. It projects an image of strength, status and classic beauty. From a pragmatic standpoint, it's a reliable finish system that's been proven for thousands of years. It's extremely durable and requires virtually no maintenance (it certainly never needs washing). Nor is brick flammable.

And from an aesthetic standpoint, a brick home can have great

architectural flair. Between all the different colors and shapes brick is available in, the different bond patterns it can be laid in, the different colored mortars available, and the classic details like quoins and arches that can be incorporated into the design, brick gives homeowners an almost endless ability to express their personal style, a style and uniqueness that will reflect well upon the builder too.

