

Bringing Credibility to BIM

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I recently was invited to speak as a part of a "Putting BIM into Practice" panel in Florida, which was hosted by Building Design and Construction Magazine. In speaking to some of the guests in attendance, many of them were interested in my background and wanted to know how much experience I had in the industry. Looking back, I realized these guests were trying to get a good feel for my credibility, since I was going to be sharing my knowledge of BIM with them.

This made me stop and think. I have been writing in the SmartBIM Newsletter for 6 months now, and I began to wonder if my readers really understand my background and expertise in the industry. Therefore, this month I thought I would share my background with you.

In 1996, I realized that I needed to make a career change, and a friend asked me to come to work for his fire sprinkler company in North Little Rock, Arkansas. While I was there, it became obvious to me that I had found my new career. One of the factors in my development was that I could "see" the building components before the building was ever built. This was a major hurdle in understanding design and construction. I also had the opportunity to work on several large hospital projects, which greatly helped my understanding of how a building should be constructed. As my career moved me to the Knoxville, Tennessee area, I was able to observe different and unique ways to construct buildings and sprinkler systems. My time in Tennessee taught me that there were many ways in design and construction to construct and design a building. It gave me a good understanding that two people can see things differently and do things differently, but come up with the same result.

In the summer of 2003, I accepted a job to become the construction manager for a fire sprinkler company in Arkansas. This experience taught me how to handle different situations, as they arose. I had to be quick on my feet and make good solid decisions for the construction crews that worked for me. This position gave me a solid understanding of what construction crews need to construct a building. However, I missed working in design and decided to return to what I loved best about the industry.

In the early fall of 2004, an opportunity arose for me to come to work for my current employer, TME, Inc. TME had just started a fire protection division, and I accepted the position of fire protection designer. Working for contractors my entire career, I was not exactly sure what to expect from an engineering firm. As it would turn out, I found exactly where my design skills were best suited. It was a

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difficult change at first, but the engineering point of view has shown me an entirely new side to designing and constructing a building.

In 2007, this little word called BIM started making its way around our office. Most our staff were skeptical at first. However, once I started using Revit MEP, my opinion and the opinion of our firm changed. For the first time, I was able to see a building and design the fire protection system in full 3D. It was then that I realized the power this program could have. I started trying to figure out how to leverage the power of the program while I was designing, which led me into my current position as BIM Development Coordinator, here at TME. In working with Revit, I have been involved in more than 40 Revit MEP models either as a designer or technical developer. I am also a member of the Autodesk Revit MEP customer research team and have had the pleasure to speak directly to some of the MEP programmers developing future editions of the software.

Hopefully, you can see that I have some experience in many different aspects of building design and construction. What you read about in my articles are things that I put into practice here at TME on a daily basis. BIM is an awesome tool for our industry and great strides are being made in the improvement of this tool and its use.