

The Ford Forum

Building a Better Carolina

A Word from the Builder

Although it seemed that Spring was never going to make an appearance, it is now time to welcome Summer! This is usually a busy time of year for the homebuilding industry and that is definitely true for our company.



Michael A. Ford

Steep Hill Farms is going strong. We have homes

under construction in River Run and we are getting ready to start putting some product on the ground in Mayfield.

I'm proud to say that Spring was an excellent time for our company. Winning the Gold Award for our category in the Johnston County Parade of Homes was exciting, especially as this was the first



year that we have submitted an entry. In addition,

we were recognized with an award for a special feature in the fireplace category.

This could only have been made possible by the joint efforts of all of my subcontractors and staff—a sincere thank you to everyone who participated in this project.

I encourage you to check out the photos and tour of our parade home on our website at www.homesbyford.com/homes-for-sale/steep-hill-farms.



Proud Recipient of the Parade of Homes Gold Award!

In April, the Johnston County Building Industry Association hosted their 24th Annual Parade of Homes event. More than 20 builders submitted their homes throughout the county in six different price categories. The Parade of Homes is a chance for builders to display new design trends and the latest home technologies. Groups of judges tour each home and grade the home based on craftsmanship, design, and layout. The winners are announced at the Parade of Homes banquet and the homes were open for tours the following three weekends.

Homes by Michael Ford submitted their very first entry this year by entering the Forestville plan in Steep Hill Farms. The top three homes are presented with a Gold, Silver, or Bronze Award in each category. Our team was so excited to walk away with the Gold Award! In addition to the Gold Award, Homes by Michael Ford was also presented with an award for the Special Feature: Fireplace Category. Be sure to check out the website to see more photos of the winning entry, www.homesbyford.com.

A special shout-out for all the builders and sponsors that participated this year. It was a truly fantastic event and a great opportunity for the builders to proudly display their hard work and effort.



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Which of these high-level computer programming languages is the oldest?

Trivial Trivia

- 1) How many 180° bends are in a common paper clip?
 - a) two
 - b) three
 - c) four
 - d) five
- 2) Hershey's Mr. Goodbar candy bars come in what color wrapper?
 - a) red
 - b) brown
 - c) orange
 - d) yellow
- 3) Which of these high-level computer programming languages is the oldest?
 - a) FORTRAN
 - b) BASIC
 - c) COBOL
 - d) LISP
- 4) Which of these common battery types is the tallest?
 - a) AAA
 - b) AA
 - c) C
 - d) D
- 5) Sales of what fruit plummeted in 1989 amid false rumors about a cancer-causing chemical known as Alar?
 - a) grapes
 - b) apples
 - c) pears
 - d) bananas

Answers: 1) b 2) d 3) a (FORTRAN was developed by IBM in 1954.) 4) d (D batteries are the tallest of the four, followed by A, C and AAA.) 5) b

Learning By Doing: Cost/Benefit Analysis

Balancing the costs and benefits of any decision, large or small, is an important responsibility for any leader. Do it right by following these rules:

- **Explore options widely.** Don't be in a hurry. It's tempting to commit to the first reasonable solution to a problem, but don't make any final decisions before examining the situation thoroughly and confirming that you're solving the right problem.
- **Think long-term.** Take a cradle-to-grave approach: How long will the entire process take? What happens when you're finished? What costs are associated with getting things started (supplies, training, and so forth)? This gives you a better view of your full investment in the solution.
- **Consider doing nothing.** Does the problem really have to be solved? For example, it may not be worth your while to repair or replace a piece of obsolete equipment if it still functions.
- **Think beyond dollars and cents.** A cost/benefit analysis should offer options, not dictate solutions based on financial considerations alone. View the results with an eye toward your strategic objectives so you pick the one that makes the most sense, not just the one that's cheapest.
- **Review the results.** After you've made and implemented a decision based on your analysis, take some time to evaluate the outcome. Did the project cost more than you anticipated? Did you realize the benefits you expected? What could you have done differently? Use the lessons you learn to guide your next analysis.



