



COVER
STORY

CAREL VAN
DUUREN



TRUE MODULAR BUILDING



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Carel Van Duuren: Pioneering the Future of Affordable, Sustainable Modular Housing

In a world facing rapid urbanization, climate change, and an escalating global housing crisis, innovative thinking is more vital than ever. At the heart of this transformation is Carel Van Duuren, the visionary CEO and Founder of TMB (True Modular Building). Through bold decisions, cutting-edge technology, and a dedication to sustainability, Van Duuren is reshaping how we design, construct, and inhabit our homes. "As a co-owner, I see it as imperative that TMB controls the entire process—from architecture and engineering to the final product," Van Duuren emphasizes. "This allows us to make more sustainable decisions and reduce carbon emissions."

Control Over the Value Chain: The Foundation of Innovation

TMB was founded on the principle of value chain control. Van Duuren understood that if the company wanted to deliver sustainable, high-quality, and affordable housing, it had to take responsibility for every step of the process.



From design and engineering to sourcing materials and constructing the final buildings, TMB oversees the entire journey. "If you want to change the outcome, you need to own the process," he says. "This approach gives us complete freedom to innovate and improve continuously."

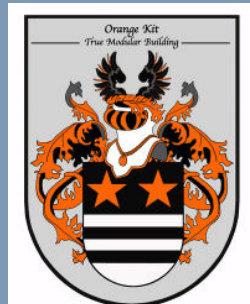
That philosophy isn't just business strategy—it's a belief system. It drives TMB to explore new materials, reduce waste, and create scalable solutions for a variety of housing needs, all while remaining independent of large suppliers and corporate influence.

"We're not dependent on major corporations or suppliers," he notes. "That independence gives us the freedom to make decisions that align with our values."

From Temporary Kitchens to Permanent Solutions

TMB's evolution began decades ago with Kessel Rental, a company founded by Van Duuren that specialized in providing modular kitchens and restaurants for hospitals, universities, manufacturing plants, and more. These units supported temporary infrastructure during renovations and construction. "We've worked with hundreds of institutions, providing over 100 modular kitchen containers to meet diverse and changing needs," he shares.

However, the limitations of traditional modular buildings soon became evident. Regulations around insulation, energy efficiency, and structural stability changed rapidly, and existing systems failed to keep up. Van Duuren and his team responded by creating a new, patented building system: NxtGen. "The existing solutions were expensive and often failed to meet changing local requirements," he recalls. "We saw an opportunity to build something better." NxtGen was the start of something much bigger. The experience gained through NxtGen Industrial Buildings and NxtGen Kitchens laid the groundwork for a new way of thinking about modular construction—not just as a temporary solution, but as a permanent answer to modern housing needs.



A Strategic Rebrand: True Modular Building

In 2023, Van Duuren made a pivotal move: rebranding NxtGen Houses into True Modular Building. This change was more than cosmetic—it reflected a deep shift in strategy, moving away from traditional volumetric modules toward a flexible, component-based system that could be customized and assembled anywhere.

“We saw the need for more adaptability,” he explains. “So we designed an easy-to-transport and assemble component-based building system that fits the future of construction.”

TMB’s approach differs significantly from the traditional volumetric modular construction model, which often requires massive factories and a continuous workflow to maintain profitability. Instead, TMB focuses on hybrid component systems that are scalable, reusable, and transportable.

“Moving away from volumetric modular isn’t just an ideological choice,” Van Duuren clarifies. “It’s a practical response to the future of the built industry.”

Leading Through Experience and Adversity

Van Duuren’s journey to leadership was shaped not only by entrepreneurial insight but by personal and professional challenges. He has weathered economic downturns, downsized teams, and faced health setbacks.

“More knowledge, experience, and time to reflect have changed my leadership style,” he shares. “I’m direct and clear, and I address unconstructive behavior. People need to feel they are treated equally and understand where the boundaries are.”

Under his leadership, TMB has become a lean, focused organization. Every team member has a clearly defined role, and the company operates with transparency, structure, and agility. “We thrive on regular communication and structured reporting,” he says.

Introducing the Orange Kit: Redefining Modular Construction

TMB’s flagship innovation is the Orange Kit, a hybrid building system that blends traditional and modular approaches. It consists of standardized, lightweight, reusable components that fit together seamlessly, allowing for rapid construction with minimal waste.







“Orange Kit allows buildings to adapt, not just stand still,” Van Duuren explains. “It’s a plug-and-play solution designed for speed, flexibility, and sustainability.” These buildings use bio-based insulation, are airtight yet breathable, and are designed for disassembly and reuse. Components can be reconfigured to meet different needs, from single-family homes to multi-unit housing complexes.

“The platform’s top priority is clear—minimize raw material use and lower emissions,” he notes.

Sustainability Beyond the Buzzword

Sustainability is more than a trend at TMB—it’s the company’s core. Every system, product, and design choice is made with the environment in mind. TMB focuses on reducing carbon emissions, minimizing waste, and using renewable materials. “Change—whether short-term or long-term—is a constant,” Van Duuren emphasizes. “Technological advancements in materials and hybrid engineering are making it possible to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing worldwide.”

The Orange Kit system also supports local economies by enabling construction without the need for large centralized factories. The decentralized approach makes it easier to bring affordable housing to underserved or remote areas.

“Building homes isn’t rocket science,” he says. “It just requires a smart system that can evolve with changing circumstances.”

Scaling the Vision: From Product to Community

In 2023, TMB launched its first residential buildings using the Orange Kit. These pilot projects provided critical insights and validated the concept. By 2024, the company focused on refining plug-and-play methods, and in 2025, TMB began planning entire communities.

“Our system is all about smart plug-and-play assembly,” Van Duuren says. “With fewer parts and a simplified process, even non-experts can build effectively.”





The ultimate goal is to enable local builders, developers, and governments to use TMB's platform to create affordable housing globally. The company is also exploring ways to train community members, creating jobs while solving housing shortages.

Strategic Financing for Long-Term Impact

TMB is self-funded but strategically open to financial partnerships that align with its mission. The company prefers patient capital from sources like governments, pension funds, and family offices.

"We see funding as a marriage," Van Duuren explains. "We look for partners who believe in long-term value, not just short-term profits."

TMB's financial model includes built-to-rent communities, asset-backed investments, and innovative solutions like tokenization—offering equity tokens to provide more flexible real estate investment opportunities.

"Our buildings generate cash flow through rent, have low initial costs, and high residual value," he adds. "It's a sustainable model for both us and our investors."

A Legacy Built to Last

True Modular Building isn't just a construction company—it's a movement. Under Carel Van Duuren's leadership, TMB is proving that you can build faster, smarter, and more sustainably without sacrificing quality or affordability.

"Everyone deserves a place to live that is both functional and inspiring," he concludes. "And that's exactly what we're building."

With a vision that bridges innovation and integrity, TMB is not only constructing homes but laying the foundation for the future of global housing—one modular component at a time.



