

# Mako Steel Building Relationships

BY RHONDA PASCHAL

**M**ako Steel has come a long way since its inception back in 1993. In fact, it was first headquartered in the home of its mastermind, Michael Branon. In time, Branon, who is now retired, took on a business partner—Caesar Wright. Together they laid the foundation for a company that has seen profound success for nearly a decade.

"The company was started by Michael," explains Wright, who is now the company's president. "He and I had worked together at another company and we shared backgrounds in the commercial industrial metal building market. We realized in the 1980s that there was a niche for self-storage construction."

The two entrepreneurs obviously possessed the experience and vision to examine all of the parameters of the fledgling self-storage industry and put their skills to work building relationships in the industry. "Self-storage seemed to have a greater upside due to the tax advantages it offered developers and the high demand for it on the West Coast, specifically in California," says Wright.

Thanks to their vision and knowledge of a material that is noncombustible, termite-proof, yields longevity even in earthquake prone areas like California, and is the most cost-effective resource for self-storage construction, Mako Steel has grown to become 14 employees strong. Additionally, the company saw a record sales year in 2001.

So what sets Mako Steel apart from others in the business? First and foremost, the Mako crew never loses sight of the fact that this is a big and sometimes risky venture for their customer base, which is made up of the private sector, developers, owners/builders and general contractors. That's why Mako makes it a point to put people at ease by deploying

good customer service.

"We offer our customers the buying power of a big company with the service you would expect from a small company," states Wright. "We offer a personal touch to the owners and builders we work for." Also affording the company a competitive edge is the fact that they operate self-storage facilities, thus giving them first-hand knowledge of what it takes to build a solid facility.

Wright and the Mako Steel team take a great deal of pride in knowing that the quality of the products and services they offer results in repeat customers and a substantial number of referrals. "Seventy percent of our business is either repeat customers or referrals," says Wright. Added to that is the company's primary goal, which is "to treat people the way we want to be treated." Needless to say, this philosophy has helped fuel Mako's continued progress over the years. "We've grown with the industry to become one of the top five steel self-storage construction companies here in the U.S.," says Wright.

Mako Steel's expertise also enables the company to deliver and stand behind the benefits of its products, including a 20-year weather-tightness warranty on their standing seam roof. Additionally, all of Mako's exterior colors and paint finishes are treated with Kynar 500 finish, which carries a 20-year no-rust/no-fade warranty. And all of the company's steel, produced on the West Coast, is G-90 galvanized.

With the latest developments surrounding tariffs on steel imports, what does the future hold for Mako Steel? "I see that our industry is still in a positive growth pattern," says Wright, who adds that Mako is looking to expand into the residential steel-constructed home arena. "We know that steel is a good choice in the residential market but no one has perfected it yet." Last but not least, Mako also has its sights on "building relationships" in the European markets. Having opened an office in Jacksonville, Florida in January 2001, the company is certainly on the road to successful expansion.

You can visit Mako Steel online at [www.makosteel.com](http://www.makosteel.com) or call them at (800) 383-4932.



Photo courtesy  
Mako Steel

## MAKO STEEL INC.

**Quick Facts:**  
**Company:** Mako Steel  
**President:**  
 Caesar Wright  
**Locations:** Encinitas,  
 California and  
 Jacksonville, Florida  
**Year Opened:** 1993  
**Products:** Steel  
 construction  
 materials



Photo courtesy of  
Mako Steel.