

Training Crisis in the Plastering Industry

A National Study: Training Challenges for 21st Century Plastering Contractors (Part 2 of 3)

by Joseph A. Scarcella, Ph.D.

This is the second article in a series of three that examines the current need for a comprehensive approach to training in the plastering industry. The information is excerpted from Mr. Scarcella's doctoral dissertation, entitled "Competencies Identified as Important for Plastering Contractors—A Rotational Delphi."

Topics presented in this study were based on the assumption that some present day plastering contractors are operating their businesses without the required skills to perform quality workmanship. This has had a tremendous effect on today's plastering industry and its relationship with homeowners, other contractors, developers, architects, and others. If this assumption is correct, that contractor trade knowledge is limited, then upgrading plastering contractor skills is of paramount importance.

In light of this, skill profiles were developed in optimism that curricula would be established to assist plastering contractors and training needs for tomorrow. Once again, these skill profiles were developed and validated during a two year research process as a basis for establishing curricula in the



establishing future training needs for the trades professional membership. Therefore, the following skills (managerial and technical) have been identified as important for 21st century plastering contractors.

Managerial Skills

By the conclusion of the study, managerial skills were found to be intensely significant skills for plastering contractors. Following is a complete listing of managerial skills that were identified as important.

Some present day plastering contractors are operating their businesses without the required skills to perform quality workmanship.

plastering industry by national authorities associated with the plastering trade. It is hoped union and nonunion authorities value these findings and use them as a benchmark for curriculum development when

1. Estimate the number and type of workers needed for specified jobs.
2. Estimate job costs and profit margins.
3. Successfully respond to

- customer complaints.
4. Read and interpret blueprints and job specifications.
5. Safety regulations specified by the Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA).
6. Federal and state labor laws and contracts.
7. The contracting laws and regulations pertaining to government and private sector contracting (i.e., commercial, residential).
8. The workman's compensation laws.
9. The mechanics' lien laws.
10. Insurance and bonding practices.
11. Accepted employee evaluation and discharge procedures.
12. Basic employee supervision record-keeping procedures (i.e., employee attendance, work records, training records, etc.).
13. The risks of sole proprietorship (i.e., running and operating a business, capital investment, etc.).
14. Determine production capabilities of each employee.
15. Perform basic mathematical calculations (i.e., addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, etc.).
16. Explain and discuss job production problems and concerns with management and staff.
17. Read and interpret technical reports and instructions related to job contract activities and procedures (i.e., product application specifications, safety standards, etc.).
18. Interpret monthly profit and loss statements.
19. General contracting practices and procedures (i.e., lifting,

- equipment guarding, eye protection, etc.).
20. Establishing positive working relationships with management and employees.
21. Following through on job-site construction and contracting responsibilities.
22. Labor movement, collective bargaining and government regulations.
23. Maintain business financial and employee records.
24. Working and cooperating with other job-site contractors.
25. Write general correspondence and proposals related to job contract activities.
26. The theories, policies and practices governing employer and employee relations.
27. Legal issues related to product quality and contractor performance.
28. Accounting practices (i.e., preparing customer billing statements, sales records, etc.).
29. How to work with material suppliers, vendors, equipment suppliers, customers, etc.

It is hoped union and nonunion authorities value these findings and use them as a benchmark for curriculum development

30. The national, regional and local building codes.
31. Business operating practices, policies and procedures for union and non-union contracting.
32. Basic marketing and sales strategies (i.e., forecasting market needs).
33. Use calculators, computers and other office equipment.
34. Reference industry handbooks, catalogs, guidebooks and other commercial information concerning effective contracting practices and operations.
35. Understand and maintain appropriate payroll procedures.
36. Conduct on-the-job training.
37. Market their services and generate new business.
38. Plan, direct, control and schedule production tasks.
39. Motivate employees and increase their productivity.
40. Determine what tools, materials and equipment are appropriate for given job procedures.
41. Assisting individuals in developing their potential through training and instruction.

