



Staying in the Loop: The Communication Strategy Our Clients Love

Written by **Collin Frisbie** | June 15, 2017

With so many ways to communicate in today's world, it's amazing how hard it can be for people to stay in touch. It's sad but true: builders have a notoriously bad reputation when it comes to communicating with their clients. Whether it's failing to mention important details or disappearing for days at a time, we've all heard the horror stories about how frustrating builders who are incommunicado can be.

From our perspective, the lack of communication is unacceptable. Isn't our main goal as builders to provide the best home building experience possible? Don't we want to do whatever we can to make the process stress-free and simple? Maybe other builders don't work that way. At Sterling, we know what can feel routine to us can be an incredibly exciting step of the process for you, whether it's setting trusses or putting on the siding.

To state the obvious, building a new home constitutes a big purchase. When you're making that kind of financial investment, you want to know what's going on day to day and week to week. Sterling developed a communication strategy back in 2008 for customers who were going to be out of the country during their build, and has continued the practice for all our clients since. It really works, and our clients near and far love to use it. We call it the **Client Access Portal**.

What is the Client Access Portal?

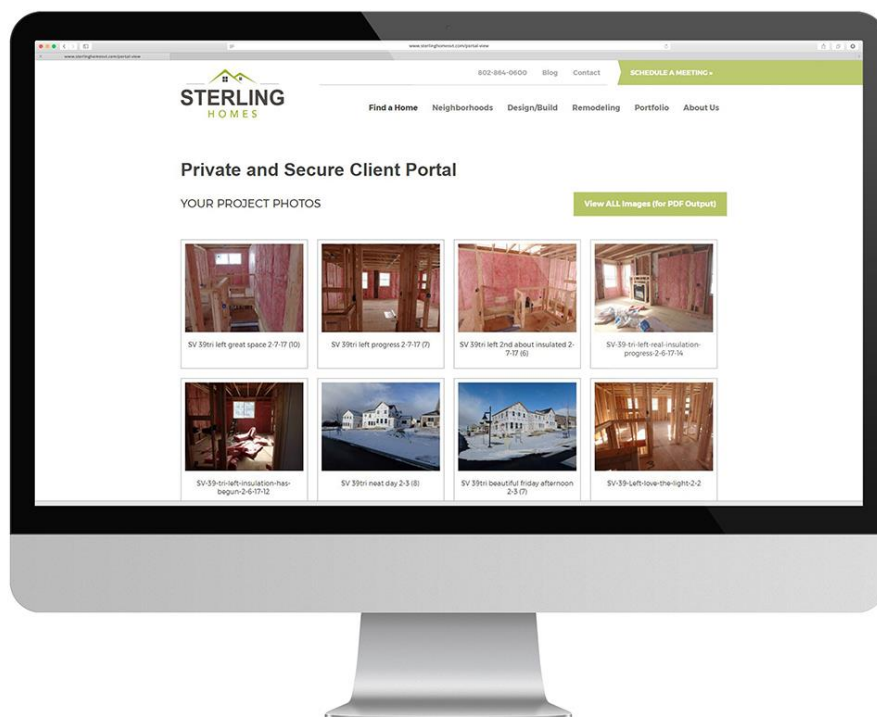
If you were having a new home built, wouldn't you want to see your home every day and monitor the progress? In reality, that's simply not possible for most people. With work, school, and busy lives, it's not realistic to visit the job site every day in person.

The Client Access Portal allows Sterling Homes' customers (or family and friends!) full transparency into the building process.

Even before we break ground on your site, we begin taking pictures of every step of the process and post them to your personal portal several times per week along with a brief description. The continual updates eliminate last-minute surprises that otherwise might not be seen until a walkthrough. If you're at all worried that your home won't come out exactly as you envisioned, the Client Access Portal helps to provide reassurance that all is going according to plan. If you *do* spot something that causes a

question, the images in the portal provide the perfect jumping-off point for a discussion. That means, if you discover any problems, we can address them earlier while they're much simpler to fix.

With consistent updates, you'll feel comfortable knowing what's going on, even when you can't be there in person. You'll also have more in-depth insight into the attention to detail that ends up getting hidden behind the sheetrock. When you look at each new update in your portal, you should feel as though you're standing on-site watching your new home take shape. Just recently, some of our clients saw their home in person for the first time—four weeks before closing! This demonstrates the unprecedented level of comfort that full transparency provides.



How to Use the Client Access Portal

The portal is great for checking up on the progress of your home, but its value goes much deeper. Here are a few other aspects our homeowners have found that make the most of the Client Access Portal:

Share Updates with Family and Friends

Have family out of town or want to keep friends in the loop? Sharing your portal is a fun and easy way to involve faraway loved ones in all the exciting developments happening with your project, so they can go on this journey alongside you. Dad or kids can monitor the construction from half a world away, if you so choose.



As a bonus, giving friends and relatives access to your portal can help alleviate the constant questions about how your home is being built. Since you may not always know the answers, you can simply share your portal and allow people to peek behind the scenes for themselves!

Keep the Conversation Going

Have you noticed that when you speak to your friends on a regular basis you have a lot to talk about, but when you haven't caught up in months, the conversation can lag? It's much better for us and our clients to maintain frequent updates so that we can keep the conversation moving forward. People actually say that they miss our updates once the project is over!

Create Lasting Memories

During the new home orientation, each of our clients receives two binders containing everything they need to know about their house, from site plans down to appliance and product manuals. In addition, we give every customer a flash drive containing all the photos from their client access portal. These photos are yours to do with what you wish! All our client access portals are still online, even from the very first customers in 2008, so you can access the information any time you like even once the project is complete.

Customers hire us to be their trusted advisors and guides throughout the home building process. One of the simplest ways we can accomplish that is by staying in continuous communication. Customers love using their Client Access Portal to stay up-to-date on their project, and we love keeping our clients informed and happy.