

editor's note



ABOUT FIVE YEARS AGO, I NOTICED THEY WERE BUILDING A NEW HEALTH CLUB ABOUT A MILE FROM MY HOUSE. We stopped in at Lifetime Fitness' sales office and were mightily impressed. There were acres of equipment, an indoor (and an outdoor) pool, and even a free day-care center.

Best of all, they seemed genuinely committed to customer satisfaction—so much so that they talked sincerely about having enough equipment that there'd never be a wait (and to ensure that, they even mentioned capping their membership at 10,000). And at first, everything was great. The club was sparkling clean, the towels fluffy, and the equipment always available. But slowly, membership and the club's popularity grew. Classes that were once free suddenly had a fee. Equipment was often reserved for a class (for which there was an additional fee) and unavailable to other members. Rates continually escalated. The final straw was when they added a surcharge for each child. So, I cancelled my membership.

In contrast is my bank. First Bank and Trust of Evanston/Skokie opened for business nearly two decades ago (it still only has three or four branches), and my wife and I opened charter accounts. We were promised personal service (to this day, I've almost never encountered a teller line and both the tellers and the personal bankers always seem glad to see me and my children, each of whom have opened friendly junior banker accounts). We were told they'd never nickel and dime us with those little fees for which banks are famous (and they haven't). We were given a lifetime free safety deposit box (they even let us move it to a different branch when one opened slightly closer to our house). They delivered exactly what they promised—until just a few weeks ago.

Perhaps my only complaint about the bank was that with only a limited number of branches, I occasionally was stuck with an ATM fee when I withdrew money from a bank in some other city (my bank, of course had no fees). But a few weeks ago, I received a notification that my bank would now pay the fees for me to use ATMs at other banks up to eight times a month. I love my bank. Not only do they meet my expectations—they exceed them!

Our goal at MSC is to do the same—and I hope our completely revamped web site (www.modernsteel.com) goes a long way to exceeding your expectations.

The first thing you'll notice is we've added a digital edition. You can page through the new online edition just like the print edition (complete with advertisements) and even click on hyperlinks to open the associated web pages. We've also added handy compilations of the most popular features (Steel Interchange, SteelWise, and Quality Corner) as well as PDFs of all MSC articles from 1996 onward. We have news and we have an interactive reader forum. We're also making it easier to reach Steel Utilities Online. This neat feature contains basic design utilities that other engineers have created (typically enhanced excel files) for things like "end plate moment connection design" or "eccentrically loaded web group analysis." Visitors can download the utilities, comment on them, or post their own.

You can search for information that has appeared in any article in MSC since 1996 or, if you click on Steel Interchange, you can search just within that section of the magazine for specific technical information.

We're also in the process of enhancing our product and job listings (have patience—building a site is complicated and we don't want to settle for just adequate). We also have a reader feedback area where you can post comments (and even comment on the postings of other readers).

I'd love it if you visited our new site (www.modernsteel.com) and gave us some feedback. Simply click on the "Reader Feedback" link in the top right-hand corner and write a new post. Tell us what you like (or don't like) about the site and any additional features you'd like to see. I hope you like us as much as I like my bank!

SCOTT MELNICK
EDITOR

MSC

MODERN STEEL CONSTRUCTION

Editorial Offices

One E. Wacker Dr., Suite 700
Chicago, IL 60601
312.670.2400 tel
312.896.9022 fax

Editorial Contacts

EDITOR & PUBLISHER
Scott L. Melnick
312.670.8314
melnick@modernsteel.com
MANAGING EDITOR
Keith A. Grubb, P.E., S.E.
312.670.8318
grubb@modernsteel.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Geoff Weisenberger
312.670.8316
weisenberger@modernsteel.com

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Scott L. Melnick

Advertising Contact

Account Manager
Louis Gurthet
231.228.2274 tel
231.228.7759 fax
gurthet@modernsteel.com
For advertising information, contact Louis Gurthet or visit www.modernsteel.com

Address Changes and Subscription Concerns

312.670.5444 tel
312.893.2253 fax
admin@modernsteel.com

Reprints

Betsy White
The Reprint Outsource, Inc.
717.394.7350
w.betsy@verizon.net