PARTITION PROGRAM: A Marketing Innovation

One of the advantages of the new Richwall Partition System, shown above with both glass and vinyl, is that it can be installed on finished floor and ceilings.

Richwall’s low profile system can be topped with acrylic panels and can be installed, due to unique design, by one craft.

Richwall’s non-handed, 9-foot door jamb system permits the use of doors readily available locally.

This St. Louis Partition Manufacturer Enables Diversification-Minded Contractors Easy Entry into the Demountable Partition Business

The cost of installing interior space separation systems can be reduced as much as 50 per cent under a novel marketing program developed by Richwall Partition Systems, Inc., of St. Louis.

Cletus Richardson, company president, said that “we developed our unique partitioning system to meet an industry demand for a quality product at a cost less than conventional systems through increased productivity.

“Now with our new marketing program, which we are calling our ‘Price Rollback Program,’ we can further reduce costs to a point where it is less expensive to install higher quality drywall, such as class 2 vinyl, than conventionally installed painted drywall.”

Basically, the program is that contractors may purchase the aluminum components direct from the factory under terms of an agreement with Richwall at the actual factory cost plus 15 per cent.

“This means,” Richardson said, “that the structural components of our basic 9-foot high 401 totally demountable, slip-joint, modular system will cost, at current factory prices, about $3.25 per linear foot, plus shipping charges.

“Add to this the price of class 2 vinyl decorative board in textures, wood grains, grass cloth or other quality finishes, at approximately $4.00 per linear foot, the cost of installation at about $2.50 per foot, and the total cost of installing a class 2 vinyl system is less than $10.00 per foot, considerably less than the cost of conventional drywall.

“Another example of the savings that will be realized from this program is our nine-foot, non-handed, simulated duronadic door jamb. It’s cost currently to the participating contractor will be about $23.00, plus shipping, and that cannot be matched by anyone.”

One Requirement

To participate in Richwall’s “Price Rollback Program,” contractors must meet only one require-
ment—a $600 membership fee which is payable in two equal installments.

"On receipt of the first $300 payment," Richardson remarked, "we will provide the contractor with a marketing kit of 12 linear feet of our basic system in a nine-foot height, including the door jamb, so that a display can be installed in the contractor’s office or wherever he might want to build it.

"In addition, the kit will include a profile section of all components for showing the product and its many features to building owners and developers, and 25 sets (125 pieces) of sales literature, as well as installation photographs and other marketing and sales aids.

"If additional material is needed by a participating contractor, it will be available on a cost-plus basis."

Richardson added that the second payment, due six months after the initial payment, will be waived if a contractor places an order for at least 5000 linear feet prior to the due date.

"The only way we are able to offer this revolutionary program is to rely on the contractors to do our selling," he stated. "We are eliminating all expenses involved in salesmen, distributors, representatives, and everyone else who adds to the cost of selling.

"We will, however, have highly-qualified people available for marketing, technical and installation instruction and assistance on a cost basis. As an example, if a contractor would want to have his key personnel receive installation instruction, we have specialists that are available at a cost of $100 per day plus expenses.

"We know our ‘Price Rollback Program’ is a radical departure from the normal marketing and sales programs, but we believe this has to be done not only to help curtail spiralling construction costs, but to bring about a parity among contractors bidding on jobs.

"We also know this program sounds unbelievable, but it is true. We are of the opinion that our approach to rolling back construction costs is so sound that, hopefully, other segments of the industry will consider similar programs wherever possible."

Richardson remarked that acceptance into the program by Richwall will terminate January 1, 1978.

The Richwall Partition System, which was introduced last year, has met with excellent acceptance. It is to be used in the new Arts and Cultural Center in Tennessee, and has been installed in a number of buildings including Ozark Airlines headquarters, Insurance Exchange in Nashville, Tenn., Tyrone Towers in St. Petersburg, Fla., and the Stromberg-Carlson Division of General Dynamics Corp.

High Rating

Architects and engineers who have seen the system and worked with it in new construction and remodeling projects have called it vastly superior to existing systems in engineering and quality.

Richwall includes, in reality, five sub-systems—partitions, glazing, door jambs, low profiles and wall coverings—and offers unlimited variety in interior space separation. Each system is 100 per cent salvageable and can be moved and installed any number of times. Its many features include progressive and non-progressive assembly, non-handed reusable jambs and unique glazing.

It was developed in conjunction with multi-tenant, high-rise office buildings in St. Louis and other mid-western and southern cities. The testing encompassed three years and more than 50,000 linear feet of installation before Richardson was satisfied with the quality and flexibility of the product, the ease of installation and the perfection of the design.

Richwall utilizes a unique and patented anchoring principle in a three component partition system for any wall. The basic structural components in this modular system are base rail, ceiling line and universal stud of extruded aluminum with a baked enamel finish.

Due to the slip-joint design, Richwall partitions, according to Richardson, can be constructed in about 50 per cent less time than other systems. This increase in productivity is due to only one craft being required for installation.

The Richwall system permits standard wiring in its cavity and also provides for sound control with insulation batts. Any standard ½" panel material and ¼" acrylic or glass panel can be used. Richwall’s doorjamb are designed for many standard doors that are readily available from local sources.

All extruded aluminum structural components for the Richwall system are manufactured by Wells Aluminum Co., which has plants in four cities around the country. Under the new Richwall program, the only difference in price between a contractor in Memphis and one in New York will be the difference in the shipping costs of the material.

Price Parity

"Since we will have no exclusive territories, distributors or dealers, there will be no hidden charges, no discounts, no favored treatment, nothing to alter the price from one contractor to another in the same city," Richardson said.

"In this way, every participating contractor will be treated alike, with the same advantages from Richwall. This, we believe, will place contractors on equal footing when bidding a job so that their own sales ability based on their individual performances will be the determining factor in awarding a job.

"No non-participating contractor can possibly match the price and quality of Richwall with another system and this, along with the flexibility of the product, will be a distinct advantage for our participating contractors."

He added that the program will be backed with a national advertising and product promotion program to generate interest, sales and inquiries from building owners and developers.

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All inquiries received from the promotional program to be conducted by Richwall will be turned over to participating contractors for follow-up.

“I am confident,” he remarked, “that we have an outstanding product. At least, that is what nearly everyone who has seen it says. With this market acceptance, already generated, combined with the program we have developed for reducing price as well as establishing availability, I see no reason why Richwall will not become the demountable drywall system of the future, especially now that many building owners are renovating instead of building new structures.

“This, of course, is part of the economy of today. But look what this program can do. A building owner can renovate his building, install a type 2 vinyl, completely coordinate the interior with a flexible and quality partitioning system that is totally demountable at a cost that is no more than half the present cost of a comparable system, and less than painted drywall.

“If he does not wish to upgrade his interior with vinyl, he can still save about 50 per cent just by using Richwall.

“This has to contribute to lower construction costs. It has to be beneficial to both the industry and the contractor who is a member of our ‘Price Rollback Program.’”