

SPECIAL SECTION

FLIP TO ROOFING ELEMENTS

METAL ROOFING



JUNE/JULY 2026
Vol. 25 • No. 4



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MAGAZINE

**Advancing the Metal Roofing
Industry Since 2001**

**TRENDING
ROOF COLORS**
.....
**CONSTRUCTION
OUTLOOK**

POPULAR ROOF PANELS

**HOW ROOFTOP
MODIFICATIONS
CAN IMPACT
WARRANTIES**

**FLASHBACK 2006:
IS ONE PROFILE
ENOUGH?**



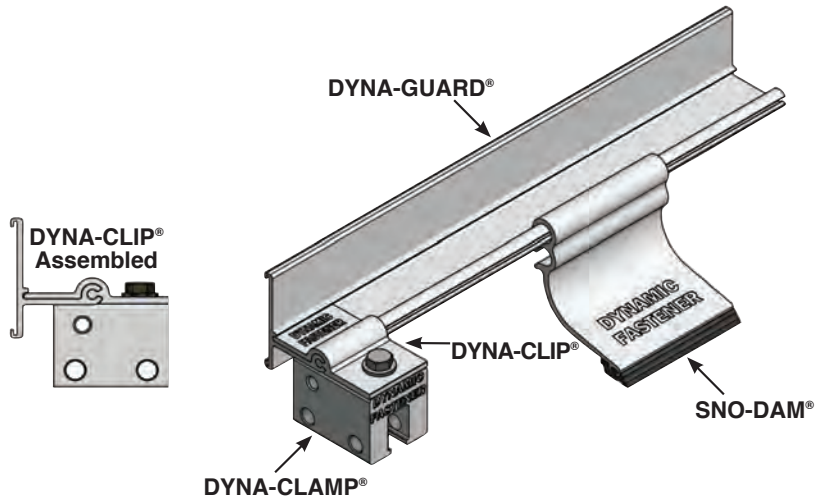
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Timeless Metal

Metal roofing has always had this way of feeling both classic and current at the same time—and that's a big part of why it continues to stick around. If you spend any time checking out all the metal roofing projects we publish here in the magazine and online, you start to notice a pattern: styles may shift a little, but the overall look of metal just doesn't go out of style.

There's something about those clean lines and defined profiles that works on just about any home. You'll see it on old farmhouses, brand-new builds, and everything in between—and it never feels out of place. That kind of versatility gives metal roofing a staying power that goes beyond trends.

Color tells the same story. A lot of the

most popular choices aren't flashy or short-lived—they're the tried-and-true options. Blacks, grays, and earthy tones—and, of course, galvanized—continue to show up on project after project. Even when homeowners choose newer finishes like matte textures, they're still leaning into a natural, timeless look rather than something that will feel dated in a few years.

And as you know, part of the reason metal roofing sticks around is simple: it lasts. Durability matters. When a roof can stand up to decades of weather exposure while still maintaining its appearance, that's not just a design decision—it's a long-term investment. People are drawn to materials that don't need constant replacement or upkeep,

and metal delivers on that expectation.

That's really the appeal. Metal roofing gives homeowners and builders flexibility in design while offering confidence that the roof will perform and look good for years to come. It doesn't chase trends—it outlasts them, both in style and in durability.

So, while you're perusing the pages if this edition, be sure to check out the discussion of color trends beginning on page 6. And if you're so motivated, I'd love for you to reach out and let me know what colors are popular in your area, and which ones aren't used as much any more.

Until next time — be well.

Karen Knapstein, Managing Editor
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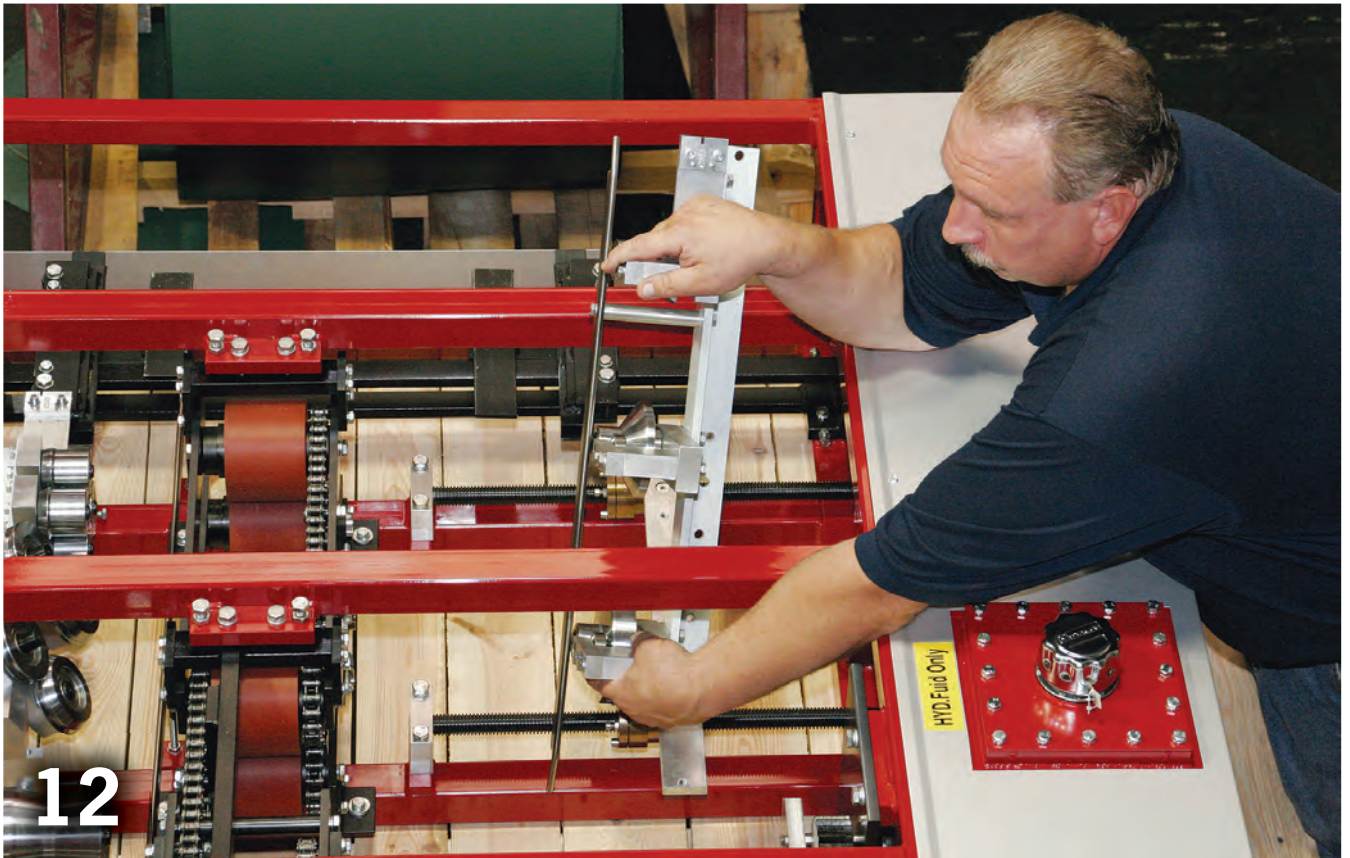
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TABLE OF CONTENTS



6: Trending Colors

According to industry insiders and survey findings

12: Flashback: 2006

Is one panel enough?

18: Bonus Flashback:

When is it time to roll form your own panels?

20: Popular Roof Panels

Observations & opportunities

24: Success Strategies

How to get off the roof

26: Business Building

Steps to a successful sale

30: Business Building

Tips from the MRA for building your business

36: Closer Look

How rooftop modifications impact warranties

40: METALCON 2026

Time to nominate for the 40 Under 40 program

41: Construction Outlook

Indicators to watch

44: Project of the Month

Courtesy of Miller Custom Exteriors

DEPARTMENTS

- 3 Editor's Message
- 28 New Products
- 32 Business Connections
- 44 Project of the Month



AUGUST PREVIEW

- Products at METALCON
- Climate-Resilient Roofs
- Cutting Metal

**GO TO PAGE 13 TO
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ON THE COVER:

This upscale residence features a ProVia premium metal roof in Lodgestone Slate.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PROVIA

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INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

Company	Page #
AceClamp.....	11
Acu-Form	32
American Garage Door Factory.....	34
AppliCad Software.....	17
ASC Machine Tools Inc.....	32
ASCO USA, Inc.	32
Aztec Washer Company.....	33
Central States Manufacturing Inc	9
Coil Spot / Wildcat / SpeedLap.....	33
Cold Spring Enterprises.....	34
Creekside Manufacturing LLC.....	34
Daystar Systems LLC.....	33
Direct Metals, Inc.....	32
Dynamic Fastener	IFC
E-Impact Marketing LLC.....	33
EPDM Coatings Corp.....	7
Everlast Metals.....	32
Flack Hill Machine.....	33
Flotrace Heat Tracing.....	27
Formwright.....	34
Golden Rule Fasteners.....	3, 33
Grandura Distribution LLC	34
Hixwood	29
Levi's Building Components	Flip 2
Marion Manufacturing.....	33
Metal Rollforming Systems.....	15
MFM Building Products.....	Flip 5
PA Wholesale Products	34
Pine Hill Trailers	25, 34
Planet Saver Industries / GreenPost.....	32
Postsaver Europe Ltd.....	34
Raytec Manufacturing	19
Red Dot Products, LLC	32
Rib Runner Tools	35
Roper Whitney.....	31
Snap Z.....	21
SteelGrip SAMM, Inc.....	32
United Steel Supply.....	33

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Color Trends for 2026

Dark neutrals, textured finishes, and residential looks reshaping roofing demands

By Linda Schmid

For decades, metal roofing color selection was largely driven by practicality. White reflected heat, barn red fit agricultural buildings, and galvanized finishes offered economical durability. Today, however, color has become one of the strongest design drivers in the metal roofing industry.

Manufacturers across the market report that homeowners are increasingly approaching metal roofing as an architectural feature rather than simply a protective covering. As a result, darker neutrals, textured finishes, and premium residential aesthetics are gaining momentum across residential, post-frame, and even light commercial applications.

Shield Wall Media's industry survey data, combined with manufacturer input, shows black and charcoal remain the dominant roofing colors nationwide heading into 2026. At the same time, contractors are seeing growing interest in matte finishes, warmer neutrals, wood-look coatings, and subtle accent colors that create a more custom appearance.

63% of customers have a specific color in mind when they meet with the roofer. Shield Wall Media Annual Color Survey

"We're continuing to see the dominance of the black/gray/white color palette for roofing," said Melissa Dunson of Central States. "Consistently over the past three years, Black, Charcoal, Pewter, Polar and Brilliant have stood atop our most popular colors."

The Shield Wall Media survey data strongly supports that observation. Black emerged as one of the top-performing roofing colors across nearly every



A very popular choice: Burnished Slate. PHOTO COURTESY OF BEST BUY METALS

category, especially among standing seam contractors and residential-focused applications. Gray and charcoal followed closely behind, while earth tones maintained strong positions in agricultural and rural markets.

Dark Neutrals Dominate

Manufacturers repeatedly pointed to black, charcoal, burnished slate, and related neutrals as the market's strongest-performing roofing colors.

"Neutral colors like Charcoal, Black, White, Gray, and Burnished Slate clearly lead our order data across both 29ga and 26ga, making up the majority of our volume in all regions," said Trent Wagler of Graber Post Buildings.

Those darker palettes align closely with the continued popularity of:

- Modern farmhouse architecture
- Barndominiums
- High-contrast residential exteriors
- Contemporary rural designs.

Manufacturers say darker colors continue performing especially well in residential applications, with no clear signs that demand has plateaued. Black, charcoal, burnished slate, and dark bronze continue appearing prominently

across product catalogs, project galleries, and contractor orders.

Across Best Buy Metals' product offerings and featured projects, dark neutrals continue dominate the residential market.

7% of customers have no specific color in mind when they meet with the roofer. Shield Wall Media Annual Color Survey

"Matte Black, Charcoal, Burnished Slate, and Dark Bronze continue to drive residential metal roofing aesthetics," said Scott Steele of Best Buy Metals. "These colors pair well with modern farmhouse styles, barndominiums, and contemporary rural homes while still maintaining broad curb appeal."

At ProVia, darker hues in their metal shake and slate profiles have been well-received by customers. "Deep, dramatic, variegated shades like Shadewood, Coalstone, and Bronzewood are among our most popular colors. Introduced in late 2024, Coalstone Slate has quickly become a homeowner favorite, pairing beautifully with the black-and-white exterior design trend while also complementing a wide range of other color palettes."



