



Six3Tile® Helps Clayton Homes Appalachia Provide Affordable Luxury

Clayton Homes Appalachia's mission is to help people achieve the dream of homeownership and have a home they can be proud of. And with the rising cost of materials and labor, they need to find innovative solutions to achieve that mission.

Allen Patterson, Sales Manager, Clayton Homes Appalachia, said they work hard to elevate their product offering by providing higher-quality features and finishes, so their customers will love their homes and take pride in them.

"As a company, we're trying to elevate the industry and erase some of the stigmas that surround manufactured housing," said Patterson. "When we provide a better product at an affordable price, we can reach new consumers who otherwise wouldn't have considered manufactured homes."

The challenge lies in maintaining costs to make sure their homes remain affordable. They need to continually look for products that provide the look their customers want, but also meet Clayton Homes' cost and production requirements.

One of Clayton Homes Appalachia's key partners in that mission is Six3Tile. The company provides an innovative solution that allows Clayton Homes Appalachia to satisfy their customers while maintaining costs and speeding up production.

Better Amenities

Clayton Homes Appalachia has optimized their design and production processes to keep purchase prices as low as possible.

But that doesn't mean they don't want to delight their customers. "We're very much about affordable housing, first and foremost," said Matt Belcher, General Manager, Clayton Homes Appalachia. "But within that we look for as much value in the options we offer, so our customers get as much bang for their buck as possible."



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MATT BELCHER
General Manager, Clayton Homes Appalachia





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MEGAN FOSTER
Interior Design Manager,
Clayton Homes Corporate

What sets a home apart in the eyes of a buyer is its amenities. According to Megan Foster, Interior Design Manager for Clayton Homes Corporate, buyers want their homes to feel special and upscale, with features that would typically be found in traditionally constructed homes.

To meet consumer demands, Clayton Homes Appalachia offers a variety of upgraded finishes. “We have some decorative lighting packages, upgraded cabinet hardware and plumbing fixtures,” Foster said. “These features give the homes an overall elevated look.”

One of the most popular upgrades consumers want is a walk-in shower with a tile surround. “Tile showers are in the top four or five upgrades that our buyers want,” Foster continued. For that reason, Clayton Homes Appalachia’s ceramic tile shower is one of the most popular upgrades they sell.

While that does satisfy consumers’ demands, the tile showers come with significant challenges.

Time = Cost

The biggest challenge associated with ceramic tile showers is time.

It’s a multi-step, labor-intensive process that limits how many showers the facility can install in a given week. “Right now, we can only install one or two ceramic tile showers in a week,” said Patterson. “That means we can’t keep up with demand, and customers having to wait longer for their homes to be ready.”

Also, because ceramic tiles are prone to damage during transportation, warranty crews often have to come to home after they have been set to make repairs. That costs Clayton Homes Appalachia money and potentially damages the Clayton Homes Appalachia brand reputation.

These factors, along with the rising cost of the materials themselves, make it challenging to provide home buyers with the showers they want at a cost and time frame that meets their expectations.

“Ceramic tile showers take more time and skill to install, and the job’s not done when the home leaves the facility,” Patterson said. “In short, they just add more time to every house, during and after production.”

To solve this problem, Clayton Homes Appalachia turned to Six3Tile.

Fast, Easy Installation

Six3Tile's Shower Surround Pro Kits are a tile panel solution that takes the complexity out of tile installation, providing a premium, luxurious feel in a fraction of the time. According to company Founder & CEO Cal Trumbo, the product makes it easier for home builders like Clayton Homes Appalachia who use tile in their installations, because it drastically reduces installation time and labor costs, while still providing the upscale look home buyers want.

"Installing ceramic tile has inherent complexities and requires a certain skill set," said Trumbo. "Our product offers that same finished look of traditional tile in a large panel format, dramatically reducing the time it takes to install."

For Clayton Homes Appalachia, using Six3Tile products means they can offer customers showers that have the upscale look and feel of ceramic showers, but with none of the cost and production challenges.



