

PRx Performance Headquarters

Fargo, ND



Created in coordination with Valor Contracting
and I & S Group, Inc.

Photo by Jill Ockhardt Blaufuss





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PROJECT DETAILS



Photo by Jill Ockhardt Blaufuss

Building: PRx Performance

Location: Fargo, North Dakota

Owner: PRx Performance

Building Function: Centralized headquarters, manufacturing, warehousing and distribution center

Size: 190,000 square feet

Construction Cost: \$25 million

Completion: January 2022

Architectural Design: ISG

General Contractor: Enclave

Metal Building Contractor: Valor Contracting

Civil Engineer: Houston Engineering

Structural Engineer: ISG

Mechanical, Electrical & Plumbing Engineer: ISG

Metal Building Manufacturer: Varco Pruden





PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Located in Fargo, ND, PRx Performance specializes in the design, manufacturing and distribution of a wide range of space-saving fitness equipment. Its corporate headquarters building, which opened its doors in 2022, centralizes the company's administrative, manufacturing,



Photo by Jill Ockhardt Blaufuss

warehousing and distribution operations under one roof. The 190,000-square-foot building features a custom display room for product demonstrations, a high-end kitchen and an employee gym. The 40,000-square-foot manufacturing area includes two overhead cranes, a paint booth

and an automated monorail conveyor system. A standing seam metal roof, which stretches across manufacturing, warehousing and distribution operations, accommodates solar panels that reduce energy usage.

Shark Tank Success

Not many companies can attribute their rise to success to a national television show. But for PRx Performance founders Brian Brasch, CEO, and Erik Hopperstad, president, it was a 2016 appearance on the business reality television series, Shark Tank, that jettisoned the duo—and the company—into entrepreneurial stardom. The two managed to convince Canadian entrepreneur and investor Kevin O’Leary (aka, “Mr. Wonderful”) to invest in their wall-mounted, space-saving, folding exercise equipment. By 2019, PRx Performance ranked 189 on Inc. magazine’s annual Inc. 5000 list of the fastest-growing private companies, and was the 5th-fastest growing retail company on the list.

The company was in desperate need of additional space to accommodate its rapid growth, and selected Enclave, a development construction and management company, as its general contractor for the new building. Enclave enlisted the support of I & S Group, Inc. (ISG) for architecture and engineering services and Valor Contracting to erect the metal building structure.

Design Priorities

1. Reflect PRx Performance’s Mission of Health and Wellness

The company’s commitment to health and wellness served as the inspiration for the design of its new headquarters. Visitors enter through wide, welcoming doors into an open space filled with natural light from two stories of windows that brighten the lobby and administrative offices along

the facility’s central spine. Outdoor courtyards provide areas for reflection and socialization. Exposed and painted steel, polished concrete and brick finishes create an industrial chic aesthetic for the modern building. An employee gym overlooks the manufacturing area, while a basketball hoop and grid lines on the floor underscore the company’s mission of Fitting Fitness into Life™. The theme of light and wellness continues throughout the manufacturing, warehousing and distribution spaces, with large windows spanning the walls to bring the outdoors in.

2. Create Flexible Spaces

As a fast-growing, ever-evolving company, PRx Performance wanted the ability to restructure the layout of its manufacturing, warehousing and distribution spaces quickly. “A metal building meets that need, with a wide-open, structural framing system,” said Mark Chambers, senior architect at ISG.

Based on the racking layout, the 115,000-square-foot warehouse features 45-foot-wide spaces between columns. The manufacturing area includes bays ranging from 40-to 45-feet wide. “The column spacing in the manufacturing area was based on equipment needs, such as the monorail system required for the company’s powder-coat line and the two cranes used for moving raw materials,” said Michael Gullickson, president of Valor Contracting.