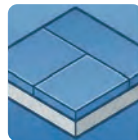
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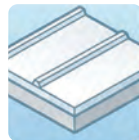


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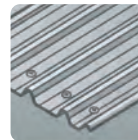
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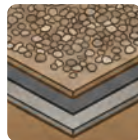
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Textured and Matte Finishes Gain Momentum

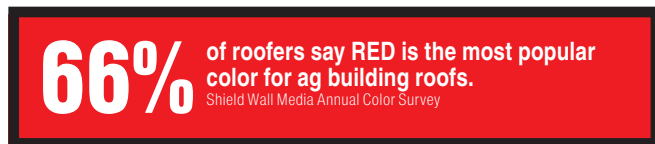
Alongside darker colors, textured and low-gloss finishes continue becoming more important in residential roofing applications.

Manufacturers say homeowners increasingly prefer matte and textured finishes because they:

- Reduce glare
- Create visual depth
- Provide a softer residential appearance
- Help hide dirt and imperfections.

“Our Textured (crinkle) line—in particular Onyx, Sumatra and Mineral—are very popular,” Dunson said. “The textured finish helps reduce glare, masks dirt and provides a more consistent appearance over time.”

Low-gloss and matte finishes also align closely with the broader architectural movement away from highly reflective agricultural-style appearances toward more refined residential styling.

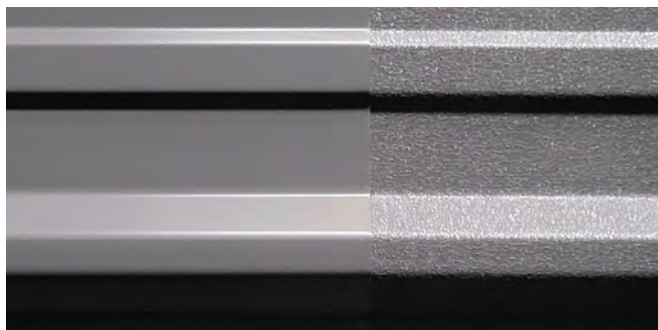


“Far and away, the most popular colors are black and charcoal, with a distinct preference for the textured option for residential roofs,” said David Martin of HIXWOOD. Kari Chermack of HIXWOOD added, “Once a customer sees and feels the difference in their hands, the quality speaks for itself.”

Steele said the move toward matte finishes reflects broader architectural preferences.

“Low-sheen and matte coatings are gaining traction because homeowners want a more residential-friendly appearance with reduced glare and a more upscale look,” Steele said.

Manufacturers say textured finishes are no longer viewed as a niche upgrade. Instead, they are increasingly becoming part of the standard residential conversation, particularly on standing



Charcoal in smooth and textured coatings. PHOTO COURTESY OF HIXWOOD

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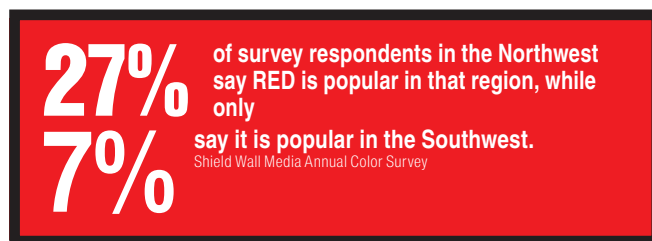
seam systems and premium exposed-fastener applications.

Earth Tones Still Hold Strong Positions

Although dark neutrals dominate much of today’s residential market, earth tones continue performing strongly in agricultural, post-frame, and rustic residential applications. Brown, bronze, clay, and copper-inspired tones remain especially popular where buildings are designed to blend with natural surroundings. Manufacturers continue reporting steady demand for these colors in barns, shops, rural homes, and barndominiums.

Wagler said earth tones like Clay and Brown remain a “strong secondary group, especially in agricultural markets.”

Steele said earthy bronze and brown tones continue resonating with rural customers looking for a more natural appearance that blends in with the surroundings.



“Burnished Slate, Dark Bronze, Copper Penny, and other earth-inspired colors remain important for barns, shops, and barndominiums where the goal is often to complement the landscape rather than stand out from it,” Steele said.

Warmer neutrals are also beginning to replace some of the cooler grays and bright whites that dominated earlier design cycles.

“We are seeing many markets move into the warmer neutrals from white all the way to the black shades,” said Brynn Wildenauer of Sherwin Williams. “Many consumers are favoring bronze tones, warmer mid-tone neutrals, and warm off-whites.”

Regional Color Preferences Continue Evolving

Although neutral colors dominate nationally, manufacturers and survey respondents continue reporting noticeable regional differences in how those colors are used and which tones gain the most traction.



Dark Neutral Metal Coil is in high demand PHOTO COURTESY OF GRABER POST BUILDINGS, INC.



Reds, Tans, and Blues are also available. PHOTO COURTESY OF CENTRAL STATES

The survey data showed black and charcoal performing strongly across nearly every region, but certain markets still maintain distinct preferences shaped by climate, architecture, and local building traditions.

The South and Southwest continue showing stronger demand

for lighter colors and reflective roofing systems, particularly in areas with intense sun exposure and higher cooling demands. Whites, light stone colors, and lighter earth tones remain common in those markets, especially on agricultural and residential buildings where heat management is a priority.



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Coalstone Slate metal roofing from ProVia. PHOTO COURTESY OF PROVIA

At the same time, manufacturers say darker colors are no longer confined to cooler climates.

“Traditionally, hot, sunny regions have favored lighter roof colors for heat performance, while cooler regions lean darker,” Dunson said. “But in the last several years, the customer desire for darker roofing colors in typically hot climates has increased, regardless of roofing material.”

3-5 The number of color options most roofers present to their customers.
Shield Wall Media Annual Color Survey

Survey responses showed the South-Midwest market strongly favoring gray and charcoal tones, while contractors in the Midwest and Northeast reported continued strength for darker neutrals overall. According to Graber Post Buildings, darker neutrals such as Charcoal, Black, and Gray remain especially popular in northern markets, while southern regions still lean somewhat lighter in overall color selection.

Regional Architecture Continues Shaping Demand

“Farmhouse designs favor warm whites, both glossy and matte blacks, barn reds, and earth tones,” Dunson said. “Modern styles drive demand for blacks, charcoals, and grays. Coastal architecture leans toward lighter neutrals and soft blues to reflect sunlight, while mountain styles prefer deep browns, greens, and muted grays that blend with natural surroundings and landscapes.”

Traditional agricultural colors also remain important in many regions despite the broader shift toward modern residential palettes. Survey data showed red continuing to perform best in agricultural applications and parts of the Northeast, where classic farm-building aesthetics still influence customer expectations. White also continues holding stronger positions in agricultural and soffit applications in southern and western regions, where brighter finishes remain associated with traditional rural construction.

Manufacturers are also beginning to see subtle regional growth in darker accent colors, particularly deep greens and navy tones. Those colors remain niche compared to black and charcoal, but suppliers say they are gaining traction in mountain regions, upscale residential markets, and parts of the Northwest where homeowners often prefer colors that complement wooded surroundings and natural landscapes.

“We have started to see a lot of interest in very dark navy and green colors,” Wildenauer said. “Nearly black, but with some chroma to add some additional interest.”

At the same time, warmer neutrals appear to be replacing some cooler gray palettes that dominated earlier design cycles. According to Wildenauer, bronze tones, warm off-whites, and warmer mid-tone neutrals are growing in popularity.

78% of standing seam customers, view color as “Extremely Important,” while only 33% of metal shingle customers give color the highest importance. Shield Wall Media Annual Color Survey

Warmer earth-inspired colors perform well in rural residential construction, post-frame homes, and barndominiums throughout the Midwest and Plains states, where builders often want structures to blend into agricultural or wooded settings rather than create stark visual contrast.

Survey results further suggested that customers are arriving at contractor meetings with stronger pre-formed color preferences than in years past. That trend appeared especially strong in residential standing seam markets in the South-Midwest and Northeast, where homeowners are increasingly influenced by online imagery, architectural trends, and social-media-driven design inspiration.

Accent Colors Slowly Expanding

Neutrals remain dominant overall, however, several manufacturers noted growing interest in subtle accent colors that still fit within the broader neutral palette.

Dark greens and deep navy tones are gaining traction.

Manufacturers are also reporting more requests for muted greens, sage tones, and digitally printed wood-look finishes as homeowners look for individuality without abandoning resale-friendly palettes.

At True Metal Supply, Shannon Clark said the company continues seeing increased interest in specialty colors and finishes alongside traditional neutrals.

“While Burnished Slate, Black, and Charcoal are consistently top sellers, we are seeing a rise in specialty requests for Colony Green and Silver Sage and innovative materials like digital, wood-printed steel,” Clark said.

Climate Still Matters — But Less Than Before

Traditionally, lighter roofing colors dominated southern climates because of solar reflectivity concerns. While that

CLOSER LOOK

influence still exists, manufacturers say aesthetics increasingly outweigh climate considerations for many homeowners.

That shift has benefited metal roofing because reflective paint systems and metal's inherent reflective qualities help reduce some heat-gain concerns associated with dark roofing colors.

Survey respondents reported growing awareness of cool-roof concepts in southern and high-solar-exposure markets. However, aesthetics and architectural style still appear to drive most color-selection decisions.

73% of standing seam customers arrive with a specific color in mind.
Shield Wall Media Annual Color Survey

Standing Seam's Influence on Color Trends

Manufacturers also noted that many of today's color trends are closely tied to the continued growth of standing seam and concealed-fastener roofing systems.

"Exposed-fastener remains dominant, but concealed-fastener/standing seam demand is increasing, especially in residential and premium applications," said Bonnie Beck and Frank Miklos of Everlast Roofing.

Standing seam buyers tend to favor:

- Darker colors
- Textured finishes
- Matte coatings
- More curated architectural palettes.

Manufacturers report that homeowners increasingly associate standing seam systems with long-term value, premium aesthetics, and reduced maintenance requirements.

Shad Eash of Red Dot Products, a coil supplier, said the market continues gradually shifting toward concealed-fastener systems because of aesthetics, longevity, and performance.

"More homeowners view metal as a long-term investment and want cleaner aesthetics," Eash said.

Balancing Trends with Long-Term Value

Despite the popularity of bold darker colors and premium finishes, manufacturers continue encouraging contractors to guide customers toward timeless, regionally traditional choices.

"Dark grays, charcoals, whites, and earth tones consistently deliver strong curb appeal and resale value," Dunson said. "Bold or highly specific colors are best used as accents."

Since stocked colors are largely neutral, they are more practical choices for most contractors and homeowners.

Wagler said, "Most projects still rely on standard colors, as they offer better availability, faster turnaround, and more cost efficiency."

As the market moves toward increasingly design-driven roofing decisions, however, one thing seems clear: color is no longer an afterthought. For many homeowners, it has become one of the defining decisions shaping the appearance of the project. **MR**

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Is One Profile Enough for Your Business?

Manufacturers explain the advantages and disadvantages of single-profile and multi-profile machines

**OCTOBER/
NOVEMBER 2006
FLASHBACK**

Even though this article was written in 2006, it still offers real, practical value for today's metal roofing professionals—especially if you are considering investing in roll-forming equipment or refining how they use what they already own.

At its core, this article helps you think more strategically about equipment purchases. The discussion around single-profile versus multi-profile machines is still relevant because the decision ultimately comes down to business goals, crew size, and target markets. Whether you're focused on residential work, expanding into commercial, or trying to increase production capacity, the same fundamental questions still apply.

One of the biggest benefits of reading this piece is the insight into how equipment choices directly impact efficiency, flexibility, and profitability. The article highlights trade-offs that still exist today: simplicity versus versatility, lower upfront cost versus long-term scalability, and speed of production versus the ability to diversify offerings. Those considerations haven't changed.

It also reinforces the importance of training and support. Understanding changeovers, maintenance, and machine capabilities remains critical to getting the most out of any roll former. The idea that a machine is only as valuable as the operator's ability to use it effectively is just as true now as it was then.

Ultimately, this article gives you a framework for thinking through equipment investments—not just as purchases, but as long-term business decisions that shape growth, efficiency, and opportunity.



Mike Gorski, senior roll former technician at Englert inserts tooling into a Metal Man machine.

By Jim Austin

Whoever first said, “You have to spend money to make money,” probably had plenty of it to start with. It's easy to talk big when you're sitting on a fat wallet.

