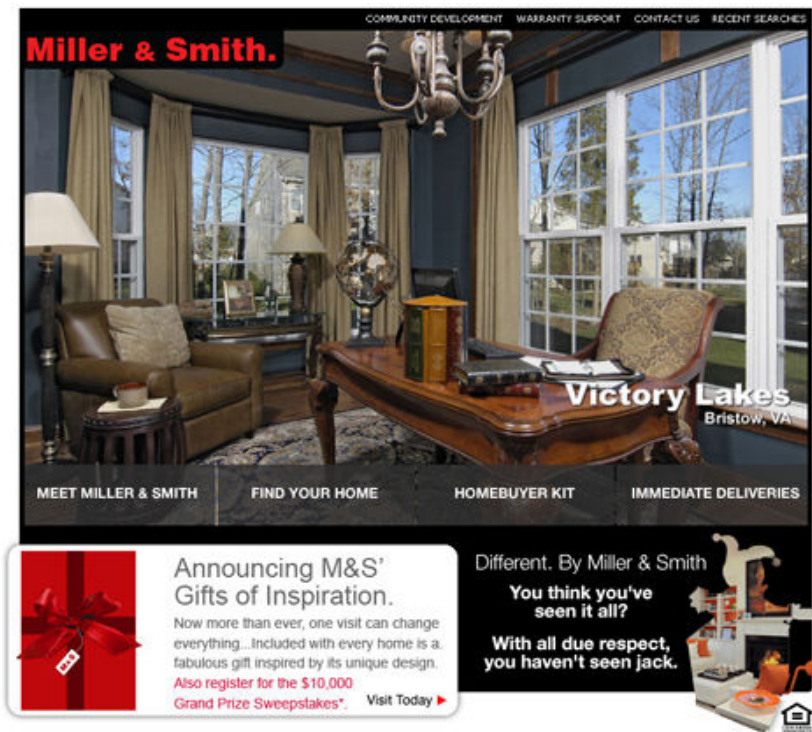


## FILNET CASE STUDY

### Miller & Smith Home Builders

Website Rebranding and Enhanced Functionality, Interactivity

CLIENT	<p><b>Miller &amp; Smith.</b> ONE VISIT CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING.</p> <p>Miller &amp; Smith</p>
PROJECT	Website Rebranding and Enhanced Functionality, Interactivity
WEBSITE	<a href="http://www.millerandsmith.com/">http://www.millerandsmith.com/</a>
TECHNOLOGY	Content Management System (CMS), Online Mapping Services, MySQL Server, HTML, JavaScript, CSS
DURATION	06.2007 – 11.2007



## Overview

For nearly a half a century, Miller & Smith has been known throughout the Mid-Atlantic region for surpassing customer expectation by providing niche homes that go beyond the conventional products offered by other home builders. Since 1964, the home builder has erected over 5,000 single family homes, 8,000 town homes, 2,000 condominiums and developed 12,000 home sites in 87 communities. As the third largest private builder in the Washington Metropolitan area, the company has focused on innovative new homes and in the process has won numerous awards. In fact, Miller & Smith has won several "Best in Show", the Monument Awards' highest honor. To advance their legacy of innovation, the company embarked on a new branding campaign that would encompass print, visual and online media including a new website. So, it was only natural that the company sought out award-winning interactive design firm Filnet, Inc. to help enhance its website's functionality and offer new perks to its thousands of areas home buyers.

## Challenge

Getting buyers to visit model homes was Miller & Smith's number one objective. With that goal in mind, the new website needed to have a larger than life photography, detailed floor plans and other visual media such as automated mapping features that would attract new home buyers as well as showcase the company's properties. Unfortunately, the (previous) Miller & Smith website failed to capture the full breath of their product. When visitors came to the site, they saw an Adobe Flash page that read "Building Innovation," and had to wait to see the company's beautiful homes and cutting-edge designs.

The development of a new brand was an additional challenge. Filnet worked with Lyons & Sucher (L&S), the branding company responsible for Miller & Smith's revamped print collateral and advertising branding campaign. Even though Filnet has award-winning experience in graphic user interface (GUI) development, L&S was tapped to provide the creative content and overall look and feel of the website. Perhaps most important, the site had to live up to the company's new tagline "One visit can change everything."

## Solution

Filnet has worked collaboratively with partners in the past to build popular websites that attract millions of visitors. For this project, Filnet worked closely with L+S in an effort to assure that the new Miller & Smith website would effectively showcase the latest brand and consist of innovations that would connect with and energize home buyers throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.

As the project manager, Filnet was able to organize and manage team resources effectively. Even more, the company provided its website usability expertise to the project. Filnet also had to ensure that L+S designs complied with the custom content management system (CMS).

Upon the completion of L+S website branding, Filnet's development team incorporated the new design into the most appropriate CMS that met the special needs of the home builder's clients who are searching for their dream homes. Additionally, the new CMS was able to manage Miller & Smith's database of communities, collections and homes. Since customizing a commercial, off-the-shelf (COTS) application can

sometimes be haphazard, Filnet chose to create an application to cater to the specific requirements of Miller & Smith.

Using online interactive tools, Filnet also added functionality that allows buyers and prospects to seamlessly map out various locations of Miller & Smith homes. On the backend, Filnet's CMS solution had an added bonus—data management and site updates would be easy for non-technical staff.

## Results

In December 2006, Miller & Smith unveiled its website, developed by Filnet Inc, as part of a new branding campaign. The site featured a completely different look and feel that was more aligned with its legacy of innovation. New functionality included interactive mapping services and user customization that enhances the shopping experience for homebuyers. Filnet developed a content management tool designed and built especially for Miller and Smith. The new CMS manages all of the information and data for Miller & Smith. Now, the home builder can easily update community listings more frequently and provide up-to-date listings of homes for immediate deliveries.

According to Miller & Smith, the home builder has gotten "extremely positive in-house feedback on the website." In fact, management has entered the website in the "Major Achievements in Marketing Excellence" awards, which is sponsored by the Northern Virginia Homebuilders Association, and the Maryland National Capital Homebuilders Association. Awards are announced in May 2008.

"Without question, a website is the front door of any business. Filnet has provided us with a new level of online interactivity that complements our business model. Our customers will find this new site an improvement on the last. Now, home buyers will be able to experience why Miller & Smith homes are so special without ever having to leave their homes, offices or anywhere they may be viewing our website." – Kimberly N. Ambrose, director of research, Miller and Smith.

In addition to positive responses from the Miller & Smith staff, the new site supplies home buyers with the interactive tools necessary to tour Miller & Smith properties, identify community locations and easily contact company representatives with the click of a mouse.

Other features include neighborhood guides and lender information, which are provided with interactive mapping capabilities. Now, home buyers can instantly get a feel for any Miller & Smith community by retrieving information on schools, shopping, transportation, services and recreation from the new site. As a result, buyers everywhere will know why Miller & Smith is unique among local home builders and move closer to owning their dream house.