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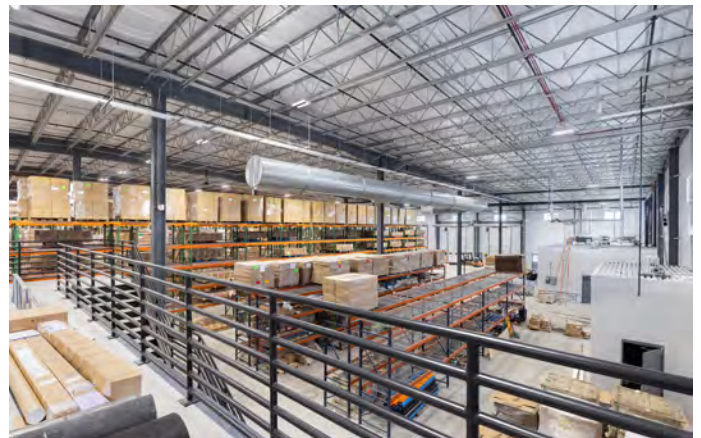


"The wide-open spans give the client the ability to rearrange the spaces as the company develops and grows over time. It's one of the big advantages of a metal building," Chambers added.

3. Future-Proof for Continued Growth

With the company growing at such a rapid pace, PRx Performance also wanted the ability to expand the building itself, when needed. "With 14.5 acres, the client has plenty of space for an expansion. Our job was to engineer that potential expansion into our initial designs," Gullickson said. "It's incredibly easy to do that at the front end of a project but can be more difficult later on once the building is already designed." He explained that a metal building is designed to accommodate certain loads. "It's much harder to go back and reinforce the building later on to support the loads that were not accounted for in the original design," he said.

In addition to engineering the building to handle extra load, planning for snow loads and water drainage was important. "We want to be able to extend the structure as it's currently shaped, so it was important that we angled the roof drainage away from the expansion line," Chambers said.



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-Mark Chambers, Senior Architect, ISG

PROJECT CHALLENGES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Expedite Construction

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, demand for home exercise equipment rose like never before, and the pressure was on to accelerate the construction timeline. “PRx Performance was coming from a facility that was about 20,000 square feet. The client was initially looking at building a smaller building, but when the pandemic hit, they saw that they’d need a much larger structure,” Gullickson said.

Valor teamed with ISG during the design stage, which helped expedite the process. “We worked hand in hand with the architect during the design process. ISG would translate the client’s needs into a design, and we’d convey that design to the team at Varco Pruden, the manufacturer of the metal building. Varco Pruden’s engineers could determine the feasibility of the designs early on in the process, reducing the amount of design revisions. There was a lot of back and forth early on, but because of the flexibility a metal building offers, it was easy to accommodate owner requests,” he said. Once the design was finalized, it was released for production in early October 2020. “Our goal was to get the steel shell up as quickly as possible so the other trades could get to work under the roof,” Gullickson added.

“We had some interior spaces that were still being designed while the metal building was in production,” Chambers explained. “We knew the overall square footage and layout of the building, but the interior design was still evolving as the client refined their needs. Working in parallel with the metal building production gave us more time to nail down the interior design.”

Production of the metal building system took approximately 12 weeks, allowing Valor Contracting to begin building construction at the start of 2021. “We worked over the winter; it took about 26 weeks to erect the shell,” Gullickson said. The construction team pushed through the snow and subzero temperatures of a typical North Dakota winter. “Barring a few blizzards and days when the wind chill was below 15°F, we worked through the entire winter to keep the project on a fast track,” Gullickson said.

Control the Sound

Pairing offices with manufacturing operations could have resulted in a noisy working environment for office employees. To combat sound transference, wall- and ceiling-mounted sound baffles installed throughout the facility provide large absorptive areas to capture both the direct sound from machinery and manufacturing activity, as well as reflections from ceilings and higher sections of the walls. (1)

Additionally, double-pane, insulated windows act as sound baffles by disrupting and absorbing sound vibrations, while a grout-filled, solid masonry wall provides a physical barrier between manufacturing and administrative spaces.

Integrate Metal with Conventional Steel

For the lobby and administrative offices, a conventional steel structure was chosen due to the need for a second-floor mezzanine and the design of a central, clearstory architectural spine that extends through the space, according to Chambers.



Photos by Jill Ockhardt Blaufuss



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“There’s no need to overengineer a metal building. It’s designed to meet your exact specifications. There’s very little wasted steel.”

- Michael Gullickson, President
Valor Contracting

“It’s not all or nothing with your choice of building systems. You can find ways to integrate two different building styles—like a metal building and a conventional steel structure, in this case—by playing with the building massing, facades, materials and colors,” he said. Lightly colored, metal panels clad the manufacturing, warehousing and distribution spaces, providing a canvas backdrop to the facility and drawing focus to the colors and composite metal panels at the building’s entrance. Along the front of the building, these same metal panels are interspersed with large windows and flat, stucco panels in soft earth tones, creating visual and textural interest.