There's a difference between spending money and investing money. Investments should be the result of extensive research and plenty of thought, especially when it comes to running a successful business. For those roofing contractors who have made the financial commitment to purchase a roof panel roll former, there are plenty of factors to wade through before writing out that check.

A major decision revolves around purchasing a single-profile machine or a multi-profile machine. There are manufacturers who make only single-profile roll formers and some who make only multi-profile machines. Many offer

both.

For those contractors who may still have questions, Mike Gorski, senior roll former technician at Englert, says the key is establishing what the machine will be used for.

“If they're just starting out and they're going to do residential, then they probably want a single-profile machine,” he says. “Residential is the easiest market to get started in. If they're going to get into commercial, then they probably want to go with a multi-profile machine. A lot of times, they start with a single-profile machine and come back and buy the bigger machine.”

Gorski says the size of the investment makes a difference, too. “Everyone wants to get the most for their money,” he says. “A multi-profile machine allows you to add tooling later. If they go with a single-profile machine and want another profile, they have to buy all new hydraulics,

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Cassettes for MetalForming's Quadro roll former (bottom) and a sequence of photos (top) illustrating a changeover. METALFORMING PHOTO

framing, a whole new machine. Then they've got to worry about having a place to store a second machine."

Englert keeps all nine of its tooling sets in stock, so any are ready to be shipped when someone orders it. A multi-profile machine allows an Englert customer to use any or all of the profiles in that machine.

Owning a multi-profile machine means knowing more than just how to run and maintain it. Contractors have to be able to change toolings to run different profiles. That can be intimidating. "We get asked a lot, 'Do you need a masters in engineering?'" Gorski says. "We've tried to make it as easy as possible with color coding, by numbering the units, and requiring the least possible number of bolts you have to unscrew and screw back in."

Gorski says Englert's training will provide a contractor the ability to complete a changeover alone and in an hour. He says some machines will take two workers up to three hours.

Gorski says Englert's training program is hands-on. "We don't just send you the box and a manual and wish you luck," he says. "We make sure someone takes you through a changeover step by step, letting you get your hands in the machine, teaching you the language. That way, if you ever have a problem down the road, we may be able to talk you through it over the phone." Gorski says all Englert distribution centers have someone on staff to handle training and field troubleshooting. "If we don't keep those machines running, we don't sell coil," he says. "We back up our machines and our material 100 percent."

An evolving trend among Englert customers is more foresight: contractors are looking to the future when they purchase a machine. "Instead of purchasing the single-profile machine, they're buying the multi-profile machine with the tooling for one profile," says Kevin

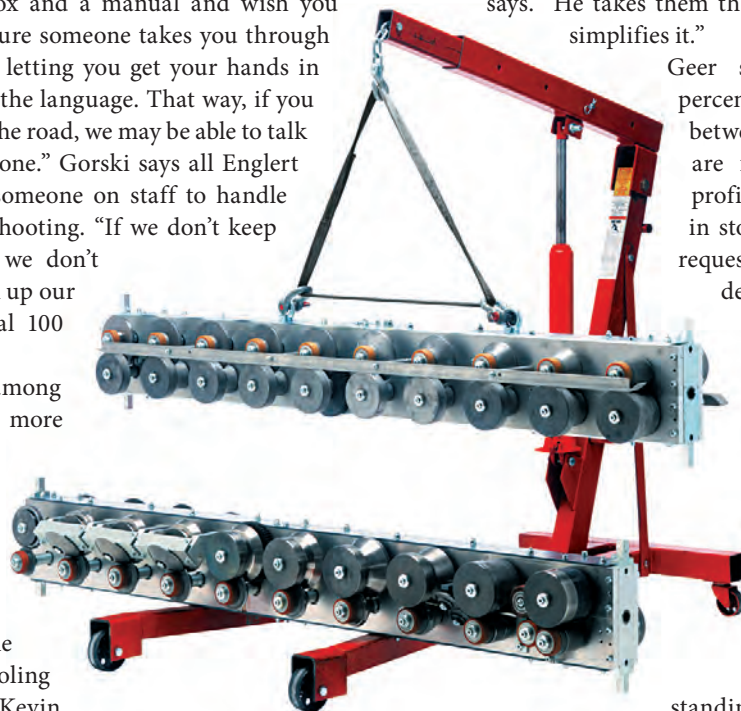
Corcoran, Englert's vice president of business development. "They start out with the basic nail-strip profile. Their crews can handle it because they've been installing 5-v panels or ag panels. They see this as a way to grow their business. Eventually, if they want to explore more business opportunities, they can purchase another set or two."

New Tech Machinery roof panel machines all are capable of running more than one profile. "It comes down to a philosophy," says Roger Geer of New Tech. "Our goal has always been to manufacture a machine that was not too big, one that was truly portable, and one that was flexible enough to allow our customers to run more than one profile."

He estimates that 75 percent of New Tech customers start with at least two profiles and that very few buy one and don't come back for a second or third. Some are intimidated by the notion of changeovers, but Geer says New Tech's training is very thorough. "Almost everybody who buys a machine from us spends a day or two with (New Tech trainer) Ron Schell," he says. "He takes them through the entire machine and simplifies it."

Geer says that approximately 80 percent of the toolings they sell between Denver and the east coast are for the 1-3/4 inch snap-lock profile. New Tech keeps all toolings in stock, ready to be sent out upon request. "We hang out hats on delivery," Geer says.

Knudson Manufacturing offers multiple-profile machines for those who want flexibility as well as single-profile machines for contractors who know they are going to install a specific profile. Knudson's VP21-M Varipan can run eight profiles — 1-inch flush panel, 1-inch nail strip, 1-inch snap-lock, 1-inch standing seam, 1-1/2-inch nail strip,

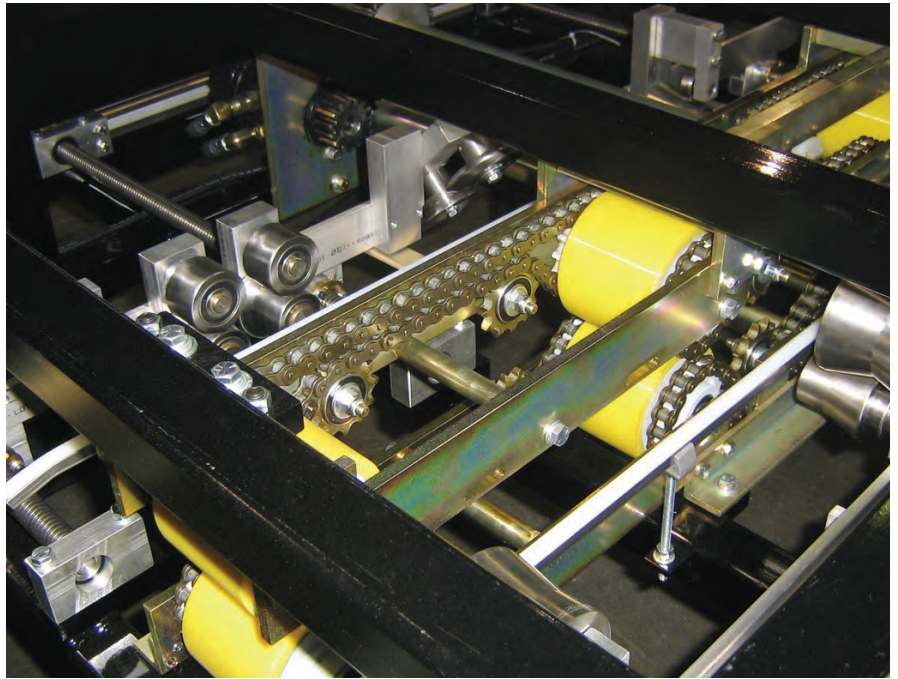


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1-1/2-inch snap-lock, 1-1/2-inch standing seam, and a U profile. A contractor can ask for any or all of the tooling for those profiles. The machine can grow with the business.

“It depends on what the contractor is trying to accomplish and where he’s trying to take his business,” says Pat Flood of Knudson. “Is he trying to grow the business? Most customers show up with a reasonable idea of what they want. With a Varipan, you have the flexibility to bid a job even if you don’t have the tooling to do it. If you get the job, you can order the tooling. If you don’t get the bid, you’re not stuck with the tooling.”

With any new machine, there is a something new to learn and Flood says it’s important for contractors to learn all they can about their equipment. “That’s one of the advantages I’ll concede to a single-profile machine,” he says. “The learning curve is shorter. With multi-



New Tech Machinery's SSP roof panel machine, pictured without its cover, is capable of producing up to 10 different profiles. NEW TECH MACHINERY PHOTO



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profile machines, there's more to learn, changeovers, new setups."

Knudson also offers several single-profile machines. "Sometimes a guy will get a good reputation for running a particular panel and it becomes his favorite profile," Flood says. "He will seek out that kind of work and that work will seek him out."

Flood says if a contractor opts to have a couple single-profile machines instead of one multi-profile machine, he can be running panels in two places at once. He also runs the risk of having an idle machine. "Not everyone can afford to have a machine sitting in a warehouse for weeks at a time," Flood says. "Running single-profile machines is one way to grow. It requires a smaller initial investment, but will require sizable investments with the purchase of additional single-profile machines later on," Flood says. "That's one way to grow a business, adding to the stable."

Flood says contractors who operate a multiple-profile machine can use it as a marketing tool, showing their versatility.

Texas-based Berridge Manufacturing offers only single-profile roll formers, or "dedicated-profile" roll formers as they're known at Berridge. "One reason roofing contractors prefer to purchase several single-profile portable roll formers is to be able to produce panels for more than one project simultaneously during peak demand without having to go through the sometimes lengthy and tedious process of changing tooling and making adjustments," says David Doyle, Berridge's vice president of marketing. "Roofing contractors who purchase a Berridge dedicated-profile roll former do so in order to comply with architectural specifications. A Berridge dedicated-profile portable roll former is designed to form one specific profile that precisely conforms to the panel specified by architects when Berridge coil, Vinyl Weatherseal, and other accessories are utilized. Several Berridge dedicated-profile roll formers also have special attachments which automatically insert the patented Berridge Vinyl Weatherseal

during the roll forming process."

When MetalForming studied the market for portable roll formers, it was quite apparent that most customers wanted multiple profile roll formers according to president Geoff Stone. "However, nearly all complained about the complexity of changeovers," he says. "Not only was time and labor a factor but also the quality of panels came into play. This is precisely why we invented the Quadro roll former. Our design criteria included changeover from one to five minutes and elimination of operators changing and gapping rolls."

Stone says Quadros are typically purchased with four profiles loaded: mechanical lock, u-panel, snap lock with clip, and nail strip. "Changeover from one to another ranges from one to five minutes," he says. "If a customer wants other profiles such as soffit, 2-inch structural mechanical or 1-3/4-inch structural snap lock, he unbolts four bolts, removes his existing cassette and slips in the new cassette — elapsed time is five to 10 minutes. This also reduces training time to as little as three hours."

Stone says if a customer wants a second machine, he can buy it fully equipped or buy the machine base only and use cassettes from an existing machine. "They are completely interchangeable," he says. "This results in total flexibility."

The Quadros are modular so a customer

can add ribbing, striation, longitudinal slitting, concave curving, hot melt for weather tightness, perforating, and even automatic pre-notching for the eaves edge.

"We also know, however that there are customers who use only one profile because they serve only one market — for example — residential nail strip," Stone says. "Thus, we provide the Quadro LTD for those customers at a substantially lower cost."

Ewald Stellrecht of ESE Machines finds it hard to believe that someone would invest in a multi-profile machine. ESE Machines manufactures only single-profile machines, and sells them to one-man operations as well as large manufacturers who only use the machine in-house. "If you've got one crew, they take one machine and run one profile," Stellrecht says. "With any one job, you're only going to need one profile. You don't put different profiles on the same roof."

"My machine costs about \$25,000 and the multi-profile machines can cost \$80,000. Do you want to spend \$80,000 on one machine that can keep one crew working, or do you want three machines with a single profile that can keep three crews working at the same time? When you're just starting out, why would you want to indebt yourself with an \$80,000 machine?"

Is there a profile you want but



Berridge Manufacturing's CL 21 portable roll former produces a 1-1/2-inch cee-lock snap lock panel.
BERRIDGE MANUFACTURING PHOTO

haven't seen offered by a roll former manufacturer? Are you looking for something truly unique? Roll Former Corporation offers custom machines for metal roofing panels, as well as drip edges, rake trim, valleys, ridge caps, and crown molding. John Dumke, Roll Former's director of sales and marketing, says some of his customers are referred to him by competitors who can't or don't want to get into custom machinery, including seamers for custom profiles. "We can design it, make it from scratch," he says. "Probably 60-70 percent of what we do at this point is custom machinery."

