

## Dispelling the Myths of Modular Construction

*There's more to modular than just the time advantages*

*by Tom Hardiman*

Commercial modular construction is an accelerated form of construction that provides quality buildings in a reduced timeframe. Most people are familiar with the time advantages of modular construction—buildings can be delivered in as little as half the time of site-built construction—but many myths still persist:

**Myth: Commercial modular buildings offer limited utility.**

**Reality: Modular construction provides flexibility.**

Modular buildings offer owners increased flexibility not only in the application of the building, but also in the acquisition itself. Owners have the option of utilizing capital or operational budgets because modular buildings can be either purchased or leased. And, more purchasers are turning to modular construction because of its relocation features. In many cases, an owner is in the process of looking for a permanent facility site, but needs to start utilizing new space right away. Modular buildings can be placed at a temporary location and moved to the permanent site at a later date.

**Myth: Commercial modular buildings are low quality.**

**Reality: Modular construction provides quality assurance.**

Commercial modular structures are built to the same local building codes as their stick-built counterparts. Additionally, modular builders have quality-assurance programs in place to guarantee that production standards, methods, and materials have continuity. In fact, most states require that the building manufacturer have an approved quality-assurance program and that it be monitored by an accredited, third party agency.



*Wells Fargo Construction by  
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### Choosing a Commercial Modular Builder

If you will be purchasing a modular building, then you can take a few steps in locating the right builder for your project:

**Ask for referrals.** Most likely, you have some colleagues who have been through this process and can provide recommendations for vendors.

**Look at other modular projects.** Visit other commercial sites where potential vendors have provided buildings so that you can see the end result.

**Research the vendor.** Ask how long the modular provider has been in business and inquire about their knowledge of both local and state codes.

**Check references.** Providers should be able to supply you with a list of past customers. Call these references to see what the other purchasers' experiences with that builder have been.

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These third-party agencies make inspections on both the modular builder's plant and the building under construction. Where a third-party agency is not a local requirement, building department officials and/or certifying engineers typically assume the same inspection role.

**Myth: Modular buildings allow few design choices.**

**Reality: Modular construction provides traditional aesthetic choices.**

More and more architecture firms are teaming with modular builders on buildings such as banks and restaurants (pictured in the sidebar). These projects deliver traditionally furnished buildings in about half the time. Success on these types of projects speaks to a level of customization you can expect when you choose modular construction. Owners can have the traditional finishes they have come to expect from site-built construction. The key advantage, however, is the speed to occupancy in the modular building.

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