Working with his father, a mason who had emigrated to the United States from Estonia, Arvo Prima learned the skills of an old world artisan. He was taught by his father to treat people honestly and with respect. The successful Central New Jersey homebuilder is staying competitive in a challenging market by combining a hands-on approach to customer service with cutting edge homebuilding design and technology.

“There are many common sense lessons we can learn about serving our customers from those who built homes in simpler times,” Prima explains. “We are a family-owned and operated company that creates a product which represents a far more personal choice than almost anything else our customers will ever purchase.”

Prima notes that a home is still the single biggest investment most families will ever make. In addition to the financial commitment, homebuyers also invest their hopes, their dreams and their futures.

“We build the homes in which people can create their own living space according to their personal needs. There they will live as a family, perhaps raise children, celebrate holidays and gather in good times and bad,” he adds. “There is a huge amount of emotion that goes into a home purchase. We recognize the importance of a home purchase and cater to everyone who visits one of our communities with the respect and understanding that someone who is making the biggest acquisition of their life deserves.”

Prima meets personally with every customer that purchases one of his homes. Over the years, Arvo’s father Vello and brother Kalju have also been involved in the business. Arvo’s wife Beverly, who was recently named 2011 Builder Sales Manager of the Year by the Shore Builders Association of Central New Jersey (SBACNJ), is in charge of sales at all Pr1ma Corporation communities. According to Prima, long standing employees like Kathy Duelly, who has been with company for over 15 years, play a significant role in the firm’s success. Duelly is responsible for internal purchasing, coordination of field supervisors, and most importantly, customer service. Her efforts have helped earn Pr1ma Corporation a reputation for standing behind the homes they build and achieving overall homebuyer satisfaction.

“I think buyers are reassured when they find out they’re dealing with a member of our family,” Beverly noted. “We customize our homes, so we spend a significant amount of time with our customers, working out all of the selections and personal choices that go into building their home. Over the course of planning the home we really get to know each other.”

The warmth experienced by homebuyers at a Pr1ma Corporation community goes far beyond the sales process.

Prima has incorporated the comfort of traditional customer service into the homes his company builds, along with the latest building materials and energy saving technology.

“Our architect, John Amelchenko, of Aquatecture Associates and I were talking about a trend we noticed toward more time-honored home designs,” Prima said. “As we met with our buyers, we began to realize that they are less interested in the formal “McMansion” style homes that were popular throughout the 90’s and early 2000’s. Now, they’re more interested in intimate homes with less volume space and more family-friendly layouts that are both energy-efficient and conducive to a relaxed, casual lifestyle.”

The result of that conversation was a new portfolio of Craftsman-style homes that was introduced at Prima’s Whitty Pines community in Toms River, New Jersey. Whitty Pines, which won the SBACNJ 2010 Community of the Year Award in the 25 homes or less category, features an inviting neighborhood setting that has proven to be very popular.

“Talking to our customers and more importantly, listening to our customers, has given us the insight to develop home designs that are both right for the families that buy them and right for the times in which we live,” he added. “By providing personal service we make home buying more enjoyable, build personal relationships that result in clients achieving a high comfort level, and we gain important feedback that allows us to make our homes better and our sales efforts more successful.”