Roll Former offers a multi-profile machine, the VS-150 that is built to offer up to eight profiles. "That's our bread and butter machine," Dumke says. "Most of the roofing contractors I talk to, some are larger companies, but most are six men and two pickup trucks. They don't always have the manpower to deal with

lengthy changeovers."

Dumke says changeovers on the VS-150 can take anywhere from 15 minutes up to an hour between the 1-inch and 1-1/2-inch standing seam panels. "We try to keep it simple, make the machine user friendly." Roll Former provides training at the customer's location for a cost and offers free training at its Pennsylvania offices for an unlimited number of employees.

Both Zimmerman Metals roof panel roll formers are set up to manufacture multiple profiles. The company's commercial machine can handle eight profiles, including structural panels, and the architectural machine has the ability to run five profiles. Any purchase includes extensive training at the customer's location, including follow-up training with the purchase of new tooling.

"I don't think there are too many

single-profile machines out there anymore," says Pearson. "We've had some customers who use them that way and they'll come back and buy a second or a third machine even. They can run panels at different sites. It's rare that they would need different profiles on the same job."

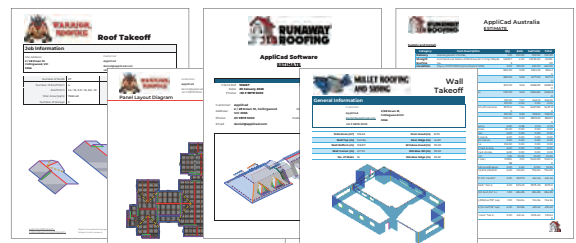
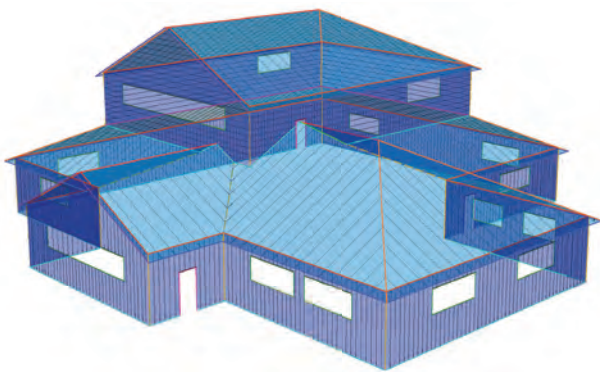
Pearson says 75 to 80 percent of Zimmerman customers purchase a machine to run just one profile. "Typically, they come back to purchase another profile or two," he says. "Often the profile preference depends on regional requirements."

According to Pearson, a new tooling can be sent out in 1-2 weeks. "We try to stock everything customers need," he says. "Typically, we have a half-million to \$1 million in parts on the shelf."

That's one way the roll former manufacturers help you fatten your wallet. **MR**

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When it's time to run your own panels

By Geoff Stone, MetalForming president

At what point should I start rolling my own panels? Capital purchasing of equipment in the business world today typically involves the calculations for establishing the return on investment (ROI) for the monies spent. These purchases ultimately are to improve the productivity, quality, efficiency, and return more to the bottom line for the company at the end of the day.

In the roofing community, many contractors have exercised these same analyses to decide whether to continue to rent a boom truck/crane vs. purchasing their own, buy their own shop equipment to brake their own trim items vs. outsourcing these parts, as well as bring operations in-house that they previously handled through a subcontractor. One area often overlooked in the ROI analysis is the decision to invest in the needed computers and software to handle accounting needs and estimating needs vs. keeping books, determining their taxes, computing payroll, and even completing estimates by hand.

This brings us to the current subject to consider, "At what point do I begin to make my own roofing panels vs. purchasing factory rolled panels?" The technology available today along with the diverse equipment to both shop roll and site form panels now allows the roofing contractor to better control his destiny. With the capability to produce panels directly from a cut-list the contractor controls, the pendulum now has swung in the favor of the contractor that has the initiative and business savvy to produce his own panels. The contractor now can avoid the many pitfalls that exist when ordering panels through a distributor and manufacturer and having to wait on shipments and many times a second shipment in the case of an incorrect order or damaged panel(s). The last hurdle removed from the equation is the acceptance of portable roll-forming equipment by the architectural community, specifiers, and building owners. Many portable roll forming manufacturers, through extensive testing with Underwriters

Laboratories and American Society of Testing Materials for wind uplift, missile impact testing, hail testing, wind, and water infiltration have provided the contractor an even playing field with factory-formed panels.

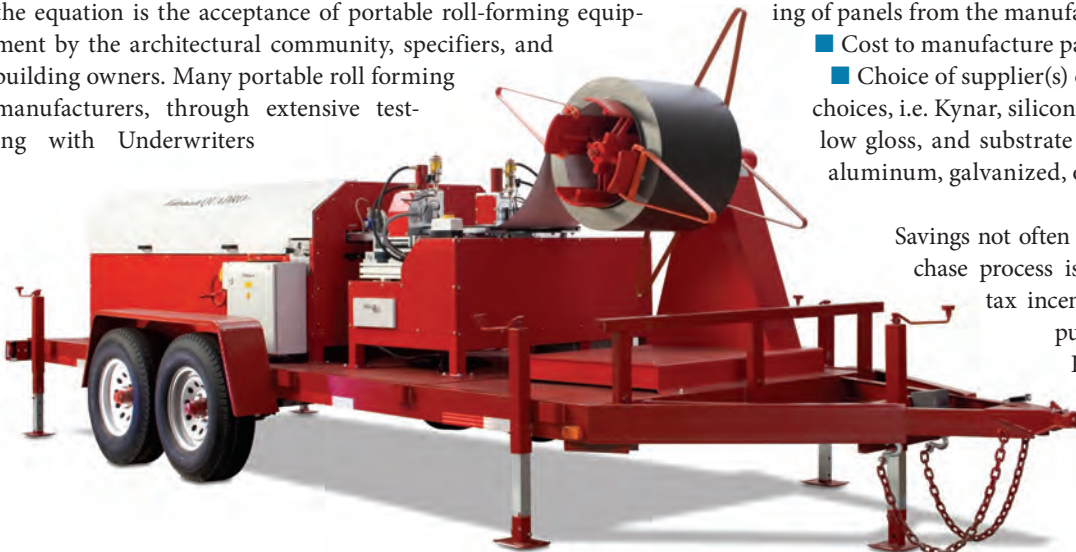
The sources for coil stock and flat sheet in both Kynar 500 and siliconized polyester painted galvanized, Galvalume, and aluminum are many. Their ability to slit coil to the needed widths and supply through their many outlets eliminate delays, and minimizes freight and packaging fees inherent in finish rolled panel shipments as well as damage.

There are more clients now that have an interest in metal roofs composed of zinc, anodized aluminum, or copper and these products are readily available for the roofing contractor and can be pan-formed on most of the roll forming machines available. The continuing decline in the shingle market for residential roofing as well as the lack of available tile roofing materials continue to shift the emphasis and increase the total square footage of metal roof panel projects available to both the residential and commercial roofing contractor.

Most of the savings in today's contracting business can be realized when the number of variables are minimized or eliminated. Variables that can't be controlled typically cause the final installation to be delayed, labor costs to be well above budget, which drives up the cost of the project. Consider the following areas where improvements can be made and savings realized when controlling the metal roof panel project from start to finish, from pan forming to installation:

- Control of the product, which includes the availability and delivery of the panels to the jobsite
- Elimination of associated costs for shipment and packaging of panels from the manufacturer
- Cost to manufacture panels from purchased coil
- Choice of supplier(s) of coil, color of coil, paint choices, i.e. Kynar, siliconized polyester, high gloss, low gloss, and substrate of coil (i.e. copper, zinc, aluminum, galvanized, or Galvalume.)

Savings not often considered when the purchase process is being evaluated include tax incentives available for capital purchases under Internal Revenue Code Section 179 allowing first-year depreciation of \$105,000, which can mean as much as a \$37,500 tax savings in the first year,



which effectively reduces the capital outlay to only \$67,500. Additional bonus depreciation is available from the recent hurricane affected areas, which include many counties in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. Lease-to-own purchases also allow the machines to be paid for as projects are being completed without depleting savings or requiring additional collateral to secure payment for these machines.

Now, the final factor that will determine how quickly the addition of a panel forming machine will return dividends to the contractor are predicated on the following:

- What price is currently paid for panels purchased from the manufacturer including packaging and freight?
- What is the purchase price for coil stock to form panels?

■ What is the purchase price for the panel forming machine to fit the contractors needs?

■ How many square feet of installed metal roof panels are rolled and installed monthly and yearly?

A rule of thumb used by many contractors based on manufactured panel costs vs. cost of coil stock show the cost of the raw material to roll the panels is typically less than 60 percent of the cost of the purchased panels and can be as little as 50 percent of the cost. The associated cost for producing the panels in the contractor's shop or site forming the panels usually range between 12 cents and 20 cents per square foot for the contractor. These numbers used conservatively show the savings can easily compute to 30 to 35 percent in overall savings. Do the math on 10,000 square feet of installed metal roof

panels monthly and without factoring in the tax incentives, the ROI and payoff for a panel machine should be realized after rolling and installing 200,000 square feet of metal panels. Factor in tax incentives and a more aggressive monthly installation rate and payoff on a panel machine and an increase in bottom line profits can easily be realized in 15 months or less. **MR**

[2006] **Geoff Stone**, *president of MetalForming in Peachtree, Ga., was the first to bring European folding technology to bear on the U.S. roofing market. His commitment to innovation has led to the continuous introduction of products that provide competitive advantages. MetalForming staff members are available for consultation to help determine ROI and payoff to fit the contractors' individual business plan.*

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Popular Metal Roof Panels

What's Moving the Market

By Linda Schmid

Ask five manufacturers what the “most popular” metal roof panel is, and you’ll get five slightly different answers. But look closer, and the industry tells a more unified story—one shaped by cost, labor realities, evolving homeowner expectations, and a steady shift toward higher-performance systems.

Across agricultural, residential, and light commercial markets, the same core dynamic continues to play out: exposed-fastener panels still dominate in volume, but concealed-fastener and standing seam systems are gaining ground—especially where aesthetics, longevity, and perceived value carry more weight.

Volume Still Favors Exposed-Fastener Panels

By most measures, exposed-fastener panels remain the industry’s volume leader. Whether labeled as 9-inch on-center panels, ag panels, or ribbed profiles, they continue to anchor the market.

“We define ‘most popular’ primarily by sales volume,” said Bonnie Beck, Everlast Roofing, Inc. “Our most-sold roof panel is typically a 9-inch on-center exposed-fastener panel. It leads because it offers versatility, ease of installation, and reliable performance across a wide range of applications.”

That same story repeats across manufacturers. “Ag panel” continues to lead in overall production.

“Our SuperRib panel, an ag panel, is the gold standard of post-frame construction,” said David Martin of Hixwood. “It’s cost-effective, easy to install, strong, and long lasting.”

What’s notable isn’t just that these panels remain popular—it’s where they’re being used. Originally tied



Snap-Lock Panels. PHOTO COURTESY OF HIXWOOD.

closely to agricultural and post-frame buildings, exposed-fastener panels now appear across a broader range of projects, including residential applications where cost sensitivity and installer familiarity drive many decisions.

Standing Seam Continues Its Climb

While exposed-fastener panels lead in sheer volume, nearly every manufacturer points to the same shift: standing seam is gaining ground—and doing so consistently.

“We’re definitely seeing the shift toward concealed fastener preference,” said Kari Chermack of Hixwood.

That shift is especially pronounced in residential construction, where homeowners are increasingly viewing roofing as a long-term investment rather

than a short-term cost decision.

“There is a clear and growing preference for concealed-fastened systems compared to previous years,” said Shannon Clark of True Metal Supply.

The reasons are layered. Aesthetics play a role, but they’re not the whole story. Longevity, reduced maintenance, and performance all factor into the decision.

“Consumers are seeking high-performance roofing systems that require minimal maintenance, come with robust warranties, and increase the value of their home,” Clark said.

From a practical standpoint, installation efficiency is also part of the equation. Snap-lock standing seam profiles, in particular, are gaining traction because they strike a balance between performance and labor demands.

“One-inch Snaplock Panels lead in popularity because they offer ease of installation, expansion and contraction which minimizes oil canning, and a good balance of cost and performance,” noted Shad Eash of Snap-Z.

