

“Overall, my home was very well built. I haven't had any problems, and I'm very pleased with how quiet and efficient everything is.”

Homeowner's Perspective: The Value of a Green Home

GUILD  QUALITY



There are many opinions and assumptions about green homes and the benefits they provide, but little is known about actual satisfaction levels among green homeowners after the sale. Do these homeowners truly understand the concept of green building and, after living in their home, do they value the high-performing, sustainable features their homes have in the same way that builders and marketers think they will?

GuildQuality, North America's leading provider of [customer satisfaction surveying](#) for the building industry, recently conducted a study in which those who purchased or built a certified green home* in the last three years were surveyed to test some of the opinions and assumptions about green home buyers and fill in the gaps in our knowledge about them. The nationwide effort was successful in helping the home building industry understand:

- Why homeowners purchased a green home?
- Is their green home meeting their expectations?
- What features do they value most?
- Would they purchase another green home in the future?
- Would they recommend a green home to a friend or family member?

All homeowners in this study are owners of **National Green Building Standard certified homes. This certification is a nationally recognized standard for green building and has been implemented widely in the industry. For more information on the certification program please visit www.homeinnovation.com/green.*

What is a Green Home?

According to the [National Association of Home Builders](http://www.nahb.org) (NAHB): "High-performance buildings are designed and constructed to incorporate environmental considerations and resource efficiency into every step of the home building and land development process with the goal to minimize the home's environmental impact. Green building is a practical response to a variety of issues that affect all of us — like increasing energy prices, waning water resources and changing weather patterns."

Source: www.nahbgreen.org

Are Homeowners Satisfied with Their Decision to Buy/Build a Green Home?

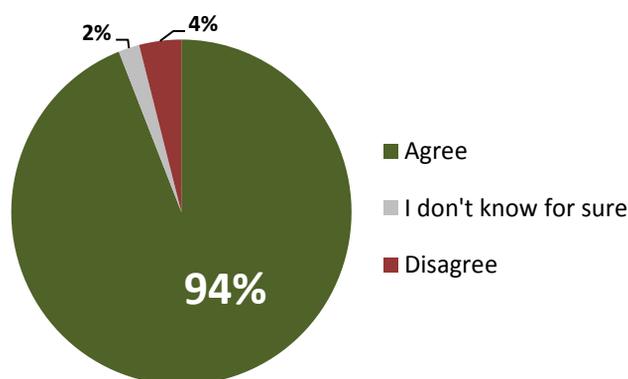
Throughout this study, our goal was to measure homeowner's happiness with their green home and if they felt that the features and benefits of their green home made them satisfied with their decision.

As a company that collects and analyzes customer feedback, we think the two most important metrics from this study are: **Likely To Recommend Rate** and **Overall Satisfaction**.

Would You Recommend a Green Home to a Friend or Family Member?

At GuildQuality, the most important metric we track is the "Likely to Recommend" Rate. We believe this metric is a tell-tale sign of happiness; because who would recommend something to a friend that they were not fully satisfied with?

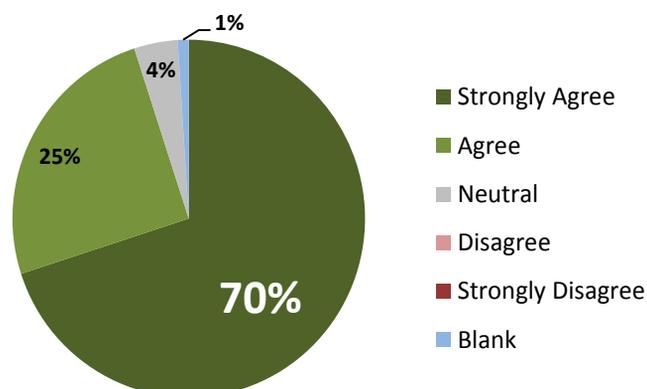
The study showed that **94% would likely recommend a green home to a friend or family member**. This shows that the majority of green homeowners are fully satisfied with their decision to purchase or build a green home.



How do Homeowners Rate Their Overall Satisfaction?

During the study, we also asked respondents to rate their satisfaction levels specifically with the green features of their home to try and gauge their overall happiness with their decision to purchase a green home.

We found that **when asked if respondents were satisfied with the green features of their home, 70% strongly agreed and 25% agreed**. This means that 95% of green homeowners agreed that they are satisfied with the features in their home.



Do Homeowners Really Care About Being Green?

Although there is much talk about living green and building green, it can be hard to determine if the average homeowner is aware of what is meant by the term "green home" and if they actually seek out green home builders when buying a home.