A Tablespoon of Hard Work, Plus...

“I do not know anyone who has got to the top without hard work. That is the recipe. It will not always get you to the top, but it should get you pretty near.”

—Margaret Thatcher

Start Creating Tomorrow's Leaders Today

Employee development is a top concern, one that requires constant attention. Ask these questions to create a healthy development plan for your workforce:

- **Where is your organization headed?** Look forward to the next five years. Anticipate the changes your organization will face so you can decide what skills you'll need from employees in the future.
- **What strengths do employees already have?** Measure what your employees do well so you can concentrate on taking advantage of their current competencies—by shifting them into positions that use their strengths better, for instance.
- **What weaknesses must you address?** Look for gaps and obstacles that might prevent employees from helping you reach your long-term objectives. Provide training and experiences that target the growth you need.

Master These Communication Skills To Succeed

Getting along in the workplace depends to a large extent on your communication skills. Doing your job is important, but letting people know what you're doing—along with understanding what they want from you—is essential to your success. Here are some top communication skills to cultivate:

- **Listening.** Expressing yourself is vital, but understanding what others are telling you allows you to make your arguments more persuasive.
- **Body language.** Nonverbal communication sends a powerful message. Be aware of your hand gestures, eye contact, stance, and tone of voice so you don't undercut what you're trying to say.
- **Brevity.** Going on and on, even when you're right, turns people off. Learn to make your points clearly and concisely, then shut up to let others respond.
- **Friendliness.** You don't have to be best friends with your managers and co-workers, but you should make an effort to get to know them. Smile, be polite, and show interest in their lives.
- **Empathy.** Show your understanding of other people's words and ideas, even if you disagree with them. A little empathy goes a long way.

SPEED BUMP

Dave Coverly



Sleep? There's An App For That!

We use the apps on our smartphones for all sorts of things. One of them is tracking sleep patterns. In a survey of 934 mobile phone users by the NYU School of Medicine, 28 percent of participants reported that they use a health app to monitor how long they sleep, what time they go to bed, and whether they wake in the middle of the night, as well as



whether they snore, have breathing problems while asleep or change positions. Thirty-five percent of men and 20 percent of women reported tracking their sleep, and the average age of sleep trackers was 34. The most popular apps (of 24 named in the survey) were Fitbit (10 percent), Lose It (3.5 percent), and Apple Health (2.6 percent).

New Filter Makes Dirty Water Safe To Drink With Just One Step

The lack of potable water could reach crisis levels in this century, but a team of scientists in Australia may have an answer, according to the *Science Alert* website.

They're using a type of graphene called Graphair to filter safe water from seawater in just one step. Graphene is an ultra-strong carbon material only one atom thick. It's expensive to produce, but Graphair is cheaper and simple to make. A grapheme film with microscopic nanochannels allows water to filter through, but stops larger pollutants.

On its own, it becomes contaminated quickly. When Graphair is added, the film screens out 99 percent of pollutants, and still works even when covered with contaminants. Scientists hope that the process could eventually be used for filtration in households and town water supplies, and for treating seawater and industrial wastewater.

So Many Worries

A recent MBA grad interviewed for a job running a small, family-owned business. "I'm looking for someone with your skills and education who can take on all of the worries that comes with this place," the owner said.

"Worries?" the grad questioned.

"Yes, worries," the owner replied. "I worry about this and I worry about that. I have so many worries I barely have time to keep this place running. If you want the job, I can pay you \$100,000 plus benefits. What do you say?"

"That sound great, but I'm curious," the grad replied. "How can a small business such as yours afford to offer such a competitive salary?"

"That," the man replied, "would be your first worry."

"I'd rather be a failure at something I love than a success at something I hate."

—George Burns



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Visit our website at www.homesbyford.com/neighborhoods/ to see all the neighborhoods of homes just a short drive away from Raleigh, N.C.

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