



Building Products that Simplify Construction Process Mitigate Skilled Labor Shortage

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The recent housing recession, the worst since the Great Depression, created a crisis for real estate developers, mortgage lenders and homeowners. But arguably the most detrimental outcome of the recession is the shortage of skilled labor. For the building trade, there was either no work to be found, or the work that existed was not profitable. Labor rates plummeted, and jobs were eliminated.

The construction industry is thankfully on the rebound, but the skilled trade shortage has reached epidemic proportions. The Associated General Contractors of America estimates that a majority of the two million construction workers who lost their jobs during the recession have either retired or found work in other industries.

Without enough trained workers to go around, builders are faced with costly delays and cash-flow problems. They are being forced to go lean — in manpower, scheduling, process and products.

One way an increasing number of builders are streamlining their operations is by switching to products that simplify

the construction process and reduce the number of workers needed on site.

Some experts estimate that the labor deficit has added 30 percent to the average time it takes to build a home. ZIP System® sheathing and tape is a one-of-a-kind structural roof and wall system that goes up in just two easy steps: install the panels, tape the seams. The process results in 40 percent faster installation when compared with traditional housewrap or building paper.



ZIP System® sheathing panels have a single-piece design that makes installation quick and simple. One panel delivers moisture protection and tight air seal, as well as excellent strength and durability. Traditional long length wall sheathing can reduce the number of horizontal joints and the need for



blocking, but these walls still rely on traditional housewrap to complete the job. ZIP System® long length sheathing combines the benefits of a longer panel with the ability to completely eliminate the need for housewrap, which cuts down on time and labor costs. The panels come in four convenient sizes.

ZIP System® tape is quickly and easily applied by hand or by using a special tape gun, maximizing jobsite efficiency. It's ideal for both seam sealing and flashing, is made of an advanced acrylic adhesive, and is proven to deliver a superior airtight and watertight seal that withstands years of harsh weather.

Keith Anderson, president of Clark Builders Group and a veteran in multi-family construction, recently began using ZIP System sheathing and tape and now needs only one crew for framing and siding instead of two or even three.

“At one point we were hiring individual companies to install and maintain just the building paper, but that was unsustainable,” says Anderson. “Once we discovered ZIP System sheathing and tape, we saw an opportunity to make life easier while making our product more reliable.”

The built-in water-resistive vapor-permeable barrier is ideal for waterproofing, which is of the utmost importance for any construction project.

Multi-family construction often requires more customization than homebuilding, adding to the complexity. Anderson says that ZIP System sheathing and tape provides a solid base for every project.

“Some homebuilders are building five or six different things 10,000 times. For me, I’m building a snowflake every single time. None of our projects are the same, but ZIP System sheathing and tape always guarantees a job well done.”

Huber Engineered Woods’ ZIP System products are helping builders bounce back from the recession by minimizing the number of skilled workers it takes to get the job done.