There aren't a whole lot of them, but they are dominant and diversified.

That's what was revealed by a recent survey among the nearly 400 contractor-members of the international association of Wall and Ceiling Contractors. The poll was conducted last January by CONSTRUCTION DIMENSIONS and was designed to measure the business volume and the extent of diversification among the iaWCC membership. And measure it, it did.

Continued on page 50
In sheer numbers he might represent a relatively small group among the estimated 10,000 contractors in the wall-ceiling-floor industry. But when it comes to buying power and position the average iaWCC member is tops.

Taken collectively, iaWCC’s contractors in 1974 performed somewhere between $750,000,000 and $1,000,000,000 worth of business. Should the lengthy string of zeroes seem confusing, that spells out to three-quarters of a billion to one full billion dollars.

**Data Verified**

To establish validity, the data from the January sample were compared with another selected sample of iaWCC members, and also with a survey completed in 1973 by Lawrence-Leiter, a nationally known consulting firm.

An analysis of the statistics showed that approximately 45 percent of iaWCC contractors’ 1974 business volume totals were in the $1,500,000-$5,000,000 category. Some 13 percent did more than $5,000,000 while about 22 percent reported volumes ranging from $750,000 to $1,490,000.

The 1973 Lawrence-Leiter survey, incidentally, reported a median business volume of $1,400,000 for the contractors involved in that study.

Although the iaWCC members derived the overwhelming bulk of their business from the commercial-industrial market, nearly 30 percent have a substantial involvement in the residential area—and this latter, market includes garden apartments-nail on.

Residentially oriented contractors indicated that the housing market contributed from a low of 5 percent to as much as 90 percent of their dollar income. The total dollar volume represented by these individual percentages amounted to $84,000,000.

A breakdown of the iaWCC contractors’ total volume demonstrated a not particularly surprising wide spectrum of business activities—and put numbers on the growing diversification movement within the association’s membership.

The lathing-plastering, stucco and specialty finishes segment accounted for approximately $198,000,000 work of work done by all iaWCC contractors in 1974.

**Drywall Penetration**

Just as dramatic, was the penetration into the drywall market. Here the business volume totaled a whopping $280,000,000 for all of iaWCC.

The market segments and the estimated amount of work done last year by iaWCC contractors showed:

- Acoustical systems, $102,400,000
- Curtain walls, $43,248,000
- Demountable partitions, $76,428,000
- Drywall, $280,000,000
- Fireproofing, $56,256,000
- Flooring, $12,020,000
- Roof Decks, $17,340,000
- Lathing-plastering, $139,720,000
- Stucco, $48,464,000
Specialty Finishes, $10,056,000
That iaWCC members are older and more established businesses is shown by the fact that some 61 percent of the membership reported being in business 20 years or more. Another 16 percent have been contracting between 10 and 20 years.

Only a handful of the contractors stated that they had been in business 10 years or less.

Most Are Local
As successful and as reliable as they have been, though, an overwhelming 65 percent of iaWCC contractors stated that they seek and perform work only in their immediate marketing areas. A few—perhaps a dozen to 15—will and do go after work anywhere in the United States while upwards of 30 percent seek work over a number of states or regions.

From the standpoint of individual business operations, about three-fourths of the membership consists of one company. The remainder operate two or more separate — but usually industry related-companies.

When asked to report on the kinds of work that their companies performed during the past five years, the iaWCC contractors disclosed rather precisely where they were going for the business dollar.

Drywall work, as expected, dominated the numbers with 87 percent of the contractors doing drywall jobs, while 81 percent reported they had been involved in lathing-plastering work during the past five years.

From the nearly 400 iaWCC contractors, here are the numbers of those involved during the past five years in other market segments: 280, stucco; 275, fireproofing; 220, curtain walls; 210 demountable partitions; 205 acoustical systems; 205, specialty finishes; 205, specialty finishes; 205, specialty finishes; 50, roof decks, and 55, floors.

Future Look
That the diversification trend is far from over was made evident when contractors answered the question, “In the next 5 years, what kinds of work that you do not do now would you probably add?”

Acoustical systems was foremost among the new market opportunities with 15 percent of the membership looking to develop potential here.

Both curtain walls and demountable partition opportunities looked attractive to a similarly sized group, while about 6 percent of those polled indicated they would add specialty finishing work to their business repertoire.

Probably because so much of the membership already has a commitment to the markets, only 4-5 percent reported that they would be moving into drywall, stucco and sprayed fireproofing as new ventures in coming years.

A lesser percentage are looking with interest in flooring, lathing-plastering, roof and concrete business.

Clearly, the iaWCC member is dominant and diversified — and he is continuing to spread his business options to remain in that enviable position.