Within the headquarters, the conventional steel mezzanine flows into the metal building in the manufacturing space, as employees use the onsite gym on the second floor, while marketing and sales activities take place below.

Engineer for Heavy Loads

One of the advantages of a metal building is that there’s very little waste, according to Gullickson. “There’s no need to overengineer a metal building. It’s designed to meet your exact specifications. There’s very little wasted steel,” he said. But to achieve that efficiency in design and cost, it’s important to understand how equipment that’s anchored to the ceiling could affect the load on the building. “Since it’s hard to add extra load capacity later on, it’s important for the customer to understand their present and future large equipment needs,” he said. In the case of PRx Performance, two cranes, used for moving raw materials, are integrated into the structural design of the metal building.

Additionally, near the end of the design process, PRx Performance decided to add solar panels to the roof. Metal roofing provides a logical substrate for crystalline and silicon solar arrays. Solar panels are easily installed on a standing seam metal roof using special clips that attach to the standing seam ribs. The clips are especially beneficial because they do not require any penetration of the roof itself. Penetrations can lead to water seepage and reduce a roof’s service life. Metal roofs also accommodate laminates that can adhere directly to them.

To understand the weight and load implications of the heavy equipment on the metal building and roof, Valor Contracting worked directly with each respective equipment manufacturer. “We had to locate where these loads would hit the metal building—right in the middle of the bay or right next to a column—and work with the engineers at Varco Pruden to increase the steel capacity to accommodate those extra loads,” Gullickson said.

The standing seam metal roof not only allows the heavy loads of the equipment but also helps keep the building well insulated. “For this project, we used a roof system where the insulation is not compressed between the purlin and the roof. The roof should last significantly longer than a standard 20-year membrane roof. There are standing seam metal roofs we’ve installed that are pushing 40 years and more,” he said.

RELEVANCE FOR STUDENTS



Photo by Jill Ockhardt Blaufuss

According to Chambers, it's important for architects to understand the potential of the "kit of tools" found with metal buildings. "You can adapt and play with these different materials. There is a lot of functionality. You can incorporate exterior metal wainscoting, attach metal panels at different angles or in ways that mix up the look and feel of the exterior," he said. "Sometimes we unintentionally limit ourselves to designing only things that we have seen, but there are a lot more possibilities that you can dream up."

He added that it's important to understand where the limitations are with any building material and to challenge yourself to see things differently. "Get out there and see what is being done, see how other architects are pushing boundaries and reinventing the field. We are all continuing to learn. It is the creative nature of what we do."

Practical Application

1. What advantages did a metal building offer PRx Performance? What were some of the challenges?
2. How did the architect reflect the company's commitment to health and wellness? What are some additional design choices you might have made to reflect that mission?
3. The standing seam metal roof structure had to be engineered to accommodate two cranes and solar panels. Research what engineers had to do to reinforce the roof and how reinforcement needs change depending on where the load falls (i.e. near a column or in the middle of the structure).
4. How did the design team engineer future expansion into the facility? What kinds of things did they have to consider in the design?
5. How did the architect mitigate noise? Research the use of sound baffles and how they can be integrated into a design.
6. What were the advantages of the architect working hand in hand with the metal building erector and supplier? Why is the preplanning work so important with a metal building—or any building project?



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-Mark Chambers, Senior Architect, ISG



7. The PRx Performance headquarters combined a metal building with a conventional steel structure. What are the ways in which the architect integrated the two building formats? How would you have done it?

RESOURCES/RELATED READING

Related Reading

- [Case Studies | MBMA](#)
- [Design Resources | MBMA](#)
- [MBMA Common Industry Practices](#)

Video Resources

Over 60 videos highlighting metal building architecture, engineering, design and application can be accessed at www.youtube.com/mbmamedia. We recommend you begin your educational process with the following programs:

