

Chad Kane: At Schumacher Homes, a drive to win and understanding working capital are key



Chad Kane
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Schumacher Homes operates in 32 markets in 14 states. In the course of building 12,000 houses since the company was founded by Paul Schumacher in 1992, the builder has won numerous accolades for design as well as the National Housing Quality award. Chad Kane, a Marine veteran, arrived in 2013 following financial management stints with several Ohio companies and realized a lifelong dream of being a chief financial officer.

Q How did you land with a home builder after working in such industries as aviation forging, material handling, and tire maintenance and distribution?

A Well, it's a small world, and that has been evident in my career. It's so important, not only in the home building industry, but in all industries, to be collaborative, network-oriented, and able to produce results. I think these three competencies are key to giving you options in your career. During my tenure in finance in the tire industry, the company I worked for grew, in an eight-year period, from under \$150 million to close to \$1.5 billion in revenue. The company was a family-owned operation, just like Schumacher Homes. The primary owner of the tire company was a great friend with the primary owner of the home builder. That networking opportunity

opened the gateway into the home building industry for me. So, in summary, I am in the home building industry because of networking, being open-minded, and doing whatever it takes to produce results.

Q What budgeting and financial control practice(s) did you bring from those industries to Schumacher?

A The largest contribution is providing more dynamic and transparent tools that offer opportunities for decision-makers to make better proactive decisions for more profit, and the understanding of working capital. Many times, organizations—not just home builders—look at budgeting as a profit-and-loss projection only. It's imperative to have enough flexibility in your working capital so not only can you capitalize on opportunities as they arrive, but also not have it be a disruption to the company. Not paying attention to working capital can really cripple an organization, especially if it becomes a distraction to the operations of the business.

Q What is most rewarding about what you do in your current job?

A It is the people I work with. I've been here for over a year and a half, and I have been blessed by the organization as they welcomed me with open arms. It has been a learning experience for me, and I would like to think that the organization has learned a few things from me along the way as well. It's a very fun and exciting environment, and it loves to win. Our No. 1 competency is that we stop at nothing to make our goals and produce desired results. That creates a culture that works collaboratively under pressure to be agile enough to overcome hurdles and create solutions for all challenges that may present themselves. How can you not love and be rewarded by that?

Q What's your biggest challenge in the business or in your job right now?

A The biggest obstacle is having quality trade depth. Not only is the trend of available skilled labor declining, but we are a scattered-lot home builder. Our construction department does a great job cultivating and managing trade relations with great communication and relationship management skills to overcome that challenge, but it's not an easy objective to accomplish.

