The Organization

David L. Wallace & Associates (DLW) is a family-owned architectural firm in Dunedin, Florida with a relatively small team that works on big projects ranging from mixed-use projects in urban centers to standalone suburban restaurants and everything in between. Their project log often includes full service and select service hotels, multi-family apartments and condominium developments, world class casinos, luxury resorts and boutique hideaways.

The Challenge

At the beginning of the recession, project planning and construction in Florida, as in many other areas of the United States, virtually ceased. Known for quality work, a large customer approached DLW with the potential for a series of projects. The catch was that they required Autodesk® Revit® documents. At the time DLW was a pure AutoCAD shop and in particular, the production manager had no intention of converting to Revit. But firm principal, David L. Wallace Jr. listened to his intuition and put together a small team to learn Revit in order to handle this client’s business.

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— David Wallace, Jr.
Principal
DLW Architects
The Solution

DLW had worked with IMAGiNiT Technologies for over a decade and turned to them as a trusted business partner for help implementing Revit. “Our partnership has lasted over a decade, not just because IMAGiNiT always meets our needs, but because they push us and provide business savvy advice we weren’t even looking for,” said Wallace.

Initially DLW sent three architects plus the production manager to Revit training at the local IMAGiNiT office. The team returned and started to work in Revit. Just five weeks later, the production manager realized the great gains they made and recommended to Wallace that the entire firm convert to Revit. While DLW had made many customizations to AutoCAD to make their work easier, the production manager still felt that the benefits of building information modeling (BIM) and Revit would far outweigh what they would leave behind.

Working closely with IMAGiNiT consultants, DLW put together a plan for full implementation, which involved design standards re-work and in-house custom, over-the-shoulder training for all employees. To achieve this, IMAGiNiT embedded two trainers who worked directly with DLW staff onsite in their studio. “The training was essential and focused on building our own design standards and making a true BIM workflow as our new standard of work,” said Wallace.

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After the initial consultation and training, DLW also relied on IMAGiNiT consultants to help them over any hurdle that came up. “We would call IMAGiNiT at any time, whenever we needed help and they were always available. It felt like we had an extremely knowledgeable extension of our team. And folks who were just as committed to our success as we were,” said Wallace.

During their conversion to Revit, DLW worked with outsourced engineers who were still using AutoCAD. Wallace identified the need to partner with engineers working in Revit. Understanding the business impact, their IMAGiNiT consultant quickly introduced them to a local engineering firm already using Revit – and the rest is history. “Now, all of our work is produced in Revit, including architectural, structural, mechanical, plumbing and electrical. I wouldn’t work with an engineering firm that doesn’t use Revit,” said Wallace. “Thanks to our well connected and business savvy IMAGiNiT colleague, we were partnered up with a like-minded firm that we can trust to do the best work. Our extended team at IMAGiNiT continually helps us drive our business forwards.”

Wallace attributes their ability to survive to both Revit and IMAGiNiT. “We have seen a lot of businesses in our industry fail around us. If I hadn’t taken on those initial Revit projects and received IMAGiNiT’s outstanding support and technical expertise, we might not have survived this downturn. Without both, I just don’t think we could have been as efficient in terms of turning around client requests. What we save in time, we save in money and that has definitely helped us weather the recession and prepare us for a brighter future.”

Another key factor in their survival was staff and their dedication to learning the new system. “Our staff organized group study sessions on their personal time because they were so excited after the IMAGiNiT training. It was amazing to watch. It’s pretty unique when employees run with an initiative and push themselves to learn the software and improve their abilities. We definitely got through this together.”
Benefits and Results

Savings in Rendering Costs

DLW used to farm out all their renderings to sub-contractors. Renderings were just another cost of doing business. “We spent anywhere from $1,500 - $3,000 on renderings for a typical project,” said Wallace. “Today, we produce them in-house more quickly than outsourcing thanks to IMAGiNiT’s effective training and Revit’s 3D rendering engine. Now our clients can make decisions faster and we help the entire project team understand how a building is coming together at any given time.”

Reduced Time to Opening

DLW has also seen a reduction in overall project completion times. From a design point of view, improved coordination between architectural and engineering teams saved approximately 15% in time which also extended to construction and administration. Ensuring the team was well trained and their design standards optimized, the move to BIM and 3D reduced the number of Requests For Information from the field by 15%. “When we first started with BIM, I would analyze the time reduction for a project from start through construction,” said Wallace. “Generally we saw 15% to 20% overall time reductions from conception to grand opening and in large part, that savings is due directly to IMAGiNiT working with us to create a new BIM-based workflow.”

Positive Customer Response

“The response from our clients and from contractors is overwhelmingly positive,” said Wallace. “They love the fact that we can generate models and renderings for them very quickly if they need to show partners or their banker. We literally have the ability to produce a 3D view of the exterior or interior of any project space within a few hours instead of days. In the markets we serve, most of our competitors don’t have Revit, so with IMAGiNiT’s help we have a developed a huge competitive advantage that not only helps us win new business, but also provides our clients with products that are beyond their expectations.”

About IMAGiNiT Technologies

IMAGiNiT Technologies (imaginit.com), a division of Rand Worldwide, advances the way architects and engineers design, develop, and manage projects. Customers of this leading professional services and technology company include organizations in the building, infrastructure, manufacturing and facilities management industries. Fortune 500 and Engineering News Record’s Top 100 organizations work with IMAGiNiT Technologies to gain competitive advantages through expert technology consulting, implementation, training, and support services. As one of the world’s largest integrators of Autodesk 3D design and engineering software, the team leverages unrivalled industry experience to design systems that accelerate innovation while improving project quality and profitability. For more information visit imaginit.com or rand.com.

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