That balance is becoming increasingly important as labor availability and skill levels influence product selection as much as material cost.

A Split Market: Cost vs. Performance

The industry isn't shifting uniformly. Instead, it's dividing into clearer tiers.

Exposed-fastener panels continue to dominate cost-sensitive projects, particularly in agricultural and post-frame construction of sheds and other utilitarian projects. However, standing seam and higher-end profiles are gaining traction in residential and design-driven builds.

“Homeowners focused on the most cost-effective solution typically choose our exposed-fastener Tuff Rib panels,” Clark said. “Those focused on long-term performance prioritize concealed-fastened systems.”

That divide shows up in how panels are used as well. It's increasingly common to see mixed applications—standing seam roofing paired with exposed-fastener siding—balancing cost and performance within the same project.

“Exposed fastener panels still dominate in agricultural and budget-driven builds,” Eash noted. “But many buildings benefit from both systems depending on the application.”

Regional Preferences Still Matter

Panel popularity isn't universal. Regional factors—climate, building type,

and even cultural preferences—continue to shape what gets specified.

In the Midwest and Northeast, practical, cost-sensitive systems tied to post-frame construction remain strong. In coastal regions, durability and code compliance carry more weight. In mountain and snow-load areas, structural performance becomes a primary concern.

“Popularity is tied to region,” Beck said. “Post-frame and agricultural markets drive exposed-fastener demand, while coastal or higher-end residential markets lean toward standing seam panels such as Everseam® and enhanced finishes.”

Even within residential markets, regional preferences can shift dramatically. For example, ProVia sees strong demand for specialty profiles that mimic traditional materials.

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Lodgestone Metal Slate mimics the look of rustic slate shingles. PHOTO COURTESY OF PROVIA.

top sellers because they replicate the look of natural materials,” said Gary Davel, Director of Sales, Roofing at ProVia. “In Florida, barrel tile profiles are especially popular.”

These profiles highlight a different segment of the market—one where aesthetics and architectural style weigh heavily. Davel said their market is mainly residential, but also covers commercial projects including car washes, churches, universities, and more.

What's Driving Panel Choice Today

Across all segments, a consistent set of factors continues to influence panel selection:

- Cost (material and labor)
- Installation speed and complexity
- Aesthetics and curb appeal
- Performance and durability
- Code requirements and climate considerations.

Roofing choices are largely being driven by aesthetics and HOA requirements according to Davel. Customers are looking for roofing choices that blend in with the neighborhood.

Labor has also become a more visible factor in recent years. Simpler systems often win in high-volume applications, while more complex systems must justify themselves through performance or appearance.

“In many cases, labor drives the roofing decision more than material,” Eash noted. “For example, it is significantly faster to install metal panels rather than asphalt shingles on a simple roof without a lot of dormers and valleys.”

At the same time, homeowners and building owners are asking more from their roofs, pushing demand toward systems that offer longer life cycles and fewer maintenance concerns.

Panel Design Is Playing a Bigger Role

As the market evolves, panel characteristics themselves

are becoming more influential in buying decisions. Rib height, seam type, and gauge all affect both performance and appearance. Taller ribs and mechanical seams tend to offer higher performance, particularly in demanding environments, but they are not as easily installed.

“Mechanically seamed panels offer higher performance but require more labor and skill,” Eash of Snap-Z noted.

Snap-lock systems, by contrast, continue to gain popularity because they simplify installation while still delivering a clean, concealed-fastener look.

“Snap-lock profiles remain particularly popular because they provide a fastener-free aesthetic with a more labor-efficient installation process,” Clark said.

Span capability is another factor, especially in commercial and large-scale buildings. Profiles like PBR panels are engineered for wider purlin spacing and heavier loads, making them well-suited for structural applications.

Color and Finish Trends Reinforce the Shift

Panel selection isn't happening in isolation—color and finish trends are reinforcing the broader move toward higher-end systems.

Across manufacturers, darker colors dominate. Black, charcoal, and bronze consistently rank among top sellers, often paired with matte or textured finishes.

“Black and charcoal are far and away the most popular, especially with textured finishes,” Chermack of Hixwood said.

Beck at Everlast Roofing reports similar trends, noting strong demand for matte and low-gloss finishes alongside darker tones. These finishes help reduce glare and soften the appearance of metal, making it more appealing in residential settings—another factor driving the growth of standing seam.

At the same time, specialty finishes and colors are beginning to carve out niche demand.

What's Changed—and What Hasn't

Compared to even a year ago, the biggest shift isn't a dramatic change in panel rankings; it's the continued acceleration of an existing trend. Exposed-fastener panels still lead in volume.

“Exposed-fastener remains dominant, but concealed-fastener/standing seam demand is increasing, especially in residential and premium applications,” Beck said.

What has changed is the rate at which standing seam and other concealed-fastener systems are gaining acceptance, particularly in residential and light commercial markets. That shift isn't replacing exposed-fastener systems, instead it's expanding the markets around them. The result is a more segmented industry, where panel choice is less about a single “most popular” profile and more about matching the system to the application, budget, and long-term expectations of the building owner. **MR**

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Success Strategies

Getting Off the Roof, Into the Office

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By Adam Spooner, Pareto Impact Consulting

Growing a business takes time. As a roofing contractor who is just starting out you feel you don't have enough time in the day to get the tasks done you need to so you can get off the roof and into the office. Following these few steps will help you achieve your goals for your business and for yourself as a small business owner.

Work on your business, not in your business

This means taking a step back from the day-to-day operations and focusing on the strategic aspects of your business, such as developing new products or services, expanding your market reach, and building your team. If you are not doing these things, who is? To be blunt, no one is going to care about your business more than you. This must be your responsibility.

Delegate tasks to others

Once you have a clear vision for your business, you need to start delegating tasks to others so you can free up your time to focus on the most important things. This may be difficult at first, but it is essential for the growth of

your business. The best teams have involvement from everyone with each person operating close to capacity and helping each other. This starts with giving them the opportunity to contribute through delegation and cross training.

Invest in systems and processes

Creating systems and processes will help you streamline your operations and make your business more efficient. This will free up your time so you can focus on the more strategic aspects of your business. Doing so removes the "I need to do everything around here" obstacle. Start small with 20% that will impact the 80% and don't over complicate the activity of process mapping.

Take time for yourself

It is important to take time for yourself, both physically and mentally, so that you can recharge and come back to your business with fresh ideas. This will help you be more productive and effective in the long run. For the small business owner this is often accomplished best by planning the time to spend in the executive chair while

still spending time in the truck with the field teams. After all this is a path made with small steps.

Working *on* your business is essential for its long-term success. By taking the time to step back from the day-to-day operations and focus on the strategic aspects of your business, you can set yourself up for growth and success.

Five actionable strategies you can use to move from working in your business to free up time to work on your business include:

Identifying your strengths and weaknesses

Take a look at yourself and understand what you are good at and what you don't enjoy doing. Once you know your strengths and weaknesses, you can start to delegate tasks to others based on their skills and experience.

Create a system for managing your time and tasks

Creating this system will help you to stay organized and on track. Many different time management systems are available, so find one that works for you and stick to it.

Set boundaries

It is important to set boundaries between your work life and your personal life. For instance, don't check work emails or messages outside of work hours. It also means taking time for yourself each day to relax and refresh.

Outsource tasks

Many tasks can be outsourced to other businesses or individuals. This will free up time so that you can focus on the most important aspects of your business.

Take breaks

It is important to take breaks throughout the day, even if it is just for a few minutes. Get up and move around, or step outside for some fresh air. Taking breaks will help you to stay focused and productive.

By following these actionable strategies, you can start to move from working in your business to freeing up time to work on your business. This will allow you to focus on the strategic aspects of your business, such as developing new products or services, expanding your market reach, and building your team. As a result, you will be more likely to achieve your business goals and objectives.

No one is going to care about your business more than you.

Additional tips

Start small. Don't try to change everything at once. Start by delegating one or two tasks to others. Once you

have mastered that, you can start to delegate more.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. There are many people who can help you to free up your time and work on your business. This includes business coaches, consultants, and other small business owners.

Be patient. It takes time to change the way you work. Don't get discouraged if you don't see results immediately. Just keep at it and eventually you will reach your goals. **MR**

Adam Spooner is a co-founder of Pareto Impact Consulting, a business consulting firm helping small to medium-sized business owners grow by delivering customized solutions that drive growth, increase profitability, and create a lasting impact.

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7 Steps To a Successful Sale

A Proven System for Roofing Sales Professionals

By Office Rescue for DuraCraft Roofing

In today's competitive roofing market, the lowest price doesn't win the sale — the clearest process does.

Too many contractors rely on charm, discounts, or pressure to close deals. But consistent, predictable growth comes from a repeatable system — one that builds real trust, uncovers genuine problems, and positions your solution as the obvious choice. At DuraCraft Roofing, every successful sale follows seven essential steps. Master them, and you'll close more deals, earn more referrals, and build a reputation that speaks for itself.

Step 1: Prepare

The sale begins before you ever knock on the door.

Preparation isn't just reviewing measurements or product specs. It's entering every conversation with the right mindset. Your goal isn't to "sell a roof." Your goal is to eliminate a problem and genuinely improve someone's life.

When you shift from selling to serving, everything changes. You listen differently. You communicate differently. And the customer feels it. That subtle shift is where great salespeople are made.

Step 2: Build Trust and Rapport

When you sit down at a homeowner's kitchen table, you're a stranger. Until trust is built, nothing else matters — not your product, not your price, not your pitch.

People do business with those they know, like, and trust. Build that

connection early. Find common ground. Listen actively. Show genuine curiosity about their concerns. Rapport isn't a script — it's presence.

Don't rush this step. Trust is the foundation everything else is built on. Invest the time to earn it, and the rest of the conversation becomes remarkably easy.

Step 3: Ask Questions

Once trust is established, shift the

Overcoming Price Objections

Any price objection can be overcome by increasing perceived value. Here's how.

Step 1: Change Your Mindset

You don't lose a sale because your price is too high. You lose it because the customer's perceived value is too low. Believe in what you're offering — that belief shows up in your tone, your posture, and your language.

Step 2: Use Value Multipliers

A value multiplier is anything that eliminates a problem and improves your client's life.

Physical value multipliers (visible and measurable): product features, superior workmanship, strong warranties, energy savings data, ROI comparisons, free samples.

Emotional value multipliers (felt, not measured): rapport, empathy, education, open communication, trust, safety, and peace of mind.

Most people buy emotionally and justify logically. Emotional value drives the decision; physical value defends it.

Step 3: Choose the Generous Approach

The selfish approach asks: "How do I close this sale?" The generous approach asks: "How does this product genuinely improve their life?"

When perceived value exceeds cost, price objections fade. **MR**

focus entirely to the homeowner's needs. Too many reps launch straight into a presentation. Instead, ask:

- What concerns you most about your current roof?
- Have you experienced leaks, energy loss, or storm damage?
- What's most important to you when choosing a roofing contractor?

Your goal is to uncover pain points. The more clearly you understand their problem, the easier it becomes to position your solution as the right answer.

Step 4: Link Their Problem to Your Product

This is where most sales conversations fall apart. Reps talk about features instead of solutions.

Don't explain what your product does. Explain how it fixes their specific problem.

If they're worried about leaks, show how your installation process prevents water intrusion. If they're concerned about energy bills, walk them through insulation performance and long-term savings. If they're skeptical about contractors, explain your communication standards and project management process.

Your product should feel like the logical, inevitable answer to the concerns they've already shared with you.

Step 5: Ask for the Sale

If you've followed the process, this moment should feel natural — not uncomfortable. Keep it simple and open-ended:

"Are there any questions or concerns

you'd like to address before we move forward?"

This invites clarity instead of confrontation. It gives the homeowner space to voice any hesitation so you can address it directly. After you ask — pause. Let them think. Silence is powerful, and confidence closes deals.

**Step 6:
Handle Objections**

Almost every objection falls into one of three categories: time, trust, or money.

Time: Ask, “When would be a good time for us to reconnect?” and schedule it on the spot. A vague “call me later” becomes a defined next step.

Trust: Return to Step 2. Strengthen rapport. Share testimonials, case studies, and proof of workmanship. Trust is built through consistency and credibility — not just words.

Money: When price is the sticking point, the issue is rarely the number itself — it’s perceived value. Increase the perceived value, and the price becomes justified. (See sidebar: Overcoming Price Objections.)

