



# COLORADO REAL ESTATE JOURNAL

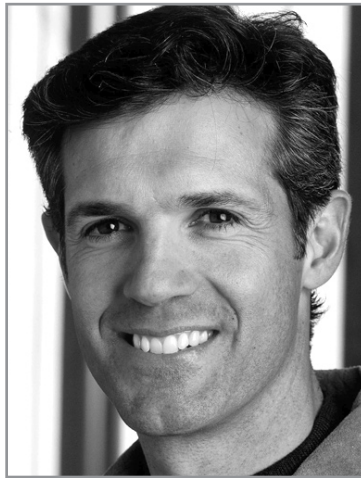
THE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL OF THE COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE COMMUNITY

AUGUST 5, 2009 – AUGUST 18, 2009

## Incorporating reconfigurable walls

**R**econfigurable walls – with their clean lines and often modern appearance – can be misinterpreted as a high-design, costly alternative to the comfort and tradition of fixed-wall construction. The converse is actually true. While reconfigurable walls have the look of a solution accessible to only a few, there is value in this approach for any size business. They offer flexibility to adapt to the constancy of change, contribute significantly to your efforts to go “green” and add “green” to your bottom line.

■ **Efficiency.** Change in business can come in many forms – reduction of work force, new employees, additional business units, changes in business processes (the list goes on) – so being able to adapt to change quickly and nimbly is an imperative. Yet most businesses forego a proactive stance to adaptation because historically it has been costly and disruptive. There is a cost to this inaction. Studies show that typically there is as much as an 80 percent reduction in effectiveness in the work space before a business cures the issue. Reconfiguring office environments to keep in step with the evolution of a business can be an integral part of achieving and maintaining a competitive advantage in every industry. Reconfigurable walls can facilitate office space moves, adds and changes while keeping employees and



**Bob Neuman**

Co-founder and owner, Teammates Commercial Interiors, Lakewood

business processes running smoothly in a fraction of the time and cost it takes to change traditional fixed-in-place construction. In just a few hours you can move walls and change spaces – all for a fraction of the cost – and with considerably less employee disruption and mess than with fixed-wall construction. And because these wall systems are clipped to the ceiling and sit on top of the carpet, there is no drywall to patch or carpet to replace. A large-scale installation of reconfigurable walls can reduce the schedule by weeks or even months over traditional construction.

■ **Sustainability.** With fixed-wall construction, reconfiguring your space also can mean a lot of

waste. Architectural walls are reusable; installing and reconfiguring them means no waste – no drywall, paint or screws, and no waste shipping to landfills. In addition, architectural walls have none of the on-site dust, noxious fumes and noise pollution associated with dry-wall construction, contributing to better indoor air quality over fixed-wall construction. Reducing waste is a big step in achieving a sustainable workplace, and demonstrating sustainability in the workplace is becoming a necessity, not just for our conscience but also to achieve a competitive advantage. Many clients and prospects are requiring certain levels of sustainable business practices from their partners, vendors and suppliers. Architectural walls can contribute significantly to a company’s efforts toward environmental responsibility, whether by demonstrating certifications or compliances or simply through the product’s contribution toward reduced waste and improved indoor air quality.

■ **Economy.** The savings realized through reconfiguration or sustainability may not be a line item on your financial statement, but consider this: Architectural walls are considered personal property, which means accelerated depreciation and generous deductions at “tax time.” Like office furniture, architectural

walls depreciate at a rate of 7 1/2 years; fixed-wall construction depreciates at a rate of 39 years.

Section 179 of the Internal Revenue Service tax code allows for significant deductions for purchases under \$800,000 within the 2009 tax year. Essentially a qualifying product, whether purchased or leased, can be largely deducted from a business’ gross income.

Also, keeping your work space in step with your business processes and culture yields a profound financial impact through employee attraction and retention. When your office space is in sync with the objectives of the business, the message is loud and clear to staff. Increasing productivity even a small percent will put significant dollars to the bottom line that could vastly outstrip the initial cost for the office environment. While opportunity cost does not appear on a typical financial statement it is nonetheless real and focus on capturing the full value of the office environment can help achieve a competitive advantage for your business.

Offering flexibility, economy and the ability to meet environmental standards, reconfigurable wall systems have a clear advantage over fixed-wall construction. So if you think reconfigurable walls will have you seeing red, think again, you should be seeing “green.”