- [Metal Building Systems 101](#)
- [An Introduction to Metal Building Systems](#)
- [Metal Building Nomenclature](#)
- [Metal Building Gravity Loads](#)
- [How It's Made: Metal Building Innovations Are Revolutionizing Low-Rise Commercial Construction](#)
- [How It's Built: Metal Building Construction Raises the Bar for Low-Rise Commercial Structures](#)
- [How Metal Buildings Compete in Today's Market Part 1 Economical Design & Construction](#)
- [How Metal Buildings Compete in Today's Market Part 2 Accelerated Construction](#)
- [How Metal Buildings Compete in Today's Market Part 3 Benefits of MBS](#)

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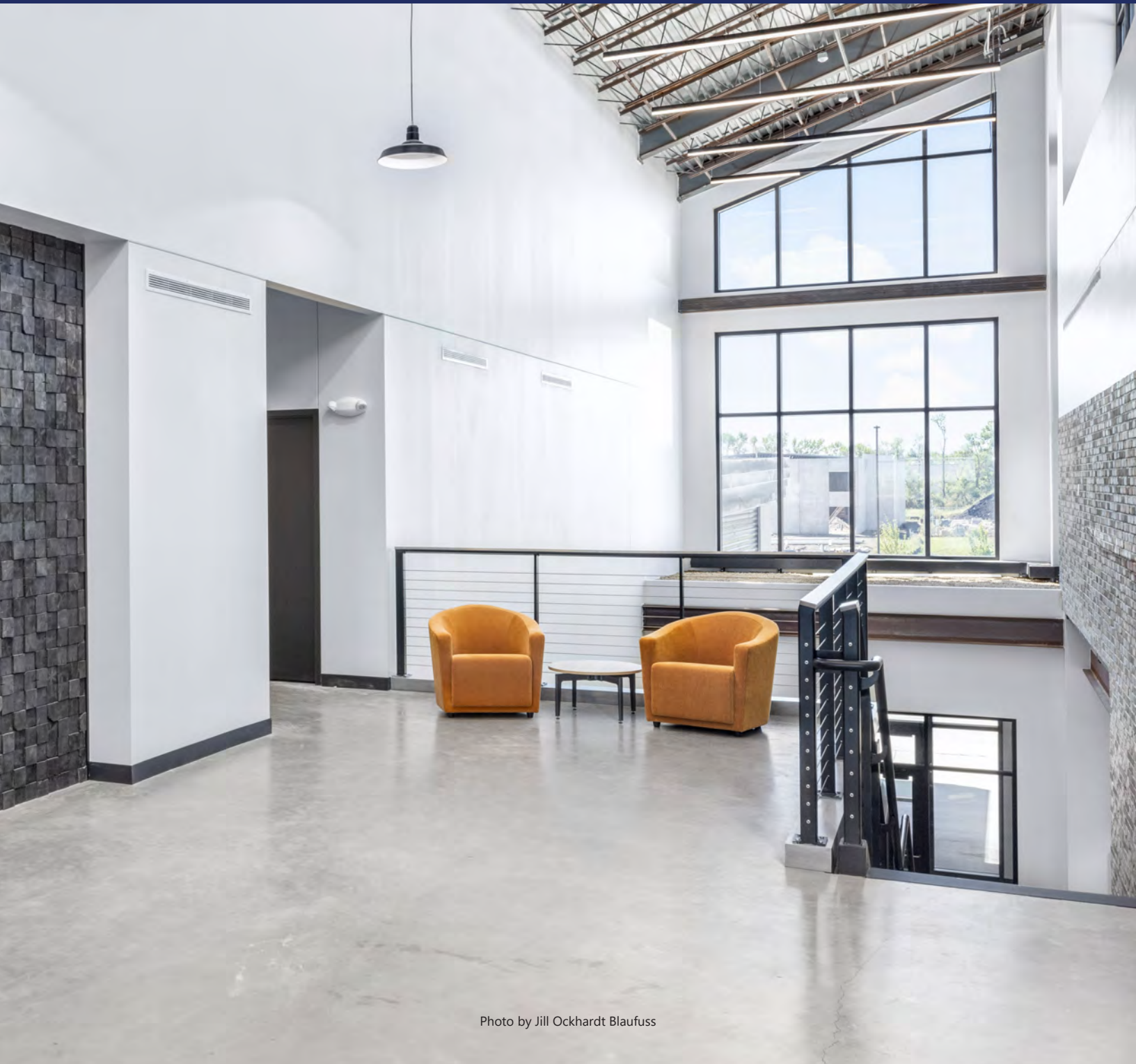


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