Since the inception of drywall in the late 1940s and 1950s professional tradesmen have demanded quality drywall tools that help them perform their jobs quickly, professionally and with ease. This demand for quality/durable drywall tools remains even stronger today in our competitive marketplace.

Taping knives, mud pans, drywall tapers, trowels, mixers, comer tools, sanders and texture hoppers are just a few of the items one can find in a professional drywall tradesman’s tool bag.

Drywall tools are made of a variety of materials and different configurations. Bending, welding and grinding are just some of the processes one sees in a factory that manufactures drywall tools.

According to Ron Meyer, president of Kraft Tool Co., in Kansas City, MO. “Most people, as they visit manufacturing facilities of drywall tool manufacturers, are always surprised at the amount of non-automated production processes. The attention to small details in certain key manufacturing processes is absolutely necessary to provide the professional tradesman the type of products he demands in today’s competitive market.”

As with any construction hand tool, drywall tools must withstand a lot of hard use. Good manufacturers try to balance this durability with product features that make them easier for the tradesman to use.

Taping knives, for instance, can be made of blue steel or stainless steel. Each blade, when put into a mounting, must retain the correct amount of flexibility to properly assist in finishing a joint. Handles come in a variety of lengths, styles and materials to fit the various jobs and personal preferences of the end users.

Some drywall contractors prefer plastic-handled taping knives, while others prefer the traditional look and feel of wood. Both types of handles are either riveted or bolted to the mounting and must not loosen. The texture and shape of the knife handle also are important features of the taping knife.

A mud pan is also a key tool for the drywall contractor. As with taping knives, mud pans used for holding drywall mud come in a variety of sizes and materials. Each style and size has its specific function to help the contractor perform the finishing or texturing of drywall. Mud pans are mainly produced of stainless steel and plastic. The manufacturing process of the stainless steel mud pan must ensure a sharp edge for the user to wipe his knife and fit comfortable in the user’s hand to minimize fatigue. Great care is taken with the welds to make sure they are strong, rust resistant and smooth to the touch. Plastic mud pans are equally as popular and are lighter in weight.

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Other drywall tools, such as the inside or outside comer finishing tool, are made in such a way as to retain their proper flexibility and enable the users to quickly and properly finish corners.

While there are a lot of automated taping tools used today, hand taping is still a popular way of finishing drywall. One tool that helps speed up the hand-taping process for the contractor is the drywall taper.

Drywall tapers are made of aluminum and usually riveted and welded together. They are made in such a way as to allow the user easy access to the material and tape compartments that are filled or replaced regularly. Small, lightweight drywall tapers are preferred over large, bulky styles and are available for the right-handed or left-handed taper.

One question manufacturers and distributors ask themselves is, What makes a drywall contractor chose one tool or style of tool over another? All drywall contractors have an opinion about what style of drywall tools works best for them. The feel of the handle, the balance of the tool, and space allowed for the hand in that tight spot—these are all qualities contractors take into consideration when choosing tools. With all these qualities, considered above all else at the end of the day . . . the contractor must have a tool that is of high quality, durable, and allows him to do his job professionally, comfortable and at a reasonable cost.

About the Author
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