



Introduction & Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the United States market demand and structure of the ornamental metal market. This is primarily targeted at the ornamental iron segment. However, due to the nature of the industry, this report also discusses other metals used within the industry primarily including steel, brass, copper, aluminum, and zinc.

According to the US Census Bureau, the umbrella classification of ornamental and architectural metal products represents a market of well over \$30 Billion. Further refined, the US Census Bureau's 1997 statistics show that ornamental metal work shipment and installation value was \$1.2 Billion. However, this includes installation costs and value added by local contractors. The focus of our study is on a somewhat smaller niche i.e. that of pre-fabricated cast or forged metal products such as balusters, newel posts, rails, finials, and related accent pieces, prior to final installation. The most difficult part of determining the size of this market is that there are various levels of channels employed.

In many cases, small local forges or blacksmiths are doing the actual sale and installation of ornamental metalwork to the final customers. For higher-end products or larger contracts, some larger forges sell nationally direct to end customers, with their own on-site installation teams. In other cases, many distributors and designers own their own molds or tools and contract out the manufacture to forges domestically and internationally. Also, three or four large importer/distributors purchase products overseas and domestically, sometimes selling to installers and metal contractors, but also selling through metal distributors and steel service centers.

Taking all of this into account, approximately \$50 Million in ornamental metal work is sold to distributors and steel service centers throughout the US by importers and manufacturers. Another \$60 to \$80 Million is sold directly by manufacturers and importers to various installers and fabricators such as stair manufacturers, fence and gate manufacturers, or is manufactured by smaller independent fabricators and sold directly to end customers. However, a large portion of this latter total is in semi-custom or very low quantity items. According to various industry sources, 60-70% of total ornamental metal sales are for iron and steel products. The bulk of the remainder is aluminum and brass.

Market Size

As noted above, the overall US market size for ornamental metal products is in the \$110 to \$130 Million range, with approximately \$50 Million coming through sales through distributors and metal service centers, and the rest coming from sales directly to end customers or to contractors and fabricators. According to various industry sources, these direct sales are becoming increasingly important as margins are further squeezed by low-cost imports from Asian and Eastern European sources, and many smaller manufacturers are selling directly to contractors or end customers to remove one level of distribution cost.



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