With The Right Wall System Comes Flexibility

A Contractor Really Can Pick and Choose Among Manufacturers in Putting Together a Movable Wall System That Will Be Attractive and Economical

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Demountable ceiling high partitions are used in tenant buildings and owner occupied office buildings where space division and privacy are required or desired. Complete demountable wall systems are offered by many companies and the concepts are many and varied.

The most widely used methods of erecting demountable partitions utilize vinyl faced gypsumboard that is offered by many companies in a wide variety of finishes and colors. I will address all references to vinyl faced gypsumboard panel type demountable partitions, as I feel that this mode is dominant.

Clips that engage the edge of the gypsumboard and are screw fastened to standard drywall studs are widely used as are kerfed gypsumboard engaging flanges of “I” studs. “I” studs are also used with clips that engage the edge of gypsumboard and the stud flanges for retention. Another system employs the use of lateral rails fastened to studs with clips on back of gypsumboard being hung on the laterals. The above concepts can be used with prefinished steel or aluminum metal trims.

Demountable laminated walls are being promoted wherein a gypsumboard base is screwed to conventional drywall studs with untaped joints and then overlayed with acoustical panels that are edge clip attached to the drywall. Excellent acoustical absorption is obtained with this wall variation along with very good attenuation. The construction is demountable and can be relocated.

In a typical demountable partition, sound attenuation ranging from 35 db. to 50 db. can be obtained with cavity deadener fill or by varying the wall thickness or gypsumboard thickness.

There are many sources of demountable partition wall systems. The names of several of them follow, although this is not a complete list; Glen O’Brien Co., United States Gypsum Co., Cinch wall, Domtar Gypsum Co., R A C O, Donn Products Co., and Rollform Incorporated.

Faster Method . . .

The great desirability of walls like these is that they can be taken down and reerected with a minimum of dust and component loss. Also, these demountable partition constructions offer a faster method of construction, resulting in earlier occupancy. Tie saved means money saved.

The walls are easily maintained as most of the vinyl finishes available can be cleaned more easily than painted walls. Surface damage can be repaired more easily too, and spare panels stored at the time of installation can be used as replacements where damage is great.

(About the Author: A Michigan native with a BS degree in civil engineering from Wayne State University, George Adams has spent most of his career in interior construction as a contractor and then a manufacturer. Earlier, he had been with Johns-Manville then Albert Kahn, Architects. During World War II, he was an airframe stress analyst. As president of Rollform Incorporated in Ann Arbor, MI, he has utilized his contractor experience to develop systems that address contractor problems directly. A widower, he is the father of two sons and a daughter. There are two grandchildren.)
“The great desirability of walls like these is that they can be taken down and re-erected with a minimum of dust and component loss.”

Sidelighted doors, windows, and door height window walls are easily incorporated into demountable walls, as these components in prefinished steel or aluminum are demountable also and can be reinstalled at another location. Door frames can be prefinished steel or aluminum with the flanges being held by screws passing through the gypsumboard into the door buck studs. The screw heads are then covered with snap-on casings.

Fire ratings of 1 Hour are obtainable with all demountable walls that I am familiar with. In most cases, the ratings are easily incorporated into the demountable wall construction.

Demountable walls can be erected more quickly because the time consuming taping and painting operations used in fixed drywall construction are eliminated. Construction is just neater when these phases are eliminated.

Demountable walls are also cost competitive with taped and painted drywall units that are fixed and permanent. Therefore, they cannot be depreciated nearly as rapidly as demountable walls, i.e. your customer saves on initial cost plus depreciation benefits.

Offer Sales Chance . . .

Demountable partitions offer a great continuing sales opportunity. On tenant type buildings, many managements will store component material for future use in vacant areas and then negotiate a labor only stand-by contract on wall placement as new tenants are secured.

About the only objection to demountable gypsumboard walls is the fine pencil line joint that occurs every panel width. This is really a small negative compared to the great number of pluses for this demountable partition wall type.

If you have been engaged solely in drywall construction, you should consider bidding a demountable wall job or changing one of your fixed drywall contracts to this growing method of erecting walls and add this versatile wall type to your company’s capability.

With the rising costs of construction, the pressures of time and deadlines, and the substantial increase in office remodeling the cost-effective, efficient demountable wall partition system appears to be the interior design system of the future.