The Organization

Founded in January 2002, the jdi group has consistently grown over the past decade, regardless of the economic conditions. Together the jdi group founding partners have more than seventy five years of experience in architectural and engineering consulting. Specializing in complex commercial, institutional and manufacturing facility design and engineering, the company has broad national and international experience. Based in Ohio, the jdi group has designed buildings and systems for many of the world’s leading companies across a range of industries including BP-Husky, Rock-Tenn, a major US automaker, Weyerhauser and Pfizer.

The Challenge

Working with high-profile players in complex manufacturing and industrial processing, this highly-interdisciplinary team saw the writing on the wall early on. They knew that 3D-modeling would revolutionize the way they worked. After reviewing their options for programs and partners, principals boldly decided to go ‘all-in’ and adopt a full suite of 3D programs including Navisworks, Revit Architecture, Revit MEP, Revit Structure, Plant 3D, Civil 3D, Factory Design Suite and Inventor. Beyond that, they needed to get their team working cohesively and quickly on a major factory project for a US automaker.

“For a firm like ours, the challenge was to find a technology consulting partner that truly understood all of the disciplines that we represent,” said jdi group Principal, Tim Fry. “It’s the complex nature of our work which often skirts the beaten path – and software doesn’t always offer a solution. We chose to work with IMAGiNiT because their consultants and trainers all came from industries we work with. So not only are they experts with the software, they also understand what our customers are trying to achieve.”

Despite a recessionary economy, because the jdi group had diversified across a number of industries – from big oil to food processing, healthcare and manufacturing – they managed to grow from fifty to well over eighty people in the last few years. And that growth has not stopped, which means they bring on new staff rapidly to meet demand and get them up and running quickly on their chosen technology and workflows.

The Solution

Committed to making this organization-wide change a quick success, the plan was to implement and train on a live project -- a 100,000 sq. ft. addition to an existing auto plant for a major Auto Manufacturer. The work required integration of structural, piping, HVAC and machinery. The team received data in .dwg, pro-engineer and many other formats which would all need conversion to create a single unified model.

IMAGiNiT worked with the jdi group to develop a complete game plan, which included creating new jdi group standards, modeling the client’s standards and optimizing workflows within and between disciplines to eliminate duplicate efforts and minimize back-tracking. The project was up-to-speed in three months flat.

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— Tim Fry
Principal
the jdi group
“IMAGINiT designed an implementation program while we were working on a massive project that we needed to deliver on time and on budget,” said Fry. “It was really pretty audacious what we were trying to accomplish. But if you’re in for a penny, you’re in for a pound, and that’s just how we work around here – we have a vision and execute on that vision – no matter what it takes. By working with a partner like IMAGINiT, we were able to pull it off.”

The jdi group opted to customize their training based on the unique project they were working on which required IMAGINiT to provide guidance and training in the four disciplines during an intense timeline. "I am a real believer in IMAGINiT’s training," said Fry. “You can’t just give people software and expect them to figure it all out. That’s a very inefficient way to work – and it does not promote utilizing common practices, which are extremely important. We learned a lot of best practices working with IMAGINiT and that’s keeping us ahead of our competition.”

The jdi group also subscribes to IMAGINiT’s ProductivityNOW online portal. Most of their questions are answered by the community or through the hundreds of technical and support resources, utilities, eLearning and support components. And, when designers or engineers hit roadblocks that the online portal can’t solve, they call IMAGINiT directly. “Sometimes our support questions have to do with functionality, but not always, said Fry. "We need a partner like IMAGINiT with experts who understand piping, how a factory is laid out, plant process design -- knowledge related to industry processes rather than just the software."

Long-Term Benefits and Results

Ahead of the Curve Today

3D modeling remains a competitive differentiator for the jdi group -- externally with clients and internally when recruiting new talent. “When we went all in, we were definitely ahead of the curve. Most of the other design firms we go up against might produce 3D renderings, but not many design entirely in 3D, so we still have that advantage.” When hiring new recruits, the jdi group has found that the brightest people usually have some experience with modeling and the fact that their entire team works on the model attracts forward thinking employees interested in a long-term career and continuous improvement.

Looking Forward to Tomorrow

“This is also where IMAGINiT’s expertise shines – perhaps even more than their great support,” said Fry. “They let us know about new technologies and practices that may help us. They know us better than we know ourselves and we trust them to keep us ahead of the pack today as well as in the future.”

Saving Time

Fry and his team understand that the investment in creating a model efficiently is well worth the effort. “Once the model is built, it’s simply a push of button to get sections – meaning sections are essentially ‘free’. There are significant time savings in the fact that most new drawings come from the model and not from the mouse.” The jdi group also uses the model to rapidly prepare walk-throughs and construction drawings – generating these in a fraction of the time it would take using flat 2D drawings.

Marketing with Impact

The jdi group also uses their modeling expertise as a marketing tool, showing prospects in 3D how a project might work – even prior to getting the job. “This allows owners and contractors to see how we would work with them,” said Fry. “IMAGINiT has helped us to use Timeliner in Navisworks to show project phasing. We use it as a selling tool and it’s impressive because it has not been used a lot in our corner of the world.”
Keeping Cash Flowing – in the Right Direction

“Our clients don’t pay us until we have delivered the final goods,” said Fry. “When we run into roadblocks that keep us from meeting a deadline or delivering a final product, we immediately get IMAGINiT involved. It makes simple economic sense -- we’re not here to finance our clients. The quicker we turn things around, the quicker we can invoice. And, with IMAGINiT at our back we get things done.”

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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