A DEMOUNTABLE: they still ask
A Demountable Wall and a Standard Drywall May Appear Similar—but the Difference Shows When It's Moving Time

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If you talk with anyone outside the construction industry and state that you sell or install a demountable partition, the first thing asked is, “What is a demountable partition?”

This immediately tells you how much the general public doesn’t know about construction; yet these same people may have them in their very own offices and not even know it. The only time they will is when it comes time to move the wall. Then they will realize the difference between a drywall and a demountable wall.

Why does a demountable wall outlive a drywall? Or why is a demountable better than a drywall? There are many aspects as to an individual’s appraisal from one another.

First, many take the position that a drywall costs less than a demountable wall. Both can be installed using a metal stud versus wood.

However, there is a statement that says, “As your business grows, so grows your wall.” If your walls grow, this means that you should relocate approximately 10 percent of your installed walls per year. Therefore, if you have to relocate your drywall, you simply tear it down and start with new material. With a demountable, you merely dismantle and relocate it to its new location.

In demountables, there are many features that can be achieved, such as sound control, fire rating, colors, vinyls, chalkboards, and tackboards and still have the versatility of moving at any given time. You can have some of these features in the drywall system, but not relocatable.

With the previous points in mind, there is no doubt which wall is more economical. Then, let’s explore the features of a drywall demountable or a metal faced demountable.

The drywall demountable gives you a choice of any vinyl clad board for a fine line joint or a batten application. Either system has the aesthetics of a well engineered wall. It is versatile, relocatable, and very practical, both in material and installation costs. If you’re going to invest in a renovation or new construction, you want the most for your money. There is no sense in investing in something that will give you only a few years of service.

Interior Changes

In both drywall and steel wall demountables, you can have a one-hour fire rated wall and have the same aesthetics as the standard demountable wall. It’s only the interior construction of the wall that changes and it still has the same demountability. In standard drywall, you may also have the fire rating, but when it comes time to move that wall, you tear it down and start all over again, with new materials. Again, there is that added cost of material when you want to move a drywall that is not demountable.

The Sound Transmission Class (S.T.C.) plays a large roll in determining the wall construction in the industry today. The demountables available on the market will range from the low 30’s (S.T.C.) to the low 50’s (S.T.C.). The higher the S.T.C. number, the more speech privacy you have. The average requirement is usually in the low 40’s. To attain these levels, the only items required are noise barrier batts which are installed in the wall cavity and sound seal applied to all perimeter details. Even with this type of construction, you still have the demountability.

One of the advantageous features in most demountables today is that they are a non-progressive system. This means that at any...
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given time, you can remove one or more panels without disturbing the adjacent panels. This feature makes it easy to make a change for electrical or plumbing services.

The ultimate in the demountables is the metal clad system. This system is designed using a metal faced panel which is laminated to a gypsum board. The edges of the panel have a continuous roll form edge which mechanically interlocks with a steel stud. The panels are factory finished with prime paint which greatly extends the life of the finish. Field application can be applied if color schemes are changed over the years. The life cycle is far superior to drywall so the initial costs are higher, but yield their return on investment over the years and far surpass the overall cost of the drywall.

One of the features that enhance demountable partitions is the ability of utilizing porcelain chalkboards in full height panels which become an integral part of the wall. These are available in a wide range of color to match any decor. The most impressive point is that they usually have a life time guarantee. They can be trimmed with magnetic or mechanically applied continuous chalk tray, map rails, combination map and tack strip, projection map and paper hooks. There is also magnetic tacks that can be used throughout the entire metal wall system.

**Glazing Available**

Another item which is available in both drywall and demountable partitions is the glazing requirements. These can be located in single barrowed light units or continuous units. They can be located adjacent to or above door frames, or in full height or above cornice height partitions. Even with all of these types of conditions, you still maintain your demountability.

Trims, which include door frames, corners, head channel, battens and glazing, come in an assorted array of colors. If the trims are steel, they are usually supplied painted black or aluminum. If they are extruded aluminum, you have a choice of clear or black anodized, or in the light, medium or dark duranodics. These are available in both drywall or demountables. When installed, they present the aesthetics of a professionally designed and constructed partition.

In the construction of demountable partitions, both drywall and steel wall have a head channel of either steel or aluminum and a base channel of steel. The steel stud which may vary from 20 to 24 gauge, depending on design, fit between the head and base channels. The panels interface with the stud, either mechanically or laminated. Both serve their functions equally well. The perimeter is usually trimmed in black or the same color as the panels.

Both demountable partition systems have the capability of interfacing with the standard ceiling and lighting systems. They also can interface any foreign or standard wall or window mullion. The partitions adapt to either full height or cornice high walls. They also adapt to soffit conditions or enclosing a convector unit. You may have a two, three, or four way intersection. Even with all of the conditions, you still maintain the ability to relocate your walls.

One final item that puts demountable partitions well ahead of drywall is that the demountable partitions can enjoy a tax depreciation because they are classified as office furniture, where drywall is not.