

## Strategic Roofing Alliances — Are They Right for You?

***Roofs are a major investment.  
A strategic alliance can help you get  
the best return for your money.***



The roof over your head is an asset. Not only does it have a value, a life cycle and a function, but it also performs a vital service 24 hours a day, every day of the year. At the end of its useful life, it has a disposal cost. A roof's value lasts longer than a few quarters; it should be expected to hold value for decades.

Nevertheless, roofs often are treated as nothing more than an annoying expense, or worse, a "get-to-it-later" type of responsibility. And when they eventually fail or leak, they're often inadequately replaced or quickly patched until funds are available to "do something" about them.

It's no wonder businesses are reluctant to spend money on their roofs. Assets are supposed to produce more than they consume. How can a roof be considered a positive cash flow item when it merely depreciates? The analysis is tricky: It's based on a comparison between a roof that's been properly designed, tested, installed and maintained; and one that's been selected and installed solely on the basis of lowest first cost.

The solution requires taking a strategic, long-term approach to roofing expenditures and forming a working alliance with a vendor that minimizes problems and keeps costs in check.

### **Partnering with the right vendor**

Many companies — from private enterprises to Fortune 500 industry leaders — are doing an about-face on strategic partnerships. These partnerships are being used to achieve lower first costs, while also assuring that their facilities remain intact and capable of meeting future needs. Perhaps the greatest reason for this shift is due to increasing concerns with contractor-related problems.

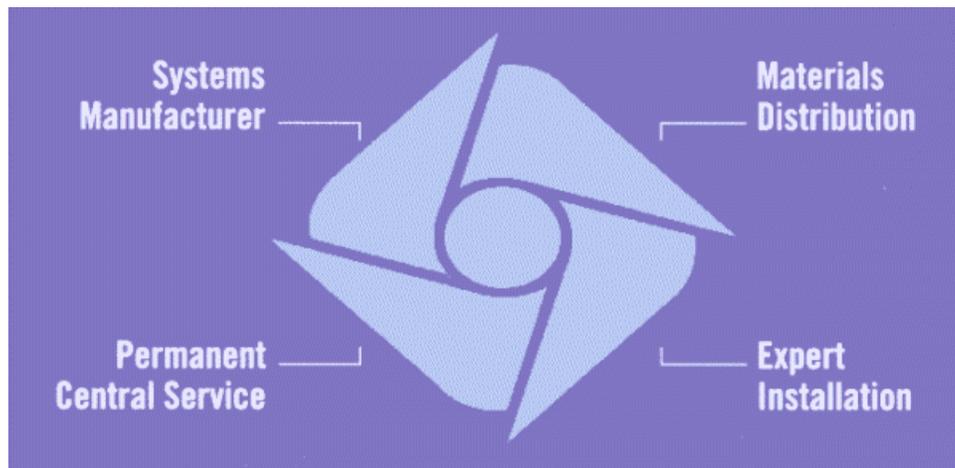
According to Norwood, MA-based Factory Mutual, the world leader in property-loss prevention, engineering, research and training, "Property losses caused by contractors are quite alarming in terms of number and cost." In fact, the research organization's property loss studies reveal that "contractors caused building owners more than 1,100 losses totaling over \$700 million for the ten-year period from 1987-1997."

The reason most commonly cited by Factory Mutual? "Contractors are an inherent risk. They are less familiar with a facility and often know little about a company's requirements — unless management tells them and enforces compliance."

### **Know what you're getting**

Companies can minimize risks and control exposure to problematic contractors by choosing a strategic partner that offers true "single source" reliability and accountability. However, not all roofing companies that claim single source solutions can be viewed the same. Even some of the industry's most recognizable names use independent contractors for installation of their roofing products, and often another entity gets involved in the long-term maintenance and warranting of the installed roof.

While more and more companies make the claim of being a single-source provider, in reality, few companies integrate the manufacturing, distribution, installation and warranting all within the control of a single, cohesive company. That orchestrated advantage is what the single-source concept represents.



### Get Straight Answers Based on Straightforward Questions

In any business, potential partners should be considered based on their ability to deliver consistent quality, superior technology, and time- and effort-saving capabilities such as reliable assistance, standardized specification processes and streamlined contracting. Roofing is no different.

Here's a checklist to help you begin the process of selecting a strategic roofing management partner:

YES	NO	
		Does the vendor/partner offer you a true, single point of contact for all of your roofing needs throughout your roof's life cycle?
		Does the vendor/partner offer standardized contracting services as well as design specifications and pricing structures that are easy to understand and have been established with your input and budget forecasts in mind?
		Does the vendor/partner perform all services with full-time company employees?
		Are you working directly with the system's manufacturer, or are you simply working with a contractor that buys materials and warranties from the system manufacturer?
		Does the vendor/partner supply documentation and service protocols based on your long-term needs and objectives?
		Does the vendor/partner offer assigned account management and one-call responses to service calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year?
		Does the vendor/partner provide a proven track record for success, and is its product and workmanship quality under warranty for up to 20 years?
		Does the vendor/partner have the financial backing to support its warranty and its commitment to your roofing program for your roof's entire life cycle?
		Does the vendor/partner approach its side of the business relationship with you as a true partner, someone who talks straight and gives you straight answers?

### **Maximize life-cycle, minimize headaches and expenses**

There are certain roles all competent roofing vendors should be able to supply, such as prompt responses to routine service calls and the capacity to perform quickly and effectively in response to a disaster call. By forming a true strategic alliance, businesses are realizing the difference between companies that say they offer single source services and companies that can truly deliver on that commitment.



It is important to acknowledge the savings a consistent, long-term roof management program offers your business. It's equally important to see that forming a roof management alliance can help your company maximize its roof's life cycle and minimize total roofing expenditures. Today, the consistent, coordinated attention that a strategic, single-source roofing partner supplies can provide cost-effective solutions — and considerable peace of mind — throughout your roof's life.

*By Gary Kassem, president of SingleSource Roofing Corporation. For more information, call (800) 777-6610.*