

Who Will Change the Future: If Not You, Then Who?

By Ron Ambrosius, Chairman, Metal Building Manufacturers Association

MBMA develops strategic outreach program

A couple of months ago, I shared with you some of the findings from a user survey commissioned by the Metal Building Manufacturers Association (MBMA) (see “Let’s Change Some Architectural Paradigms Together,” September issue).

We received important feedback from nearly 1,000 participants. They included architects, contractors, engineers, specifiers and developers—and all had some experience with metal building solutions.

The survey showed that education is a necessity if we are to increase the metal building market share in the days ahead. Specifically, we need to help designers, specifiers and owners recognize the potential and value of a metal building in terms of cost, quality, design flexibility, safety and durability, energy efficiency and life cycle. The respondents to the survey even gave us recommendations for how to implement such education. They specifically cited educational programming through literature, seminars and educational programs, and they suggested that we focus primarily on design flexibility and appearance.

In August, the MBMA Board of Directors met to talk about next steps. Now that we have the research to help us better understand the decision makers who ultimately decide whether to use metal buildings, we needed an action plan to address the concerns expressed through the survey.

The August Board of Directors meeting culminated with the decision to develop a strategic outreach plan. Key elements of that plan include:

- MBMA architecture committee
- Direct CEU/LU courses for architects
- Lunch & learn programs
- Promote benefits of metal roofs
- Architecture students design competition

Let me share a little about each of these initiatives.

MBMA Architecture Committee

MBMA has not specifically studied how to best reach out to architects. By developing a full committee, dedicated to influencing the architecture community,

we will necessarily develop a program that will engage with them and involve them. The committee is being formed now and will begin meeting in 2020. Stay tuned for details and volunteer to participate or send us your suggestions.

Direct CEU/LU Courses for Architects

MBMA began developing continuing education courses for architects in 2003; but it’s only been in the past three years that we’ve committed the resources to get serious about sharing these programs with a broader audience. The course we developed in 2018, “Sustainable Metal Buildings,” was a home run on many levels. It was recognized by *Architectural Record* magazine for being the fastest-moving CEU course of 2018.

“Sustainable Metal Buildings” introduces readers to the fundamentals of metal buildings and the principles of green building design. It also highlights the sustainable aspects of metal buildings and compares them with other building types. It went live in December 2018 and received more test takers in its first month than any other continuing education course launched last year. We are currently working on a new course, which will be introduced in 2020. It will focus on issues that appeal to architects, such as: custom engineering; a metal building as a blank palette for an architect’s imagination to explore; creative ways to achieve the required form and function; energy efficiency; and proven sustainable construction.

Lunch & Learn Programs

We recently released a new video, “Metal Building Systems 101,” now available on our YouTube channel. This 22-minute video is a comprehensive overview of metal building systems. We’re following up with a PowerPoint presentation and script that can be used by anyone in the industry to speak to local groups, industry tradeshow, students and more. The presentation materials will be available before year-end. Next year, we hope to have a calendar of events where this presentation will be pushed out nationwide to the architectural


community and beyond.

Promote Benefits of Metal Roofs

One way to lead architects to explore the value of metal buildings is to bring them in through the roof. Metal roofing has such great architectural appeal in terms of design and color and sustainable attributes. We recently developed a case study on metal roofing and solar applications available for free download on the MBMA website. We’ll be developing more roofing materials in 2020 and sharing them with broader architectural audiences.

Architecture Students Design Competition

We are particularly excited to announce that the MBMA board approved the creation of an architecture student design competition. This will draw great attention to the industry while educating students and their professors about the creative potential of metal building alternatives. If we are to change hearts and minds, we need to be focusing on the up and coming architects who will be the decision-making project managers and studio directors of tomorrow.

We are also reaching out to companies like yours and asking that you join in the effort. It may mean speaking to university students or AIA chapters; it may mean attending trade shows or sponsoring an educational luncheon. Your involvement can make a difference. Opinions are so often changed one person at a time. How will you get involved? Contact MBMA’s general manager, Tony Bouquot at www.mbma@mbma.com to learn more. Come be a part of the solution. Let’s make market share growth a priority for us all. As we know, a rising tide lifts all boats; so, let’s raise that tide together to make a difference in the future for us all. 



Ron Ambrosius is chairman of the Metal Building Manufacturers Association. More information about the association is available at www.mbma.com.