This profile of managerial skills depict plastering contractors as business persons requiring an understanding of (a) content related to business practices (i.e., finance, marketing, accounting, estimating, etc.), (b) management and employee relations (i.e., planning, directing, and scheduling production tasks, conducting employee evaluation and discharge procedures, maintaining employee records, etc.), (c) construction law (i.e., knowledge of the mechanics of lien laws, insurance and bonding practices, federal and state labor laws and regulations, etc.), safety (i.e., safety regulations, insuring safety of job-site equipment, safe procedures, etc.), and basic academic skills (i.e., performing basic mathematical calculations, reading blueprints, writing correspondence, etc.).

The Faster, Easier Alternative To Cornerbead!

PRE-TAPED DRYWALL TRIM

Outside Corner
Bullnose
Inside Corner
1/4\"

EASY to INSTALL!

FAST!

No NAILS! No Screws!

Resists CRACKING!

Uses Less Joint Compound!

Problem-Free Installation!
No Stripped Screws or Bent Nails to Deal With!

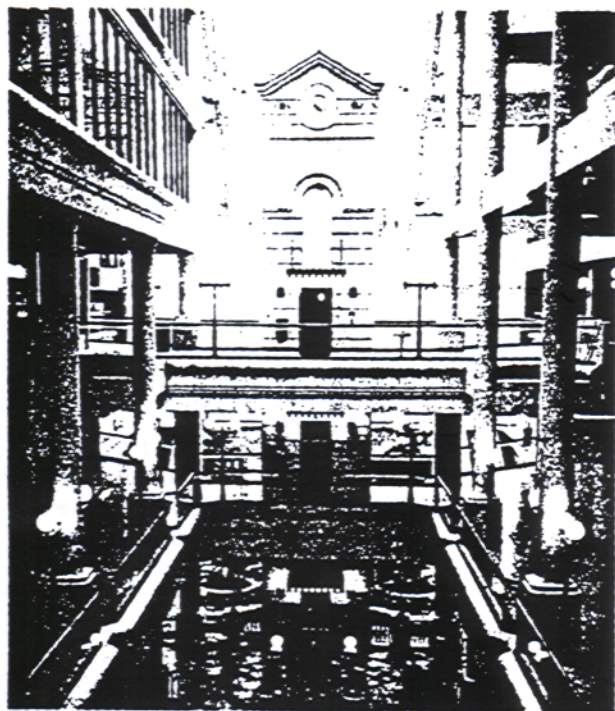
- Offered in 5 of the most common trim styles
- Manufactured from rust resistant steel with quality drywall paper glued to trim
- Reduces labor costs
- No nails, screws, or crimping required
- No unsightly nail pops, edge cracking, and chipping
- Superior adhesion with drywall joint compound
- No metal surfaces to be painted, only paper

Complete information on Chicago Metallic's Drywall Product line & Pre-Taped Trims are available.

Sample & Literature Hotline:
1-800-323-7164 ext. 4580
Fax your request to
1-800-222-3744.



Chicago Metallic®



Imagine That

With distinctive shapes from Plastrglas, the designs you imagine can become real! Whether you design columns, domes, coffered vaults, light shelves or whatever you imagine, Plastrglas can deliver.

Plastrglas durability is second to none, particularly in high traffic areas. Spray formulated gypsum matrix and multidirectional chopped strand fiber encasement insures optimum impact strength. Our manufacturing techniques maintain consistent fiber to matrix ratio to fit your specifications.

Plastrglas can custom create your designs—or choose designs from over 1000 molds we have in stock for a more cost effective solution to your design challenges. Call us today to see how Plastrglas can help you more than you imagine!



Architectural Gypsum Fabrications

PLASTRGLAS, Inc.

Building Today ■ Shapes of Yesterday ■ Designs of Tomorrow

4200 No. 30th Street P.O. Box 11038 Omaha, NE 68111
Phone 402-455-0652 Fax 402-451-5375

Architectural Fabrications
WEATHR ROK GRC
by Plastrglas, Inc.
Setting the Standard

TWO BIT CLIPS
FASTENERS FOR EASY INSTALLATION

(Please Circle #166 On Reader Action Card)

Training Crisis

Technical Skills

Similar to managerial skills, the following technical skills were found to be extremely significant skills for plastering contractors. These skills are defined as what a contractor must know in order to effectively manage job-site operations. Following is a complete listing of technical skills that were identified as important.

