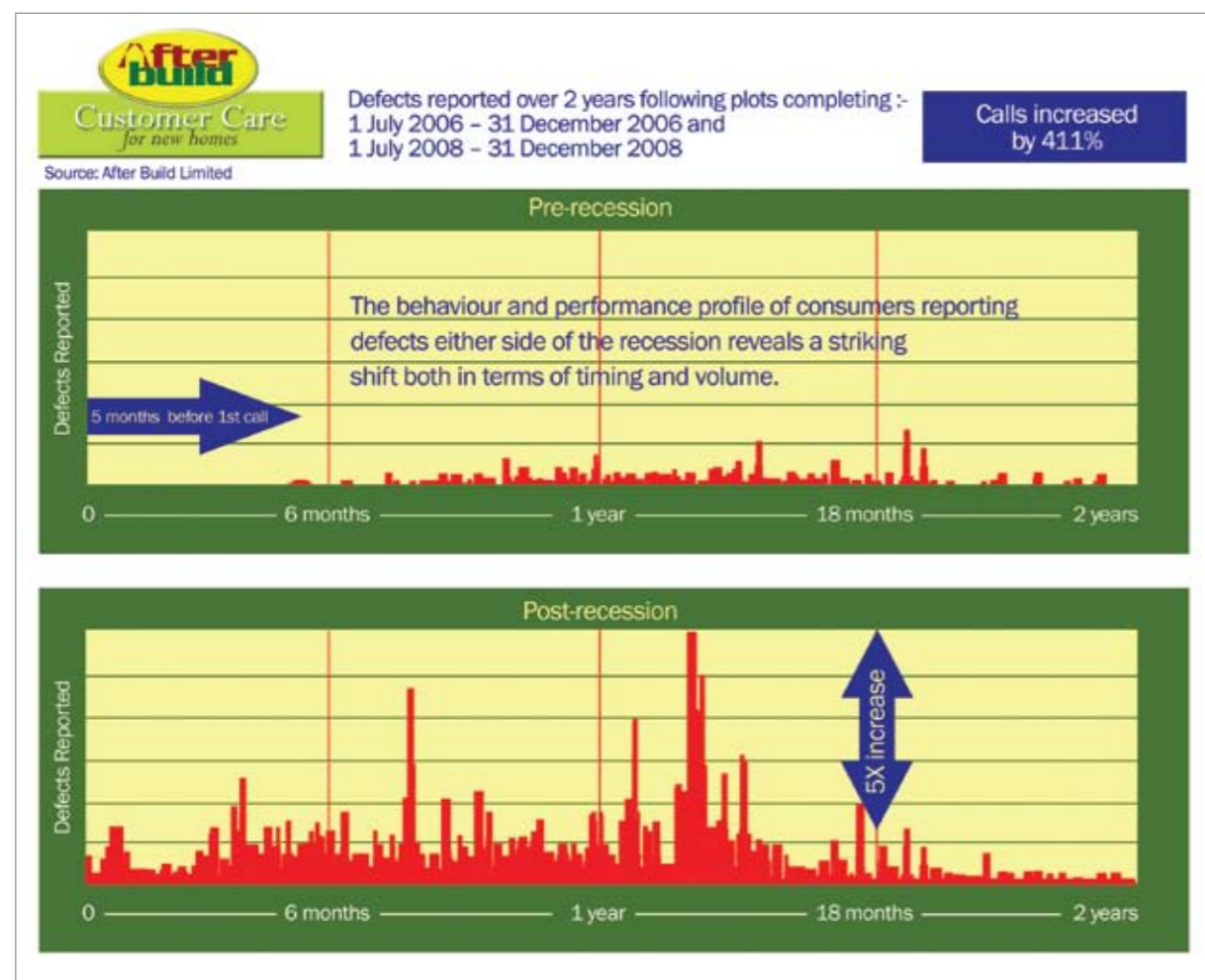


August/September 2010

# AFTER BUILD'S UNIQUE SERVICE

A curious thing has happened!



Three years ago in the golden days of construction when new homes were selling at a healthy rate and 'economic downturn' was a phrase remembered only by those who had been around in the 70's and 80's, developers could have been forgiven for being more focussed on delivery than on post sale support – nonetheless many had in-house resource available to deal with homeowner problems when needed.

But those who survived the rigours of 2008-2009 have been required to adjust their business outlook and plan (for

now) a longer sales cycle with fewer completions; and they almost certainly have fewer people available to manage issues arising during the 2 year Builder's Liability Period. So what's the curious thing? Well, although output and therefore new home ownership has reduced substantially in recent times, the volume of calls received from homeowners has risen sharply. Not only this, but calls are received in week 1 following legal completion yet, pre-down-turn, it would have been 3-5 months before problems could be anticipated.

