In today’s frantic business climate, the industry is always in pursuit of finding new ways to exceed limits and expectations established in the past. With the heightened emphasis on technological improvement and advancement, new ideas and innovations have seamlessly permeated the market place.

As buildings grow taller and jobs become more extensive, many contractors turn to these new products to help move with the times. However, keeping up with all of the new products out there can become a very time-consuming task. Luckily, some of the work has been done for you. Below are some of the newest items to hit the market. These products are varied, consumer-friendly and aimed at making your job as easy as possible.

Spectram Precision’s new Laserplane® 600, 800 and 500C electronic leveling systems allow even an inexperienced operator to rough level a unit in seconds. The new Laserplane 600 and 800 transmitters provide for four levels of precision to fit any need and also offer several features designed to save time, labor and money for the general contractor.

“This new family of lasers is designed to meet the needs of any size contractor,” says Mike Yowler, product manager of Spectra Precision.

Features of the new Laserplanes include Spectra Precision’s SafeGuard Warning System, that advises the operator when the unit should be checked for calibration. Both the 600 and 800 are also equipped with AccuGuard, an accurate and efficient temperature-stable compensator.

To make general contractor construction work even easier, the new Laserplanes have a highly visible beam to provide easy reference. The 600 and 800 also feature the exclusive out-of-level communication function, designed to alert the operator when the unit has been moved or requires re-leveling.
“With systems offering advanced features to lasers that meet basic leveling needs, the Laserplane family can work within any budgetary or project consideration,” Yowler says.

Numerous studies of homes damaged by water settling behind exterior wall cladding point to windows as an area where significant damage occurs.

Sto Corp. has developed Sto Sill Sentry™, a polyvinyl chloride flashing that is designed and engineered to channel water from leaking windows to the exterior. If not diverted, the water might otherwise enter the wall cavity and cause serious damage.

The product can be used in retrofit as well as new construction. For retrofit, installation of the product does not require removal or replacement of windows.

“We believe Sto Sill Sentry will prove to be a very effective weapon in the construction industry’s age-old battle with water intrusion,” says Tom Remmele, manager of technical services for Sto Corp.

Although principally designed for windows, the product also can be used to control leakage beneath other wall penetration areas such as doors and air-conditioning units. It also integrates well with most exterior claddings, including EIFS, conventional stucco, wood and vinyl siding.

To help interior contractors see the laser beam better, Topcon’s RL-VH2G is the first and only interior laser to use a high-visibility green laser beam.

Innovated in 1996, the green laser beam provides four times the visibility of traditional red-beam lasers. The enhanced visibility makes it possible for the mechanic to see the laser beam over longer distances and in bright sunlight.

“In areas where there might be a lot of windows or excess light, it is difficult to see the red laser beam,” says Dennis House, advertising manager for Topcon. “However, the highly visible green laser eliminates the problem, even in varying light and environmental conditions.”

In addition to the green beam, the RL-VH2G also features the first auto-focusing beam. Utilizing patented scanning technology, the laser beam automatically focuses to a pencil-lead thin line as it strikes the target. For sloped ceilings, the beam will automatically match a user defined point eliminating time-consuming manual adjustment and guesswork.

Other features include a 90 degree plumb beam, automatic beam alignment in vertical operation and user-control scanning for “drawing” a laser control line on any surface.

“The new laser gives contractors the edge—making their jobs easier,” House says. “It’s a real advantage on the jobsite.”

Parex I-C Gold®, flexible PM exterior insulation and finish system, offers impact and puncture-resistance performance where high traffic and extreme wear prevail.

“The I-C Gold allows anyone to have increased design flexibility,” says Linda Brantley, marketing coordinator for Parex. “It combines the PB system and the PM system, a hard and soft coat, so that it’s like getting the best of both technologies in one product.”

I-C Gold is now available with a drainage option. By utilizing the Owens Corning Formular Sanded
Extruded Polystyrene Insulation, I-C Gold offers strength and energy performance. A secondary moisture barrier can be applied to the sheathing. It includes a self-gauging base coat which warrants a minimum thickness of one-eighth of an inch, providing two to four times the impact strength of most EIF systems. It does not, however, require control joints like traditional PM systems and allows complete design flexibility.

Parex also offers the Water Master® Commercial, designed for commercial buildings including non-combustible and multistory construction. It offers built-in drainage, durability and code compliance from a single-source exterior insulation and finish system.

The system is composed of a specially developed liquid membrane that protects the sheathing from moisture infiltration. It is designed to remove any incidental water that might find its way behind the insulation.

La Habra Zygoplast™ Supa-Finish 1.5 is a resin-based product that is applied to interior gypsum wallboard surfaces and provides a smooth, blemish-free surface prior to painting. It equalizes the porosity differences between the wallboard, and the joint compound can be used to achieve a Level 5 paint grade surface.

Zygoplast virtually eliminates the most common drywall problems, including photographing, joint banding and telegraphing. These problems are caused by variations in texture, suction and porosity between the joint compound and the face paper. This is a common cause of color and gloss variations and unsightly walls.

It is also easier to sand than conventional pre-finish compounds and gives a smooth blemish free wall. Other advantages include a having short drying time, spray or roller application and is compatible with other finishes.

