

# Let's Change Some Architectural Paradigms Together

By Ron Ambrosius, chairman, Metal Building Manufacturers Association (MBMA)



## A new survey reveals architect's perceptions about our industry

**The metal building industry needs to grow. Your company is probably doing all it can to promote your products or services to help build your market share, and that translates to helping the industry grow.**

But there's more your company can do. On a broad scale, we need you and your people to help us address the issues that came to the fore when we recently conducted a broad national survey of metal building developers and those who influence their building decisions.

We surveyed almost 1,000 people who generously gave us excellent feedback. They included architects, contractors, engineers, specifiers and developers. Below, are some of the things they said.

### Can We Captivate Architects?

One of the most significant findings in the survey relates to the attitudes expressed by architects. While each of the audiences we surveyed influence the materials used in construction projects, the architects surveyed most often perceived themselves as the lead influencers. Here are some of the important perceptions they expressed:

- Many architects do not consider metal building solutions for offices, retail or institutional buildings. In fact, they are seven times less likely to select metal buildings for institutional projects, six times less likely for office complexes and five times less likely for retail.
- Architects especially prefer a built-up/membrane roof over metal for offices, institutional projects and retail. Yet, more than half of the architects surveyed are unaware that another roof design is even possible.
- Many architects rate metal buildings low in terms of appearance and design flexibility, but also in terms of structural issues such as durability,

energy efficiency and energy code compliance, weathertightness, resistance to weather events and fire resistance. The survey indicated that these structural issues play a greater role than appearance in the architects' perception of metal buildings.

- Notably, speed of construction is not a strong benefit for most of the architects surveyed and, for some, the reduced construction time signaled lower quality.

### Get Involved ... Get Active

To change the perception of architects, we need to work together. Here are some of the ways that your firm can be a part of the solution.

We encourage you to meet with architects and specifically address the concerns they've expressed above. The Metal Building Manufacturers Association (MBMA) has printable online resources to help you, such as case studies on roofing, vehicle dealerships, breweries and distilleries. Each of these brochures is extensive and provides beautiful photographs of metal buildings. We also have many video resources. In fact, we have over 30 products on our YouTube channel (MBMAMedia) that you are welcome to use. Here are some that you could show to architects, individually or in groups:

- How Metal Buildings Compete in Today's Market Part 1-Design & Construction
- How Metal Buildings Compete in Today's Market Part 2-Accelerated Construction
- How Metal Buildings Compete in Today's Market Part 3-Benefits of MBS
- What Do You Know About Metal Building Systems?
- Sustainable Benefits of Metal Building Systems
- Award-Winning Metal Buildings
- Get More with Metal: Recreation & Fitness Buildings
- MBMA Interview with Professor Marci Uihlein,

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign School of Architecture


- How It's Made: Metal Building Innovations Are Revolutionizing Low-Rise Commercial Construction

In addition, our YouTube channel has technical webinars that dispel many of the perceptions that the survey respondents expressed. You might like to use one as a teaching tool at an architectural conference or as a lunch-and-learn in an architecture studio.

### Get Credit!

MBMA also produced several learning unit courses. Our most recent one, "Sustainable Metal Buildings," received more test takers in the first month it went live than any other course that was launched last year through Architectural Records' online education center. To date, there have been nearly 2,000 course takers. Please encourage any architect you know to take advantage of the class. It's not only educational, but it also provides them with credit toward their AIA continuing education requirements.

Tell us what you're doing to help architects have a positive and enlightened view of the metal building industry. Send your best practices to MBMA's general manager, Tony Bouquot at [mbma@mbma.com](mailto:mbma@mbma.com). And if you'd like access to other marketing and teaching tools or if you'd like to help MBMA as we develop strategic initiatives based on the survey findings, Bouquot is your resource as well.

Let's work together to make this industry better and brighter than ever! 



**Ron Ambrosius** is chairman of the Metal Building Manufacturers Association. More information about the association is available at [www.mbma.com](http://www.mbma.com).