

# MSI GENERAL CORPORATION



## IDENTIFYING, INNOVATING, AND INTEGRATING THROUGH SUSTAINABLE BUILDING

by **Christopher Cussat**

*Above: Beerline Crossing, a 2007 urban renewal project that demolished and transformed 17 vacant industrial and commercial buildings into updated offices, tenant and warehouse space.*

SOMETIMES A SIMPLE PHILOSOPHY IS the best. MSI General Corporation has built its long tradition of excellence and success on relatively simple ideals: quality design-build services, professional diversity, and personalized customer relationships. This fundamental formula easily translates into the company's recent conversion to green practices.

Founded by Pete and Claude Debbink in 1957, it was originally known as Metal Structures Incorporated. When Claude passed away a few years later, Pete carried on the family business

as Metal Structures, Inc., and in 1972, the company name was changed to MSI General Corporation.

According to Don Frost, vice president of design/estimating, MSI General is a full-service design-build contractor in every sense of the term. "We employ professional architects, structural engineers, civil engineers, interior designers, estimators, project managers, field personnel, and sales executives." This professional diversity makes MSI General a one-stop shop for a client's design and construction needs, including providing services for retail, industrial,



MSI GENERAL CORPORATION  
AT A GLANCE

LOCATION: Oconomowoc, WI

AREA OF SPECIALTY:

Design-build of retail, industrial, religious, municipal, commercial, educational, and healthcare facilities

ANNUAL SALES: \$52 million

SALES GROWTH IN 2007: 7%

EMPLOYEES: 60+



religious, municipal, commercial, educational, and health care projects.

With over 50 years of construction experience deeply rooted in southeastern Wisconsin, MSI General has an outstanding reputation for designing and building facilities which exceed customer expectations. It is not surprising that the company has long been an active supporter and participant in various community organizations. This long history with, and dedication to, people living in the area, as well as the environment in which it is located, have

prompted MSI General's commitment to being environmentally conscious in its design-build practices.

Frost explains, "We started with high performance buildings a couple of years ago and we now have taken on green/sustainability full force." MSI General is dedicated to designing and constructing buildings in a manner to utilize sustainable philosophies, and constantly strives to reduce the negative impacts on the environment, as well as on the building occupants.



*Outpost Natural Foods, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Adaptive reuse of an old facility with complete interior remodel and exterior reface.*

MSI General sustains its green commitment by working closely with clients to precisely identify the goals of the building. The pre-design stage of each project addresses site sustainability, energy efficiency, water conservation, indoor environmental quality, and material selections. This helps clients create innovative solutions to their specific goals and needs by discussing multiple options. Once sustainable ideas have been selected for the project, MSI General will integrate the environmentally-friendly features into the final design. This model allows both MSI General and the client

to obtain a measurable result between future cost savings and environmental responsibility.

Frost feels that this approach gives MSI General a competitive edge that will be evident in the next couple of years. In fact, he has noticed that environmental issues are increasingly considered by his clients. "We have more and more customers that talk about it, understand it, and know that it is something they should do." If requested, MSI General can also guide clients through the LEED certification process.

“We started with high performance buildings a couple of years ago and we’ve now taken on green sustainability full force.”

*Don Frost, Vice President of Design / Estimating*



*Don Frost, vice president of design / estimating.*



Friess Lake Elementary School, Friess Lake, WI.

MSI General is determined to influence others by its own example. As a result, company representatives not only encourage their clients to consider sustainable options, but they have also integrated many green aspects into their own corporate culture. For example, in addition to recycling, going paperless, and encouraging car pools, MSI General provides training and test reimbursement in order to have 100 percent of its sales, design, estimating, and field personnel LEED certified by the end of 2009.

The company has just signed a contract to construct a 60,000-square-foot

printing facility for which it is pursuing LEED silver certification. Frost believes that this may be the first LEED certified printing facility in the country. Plus, MSI General recently completed the rehabilitation of an old office facility, where it successfully recycled all building materials.

What truly makes MSI General unique is its design-build process and its in-house design staff. To further explain, Frost quotes the company's mission as stated in its Value Proposition: "MSI General offers single source responsibility. We consistently deliver excellence in design, in estimating, and in construction management. We have made this our commitment and this is what differentiates MSI General from its competition."

Frost also believes that MSI General's great success is directly linked to the fact that all company employees engage customers throughout the design and construction process. "Before we sign a contract, we want our clients to meet the team that they are going to be working with. This often results in long-lasting friendships, even after projects are completed." He concludes, "I truly believe that every employee at MSI General enjoys coming to work every day, performing their jobs, and helping clients fulfill their dreams." GBQ

**MSI GENERAL**  
Design Build Since 1957

**DEDICATED TO DESIGNING AND CONSTRUCTING FACILITIES IN A MANNER THAT REDUCES THE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE BUILDING OCCUPANTS**

**U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL MEMBER**

**LEED CERTIFIED ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS**

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