A MOVING MARKET: the forecast is up

Customers For Movable Walls Are Taking a New and More Positive Look at the Advantages Offered

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Like every other industry, the movable/demountable partition business is in a constant change.

One of the main gripes of customers (the end users) is, “We can no longer get parts.”

Overall, the industry continues to grow. New systems are developed and gradually non-popular systems are dropped.

While some contractors are asking, “Should I get into movable partitions?” other contractors are evaluating, “Should I get out?”

A few years ago a marketing expert said demountables represent seven percent of the market. I do not have a current update on that figure, but there are more people in the business today, and there are an increasing number of big jobs going demountable.

The emphasis in the industry among the research people is to develop a concealed fastener for prefinished gypsum board panels. Several new systems have been put on the market in the last few years—some without adequate laboratory testing.

Sales people put pressure on to release the product and development costs are so great that everyone goes along. In reality, how can you really find out what the problems are until you try the product in the field?

Five years ago many office buildings were built as speculative projects with tight budgets. Little or no latitude was provided to allow for future remodelling costs.

Furthermore, the tenant paid the cost of remodeling. As a result, developers did not have a receptive ear for demountables, contending that the increase in original cost would not be offset by the other advantages.

At the time, the first question a partition salesman would hear was, “Tell me how much money I can save.” Today, that same building owner is complaining about the high cost of remodeling.

A quick glance at the photographs throughout this magazine will tell where the smart owners are.

Most of the people reading this

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article are something more than an alley garage contractor with a pickup truck. Possibly you were at one time and proud of it. But today you are offering more to your customers.

You have an obligation to know the alternate methods of doing a job and how to profit from this experience.

If you are serious about evaluating demountables, ask these questions:

1. How long has the system been used?
2. Where do you have jobs I can see?
3. Who are some of your successful contractors?
4. What is the cost of materials? Labor?
5. What are some typical selling prices?
6. What is the S.T.C. rating?
7. Do you have a fire rating?
8. What does your favorite architect say about this wall?
9. Have you some figures on the cost of take down?

There is a real opportunity present today for everyone associated with the demountable partition business. Drywall contractors in particular are passing up a golden opportunity if they do not examine each job to determine if it can be upgraded to a more profitable demountable job.

With everyone talking about conservation of natural resources look what a demountable job does:

1. Almost all of the construction materials can be reused—board, steel, hardware, doors, frames and glass.
2. The labor and cost of removal of debris is saved.
3. The cost of protecting valuable office machines from construction dust is fractional.
4. The complete ceiling is saved.
5. The lost time for the construction cycle between successive tenants is shortened.
6. There is no longer a long waiting time for delivery of materials.

Demountable partitions are sold and if you have a selling organization they are right for you. If you are a bidding house with the low dollar, partitions would probably not be for you.