In construction and design, there are few things that can be quantified completely by solely dollars and cents. The true value of a design decision or material choice rarely comes down to purchase price alone and must also account for construction labor and equipment costs as well as long-term operating costs. Construction material, product, and equipment supplier, Logan Contractors Supply serves the mid-western United States building industry from six branches located in Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri and strives to build customer relationships based on sound solutions to today’s construction challenges.

"Bottom-dollar, low-bid is rarely the best way to go for anyone," said Owner Bruce Logan of the products he carries at the business he started with his father in the early 1990’s. "Trying to make things cheaper doesn’t add value. Relationships are what drives success in construction and for us, that begins with the products we carry and recommend."

Creating a New Facility

While many different building materials may serve the same basic function at comparable costs, Logan suggests there are a wide range of important issues in construction like faster production times; better material delivery and logistical support; and customer care that distinguish the products he stocks. When the time to add a new retail location in North Liberty, Iowa, came in 2017, Logan and his team had a chance to apply the same thought process to a building of their own.

“We wanted to create something more than the simple metal warehouse buildings we’re used to,” said Logan of the new 15,000-square-foot facility that includes the retail sales floor, offices, warehouse and vehicle/equipment service shop. A mezzanine level accounts for an additional 3,000 square feet of office and storage space. “We’ve served the North Liberty market for many years, but this new brick and mortar location gives us a chance to take ownership in the community and we really wanted an elevated presence.”

The task of elevating the architecture of a prefabricated metal building fell to OPN Architects’ project leader, Justin Bishop. An Associate Principal, Bishop heads OPN’s Iowa City studio and enjoyed the opportunity to design a utilitarian solution with a modern twist for a respected industry partner.

“High-functionality and durability in a daylit and sustainable, modern environment with integrated brand recognition was the brief,” said Bishop. Creating an airy, well-lit sales floor and warehouse began with incorporating a clearstory roofline to allow natural light to fill the large, open-volume building. Solar panels account for the majority of the energy requirements and control of the building’s entire systems package can be managed from a tablet computer.

Metal panels in contrasting colors are punctuated by translucent light panels and combined with a split-face masonry block to enhance the external appeal. The design also included custom-made pre-cast concrete panels featuring the Logan L at the entrance to establish brand presence and foster employee pride.
Distinguishing Products

As an industry partner and product supplier with a wealth of knowledge, Logan had good reason to be particular on the materials used in his building. Before the final design was approved, he requested a few changes to the specifications.

“We felt wise in asking OPN to specify products that we carry where possible,” said Logan. “We know their quality and performance; we know the companies, and the sales people too. So, of course, we wanted to build with what we sell.” Reviewing the specification, Logan and Bishop adjusted approximately 30 different items ranging from interior and exterior sealants for joints and concrete, to insulation, dyes, and adhesives.

Ironically, during a routine sales call when a vendor representative jokingly asked if his product was being used, Logan realized it wasn’t and switched the specified insulation around the metal building’s concrete foundation.

“Dale Mullikin with ACH Foam Technologies is a great example of the intangibles we look for in superior products and service,” said Logan. Logan Contractors Supply carries ACH Foam Technologies’ line of molded polystyrene insulations, which can be used in both below- and above-grade applications including under-slab and foundation insulation; void-fill and structural loading; and cavity wall- and roof- insulations among others.

In the case of the new North Liberty location, insulating the concrete foundation walls not only increases the building envelope’s R-value but also shields the foundation from the lateral pressures of the area’s expansive soils. Working with the product representative, Logan and Bishop ultimately settled on Foam-Control PLUS+ 250 an architectural insulation with high compressive-strength and stable R-values, both of which are warranted for 50-years. Foam-Control PLUS+’s closed cell structure has also been scientifically proven to resist moisture absorption as well, or better than other rigid foam insulations on the market.

“The quality of their products is high, and we like that it is manufactured just 50-miles away in Washington, Iowa,” said Logan, who points to local delivery as advantageous not only from an economic point-of-view but as an environmental consideration. Logan Contractors Supply also appreciates the time and effort ACH Foam Technologies takes in helping contractors develop precise purchase orders and tailored material delivery schedules that eliminate clutter on the job site without compromising smooth, seamless construction progress.

When customers need large product orders on a limited schedule Logan Contractors Supply has to be able to rely on vendors to deliver. “When it’s time to backfill against a foundation, if you don’t have the foam insulation ready then progress is going to halt,” said Logan. “The strong relationship we have with ACH Foam Technologies and their can-do attitude gets the job done no matter what we need or when we need it.”