

# The Process

## Starting Out

Once you have chosen your builder and your home electronics installer, it's time to start an open dialog among the three of you to ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of what you want and expect in your smart connected home. Knowledge is power. Although your builder and your home electronics installer will coordinate the timing of the installation of the electronic systems with each other, it is important that you understand the timeline so that you can be thinking ahead about decisions you will need to make.

Ask your builder and installer to agree on some installation milestones so that the building schedule meets your expectations. These milestone planning meetings will also serve as a good time to collectively decide where your home should be equipped with voice (telephone) and data (computer) jacks. "I can't stress it enough, but planning is a BIG key in networking a home. You want to make sure that you have the right type of network outlets in the ideal locations. This will save you time and money," says Salvador Lara, marketing communications manager of UNICOM.

### Milestone 1 - Planning and Design

Before the ground is even broken, you will have met with your builder, your home electronics installer and any other critical tradespeople, such as the interior designer and the lighting designer. Unless you have chosen to act as the general contractor, your builder will most likely assign a project manager to coordinate the work of all the subcontractors.

Meetings between you and your electronics installer will have taken place to carefully go over every aspect of the proposal and to indicate on the blueprints where every piece of electronic gear goes and how it will all work together.

### Milestone 2 - "Pre" Prewire

It's a good idea to plan a "walk-through" with your electronics installer or project manager to review the proposed locations of keypads, entertainment gear, loudspeakers and other electronics. If you want to change the location of a piece of equipment, do it before the wiring is installed.

Your builder or project manager and your installer will be in very close contact during this phase. "I work with a builder's schedule because I need to be in after the electrical installation is complete, so I can create a clean cabling pathway, and before the insulation and drywall go up, because open walls make cabling a breeze," says Lara.

The wiring, keypad, outlet and speaker locations are "set in stone" after the Sheetrock has gone up. If you change your mind after this point, it will be very costly and prolong the "move-in" date.

### Milestone 3 - Final Installation and Training

All the major products, such as TVs, home theater gear, and speakers, are installed and the systems tested by your installer. The final programming of home control systems is done. Now it's time for you to be trained on the systems and make sure that everything meets your expectations.

### Milestone 4 - Move In and Follow-Up

You will need to live with the systems for a time to figure out what programming tweaks might need to be made to better suit your lifestyle. Plan a reasonable time after your move-in date for your installer to return to make these adjustments.

Make sure you ask your installer for documentation of the systems that have been installed, and a wiring plan to use for future upgrades.