Backup clip ‘clips’ dollars off costs

Drywallers are finding new competitive advantage in use of the patented Prest-On fastener by installers

Peter Drucker, renowned professor of the Harvard Business School, points out there are two questions every business person should periodically ask about business.

The first is: What is my business? The second is: What should it be?

Answering the first by writing a short paragraph about your business will prove very rewarding in helping you understand your goals and objectives for both the short and long runs.

Most successful wall and ceiling contractors would probably include in their second answer such terms as ‘innovative’, ‘progressive’, ‘profit minded’ and ‘quality conscious’.

If those words are, in fact, descriptive of a company’s outlook, then the company is most likely continually testing and evaluating different methods and products introduced to the industry each year.

The profit minded, quality conscious firm will usually embrace the good ideas, while disregarding the bad ones.

An example of an idea being accepted by many progressive wall and ceiling contractors is the drywall backup clip. These fasteners have been steadily gaining acceptance and are now permitted by model building codes (such as BOCA, SBCCI and ICBO) and by federal agencies throughout the United States and Canada.

The drywall backup clip has quickly found acceptance because it enables the savings of time, money and energy costs. Recently, the National Association of Home Builders Research Foundation of Rockville, Maryland cited advantages of using clip fasteners.

They found that framing material and labor is greatly reduced by eliminating non-structural lumber at corners and ceiling intersections.

They also determined that energy efficiency is improved because insulation can be placed behind partition tees and corner cavities without compression. This also allows a more continuous vapor barrier application on certain walls when using faced insulation.

The organization also found that floating joints are created with the clip system, which
reduces cracks in finished drywall corner joints.

In addition to continuous 90-degree angle metal strips, there are basically two types of metal drywall backup clips.

The first type is attached by the carpenter before drywall application. It is attached directly to the framing. The second type of clip is attached directly to the edge of the drywall and is installed as part of the drywall application.

According to the manufacturer of this clip system, known as the patented Prest-On Fastener, the drywall edge attachment offers a contractor an opportunity to expand his business and job income, since his crews do the installation of the clip system.

That clips will continue to gain in use is underscored by the realities of impending shortages in energy and timber supplies during the 1980s.

The homeowner of the 1980s will be more energy conscious than his predecessors, and he'll be seeking more value in his home purchases. Builders and architects will be forced to seek out cost reductions on a larger scale than was evidenced in the 70s. Roof truss construction is likely to be more widely used, and less backup lumber will lead to simplifying electrical, plumbing, sheet metal and insulation work.

Lumber manufacturers have already projected a shorter supply of lumber (see item, Page 30) during the 80s. Increased demand for new building and the likely increase in establishing new families and households will help further increase the lumber demand.

As a result of these two shortages -- energy and timber -- the backup clip seems well postured to enjoy increased use in the application of drywall.

SOME ADVANTAGES

Licenses to manufacture and distribute the patented Prest-On device have recently been granted to several manufacturers. The clip is different than the other major type of backup device, which is commonly referred to as the 'gyp clip'.

Prest-On's manufacturers say the product enters into the profit picture for contractors, because they can now include the backup in the construction bid.

In applications of 'gyp clips', the carpenter has historically drawn the money, although the responsibility for the finished wall system has generally fallen to the wall finisher.

With the board-applied clip system, problems with backup lumber can be overcome. The board-applied clip also has a competitive advantage, because 'gyp clip' applications require mid-high blocking in many model codes.

The Prest-On manufacturers project that contractors quoting...
the patented system will realize a per-board additional profit of a half-cent. They say the clip will also compensate for ceiling truss camber and a vertical corner will handle framing inaccuracies, which will improve the finished product.

The clip is also said to help the contractor meet energy-saving demands when insulated exterior corners and tees are used. Since the Prest-On system does not require the mid-high blocking, it is not necessary to cut blanket insulation during installation.

The manufacturer says the time frame for applying the clip has been proven to be effective. They point to contractors using the system and say job results indicate the use of the clip does not take any additional work-crew time. "A board fitted with the clip requires only half as much nailing or screwing -- thus compensating for the time for slipping the clip on the drywall edge before attachment," notes Prest-On President David J. Conville. "The system has a very modest learning curve. Ordinarily, the crew becomes very accomplished in using the clips in a single day or less."

Conville backs up his backup with a new brace of testing results. He says the clip is the only metal type of backup with U.S. approval for one-hour fire rated assemblies. It has also passed the ASTM-E-72 shear wall test and is approved for earthquake zones.

He has recently awarded manufacturing contracts to the Anderson Metal Products Corporation (AMPCOR) in Taylorsville, Mississippi, The Prest-On Company of Libertyville, Illinois, Stern Industries of Minneapolis Minnesota, and Prest-On Canada Limited in Burnaby, British Columbia.

Is he confident the use of the fastening device will grow? Says Conville: "Successful wall and ceiling contractors -- particularly those who identify themselves as innovative, progressive, profit minded and quality conscious, are already identifying the clip as one of their mainstay ideas for the 1980s."

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