# THE TOTAL WARRANTY MANAGEMENT SOLUTION



## From PC to end of warranty

We are your 'out-sourced customer care team' providing a comprehensive service to manage your warranty obligations\* from practical completion to the end of Year 2

\* Builder's Liability Period



### 2 Year All-inclusive Customer Care

**FROM AS LITTLE AS £450**  
Per plot for 2 Years cover



### 2 Years Defect Management

Our experienced team will take the homeowner's call, manage all of your sub-contractors, organise and carry out all work and report to you regularly.



### 2 Years Emergency Cover

On call 24/7 - 365 days a year our team will manage all your emergency calls and organise trades to attend and arrest each problem within 4 hours.



### Snag and Handover

We snag each property at PC, then manage all works that need to be carried out before conducting a final handover walk round with your purchaser.

**Cutting costs doesn't mean sacrificing quality**



Call us now on 0845 456 4631

After Build Units 1&2 Woodfield Farm Offices, Isaacs Lane, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 8RA  
www.afterbuild.com

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#### So why is this?

Our data analysis when measuring the performance and call activity generated by 150+ developments from Scotland to the West Country, across the Midlands and down to the South East revealed the following:-

- Consumer expectations have shifted substantially – without question it has been much harder to secure a mortgage and that has probably contributed to the purchaser's view on service and response
- More for less – sub contractors have been pushed hard to deliver their side of the deal and this has been achieved through a combination of using cheaper materials (higher failure rate) and devoting less time to process (poorer preparation)
- Insufficient attention spent on details prior to handover – incomplete snag procedures and little or no commissioning of systems

Overall we have witnessed an increase in call volume by a factor of five fold and there is little sign that this is going to reverse as the market continues to stir. Invariably and in any market place, consumer expectations only ever travel in one direction and that is UP. And to complete the challenge, in April this year we saw the introduction of the Consumer Code for New Home Builders. It is early days perhaps but we expect it won't be long before someone is caught out through a lack of appropriate systems and processes.

#### How does this relate to Customer Care?

After Build set out as a new business in 2004 briefed to provide a fresh new way of managing what then was a simple and highly specific need – to manage the Builder's Liability Period for and on behalf of new build developers. The concept was based on a single, fixed-price all inclusive service where we:

- Take the homeowner's call
- Diagnose the defect
- Instruct and manage the original sub-contractors
- Carry out all necessary work
- Close the job and report to the developer

This unique approach saves the typical developer up to 75% when measured against the cost of dedicated internal resource. As our reach began to grow we recognised that there were other aspects of the developer's we could incorporate and a dedicated suite of services began to evolve. It wasn't long before we added an emergency package to take calls 24/7. This has proven to be exceptionally popular, particularly in recent light of other service providers withdrawing from the market. Snagging a finished plot prior to handover is another critical area where developers have little time to do this well – we now provide a fixed-price approach to this including system commissioning and (where required) a pre-occupation handover with the purchaser.

#### What makes this work?

It's simple – After Build doesn't buy land or build houses – so without these distractions we can specialise and focus on providing the essential elements a developer needs. Managing unhappy homeowners can be a thankless task but it's what we do and we're better at this than anyone else.

We don't get it right all of the time, but we are organised to handle all eventualities with a highly dedicated team of experienced professionals. We listen, we diagnose and we act – all in accordance with the relevant warranty provider's standards. This is a service that gives the developer certainty they will meet the Consumer Code requirements. It also means they have budgetary knowledge and control from the very outset (this is the real value of a fixed-price structure). But there are some softer, less obvious benefits too. For instance After Build puts distance between the developer and the homeowner, so when difficult issues arise we're able to take the brunt while they get on with business as usual.

#### How else do we differ?

After Build is unique – there are thousands of maintenance businesses who can provide capable resource when a problem needs a tradesman. But we aren't a maintenance business. Yes we employ tradesmen and our operatives will attend to conduct work when required but then we go far beyond this otherwise limited offer. After Build take ownership of the homeowner's problems – and we strive to build positive relationships with them over the 2 years following purchase. We seek to resolve all issues without the involvement of the developer although we do ensure regular reports keep each of our customers up to speed with daily activities. More than this we operate on a fixed-price which in these testing times of cost and cash control is a massive plus for any construction company.

#### How could we help you?

There is no real profile of a typical After Build customer. We operate with small independent companies, large scale regional operators, starter homes, exclusive upper end, refurbishment, retirement, mixed-use and affordable housing.

The common theme is that all our customers have recognised they have a very real need and our solution satisfies this in a simple, professional and uncomplicated way with unquestionably advantageous economics. Increasingly we find that those who down-scaled resource to save cost have looked to find ways of managing business going forward – and as the consumer will want ever more, After Build meets the brief very well.

[www.afterbuild.com](http://www.afterbuild.com)  
phone number? pls check website

# Take the headache of Housing Guarantees away



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