During our study, we asked homeowners to answer these questions and found that of the respondents, 79% understand what is meant by the term "green home" and a whopping 88% were fully aware that they were buying or building a certified green home.



"I understand what is meant by the term 'green home'."



"I was aware that I was buying or building a certified green home."

90% of respondents shared that they gained satisfaction in knowing that they've done the right thing in buying a green home.

The findings in our study show that the homeowners are fully aware of what a green home is and were aware that the home they bought or built was a green home. For many green homeowners, they feel like they did the right thing by purchasing a green home and many expressed that the home being green was an important decision factor during their initial home search.

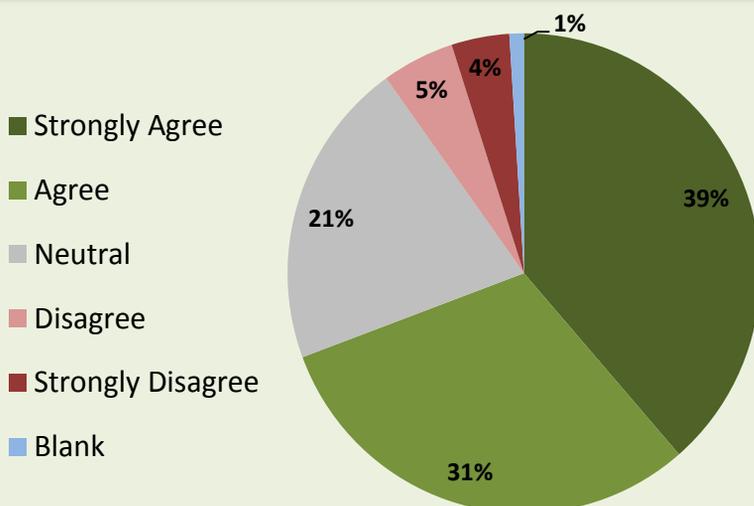
For green home builders that are not sure if potential buyers value the features and benefits of a green home, the results of this study indicate some potential buyers do seek out green homes as something that is important to them when they are buying or building a new home.

Was Owning a Green Home a Decision Factor?

It is evident that green homeowners are aware of what a green home is and that the home they purchased was a certified green home, but was it an important factor in the decision process?

When asked if owning a green home was important when searching for a new home, 39% strongly agreed and 31% agreed. This means that **70% of respondents agreed that they were actively searching for green homes to either build or buy.**

Owning a green home was important to me when I began looking for a new home.



Why Do Homeowners Buy or Build a Certified Green Home?

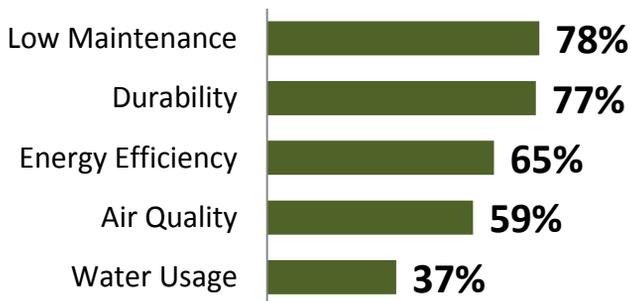
Our study revealed that those looking to buy or build a green certified home do so for many reasons:



As we spoke with homeowners, three common themes appeared as to why they chose a green home: valuable features, environmental considerations, and certifications.

Valuable Features

In the study, respondents were asked if the following were important decision factors when they purchased their home: low maintenance, durability, energy efficiency, air quality and water usage. The numbers below indicate those who strongly agreed that each feature was important during their decision.