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CAL TRUMBO | Founder & CEO, Six3Tile®

First, Six3Tile Shower Surround Pro Kits are easy to install. Because they're installed in large panels, showers can be fully installed in a couple of hours. That not only reduces labor costs for Clayton Homes Appalachia, but it also dramatically increases their production capacity.

Patterson said Six3Tile has increased their production capabilities more than tenfold. "We used to do one, maybe two showers a week," he said. "Our goal now is to get up to 20, and we're not going to stop there."

Second, showers made with Six3Tile panels are far less susceptible to damage during transportation. With no brittle, individual tiles that can crack or come loose from the adhesive, the shower panels are much more resilient and stay in place during transportation and setting homes on foundations.

Finally, the Shower Surround Pro Kits are much more economical than ceramic tiles. Ceramic tiles are heavy and tend to break during shipping, so the production facility has to order more material than they need for each shower.





“Six3Tile was able to conform their product to meet our process, not the other way around.”



ALLEN PATTERSON
Sales Manager, Clayton Homes Appalachia



Every Shower Surround Pro Kit is exactly what is required. No more, no less.

But the real cost savings of Shower Surround Pro Kits lie in the installation. While ceramic tiles required skilled craftsmen to install, a general laborer can learn how to install Six3Tile panels in less than an hour. And with fewer steps and less material requirements, a Six3Tile Shower Surround Pro Kit can be installed in a fraction of the time compared to ceramic tile.

So Clayton Homes Appalachia is able to provide more homes in less time, while providing buyers with the look they want and at a price they can afford. The Six3Tile showers fit into Clayton Homes Appalachia's mid-range home packages which allows more buyers to get the upscale shower look that everyone wants.

A Partnership that Clicked

The relationship between Clayton Homes Appalachia and Six3Tile is more than just a transactional one. It's a partnership in which both parties collaborated to develop a solution that would work for Clayton Homes Appalachia's design and production departments, as well as for the builder's licensed retailers.

It started with developing a custom solution that met Clayton Homes Appalachia's needs. Six3Tile developed a tile pattern that complemented the design of their bathrooms, which provided a cohesive, luxurious look. More importantly, the panels were designed specifically to match the dimensions of the Clayton Homes Appalachia showers, so there is no wasted material.

“They got it right when we started working with them,” said Patterson, who said that he often has trouble with suppliers' lack of flexibility. “Six3Tile was able to conform their product to meet our process, not the other way around.”

Six3Tile's partnership didn't end with developing the product. They worked closely with Clayton Homes Appalachia's production teams to provide training and resources to ensure workers knew how to install the product.

“They made our production team feel comfortable with the product,” Patterson continued. “Once we started using the product, everything just clicked.”

Win-Win-Win

Belcher summarizes the decision to use Six3Tile products in three words. “It’s been a win-win-win,” he said. “From a speed, quality and price standpoint, the Six3Tile products have been everything we needed.”

Feedback from all stakeholders – production, dealers and customers – has been overwhelmingly positive. Customers seem to love the option as a means to achieve “affordable luxury,” and owning homes that make them feel comfortable and proud to own.

The Six3Tile product is making it easier to provide homes to more people. Not only are the showers more affordable, but the builder can produce more of them to meet demand.

“It’s been a very popular option,” Belcher said. “It has allowed us to increase the amount of homes we build, and the amount of homes we sell.”

Because the showers look great, function well, and don’t get damaged during transportation, Clayton Homes Appalachia is less likely to receive complaints or callbacks. In fact, to date there have been no customer warranty claims related to Six3Tile shower enclosures.

“I haven’t heard any service issues,” said Patterson. “My service team loves the product. My sales team loves it. My production team loves it. Even procurement loves it because it’s easy to store.”

But most importantly, the Six3Tile kits are an important part of Clayton Homes Appalachia’s mission of making the dream of home ownership attainable for more people.

As the cost of new and existing homes continues to rise, it’s getting harder for people to achieve the American Dream, according to Belcher. “There are a lot of people in our area who could never accomplish that dream if it weren’t for what we do,” he concluded. “By finding better and more cost-effective ways to build our homes, we can help more families get the stability that comes with a place to call their own.”



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