

Section 2 – Business model and relationships

Premium Steel began as a supplier for ThermaSteel, a manufacturer of insulated structural wall panels. Premium Steel recognized that the insulated steel panel is an efficient framing material but a first-time user tends to require support and training. Therefore, Premium Steel developed a business model that encompasses not only providing material but also all related buildings services to its customers. Now Premium Steel takes a comprehensive, service-based approach to supplying framers and builders.

Premium Steel offers a continuum of services from simple material supplier to comprehensive turnkey construction, and levels of service in between. A builder can select as much support as is necessary or desired. On some projects, Premium Steel may only provide the wall panels. On others it provides the entire framing package. On some projects it installs the panels. On others it does all of the framing.

On the support side, Premium Steel provides design services, training and inspections. It produces all associated design documents related to framing, including wall, truss and joist framing plans. Premium Steel also works with other trades and subcontractors to accommodate and efficiently design mechanical and electrical systems.

Although wall panels are their main interest, Premium Steel often provides other framing materials. Its typical material framing package includes steel floor and roof trusses along with the insulated structural wall panels. The steel trusses are manufactured using a proprietary roll-forming system. Premium Steel used to purchase truss or joist systems, but once their volume level increased it became cost effective to internally manufacture these components.



The insulated structural steel wall panels are engineered and assembled in a factory by a third party manufacturer specifically for Premium Steel, then transported to the job-site with the rest of the framing package.

The panels can be installed on any type of foundation using conventional screws and pins. Premium Steel supplies steel tracks used for attaching the panels to the floor or foundation. Wall panels are attached to adjacent panels using connector plates secured with self-drilling, self-tapping screws. The screws and plates are included in the framing package provided by Premium Steel.



Premium Steel provides training, as part of the framing package, to its customers. The builder we interviewed has used the insulated panels on

previous projects but none as complex as the house under construction at the time of this case study, Premium Steel was in continuous contact with the builder to offer guidance and conducted field inspection to ensure proper installation throughout the project.

Rounding out their comprehensive approach to service, Premium Steel works with local building officials to make sure the designs and framing systems comply with local codes and engineering standards. This reduces apprehension by new users and provides additional options for home owners and builders to explore.

From the perspective of the builder we interviewed, the approach used by Premium Steel allows him to use innovative building systems without the need for significant capital investments. The use of panels plus the training and design services provided by Premium Steel also removes much of the resistance to switching from wood to steel framing materials.