**Step 7:
Schedule, Reassure,
and Ask for Referrals**

The sale isn’t over when the contract is signed.

Schedule the project immediately. Then ask: “How does it feel knowing this problem is about to be solved?” This reinforces their confidence in the decision they’ve just made.

Then ask: “Who do you know that might be dealing with something similar?”

Happy customers are your most powerful marketing tool. Referrals should be part of your standard process — never an afterthought.

Process Over Price

Successful sales aren’t built on pressure or persuasion. They’re built on clarity



PHOTO COURTESY OF DURACRAFT ROOFING.

and value.

When you prepare properly, build genuine trust, ask the right questions, connect your solution to real problems, ask confidently for the sale, handle objections with strategy, and follow through professionally — you create a

buying experience that simply feels right to the customer.

When perceived value exceeds cost, the decision becomes easy.

Master the process, and the sales will follow. **MR**

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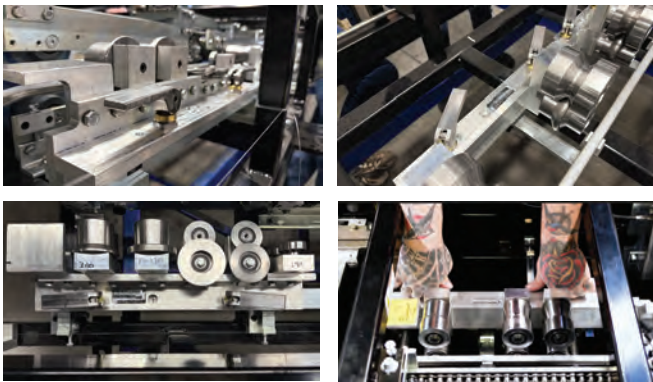
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New Tech Machinery QWIKSwap™ Tooling for SSQ3 MultiPro

New Tech Machinery (NTM) has announced the release of its new QWIKSwap™ tooling, a quick-change tooling designed to cut changeover time by roughly 50%. QWIKSwap is available exclusively on NTM's new SSQ3™ MultiPro Roof & Wall Panel machine and is engineered to help operators reduce downtime while keeping production consistent.

"From an operator standpoint, it's been pretty straightforward," said Alex Crisman, NTM's Products Engineering Director. "Everything about the tooling adjustments remains the same—whether you're using bolts or the new lever-style setup. The main difference is how quickly you can get the tooling in and out."

QWIKSwap is designed to streamline the physical in-and-out process of tooling changeovers while maintaining the same forming performance customers expect from the SSQ3 MultiPro. Because QWIKSwap uses handles, no tools are required.

Internal observations show the time savings can be dramatic: one documented changeover was completed in less than ten minutes compared to 45 minutes on standard tooling; however, tooling varies and operators should expect around 20-minute profile changeovers.

As importantly, QWIKSwap does not change how the SSQ3 MultiPro runs day-to-day.

"Nothing that we've seen has changed in terms of the panel coming out," Crisman added. "Operations are the same—no impact on speed or consistency."

QWIKSwap tooling is designed to remain secure in the SSQ3 during transport, even on rough roads, as the handles lock the profiles in place.

Said NTM Vice President Terry McGuire, "Our QWIKSwap tooling is designed to streamline panel production and increase ROI without compromising durability or quality."

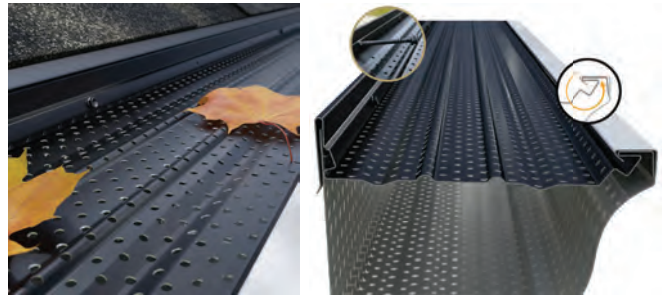
NTM recommends a consistent, proven changeover sequence:

- When installing tooling, start from the exit side of the machine and work forward
- When removing tooling, start at the front of the machine and work backward

This approach helps ensure smooth removal/installation.

QWIKSwap™ tooling is available only on the SSQ3 MultiPro. While most NTM profile options are offered in QWIKSwap, a few are not yet available.

www.newtechmachinery.com



EZ-Gutter Guard SASQUATCH Hangerless Gutter Protection

The Beast has been unleashed in Las Vegas as Sasquatch™, the newest breakthrough innovation from E-Z Gutter Guard and Midwest Enterprises.

Sasquatch installs on the ground WITH the gutter for reinforced strength from end to end. It locks securely into the front hem of the gutter and is secured through a patent-pending rear screw ledge that allows screws to be pre-started on the ground. From there the entire system is fastened into the fascia, creating a strong connection that won't rust, buckle or collapse under the weight of heavy snow and ice.

"Sasquatch has been a labor of love for the past five years," says Perry Ealer, President and CEO of Midwest Enterprises. "As with all of our products, Sasquatch has been meticulously designed with the contractor in mind—easy to install, timesaving, no hangers, and superior water management and durability once installed."

Sasquatch is constructed with solid, perforated, and painted .019" high-strength aluminum. In areas where ice and snow loads are extreme, Sasquatch is also available in .022" heavy-duty Arctic Extreme. In areas where pine needles and oak pollen are prevalent, an optional Fine Debris Filter is available and installs quickly and easily over Sasquatch.

"I believe we can save 30 minutes to an hour per gutter installation job using Sasquatch," says Greg Aholt, President of Aholt's Seamless Gutter in St. Louis, Missouri. "Using Sasquatch eliminates a second step of installing gutter protection after the gutter is on the house. It's all in one, which gives us time to potentially get in another job during the day and make more money."

Sasquatch carries a lifetime, limited, transferable warranty and meets critical ASTM 2768 fire-resistance standards for flame spread. When the Fine Debris filter is added, the Sasquatch system also meets the strict ASTM 2886 standard for ember intrusion.

"We have been contractors, and we know contractors," continues Ealer. "We know what works and what doesn't. Sasquatch is a whole new way of approaching gutters and gutter protection, and this product is designed to make the whole process easier, more efficient, and effective."

<https://e-zgutter.com/>



SmartCut™ Touch Screen Gloves

Brass Knuckle has combined touch screen compatibility and rugged protection, dexterity, and grip in its SmartCut Touch Screen Gloves.

The Brass Knuckle® SmartCut™ BKCRT201 Touch Screen Gloves feature medium cut protection, excellent dexterity and grip, and special touch screen fingertips. This facilitates device usage while providing all the safety and durability needed on the job. Because workers can keep their gloves on to handle screen work, they don't have to remember to put them back on – a win for safety compliance.

Just as technology has integrated into virtually every aspect of life, touch screens have become increasingly visible in manufacturing and construction environments.

Multiple manufacturers provide rugged devices designed especially for the harsh conditions of the construction market. Similarly, SmartCut™ Touch Screen Gloves are made to protect hands while providing access to and usability with computer touch screens.

In addition to their touchscreen capability, these gloves feature ultra-high molecular-weight polyethylene fiber, which offers ANSI cut resistance level A2 protection. Thinner, 13-gauge material facilitates dexterity. Excellent dry-grip functionality is enhanced by a non-sticky polyurethane (PU) coating on the palm and fingers, which also enhances puncture protection and abrasion resistance. All without adding bulk, reducing touch sensitivity or negatively impacting touchscreen compatibility.

www.brassknuckleprotection.com

Asecos Lithium-Ion Battery Charging and Storage Cabinets With Built In Fire Suppression

Third generation Energy Storage Cabinets from asecos are designed specifically for storing, or charging and storing lithium-ion batteries. Available in one- or two-door models, these new cabinets feature insulated shelves designed to help slow the spread of fire between storage levels during a lithium-ion battery incident. The shelf design supports asecos' safety philosophy of allowing the event to burn itself out while limiting internal escalation, supporting waste heat dissipation and enabling rapid smoke detection within the cabinet. When coupled with an optional fire alarm that can connect to the facility's alarm system, this system quickly notifies teams if smoke/heat/fire is detected inside the cabinet. An optional fire suppression system is also available. With 90 minutes of fire resistance from outside to inside (type 90 / type tested in accordance with EN 14470-1) and for more than 90 minutes fire resistance for fires from inside to outside, these purpose-built cabi-

nets protect against fire hazards due to thermal runaway, deep discharge, mechanical deformation, or chemical reaction. A variety of Energy Storage Cabinets are available, making them ideal for manufacturers, dealers and distributors incorporating Lithium-ion batteries into their products, as well as facilities using them.

All units feature solidly welded construction for a long service life. Constructed with powder-coated sheet metal for increased protection against corrosion, scratch- and impact-resistance, and an easy to clean surface. They incorporate a tested, liquid-tight spill sump to manage battery leaks that may catch fire. Each fireproof lithium-ion battery storage cabinet also features self-closing, lockable doors and high-quality oil-damped door closers for enhanced safety. Each cabinet is equipped with a transport base with forklift pockets to allow rapid movement in case of an incident. Once the cabinet is outside of the building at a safe location, rescue personnel can identify any further measures necessary.

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This re-roofing project in Anna Maria, Florida, was installed by Blue Vision Roofing Inc. (<https://bluevisionroofing.com/>). An older metal roof was replaced to match a newly-built addition. The owners' old roof had withstood multiple hurricanes and was still in good shape after 25 years, so the owners trusted their new Galvalume metal roof would also stand the test of time as well as extreme high winds and hurricanes without issue. The material was rolled and cut onsite by Sunshine Metal Supply and expertly installed by Blue Vision Roofing. This roof is designated as a Best Residential Metal Roofing Project by the MRA. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE METAL ROOFING ALLIANCE

Residential Metal Roofing Is Booming

Experts Share 5 Essential Tips To Help Businesses thrive

By Renee Ramey, Metal Roofing Alliance

In comparison to other roofing material types, prospects for residential metal roofing as a fast-growing, profitable business opportunity are bright. That's because of metal roofing's inherent advantages and benefits. As a long-lasting, reliable, better performing and sustainable choice, more homeowners than ever before are interested in installing a metal roof on their home.

In short, it's a fantastic time to get into the residential roofing market in the U.S. and Canada. But how do you set yourself up for success? Here are the top five strategies experts at the Metal Roofing Alliance (MRA) suggest that will help you not only survive, but thrive in today's residential metal roofing business:

1) Partner with a quality metal roofing manufacturer.

To help you succeed long term, it's essential to partner with a reputable manufacturer that stands for quality, which is defined in the details, such as using the right metal substrate, gauge and appropriate coatings. Doing so is the key to reliability, longevity and ultimately, satisfied customers, reducing call-backs and warranty issues while helping you increase job site efficiency. Partner with a manufacturer that will stand behind their products, offers quality installation resources and has a track record of success.

Manufacturer and contractor members of leading trade organizations like the Metal Roofing Alliance stand behind this philosophy. They represent industry

leaders who know that delivering on the promise of quality directly impacts the bottom line, and ultimately the reputation and future of the industry.

2) Prioritize training and building skills.

While it's true the time and training necessary to become skilled in the metal roofing trade is slightly higher, the payoff is clear: the demand for metal roofing is tracking to outpace the need not only for installers, but other related careers in the field, for the foreseeable future. And unlike commoditized products such as asphalt, residential metal roofing jobs are more profitable, with customers less likely to be "value-shopping" and more willing to pay for quality and a job done right.

According to MRA members, the trade should understand that the installation process for a quality metal roofing job is more specialized and requires a higher skill set than installing conventional shingles, but there are plenty of good ways to receive training and education.

As Philippe LaPlante, MRA board member and Vice-President of Sales and Marketing for Ideal Roofing puts it, “Many manufacturers offer free seminars. For example, at Ideal Roofing, we offer a training course at our manufacturing plants. We also have an installation rep who will visit jobsites to train anyone interested in metal roofing.”

Additionally, classes, information and training are available through organizations such as the Metal Construction Association (MCA). For installers who stay in the industry and reach a level of mastery, Todd Miller, MRA board president and president of Isaiah Industries suggests checking out NRCA’s ProCertification program.

“At minimum, find a manufacturer who will not only provide initial training on their systems but be there as an ongoing resource to answer your questions and provide support. Try to tour some manufacturing facilities so you understand the industry better,” he said.

3) Use technology to your advantage.