The Stucco Patch Gun™ from Homax is designed for quick and easy patch and repair of exterior aggregate surfaces. The gun is an innovative repair system that offers the ease and control of using a caulk gun with the convenience of using pre-mixed Stucco Patch cartridges to make professional spray repairs.

“This unique product gives the contractor better results in less time,” says Randy Hanson, director of marketing for Homax. “There is no mixing involved because all you have to do is drop in the portable cartridges and begin working.”

It is designed for repairing cracks, efflorescence, scaling and other damage. It is also ideal for finishing around newly installed doors and doors windows. It features a professional aircraft aluminum spray head that delivers a controlled spray, allowing the user to seamlessly blend and feather the patch material into the original surface.

The Stucco Patch Gun operates off a 3/4 hp or larger air compressor or HVLP air source. Homax’s proprietary quick disconnect fitting permits both types of air sources to connect to the gun without requiring the use of tools.

“There are currently no other products on the market that are similar to this one,” says Sharon Martin of ET&F Fastening Systems, Inc. “Panelfast gives contractors the convenience and speed that they have been looking for.”

The Panelfast™ pneumatic fastening system is designed to attach exterior gypsum sheathing, proprietary gypsum sheathing products and various siding panels to steel framing 14 gauge and lighter. The Panelfast coiled fastener with a large 5/16-inch diameter head provides excellent wind load test results.

The Aericote 1000 fastener coating produces over 1,000 hours of salt spray corrosion resistance. The Panelfast Model 510
pneumatic tool provides accurate placement of the fastener in gyp sheathing and other panel products that require precise fastener depth control.

The **MEC 3068ES** scissor lift features a single-beam elevating system, developed by Mayville Engineering Company, that is designed for operation on hard slab surfaces in indoor and outdoor construction, maintenance and other applications.

“The single-beam offers the operator more stability and security,” says Rich Gronquist, senior vice president of Zigman Joseph Stephenson, the press agency for Mayville. “It offers superior rigidity and gives greater comfort when compared to the traditional double-beam scissors.”

This scissor lift is a battery-powered machine, which is 68 inches wide for easy movement through double doorways, has a large platform that rises up to 30 feet above ground level. With a total lift capacity of 1,000 pounds, including 300 on its 48-inch standard platform extension, the unit can accommodate three workers, their tools and equipment.

It also offers an automatic pothole protection systems and dual front-wheel drive for maneuverability. Other fea-
tures include 25 percent gradeability, a 60 inch by 110 inch non-skid steel platform, a sheet-loading entrance to accommodate standard 4-foot-wide panels, a high torque power package and a one-hand, multistep joystick control box.

Most modern buildings have walls made of gypsum board, which is less expensive than its plaster counterparts. Most of the cost is related to the fact that plaster application takes a long time and must be done by specially trained workers. However, the Mechanical Plasterer from Invention Sub- mission Corporation allows any general handyman to apply plaster in a fraction of the usual time.

The Mechanical Plasterer reduces the cost of plastering by making the job quick and easy for almost anyone to do. This machine will allow a wider range of buildings to have high quality, attractive plaster walls. It can also produce the decorative textures that previously had to be created by hand.

Because access panels are never as simple as they should be, Fluidmaster has created access panels that are streamlined in every way. The streamlined effect makes them easy to use, install and conceal. The panel’s spring-loaded mechanism permits frameless mounting from the outside.

The panels are easy to use. Simply measure, cut and pop them in. No lumber, adhesives or measuring tape required. They’re ideal for fast or periodic access to household plumbing, wiring and security systems; in-wall cables for computers, stereos and televisions; pipes and valves behind spas and saunas.

“The frameless access panels are a real time...
and money saver,” says Colleen Cotton, president of Cotton & Kurz. “You just snap them in and snap them out easily. The time usually devoted to building a frame can be put toward other tasks instead.”

A choice of two sizes, 8 inches by 8 inches (Model AR-0808) or 14 inches by 14 inches (Model AR-1414) covers almost any application in walls or ceilings up to three-quarters of an inch thick.

“We had an overwhelming demand from our customers to add additional items to our already extensive collection of mouldings,” says Joey Shimm, director of marketing and advertising for Outwater Plastic/Industries. In response to those requests, Outwater Plastics has added Cabinet and Counter Mouldings with its new line of Half-Round Hardwood Rope Moulding to their catalog. Stocked in maple, oak and poplar in 8-foot lengths, Rope Moulding can be stained and painted. It is ideal for use as tack on moulding for borders on cabinets as well as trim on furniture.

“From an aesthetic standpoint, we wanted to offer our customers more varieties and choices to pick from,” Shimm says. “The moulding can be used in conjunction with other models so that no one is limited by any kind of restrictions. It’s very versatile.”

The rope moulding is available in additional wood species and sizes, and custom requests can be ordered.

Now you have a taste of the some of the newest items that have been introduced to the wall and ceiling industry. With countless innovations hitting the market each year, consumers have many options to choose from—catering to every customer’s need. Although the products may vary in function, price and availability their main goal remains the same—to make your job as easy as possible. So, what are you waiting for?