



## The Modular Maestros

Modus Group of Companies creates high-performance commercial structures with a flexible modular production process

### At a Glance

**Headquarters:**

Calgary, AB

**Founded:**

2004

**Employees:**

200

**Specialty:**

Commercial modular solutions

**Annual Sales:**

\$40 million+

Above: A unit being placed at an elementary school is ready to use once connections to the utilities are made.

WHEN BELL CANADA NEEDED A NUMBER OF HIGH-PERFORMANCE buildings for a new program it was introducing in 2004, four friends who worked in the construction industry decided that they could meet the challenge. The solution required the formation of a new company that would provide commercial modular-structure solutions. Out of this challenge, the Modus Group of Companies was born.

"Bell Canada needed telecommunications shelters that could be built in one location, but shipped and installed all over Western Canada and parts of Eastern Canada," says Randy Ludwar, CEO. "The idea was to control quality and build in a tight time frame, thereby saving time in the schedule and expense in labour costs of building in remote regions."

At the time, the four founders developed a vision: to supply a modular building that had performance standards that no other modular builder had ever even tried to achieve. "They wanted to be a modular manufac-

turer that could fill a client's business needs whether they were permanent or relocatable," Ludwar says. "Just because we build our units so they can be relocated doesn't mean they have to be."

Today, the company has grown to 200 employees, handling roughly \$40 million in annual sales—all by creating modular structures specifically for the commercial marketplace. "We don't manufacture trailers," Ludwar says. "We are truly a commercial builder in that we manufacture structures that meet all commercial requirements as set out by any building code in Canada or the United States."

The key is in the technology and construction process implemented in each of their modular structures. "We use structural-insulated-panel [SIP] technology as our core building component along with steel studs, commercial wiring, and commercial heating and cooling systems, and we install the drywall and interior fit-ups," Ludwar says. "When we manufacture and place an



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RANDY LUDWAR, CEO

accommodation, it has as high of a quality of finish as you'd find at a Four Seasons resort.”

Case in point: the 600-plus classrooms Modus created for Alberta Infrastructure, a division of Alberta's government that constructs classrooms that can be relocated as demographic needs change. Recently, Modus has begun work on a similar project for Saskatchewan.

The key to the company's success is understanding the client's needs. “Instead of saying, ‘Here's what we offer,’ we look for the needs of each client,” he explains.

Modus has also excelled at developing most of the components required for its modular structures in-house. The company creates its own SIPs, for example, with a style of expanded polystyrene that is laminated with a steel skin. Ludwar says this gives clients a higher-quality product that is able to be constructed much more quickly than with traditional construction. The company also manufactures its own windows in two lines—one Energy Star-rated PVC, one commercial aluminum. In addition, its steel company fabricates structural steel, purlins, girts, and roll-formed cladding and flashings.

Modus is poised for even more changes. Ludwar came onboard in 2008 when the business began growing dramatically, and it was clear a new business model was necessary. Today, Modus—which *Profit* listed as one of the fastest growing businesses in Alberta in 2007 and 2008—is seeking to improve construction efficiency and productivity with modular construction in a more diversified market. New initiatives include selling SIPs to other builders as components of a system, supplying

on-site construction services, building modular consultation services, and expanding overseas.

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## The Five Steps to Modular Fabrication

- 1. Research the client's needs:** Modus incorporates a complete design-engineering and sales team that performs a thorough needs analysis with each client.
- 2. Develop a concept:** Whatever Modus ends up producing is the result of finding an idea that fits the client's end solution.
- 3. Create a plan:** Modus' design-engineering team completes a set of drawings and a manufacturing build document that will be used in the production process.
- 4. Produce the structure:** The plans then go to the production floor, where Modus manufactures the exact high-performance modular structure needed by the client.
- 5. Install it:** Everything that comes out of the manufacturing facility is “plug and play.” The client just needs to implement the structure with the infrastructure at the site and it's ready for installation.