

Houston custom homebuilders adapt to shifting market

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Kevin and [Scott Frankel](#) have noticed a shift in their client base amid the oil slump.

The brothers — co-presidents and principals of Frankel Building Group — have seen more interest from doctors and surgeons than energy executives as oil prices have plunged over the past two years. The Houston custom homebuilders design and construct custom homes from \$800,000s and up for well-heeled clients across Houston, particularly inside the 610 Loop and in The Woodlands area.

Moreover, prospective homebuyers are demanding more from luxury homebuilders, the Frankels said. Even wealthy homebuyers are concerned about the time and costs associated with building a multimillion-dollar mansion, they said.

“Buyers aren’t just asking for transparency, they’re requiring it,” Kevin Frankel said. “The prevailing sentiment of homebuilders is that we’re slow-playing it. We have to fight that perception and prove that homebuilders are professionals in their field.”

Frankel Building Group, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, has [implemented new technologies](#) and processes to ease the homebuilding process for its customers. The homebuilder created a smartphone app that lets clients keep track of their construction timetable and outlines their budget to make building costs and fees more transparent. The builder also schedules several meetings with clients at their 3,000-square-foot design studio for design consultations. The Frankels show customers realistic renderings and 3D images and videos of unique features like [environmentally-friendly construction](#), [a decked out children’s playroom](#) and [flood-resistant raised foundations](#).

“Working with customers day in and day out is hard work, but we embrace it,” [Scott Frankel](#) said.

The Frankel brothers said they are refining their business to make custom homebuilding easier for clients. Too often, building a custom home is a stressful process for clients, they said.

“One of our prospective clients was so worried she was going to make a wrong decision that she and her family would have to live with for a long time,” said [Scott Frankel](#), [who built his own home in 2014](#). “A lot of



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Houston custom homebuilder Frankel Building Group's 2015 Bellaire Showcase home features family- and kid-friendly amenities.

builders don't understand how stressful it is to design a home, but building houses should be a fun thing. We really believe that."

Ultimately, the Frankel brothers hope these refinements will help them attract more clients and weather the energy downturn. Already, The Frankels have seen an impact.

"How do you compete against a house that already exists?" Kevin Frankel said. "We thought really hard about how we as designers and builders can make our clients feel comfortable about building a house with us."

"We're seeing a ton of interest right now," Scott Frankel said. "People are seeing the world didn't come to an end in Houston. Customer confidence in the high-end market is coming back."

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