Technology is advancing rapidly, and the residential metal roofing industry is benefiting from it. There are plenty of software solutions on the market that help eliminate project waste, offer precise installation guidance and accurate estimating to help you save time, money and give you the ability to deliver on customer expectations. There also are AI tools that help customers visualize how a new metal roof will improve the look and performance of their homes, and can help you problem-solve or assist with providing accurate customer information, answering questions and setting expectations.

4) Perfect your in-home sales process.

The right technology is important to take the guesswork out of the bidding, installation and customer support process—while helping reduce mistakes and call-backs—but it doesn’t replace the need for good customer service practices. As Miller says, “It does not take many mistakes out there to give the entire industry a black eye. Metal roofing can be profitable but we all must take it seriously. Spend time listening to property owners and addressing their concerns. That will help set you above your competition.”

The path to success also includes fine-tuning in-home sales (while you are at the table with the homeowner), as well as focusing on how to make the decision-making process as easy as possible for prospective customers. Consider offering financing options by partnering with a third party financial provider that may be able to assist with providing real-time estimating capabilities. Be sure to provide references that speak to your experience and work, and ensure a high level of customer service.

It’s important to keep in mind that being responsive is also a characteristic of successful contractors. From a manufacturer’s perspective, it is not uncommon to hear homeowner complaints about not receiving something as simple as a return phone call from contractors. That’s a missed opportunity and may cause customers to turn to alternative options even if they aren’t as good.

5) Build out your team and utilize industry resources.

Miller suggests, “My advice to contractors is to first get a good CPA, attorney, and insurance agent to start your company on the right foot. Then find a product / manufacturer to align yourself with and take advantage of all the training they offer for marketing, sales, and installation. Learn from those who are already successful and then begin to put your own spin on things for

your own individual success.”

Leaning on professional organizations such as the MRA for assistance in driving awareness, providing information homeowners need to make well-informed decisions, and lending third party validation can help those in the metal roofing business strengthen their reputations. These types of groups help pool resources and drive awareness, information, and channel demand for residential metal roofing in ways that individual companies alone may not be able to afford.

For more information about how to take advantage of the many opportunities that today’s residential metal roofing market offers, visit the Metal Roofing Alliance at www.metalroofing.com. **MR**

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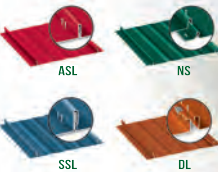
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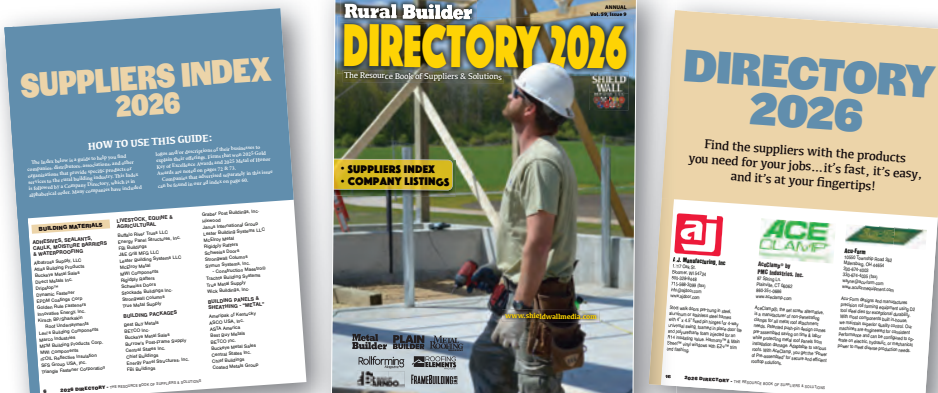

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This home utilizes a penetration-free solar attachment solution, ensuring the roof manufacturer's warranty remains intact, alongside an engineered snow retention system that perfectly complements the roof's design and enhances its longevity. PHOTO COURTESY OF OLIVER FRAZIER, SUNTUITY SOLAR

How Rooftop Modifications & Accessories Impact Metal Roof Warranties

By Rob Haddock

Once considered a specialty option, metal roofing has become mainstream, with contractors, designers and manufacturers all seeing demand climb as owners prioritize long service life, resilience to extreme weather conditions, and lower lifecycle maintenance.

A building's roof has become an active mounting platform for rooftop solar, snow retention, mechanical equipment, fall protection, communication

equipment and other accessories.

The increase in use makes roof warranty preservation a shared responsibility across the project team. The accessory itself is rarely the problem. The attachment method, material compatibility and coordination—or lack of it—are what determine whether a warranted roof remains warranted.

Warranties Are Performance Agreements, Not Formalities

A manufacturer's warranty is a performance agreement tied to the roof

being installed and used within defined parameters. It's not simply a backstop for panel defects; it's the manufacturer's statement that the roof will behave as tested and approved for a given service life. That behavior can include finish durability, structural performance and weathertightness—provided the system remains within the basis of design, product data and warranty language.

What often gets overlooked in the field is that warranties are conditional. They assume the roof will not be altered in ways that change drainage paths, thermal

movement, protective coatings or in short—panel integrity. When rooftop modifications introduce conditions outside those terms, manufacturers can classify resulting issues as field-created conditions rather than product failures. From a risk standpoint, that is where accessory work intersects directly with future claim viability.

For roofing contractors and general contractors, warranty conditionality translates to downstream liability if attachment decisions weren't defensible. For architects and specifiers, it means that accessory criteria must be embedded in design and not treated as a separate afterthought. For manufacturers, it reinforces why clear, enforceable guidance on allowable attachments is essential—not just for product performance, but for protecting the integrity of the roof's warranty itself.

Two Mounting Paths, Two Very Different Risk Profiles

Most rooftop accessories interact with metal roofing through one of two attachment strategies. Standing seam systems typically rely on non-penetrating clamps that engage the seam mechanically. Exposed-fastened systems often secure accessories with



Installing solar panels with penetration-free attachment solutions preserves the integrity of a standing seam metal roof while simplifying the installation process. PHOTO COURTESY OF S-51

brackets that penetrate the panel surface and fasten into the structure or substrate below. Both approaches can be appropriate, but their risk profiles differ sharply depending on roof type, efficacy of the attachment and warranty terms.

Standing seam roofs are engineered to move under thermal cycling, and that movement is fundamental to

performance. Attachments that restrain or interrupt the freedom of roof panel movement can create stress concentrations and violate roof integrity. Even a well-intentioned penetration detail can be treated as a functional alteration from a warranty perspective if it violates roof integrity.

Exposed-fastened roofs are different by design, since they already incorporate sealed fasteners through the panel into the substrate. That doesn't make additional penetrations automatically acceptable, but it does mean they can be compatible with warranty intent when they are engineered, sealed and executed prudently. The risk escalates when the project team assumes any rooftop hardware is "just another attachment," rather than a modification to a warranted assembly.

Where Warranty Breakdowns Usually Start

Warranty failures tied to rooftop accessories typically show up in three familiar ways. The first is unapproved penetration—holes placed through panels, seams or critical drainage areas without a roof manufacturer-recognized



Opt for standing seam clamps that won't penetrate your roof, ensuring a secure attachment while preserving the integrity of your roof system. PHOTO COURTESY OF S-51

detail. These are easy for manufacturers to trace, and their presence alone can be enough to shift responsibility away from the roof product.

The second breakdown point is compromised weathertightness. Poor seal design, incorrect fastener selection, or geometry that doesn't align with the panel profile can fail under thermal cycling and environmental loads. Once movement works a penetration or bracket loose, a relatively small detail issue becomes a repeated leak event that can spread into insulation, decking and interiors.

The third common failure is corrosion, often driven by incompatible attachment materials or by hardware that damages protective coatings. Setscrews that cut coatings, fasteners that expose raw metal or mixed-metal assemblies that accelerate galvanic action can all lead to corrosion that is excluded from coverage. Corrosion is especially problematic because it may take years to manifest—long after the accessory installation is out of mind, but not out of warranty scope or term.

Standing Seam: Non-Penetrating Is the Default for a Reason

On standing seam roofs, non-penetrating seam clamps remain the most reliable way to preserve system behavior and warranty intent. A properly engineered clamp creates a mechanical interlock between the clamp body, the seam geometry and the setscrew. That interlock provides holding strength without breaching the panel, preserving watertightness as well as warranty compliance.

Hardware selection matters more than many teams realize. Round-point setscrews are designed to grip the seam without cutting through protective coatings. Cup-point setscrews, by contrast, can pierce finishes and expose bare metal, which introduces a corrosion risk and raises immediate warranty concerns. This is a small component decision that can have long-term



Choose brackets for your metal roof that come with factory-applied butyl or EPDM to ensure a watertight seal. PHOTO COURTESY OF S-51

consequences.

Beyond screw type, seam clamps should be seam-specific and load-tested for the application. Clamp performance depends on seam geometry, material thickness and the loads expected from the accessory. When clamps are tested, documented and installed to verified torque requirements, the attachment becomes a predictable, warranty-friendly component of the roof system.

Exposed-Fastened Systems: Penetrate Only With Disciplined Detailing

Exposed-fastened roofs can accommodate penetrations, but only when detailed with the same rigor as the roof itself. Brackets should be purpose-built for the specific metal roof profile, include chemist-formulated, factory-applied butyl or EPDM sealing at the interface, and fasten in a way that distributes load without dimpling flats or stressing ribs.

The types of fasteners and sealing washers used may change how the assembly holds up over time against the elements. Best practices mandate that materials and sealing methods are equal

to or better than those used by the roof itself.

From a warranty standpoint, the accessory detail should behave like a roofing component: profile-matched, sealed by design and installed by a method that the panel manufacturer approves. The better the attachment is engineered and documented, the more defensible it is if questions arise years later.

Material Compatibility: A Small Spec With Big Consequences

Material compatibility is one of the most underestimated warranty variables. Even where attachment geometry is correct, mixed-metal interactions are a common cause of breakdown and accelerated corrosion, especially in wet or coastal environments. Many warranty exclusions explicitly reference corrosion caused by third-party attachments, so compatibility is not optional.

Aluminum clamps paired with stainless steel fasteners are broadly compatible with most common roofing metals. Copper roofs require special consideration, where brass attachments



Non-penetrating clamps will dimple the seam material, forming a mechanical interlock between the clamp, seam and setscrew when tightened. PHOTO COURTESY OF S-5!

are typically used to avoid galvanic reactions. Similar logic applies to fasteners, brackets and any isolator components in the assembly¹.

For architects and specifiers, this belongs in the accessory and roofing sections of the documents and not left to field substitution. For contractors, compatibility should be a submittal checkpoint. For manufacturers, publishing clear compatibility charts reduces the chance of avoidable failures that end up mislabeled as product issues.

Coordination Is the Real Control Point

The strongest predictor of warranty preservation isn't the accessory brand—it's the coordination process around approved attachment. Roofing contractors and manufacturers need alignment early on regarding what is compliant for that specific roof type and profile. Without that alignment, accessory layouts get value-engineered in the field,

and warranty boundaries blur fast.

General contractors must ensure the rooftop trades don't proceed with mounting practices of their choice that conflict with metal roof requirements. If they proceed with penetrations or hardware that compromises the roof warranty, the general contractor and roofing contractor may be left defending a construction detail they didn't design or approve.

Architects and specifiers play a vital role by integrating compliant attachment criteria into the project documents. Clear, coordinated requirements across all relevant scopes give specialty contractors a defined process and eliminate the need to improvise on the fly.

Roof manufacturers, for their part, can reduce downstream failures by publishing accessory-ready guidance, seam-clamp approvals, penetration limitations and compatibility charts in language that is easy to enforce in the field.

Protecting Warranties Protects Everyone

Rooftop accessories are now a permanent feature of modern buildings, and metal roofs are excellent platforms for mounting them when attachments respect the total system design. Protecting warranties isn't about limiting rooftop use; it's about enabling it without compromising the performance promise the owner purchased. That requires consistent decisions across design and construction, not just careful work by one or numerous trades.

When modifications are seam-specific, non-penetrating where appropriate, sealed and detailed as roof-grade assemblies where penetrations are allowed, and built from compatible materials, the roof remains watertight and durable for its expected service life. Those choices keep manufacturer coverage intact and reduce the likelihood of costly disputes over responsibility later.

Ultimately, every stakeholder benefits when warranty intent stays aligned with real-world rooftop use. Contractors avoid surprise liability, architects and specifiers deliver on lifecycle expectations, and manufacturers protect the integrity of their systems. Done right, rooftop accessories become part of a high-performing metal roof story—not the reason that story gets rewritten. **MR**

Rob Haddock is the CEO and founder of S-5! and the inventor of metal roof attachment solutions. A former contractor turned building-envelope scientist, Haddock has dedicated more than five decades to advancing the metal roofing industry. He is an award-winning roof-forensics expert, author, lecturer and educator, as well as the director of the Metal Roof Advisory Group, Ltd., a consulting firm specializing in metal roof design, installation and performance.