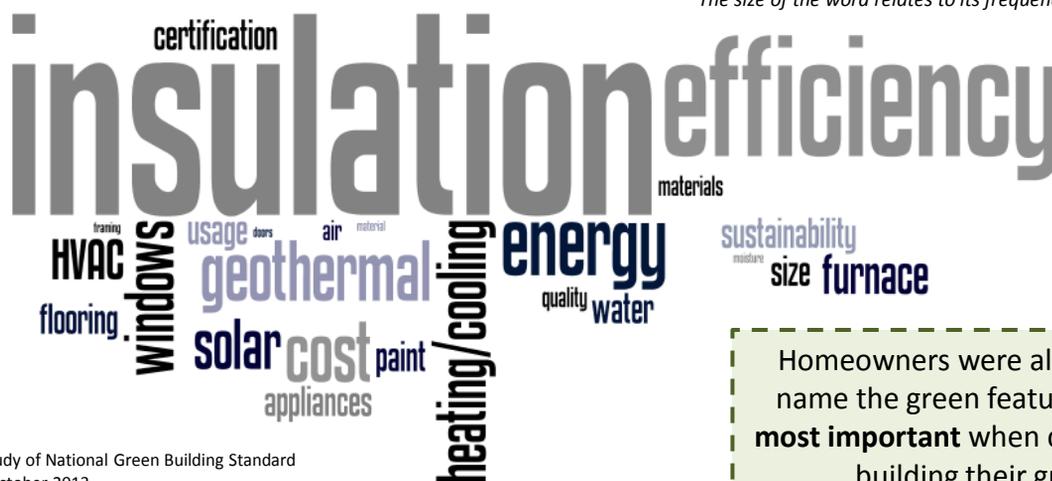
Environmental Considerations

Those who want to buy or build green are usually environmentally conscious and want an energy efficient home. **Over 80% of respondents agreed that trying to reduce or minimize the impact of their home on the environment in general was important to them**, with 43% who strongly agreed and 38% who agreed.

Certifications

For many homeowners, certifications serve as a way to ensure that their home meets certain standards and requirements. As we mentioned previously, all of the homeowners in this study were owners of National Green Building Standard certified homes. Our findings show that **66% of the respondents strongly agreed that they were aware of the NGBS certification and value that their home was certified to the National Green Building Standard.**

**The size of the word relates to its frequency as a response.*



Homeowners were also asked to name the green feature that was **most important** when choosing or building their green home.

Was Buying a Green Home the Right Choice?

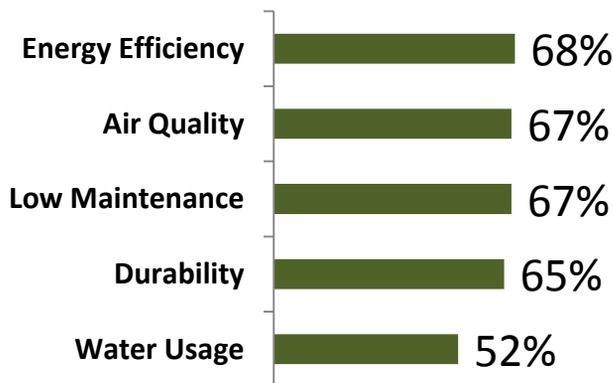
“We didn’t look at any builders other than green builders. Having a green home was the most important issue for us.”

For many of the green homeowners that participated in this study, buying a green home was well worth the investment. **55% of respondents stated that they knew their home may have cost a bit more than a non-green home, but believed the benefits of the green features outweigh the costs.**

This is great news for green home builders that go the extra mile to build homes that meet the standards and requirements that are expected in a green home.

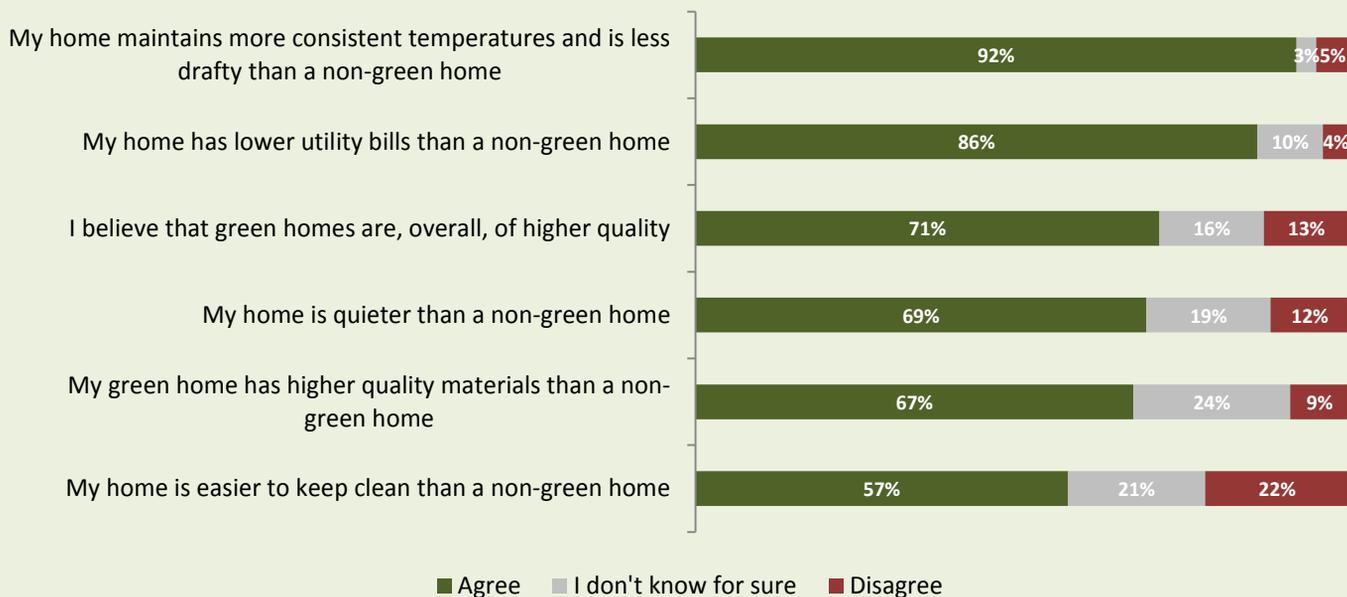
Are Homeowners Satisfied with the Features of Their Green Home?

