Some design elements are so obvious that it’s easy to look past them, and in doing so you can miss out on the power of their function and form. Need an example? . . .

. . . Look up. Have you tapped the potential of your ceilings as a practical and aesthetic design component? Ceilings, now more than merely a lid on a box, give us a whole new way to define our spaces.

For hundreds of years, boxes have been the standard shape for our rooms, and flat has been the shape of our ceilings. Current marketplace trends led USG Interiors, Chicago, to break out of the flat box, or at least change its parameters.

The ceiling systems 36 grid segments can be combined into an infinite number of designs. The infill panels are available in perforated metal, unperforated metal, woven wire mesh and translucent fiberglass-reinforced plastic. An optional lay-in, fiberglass (poly-bagged) batt provides for localized acoustic control. The curves of the system can be used to draw attention to a small area of a larger room, to create a pathway, to accent or de-emphasize certain aspects of a space, to change the lighting dynamics or simply to introduce a creative element.

Denise Miller-Clark, museum director, Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, used CURVATURA ceilings to achieve a very specific effect. “We were trying to create an environment for the Target Market! Exhibit, similar to a polished, sophisticated advertising agency—a very creative-looking room. CURVATURA was the perfect product. It’s provocative looking and sensuous. We liked the sinuous, dramatic effect, the wide range of colors and finishes, and the fact that the panels could be combined with special lighting.”

Others have used the system to draw attention to a challeng-
New Ceilings Bridge the Gaps from Design to Application
ing area. Chicago’s Merchandise Mart is big and busy. It houses exhibits of more that 70 franchisers, all vying for the interest of potential franchisees in a continuous flow of foot traffic.

Marla L. Fisher, vice president, director of design, Franchising & Licensing World Center, explains: “We wanted to give the reception area and theater, which are visible from the outside mall area, a special look to attract attention . . . . People see a side view of the curves from the mall area and are very intrigued. It definitely draws people in.”

USG had contractors in mind along with designers in creating the CURVATURA system. “We specifically engineered application and transitional details into the product,” explained Greg Ahren, specialty product manager, USG Interiors. “Because it is predicated on standard T-grid and 2-foot by 2-foot panels, the system virtually assures success.”

Product Design Manager David Stover, USG Interiors, Chicago, adds that hanging a curved, wavy or angled ceiling is actually easier than hanging a flat ceiling. “There is no need to make it level, and the hold-down tabs entrap the panels, conforming them to the curve. The product design actually does the work for you.”

In addition to the grid and panels, the kit includes tools to aid in the design stage. A design selector provides 100 standard traceable wave designs. A template allows creation of unique ceiling designs by drawing and connecting discrete curved main tee segments.

“The three-dimensional nature of these ceilings convey movement, grace and energy,” Stover said. “The infinite combinations of shape, texture and lighting can change the way we look at ceilings, and even the way we look at the space under and around them.”