The wall and ceiling contractor who gets the next bid is the one who can control his rising operating costs.

Contractors are rapidly learning that with laser control systems they are better able to utilize their personnel which is extremely costly today. Labor costs have more than doubled in the past decade.

It is interesting to note that acoustical and drywall contractors used to represent the largest single group of rotating laser purchasers. These contractors found that by utilizing a laser mounted either to a column or an extended tripod, the time that was required to lay string and chalk lines could be utilized in actually laying out the grid work.

Another benefit of the rotating laser beam is that it is immediately and continually available to multiple workers enhancing their production as much as one third. But the advantages don't stop there. The contractors found that having a constant reference level always available the quality of their work vastly improved.

At this point in time, perhaps lasers were considered highly discretionary. That was to change very soon. As more and more lasers were sold, the demand became greater. The rotator became an essential “tool of the trade” rather than discretionary until today an estimated 75 percent of acoustical and drywall contractors utilize a rotating laser system with automatic self-leveling.

On a typical 80,000 square foot acoustical job with a ceiling height of sixteen feet, it requires approximately 96 man days to complete a normal installation.

With the advent of the progressive thinking open-to-new ideas contractor, the rotating laser was introduced on the same size jobsite. Without a great deal of indoctrination for his workmen by the manufacturer or distributor, the contractor found the same job was completed in 71 man days a savings of 25 man days.

Back in those “good old days”, the average labor rate for an acoustical grid installer was about $7.50 per hour. Based on that extremely conservative figure, the acoustical

continued on next page
contractor realized a savings in his labor cost amounting to $60 each day.

Those were the “good old days”. You can be assured that the “good old days”, with reduced labor costs, are not going to return to the construction scene in our lifetime. Probably never. On this typical 80,000 square foot acoustical job, the farsighted contractor earned an unexpected profit of $1500.00.

Drywall installers have found that they too can increase their production as well as perform a far better overall job with the utilization of a rotating laser setup in a vertical plane of reference.

Where he has a series of studs to align, he merely measures his sixteen inch centers at both ends of his jobsite . . . . sets up his laser on his reference marks. With one man high and another low, they can keep helpers busy just handing the studs as the two work toward the laser. No need for string line or chalk marks. Productivity can be increased as much as 50 percent providing for a greater profit.

When considering an investment in laser equipment, the contractor has three principle areas of consideration. Investment cost reduction or savings, and job performance improvement. Almost without exception, contractors using laser equipment notice a remarkable reduction in labor requirement. In other words . . . . two men can do the work of three, so one can expect to reduce his labor costs by as much as a third.

A second noticeable improvement is realized in time saved. Both the total length of time required to finish a job, and the amount of time saved in eliminating the need to align with a sagging string line, chalk line, or water level. That time is used to increase production.

A third, but not so obvious benefit, is the improved accuracy and the reduction of human error. It is this elimination of error, reduction in labor costs and improved efficiency that increases a contractor’s profits.

Lasers have come a long way since 1969. They are now available from the manufacturer or his distributor and at a cost that makes laser ownership an almost must if the contractor is to effectively compete in today’s marketplace.

From mechanical leveling lasers to today’s more sophisticated self-leveling units that automatically shut off if they are knocked out of level . . . . restoring the laser beam only after the unit is level again to more sophisticated lasers with slope capability. There is a rotating laser for just about every need in today’s construction world.

Over the past several years, there have been in excess of a hundred construction laser manufacturers trying to serve the construction field needs. For all practical purposes, there are remaining today fewer than ten. Only the fittest survive, and they are producing exactly what the market demands.