

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

NK Architects Improves Client Services and Project Productivity with IMAGINiT's BIM Tactical Assistance and Management Processes



The Organization

NK Architects is a full-service architectural, interior design, planning, and structural engineering firm committed to client service and the pursuit of excellence in architecture. With a staff of 70 and offices in New Jersey and New York City, NK Architects works with clients throughout the United States.



The firm uses Autodesk® Revit® and Autodesk® AutoCAD® Architecture extensively on its projects for building information modeling (BIM). Initially, one staff member had been assigned to handle BIM management. He dealt with customizations, created families to support projects, addressed planning and design issues that arose with Revit models, and more. “A great deal of this individual’s time was spent helping others on BIM issues,” said Pablo Serrano, Associate Principal. “If he was unavailable to help staff, they often had to stop their work or they used shortcuts which weren’t pretty and that had negative ramifications later in projects.”

NK Architects realized that this solution to BIM management wasn’t sustainable and simply didn’t fit their needs. It was more valuable for the part-time BIM manager to devote his time to billable project work. In addition, there just wasn’t enough bandwidth in-house to address the firm’s aspirations, such as implementing standards and training guidelines.

Exploring BIM Management Solutions

At the annual partners’ retreat, the NK Architects team discussed how to address their BIM management situation. The firm had several needs including:

- Improving Revit performance by providing staff with assistance
- Creating Revit families and components
- Developing Revit libraries and templates
- Handling software installs and updates in a timely manner
- Training employees
- Increasing billable time for the team



One alternative was to hire a full-time BIM manager. This solution, however, had several drawbacks. Hiring a new grad wasn’t an option because he or she wouldn’t have the necessary experience. The team also realized that finding a candidate with a high level of Revit and AutoCAD Architecture expertise would be difficult. “If we did find a promising candidate, we knew that within a year or two they would grow into a project architecture position in the firm and then the search for a BIM manager would begin all over again,” said Serrano.

The partners then discussed outsourcing BIM management to consultants from IMAGINiT Technologies. This seemed like the perfect fit. The consultants could help the firm grow over time, reduce the complexity of the software for the team, and allow staff to concentrate on billable work.

Outsourcing BIM Management

The first stage of the IMAGINiT engagement was a one month discovery period. During this time, two consultants assessed NK Architects' BIM management needs and discussed the firm's goals. This information was incorporated into a strategic work order.

Initially, two IMAGINiT consultants worked onsite five, and then three days a week. After addressing the high priority issues, the consultants reduced their schedule to two days a week. NK Architects has been very pleased with the outsourcing arrangement. The biggest benefits have been the firms' ability to focus more on business development and to complete projects more efficiently. "Since the IMAGINiT consultants joined the team, our productivity has increased dramatically. We no longer lose time on projects handling BIM management tasks. The staff rarely deals with Autodesk issues now and I have more time for business development," said Serrano. "We recently won a bid for a complex project—if we had been handling BIM management ourselves, our workflow would have been slower. It's a lot easier to handle new projects now. Thanks to IMAGINiT, the team can focus on meeting client deliverables faster and more efficiently."



Another major advantage of IMAGINiT BIM management resources is that their knowledge dramatically reduces the staff's learning curve. The consultants have improved NK Architects' Revit templates and instructed team members on how to use them. "The IMAGINiT consultants have access to extensive experience and knowledge which they apply to our challenges," said Serrano. For example, when a complex Revit question arose at NK Architects, their IMAGINiT resources contacted colleagues across the country and immediately found a solution. After projects are complete, the consultants participate in post-mortems where the team examines the building information model and identifies what was done well and what could be improved on future projects.

The Best of All Worlds

Outsourcing BIM management offers NK Architects the flexibility of a consulting arrangement, as well as the stability of a full-time employee. "The IMAGINiT consultants are willing to come in later in the day for software installs, in order to minimize the disruption to employees. In addition, outsourcing has been a scalable solution for us. It's easy to scale the consultants' hours up during times when we need more help and then scale down when circumstances change," said Serrano.

Since the same consultants work with NK Architects every week, they have built a rapport with the team. "The guys from IMAGINiT have a pulse on what's going on at the firm at the production level. They know our team members well and understand their strengths, as well as areas where they need additional support," said Serrano. "Before they came on board, we worried that there might be personality conflicts between the consultants and our staff which would prevent employees from asking questions. IMAGINiT assured us that they would switch staff out if necessary, but it was never an issue. We wouldn't change our IMAGINiT consultants for anything."



About IMAGINiT Technologies

IMAGINiT Technologies, a Rand Worldwide Company, is a leading provider of enterprise solutions to the engineering community, including the building, manufacturing, civil and mapping industries. With over 25 years of experience, and over 40 offices throughout North America, we provide the expertise, training and support to help companies realize the full power of design technology, maximize ROI and gain competitive advantage.



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