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# Growth in Green: McGraw-Hill Reports on World Green Building Trends

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In previous discussions about building products we touched on the concept of “find it, choose it and use it.” Design professionals have to find a manufacturer’s product, before they can choose it from among competitive technologies and brands. That has to occur before they can ‘use’ the product by specifying it on the project. Nothing happens to benefit the manufacturer until those things take place because only then do products get sold. For anyone involved in the building design and construction industry it will come as no surprise that the topics of green and sustainability are high on the list for building product manufacturers who are constantly trying to determine the best ways to get their products found, chosen and used.

I recently heard a powerful statistic presented by a guest speaker at Greenbuild 2013 in Philadelphia. Stuart Kaplow, an attorney and green building practitioner, said that over the last seven years, non-residential green building construction has grown from 1.4% to 44% of the construction market. He reminded the audience this represents a 3200% increase. So is green big? You bet it is. It continues to grow and it is the way most product manufacturers are using to reach out to designers.

McGraw-Hill Construction, one of the primary and valued publishers in the industry recently released a new report called World Green Building Trends. It looks at the “business benefits driving new and retrofit market opportunities in over 60 countries.” The McGraw-Hill SmartMarket Report is well worth the time required to read and can be found below:

## [World Green Building Trends](#)

A few quick points to take away from this important report include:

1. A green project is defined as a project that is either certified under any recognized global green rating system, or built to qualify for certification.
2. More than half of the architects surveyed said that more than 60% of their work will be green by 2015. That is up from 28 % in 2012.

3. Reasons have shifted since 2008 when most respondents said building green was “the right thing to do” and important for “market transformation.” The latest report has respondents citing “lower operating costs” and “branding/public relations,” signifying a change in the perception of green building.
4. The analysts also noted a shift in the US market with an increased importance on “health and wellbeing benefits” as a reason to build green. Evidence of these benefits will help move markets the publisher says.
5. In the US the average green share of building is 48% and non-green is 52%. This varies slightly from Mr. Kaplow’s number but is still roughly equivalent.
6. Architects tend to be more “emotionally invested” with green than their peers, with 40% saying it’s about “doing the right thing.” That will probably come as no surprise, and neither will this; the researchers observed that building Owners do what makes business sense, and Contractors do what owners want.
7. Social reasons for going green are now about greater health and wellbeing, increased worker productivity, and supporting the domestic economy. This could reflect a growing trend toward a more mature understanding of sustainability; that is, sustainability and green must take into consideration not only environmental aspects, but also social and economic ones as well.
8. The criteria for identifying and evaluating green products were ranked in priority. They included:
  - High energy efficiency
  - Industry performance data
  - Non toxicity
  - Made of recycled content
  - Life cycle data
  - Durability
  - Certified by a third party
9. Sources of green building information were also identified and prioritized:
  - Internet
  - Conferences
  - Industry associations (exhibited the highest level of trust)
  - Magazines
  - Product manufacturers
  - Industry peers
  - Government resources

- Non-profit organizations
- Trade shows (showed the lowest level of trust)

10. Characteristics of Green Products and the percentage of manufacturer's whose products included these characteristics, as reported by 105 building product manufacturers from 27 countries:

- Highly energy efficient (73%)
- Durable (71%)
- Recycled content (53%)
- Non-toxic (51%)
- Cradle to grave, or cradle to cradle LCA data provided (31%)

The McGraw-Hill SmartMarket report contains even more valuable information on green building trends. It is worth a careful read, with an eye toward incorporating these findings into building product manufacturer marketing plans, for next year and beyond.

Your thoughts, comments, or questions are always welcome.

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