The intent of this article is to generate thoughtful response. The author is “polling” the industry which can be identified as (A) owner/architect, (B) drywall contractor, (C) painting/decorating contractor and (D) gypsum board manufacturer.

The basic question is—Where does “finishing” stop and “preparation” begin when “gloss” types of decoration are to be used?

The points of view of the four interested parties are obvious. (A) wants an unblemished, monolithic surface of absolutely uniform color and texture. (B) wants to leave the surface in an “acceptable” condition, meaning the butt joint and fastener treatment will not subsequently “telegraph” through the final decoration. (C) wants to receive a surface requiring the least amount of preparation for decoration. (D) does not want to increase the cost of his product.

This condition can be greatly alleviated by the application of a “skim coat” over the entire board surface, using the same finishing compound as used for the joint treatments.

The problems occur not with the procedure, but over who will pay for the additional labor and material.

This is true because all current industry specifications (standards) do not use the term “shall” to require said skim coat. Placement in the appendix and use of the term “should” does not make it a mandatory requirement.

In a competitive market, unless this requirement appears as a specified item, the owner will not likely receive this additional treatment.

None of the parties (A), (B), (C), (D) want to increase their costs. The drywall contractor generally does not accept this additional step as a responsibility. The painter doesn’t consider this as painting. The manufacturer hopes someone else will accept the responsibility.

The architect/owner could resolve this problem by placing the skim coat requirement in one or the other specifications—if the owner is willing to absorb its cost.

Where do you sit?