During the study, respondents were asked about different features that were important to them during their decision to buy or build a green home. After living in their green homes for an extended period of time, the majority strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the features that they initially deemed important.



Buying a Green Home vs. a Non-Green Home

The study also asked respondents whether or not they felt that their home was better in certain areas than a non-green home. Most of the respondents agreed that different aspects of their green home are better than a non-green home.



What Are Some Challenges Builders Face in Selling Certified Green Homes?

Although the majority of the respondents expressed positive feelings about their green home, there were some areas for improvement that were conveyed during the study. Being aware of these areas for improvement can help home builders devise a plan to maximize their success when meeting with and selling to potential green home buyers.

Build Awareness of Financial Incentives

Our findings show that building awareness of financial incentives can be a great persuasion technique when selling or building a green home. As with anything else, be sure to communicate clearly exactly what rebates, if any, the homeowner will be receiving and why.

The results showed that **51% of homeowners were either neutral or disagreed when asked if the existence of a utility rebate, tax credit, or some other financial incentive was important in their decision to build or purchase a green home**; with 20% neutral, 10% disagreeing and 21% strongly disagreeing. When asked why this was, we got a few interesting responses:

"The fact that there were financial incentives didn't even occur to me."

"I didn't get to use any financial incentives. The builder got to take those benefits. I was glad they were there, but I didn't get to use them."

"It never crossed our mind that there would be any rebates and I never received any rebates."

Educate the Homeowner

We also found that **53% of homeowners understand how to operate and maximize the benefits of the green-related features in their home**. There was a small percentage of homeowners who did not agree with this statement, but some of the respondents did express that they wished they had received a little more education on how to operate and maximize the benefits of their green home.

The study uncovered that home builders should be sure to educate prospective buyers during the sales process on how to effectively manage and utilize the features in their green home.

"I don't really know how to maximize our benefits. I just assumed our house did this for us."

"Instead of receiving education from either the builder, the developer, or the utility company, I was expected to learn about this on my own. They installed the equipment but they didn't provide any training or a homeowner's guide."

"I don't know what my green-related features are."

As a green home builder, it is important to take the time to ensure that potential buyers fully understand what they are paying for and why it is worth the money. This means ensuring that they understand all of the features and incentives available to them and how to fully take advantage of and maximize the benefits of having a green home.

The Key Findings

- 1** **94%** of respondents strongly agreed that based on their satisfaction levels, they would recommend a green home to others.
- 2** When asked if they were satisfied with the green features in their home, **70%** of respondents strongly agreed and **25%** agreed.
- 3** **79%** strongly agreed that they understand what is meant by the term "Green Home."
- 4** **55%** knew their home may have cost more than a non-green home, but they believe the benefits outweigh the costs.
- 5** Of the respondents who were aware of the NGBS certification, **66%** strongly agreed and **21%** agreed that they valued the certification.
- 6** **65%** strongly agreed that having an energy efficient home was an important decision factor.

The GuildQuality Approach

GuildQuality was given a list of 1,350 people whose homes are **National Green Building Standard certified** and were built in the last three years to participate in the study. Our team created a survey containing 37 questions, both quantitative and qualitative, and administered the survey by telephone. Between eight and nine attempts were made, if necessary, to reach each homeowner and we received a total of 187 responses. In order to be counted in the study, all respondents had to be the original homeowner.

The Reason for the Study

This study, commissioned by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), was focused on collecting feedback from actual green homeowners in order to see how satisfied they were with the features of their home and with their decision to buy or build their home. Previous studies about green homes have concentrated more on potential buyers and their interest in buying or building a green home, rather than on homeowner satisfaction. Therefore, we hope this study will provide a new perspective, offering valuable data for builders in our industry.



About GuildQuality

North America's best home builders, remodelers, and contractors rely on GuildQuality's customer satisfaction surveying, performance reporting, and marketing resources to help them deliver exceptional service, and promote their quality to prospective customers. For more information, please visit www.guildquality.com.