



Competitive Forces

Dale Nelson, Posted 02/25/2013

Every contractor has competition. So does every manufacturer and every installer. The best we can do is to try to keep the bidding as fair as possible. When you are trying to sell a metal-over-metal retrofit, and you are competing against a coating contractor, keeping things fair can be a bit more challenging.

You will be more expensive, which is a given. The good news is you will not be a lot more expensive. We typically hear a price difference of about 30 to 40 percent. That's not exactly pocket change, but remember that you are providing a superior product with a significantly longer roof service life.

Coatings, done properly, require a tremendous amount of surface preparation: capping fasteners, taping seams and an even and consistent sprayed-on application of the product on all surfaces. That's not easily done.

Use this information to remind your client of some important facts:

- An improperly applied coating will actually significantly decrease the life of the old roof. Moisture trapped between the coating and the old metal panels can destroy the integrity of the panel in less than a year.
- Coatings do nothing to improve the design load capacity of the old roof. In fact, they may hide major defects or significantly change water flow, potentially leading to a roof collapse.
- Coatings cannot bring the old building to the current building code requirements, which in some cases mean the corners of the roof may be under current requirements by 300 to 400 percent. The old building code considered roof loads to be uniform across the entire roof. Plus, they further allowed wind loads to be reduced by 33 percent since they were not constant loads. The new, more stringent code does not allow this reduction, and it evaluates the roof by corner, edge and field zones, which is a much more real-world design.
- A new metal roof will meet the current stringent building codes.
- It may provide reductions in insurance rates.
- It can improve the energy efficiency of the building.
- Old screw-down roofs are easily upgraded to standing seam systems with no exposed fasteners that have long-term weather tightness warranties.

- Finally, and most importantly, a new metal roof will last more than 50 years, which is truly a great value for very little more investment.

Use the strengths that metal roofing brings to the equation to level the playing field between yourself and your spray-on roof coating competition.

Dale Nelson is president of Lutz, Fla.-based Roof Hugger, a leader in the metal-over-metal retrofit roof category. Nelson also serves on the Metal Construction Association board of directors. To learn more, visit www.roofhugger.com.