¹ <https://www.metalconstruction.org/index.php/online-education/fastener-compatibility-with-profiled-metal-roof-and-wall-panels>

METALCON Launches 40 Under 40 Recognition Program

Recognizing the Rising Leaders Shaping the Industry

METALCON has launched its new 40 Under 40 Recognition Program, highlighting rising leaders driving the future of metal construction.

Forty professionals, age 40 and under, will be honored for their work influencing projects, teams and processes – from jobsites and fabrication floors to engineering and design – at the only event where the metal construction industry comes together to make decisions, build partnerships and shape what’s next.

“The program spotlights professionals who are already making an impact across the metal construction industry while also representing its next generation of leadership,” said Judy Geller, Vice President of Trade Shows for PSMJ Resources, Inc., producers of METALCON. “These are individuals driving projects forward, improving how work gets done and helping shape where the industry is headed.”

Nominations are now open and can be submitted via the online nomination form

[<https://metalcon.com/attend/40under40/#form>] by the July 21, 2026 deadline. Honorees will be selected by a cross-industry panel based on achievement, leadership, innovation and overall impact.

“As METALCON marks its 35th anniversary, this program is about elevating the people who are actively shaping the industry’s direction,” continued Geller. “40 Under 40 puts their work—and their impact—front and center where the industry comes together.”

Selected honorees will receive industry-wide recognition, including a featured profile on METALCON.com, promotion through email, social media and trade publications, and recognition onsite at METALCON 2026, taking place October 7–9, 2026, at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. Honorees will also be invited to a Future Leaders networking reception.

Eligible nominees must be 40 years of age or younger and actively working in or contributing to the metal construction



The 40 Under 40 program spotlights professionals who are already making an impact across the metal construction industry while also representing its next generation of leadership. PHOTOS COURTESY OF NEUBEK PHOTOGRAPHERS.



industry. Candidates may be nominated by peers, managers, employees or other industry professionals, or may self-nominate with an external reference.

The program aims to elevate the professionals who are driving innovation, improving processes and leading teams across the industry today—those helping define how the industry continues to evolve.

Honorees will be announced in September and formally recognized during METALCON 2026. For more information or to complete a nomination form, visit www.metalcon.com. **MR**

Business Outlook

Construction Faces Opportunity and Headwinds in a Two-Speed Economy

Keynote insights highlight rising costs, uneven demand and sectors driving construction forward

By Fiona Maguire-O'Shea, METALCON Writer

Before leaders of the metal building industry in Colorado Springs, Colorado, keynote speaker Anirban Basu, a widely respected industry economist, underscored both the opportunities and headwinds facing construction: the U.S. economy is still growing, but growth is increasingly uneven, and industry professionals need to be clear-eyed about where opportunity exists and where risk is building.

Speaking at the joint Metal Building Contractors and Erectors Association/Metal Building Manufacturers Association (MBCEA/MBMA) event, Basu offered an early roadmap to the financing, labor, inflation and market questions facing the metal construction industry — conversations that will carry into METALCON 2026, where thousands of metal construction professionals will gather amid ongoing discussion about the market forces shaping the year ahead.

Basu, chief economist for the

Associated Builders and Contractors, the Construction Financial Management Association and the Modular Building Institute, and a former chair of the Maryland Economic Development Commission, brought a practical, construction-focused perspective to the stage. His core point was blunt: the economy is growing, but the benefits are uneven. “So, it’s a lopsided economic expansion with some families really benefiting, and other families really fading in terms of standard of living,” Basu said.



Anirban Basu, Chief Economist for the ABC, CFMA, and MBI. IMAGES COURTESY OF METALCON

Prices, Rates and Project Pressure

One of Basu’s clearest messages centered on inflation and the frustration it is creating. He said there is “a fair amount of angst out there regarding the economy,” as well as “a fair amount of unhappiness” and “a significant amount of discontent,” driven in part by rising everyday costs such as groceries. At the heart of that discontent, he said, is “high and rising prices.” He noted that overall

inflation has climbed 29% since May 2020, while core inflation has risen 25.7% over the same period.

That matters because inflation continues to keep interest rates elevated, raising the cost of capital and making many projects harder to pencil. Basu noted that after holding its benchmark rate near zero early in the pandemic, the Federal Reserve raised it to about 5.5% before later easing, but borrowing costs remain high relative to the pre-pandemic environment.

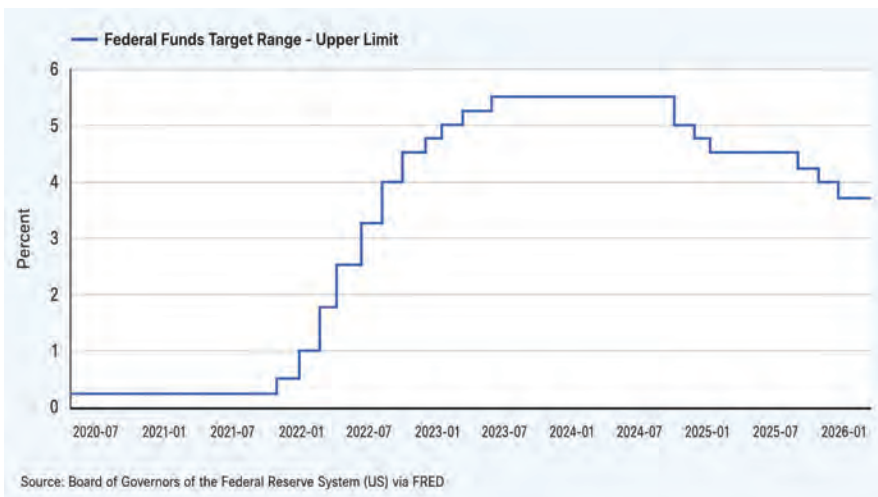
As he put it, “Borrowing costs go up, project financing costs go up. That’s not good for construction projects.” Basu said inflation is likely to linger, keeping interest rates higher for longer — an unwelcome outlook for the construction industry, which needs private financing costs to come down to support more construction starts.

That pressure is most visible in residential construction and parts of the commercial market. Basu pointed to declining housing under construction, weak permit activity and continued softness in multifamily, where many projects are simply not viable at today’s financing and input-cost levels.

He also emphasized that the office sector remains a weak spot, with remote and hybrid work continuing to weigh on vacancy in major metropolitan areas, putting pressure on property values, lender appetite and municipal tax bases. As a result, private-sector work tied to traditional office, speculative multifamily and other rate-sensitive development remains under strain.

Where Strength Is Concentrated

At the same time, Basu made clear that not all construction sectors are struggling. He singled out data centers and the energy



generation and distribution infrastructure needed to support them as two of the strongest opportunities ahead. “These two segments of construction tend to be the strongest going forward,” he said.

He described artificial intelligence as one of the defining drivers of capital spending in today’s economy, with hyperscalers, such as Amazon and Meta, spending about \$450 billion last year on related architecture and infrastructure and expected to spend \$700 billion to \$725 billion this year. He also noted that data centers used about 4.4% of U.S. electricity in 2023 and could consume well above 12% by 2028. Those trends will keep driving demand for power generation, transmission and related utility work, while also reinforcing the appeal of fast-track, durable building systems.

Public construction is another relatively bright spot. Basu showed that while total nonresidential construction has flattened, infrastructure-related categories such as transportation, water supply, sewage and waste disposal, and conservation-related work continue to benefit from public funding already moving through the system. In practical terms, that means companies with exposure to civil, utility and public-sector work may find better near-term stability than those dependent on speculative private development.

Materials Costs Remain a Problem

Basu underscored rising construction input costs, particularly in metals-related categories. He said construction materials prices overall were up 48% from February 2020 to March 2026. The more targeted figure may be even more important: Basu said the producer price index – the price received by producers – for architectural and structural metals manufacturing was up 7.4% year over year and 75% since February 2020. He also pointed to steep increases in steel mill products and fabricated structural

4 Recession Signals to Watch

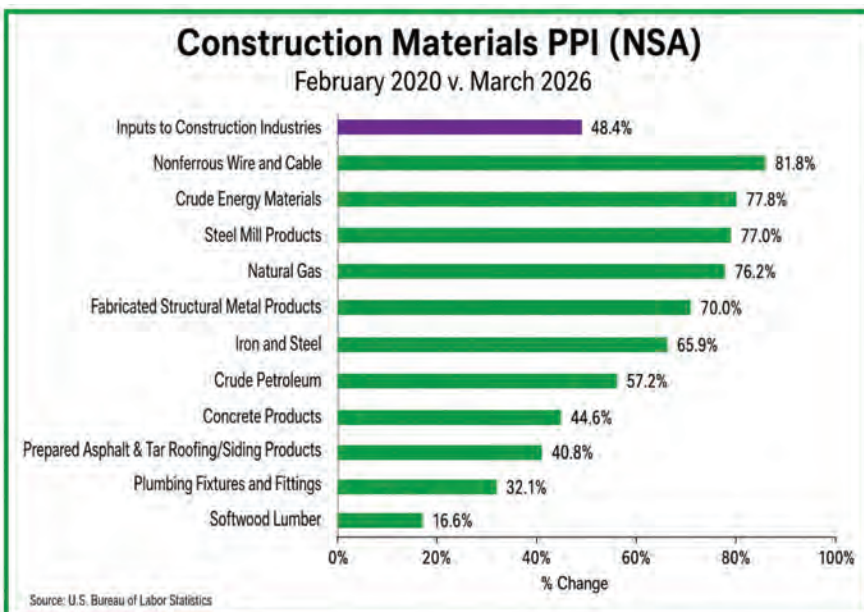
Key indicators to watch when assessing recession risk



Source: Summary of recession indicators discussed by the user.

metal products, highlighting how tariff policy and supply-side pressures continue to affect pricing.

Materials volatility continues to shape pricing, bidding, procurement strategy and project timing. In a market where owners are already struggling with financing, further escalation can push work from delayed to dead.



Labor and Location Still Matter

Labor remains another complicated piece of the outlook. Basu noted that construction job openings have not surged the way some expected, even with changes in immigration policy affecting workforce availability. He said about 25% of the construction workforce is foreign-born, but the expected increase in advertisements for native-born or documented workers has not materialized. The reason, he suggested, is that between residential and nonresidential construction, overall construction spending has been in decline, even though some individual segments continue to grow. That means labor availability, wage pressure and productivity remain key concerns, particularly in labor-intensive trades. Even where demand exists,

execution still depends on workforce access and retention.

Basu also urged the audience to think regionally, not just nationally. Some markets can transcend a weakening economy, particularly when population growth continues to drive demand. Economic momentum remains strongest in places that continue to attract people and business investment, including parts of Texas, Florida and the Carolinas. Those regions are more likely to support job creation and construction demand. Markets dealing with population outflows, weak office fundamentals or fiscal strain face a more difficult path.

What Comes Next for Metal Construction

As the industry looks ahead to METALCON 2026, the same questions Basu raised continue to shape conversations about where work is coming from, which projects still pencil and how companies can position themselves for the next phase of the cycle. Strength remains concentrated in a relatively narrow group of drivers – artificial intelligence spending, data centers, power infrastructure and public work – while other parts of the market remain constrained by financing costs, input prices and softer demand.

In closing, Basu said, “So there are four things I’m watching to

determine whether or not we’re going to enter recession.” First is the conflict in the Middle East, which he said the stock market appears to be treating as temporary, even though “it hasn’t ended yet, and things can go wrong.” Second is hyperscaler spending, particularly what major technology companies say about their investment plans. Third is the stock market’s performance, which is closely tied to that spending. Fourth is layoff activity, because hiring remains soft and a meaningful pickup in layoffs could quickly push unemployment higher and put more pressure on consumer spending.

For now, Basu said, initial unemployment claims remain low — a sign that employers are still largely holding on to their workers. That, he said, “speaks to economic stability.” His conclusion was cautiously optimistic: “My forecast is for growth in 2026.”

That leaves the industry with a message that is neither alarmist nor complacent. Opportunity remains, especially in segments tied to infrastructure, energy and advanced technology. But so do serious headwinds, particularly for projects that depend on easier financing, steadier input costs and broader private demand. That conversation will continue across the industry in the months ahead — including at METALCON 2026, scheduled for Oct. 7–9, 2026, in Orlando, Florida. **MR**

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