1. Diagnose job-site problems and failures.
2. Evaluate the quality of work being done by employees.
3. Set-up job-sites with the tools, materials and equipment required for maximum productivity.
4. Applying the proper materials and mixtures for interior and exterior substrates.
5. Using the proper techniques, materials and equipment.
6. Learning new products, applications and procedures that they may be unfamiliar with.
7. Install a quality control/assurance program to monitor employee/job-site performance.
8. Identify new products and evaluate their benefit and performance.
9. Erect scaffold using proper techniques for insuring safety.

These technical skills identified for plastering contractors generally had to do with (a) maintaining quality, and

Specific training should be developed to expand and formulate the development of managerial and technical skills for practicing contractors.

(b) learning about new products and systems (i.e., diagnosing job-site problems and failures, quality workmanship, training and upgrading skills). It should be noted, however, the more specific technical skills that require hands-on application are viewed as less important. At large, consensus suggests plastering contractors need to know how to manage, direct, and control job-site operations.

What Does This Mean?

Plastering contractors must be able to manage multiple job-sites with numerous personnel, financial, legal, and business concerns. While some knowledge of the technical aspects of the trade is certainly important for these individuals, it is more critical that they be able to manage and direct others who have specialized technical skills (i.e., foremen, apprentices, and technicians).

With these factors in mind, some important implications for practice, particularly related to the development of training programs and licensing requirements for plastering contractors, should be discussed. One recommendation is that specific training should be developed to expand and

Training Crisis

formulate the development of managerial and technical skills for practicing contractors. The skill list developed in this study could provide a solid base for this type of curriculum and program development.

How Does A Trade Develop Training Requirements?

Developing training requirements and standards is not an easy task. First, agreement throughout the ranks of the profession needs to be established nationally. Once this is in place, it is recommended that the relationship among plastering contractors, associations, vocational-technical schools, union-based apprenticeship training programs, the job corps, community college trade training, and other educational delivery systems be assessed and strengthened. This will assist in the development of curriculum and training needs.

Keep in mind, various combinations of these organizations could collaborate on the development of a strategic plan for the plastering industry (i.e., union associations, bureaus, and state educational agencies) to establish long term coordinated efforts and for broad based improvement on a national scale. Enhanced communication across these organizations would also serve to reduce the fragmentation within the industry.

A second and related recommendation for practice has to do with the

need for formal and structured training mechanisms across the plastering industry. The results of this study indicate that consensus can be (and has been) achieved regarding the skills needed across the industry. What is now needed is to take the next step and build on this foundation. The

To this end, professionals involved in the industry should take an active role in establishing training curricula for plastering contractors. Nationally, companies of all kinds are recognizing the importance of product quality and employee workmanship. It is critically important that the plastering

Professionals involved in the industry should take an active role in establishing training curricula for plastering contractors.

potential exists for standardizing plastering industry training, improving the image of the profession, and increasing the level of the industry's workmanship.

industry take the cue from others and consider the implementation of similar quality and standards-based program alternatives.

Closing Thoughts

Preliminary indicators are that leaders in the plastering industry are quite interested in the development of plastering contractors. In fact, the managerial and technical skills identified provide a sound base of validated skills that, if accessed and used, could provide a much needed point of departure for addressing many of the plastering industry's problems. As a result, curriculum development, training planning, licensure standards, and certification standards could be addressed and enhanced.

About the author: Joe Scarcella, a former plasterer and manager in the plastering industry, holds a doctorate of philosophy from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Currently, he is an assistant professor involved in teaching and research activities related to technology and industry at Southeast Missouri State University. This series of articles are excerpts from Mr. Scarcella's doctoral dissertation. Complete references and the entire dissertation can be obtained from the author. Mr. Scarcella can be reached at (573) 651-2651.

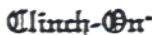


The Professional's Choice in Drywall Finishing Products for 30 Years.

hamilton materials

■ Joint Compounds ■ Joint Tape ■ Wall Textures ■ Ceiling Textures
■ Patching Compounds ■ Foam Coat ■ Prep Coat Plus

Distributors of a complete line of brand name products:



345 West Meats Avenue • Orange, California 92665 • Telephone 714.637.2770 • FAX 714.921.8974

1-800-331-5569

(Please Circle #145, On Reader Action Card)