ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS:
The Market is There

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A
coustical ceiling installation is a
good idea for wall and ceiling con-
tractors.

Whether your company is a spe-
cial single service operation or of-
fers a whole range of construction
abilities, acoustical ceiling in-
stallation can be a profitable area of
diversification for you.

There are several good reasons
for expanding into the ceiling
scene. Perhaps most important is
the fact that the majority of jobs, 
whether new construction or reno-
vation, include the installation of a
new ceiling.

What does this mean to you spe-
cifically?

Well, first of all, when you have
the capability to install acoustical
ceilings, the number of jobs you
can bid or sell automatically in-
creases.

Secondly, because of the cyclical
nature of the construction busi-
ness, your company won’t be in
quite the “feast or famine” situa-
tion (particularly true of single ser-
vice operations) when you can
offer a capability that is so univer-
sally required.

Not Complicated

Frankly, acoustical ceiling instal-
lation is only slightly more compli-
cated than falling off a log. With the
new methods and materials now
available, plus the advances that
have been manufactured into ceil-
ing grid systems, you’ll find that
adding this service to your com-
pany’s roster can be quick and
simple.

In many cases, the ceiling grid
systems from major manufacturers
feature snap together components
and positive locking tabs that
eliminate the need for special tools.
In addition, companies which pro-
duce ceiling grid (no panels or tiles)
have systems that accommodate
virtually any acoustical panel made
in the world. And that gives your
company some real flexibility in
keeping costs in line, plus being
able to supply a wide variety of ceiling appearances.

**Integrated Ceilings**

An integrated ceiling system combines acoustical panels, ceiling grid, lighting, and air distribution which in some cases includes air boots and diffusers integral to the system.

While integrated acoustical ceilings are more complicated in concept than a simple ceiling installation job, there need be little additional physical work involved for your company.

Because most electrical and HVAC work is subcontracted, installation of the more sophisticated integrated ceilings largely involves more coordination than complication.

**Who Does What**

You can really simplify sub scheduling when you specify and use ceiling grid systems that are rigid before acoustical tiles or panels are put into place. Afterwards the electrical and HVAC work which has been previously roughed in can be completed at any time after the grid is up. That eliminates the hassle of split-second timing to a large extent.

What’s more, some integrated systems feature easy-to-install air boots and diffusers that slip onto the ceiling grid, plus flexible ductwork for even more timing and time-saving freedom.

Building owners and managers have long been involved in “noise ecology.” And what with the modular office partitions and the requirement of tenants for relative quiet in their working and business environments, acoustical ceilings offer a “sound solution” for today’s contractors.

Manufacturers of acoustical tiles and panels have done a tremendous job of developing attractive sound-absorbent materials. And if you’re using ceiling grid systems that accommodate a wide range of panels, you’ll have an incredible amount of flexibility in specifying and installing high quality tiles in a variety of finishes.

In addition, many companies that offer integrated ceiling systems have gone to great lengths to assure owners and contractors of quiet operation of HVAC diffusers and components (be sure to check sound ratings before you order).

**Where’s Profit**

You’re well aware that accurate estimating is the key to profitability in bidding and in sold construction. Renovation tends to be pretty much a sold market . . . you offer the building owner a range of services and products to meet his needs without knowing the final specifications.

Bidding is another matter entirely . . . if your bid is the lowest, chances are you’ve got the job. But in order to get in a low bid that will make you a profit, you’ve got to have your materials and labor costs well defined.

In renovation and in new construction, the “composite contractor” often has the leading edge. When you can offer a building owner floors, ceilings, walls . . . and perhaps decorating, you’re offering him a single source of responsibility, and fewer headaches.

When you’re bidding a job (usually new construction), if you’re offering the same wide range of services, you may be able to get the contract at a better price for the same “lower headache” reason. Chances are, you’ll also be able to bid even lower than a combination of individual companies that have their entire inventory and staff locked into a single service.

Contact several ceiling grid manufacturing companies, and companies that provide total integrated ceilings. Check prices for their various systems. Ask about installation procedures. Will the company provide field consultation and service for your more complicated jobs? Shop around until all the answers are right.

**Many Involved**

In an iaWCC/GDCI survey conducted recently results showed that over 50% of their members were doing acoustical ceiling installation . . . and that in 1974 (not a good year by anyone’s reckoning) members did more than $100,000,000 in acoustical ceiling business! Why not contact some of your fellow iaWCC/GDCI members and get their views?