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# How BIM technology sets your company apart from the competition

You may be using BIM and other digital construction technology, but are you marketing it to the best of your advantage?

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Okland Construction knew it was the underdog in the bid for a \$100-million-plus apartment complex project. Unlike its competitors, Okland hadn't done a project of this type and scale before. But Okland saw an opportunity and decided to go for it.

The company used its Building Information Modeling (BIM) technology to do laser scans and 360-degree camera scans of the site. It then used that data to produce a highly personalized and high-tech presentation that used BIM to show exactly how Okland would do the job, including the workflow and the schedule for everything from demolition through renovation.

And it worked.

"We were able to get the job over a contractor that was better qualified," says Blake Rawlings, Okland's Integrated Construction Team Manager. "We went into that project and showed them how we'd apply our methods and our people on their project. In using BIM, we could really show them what we were talking about."

## **Why Owners Love BIM**

Studies show that owners who adopt BIM into their workflows love it, with 93% of owners saying it improves the quality/function of the final design, according to the Dodge Data & Analytics Report "Measuring the Impact of BIM on Complex Buildings." The study further showed BIM improved their ability to understand construction documents (73%) and ability to plan construction phasing/logistics (70%).

But while owners value BIM on the job, experts say many contracting companies aren't doing enough to market their BIM skills and set themselves apart from the competition. Just as Okland discovered, showing off the "wow factor" of those BIM skills with 3D visualizations in presentations and drone flyovers, can really impress owners — and make the difference in winning the bid.

Indeed some experts say demonstrating BIM skills and the know-how are a necessary prerequisite to even be considered. "They're expecting you to have all the latest tools," says Scott Jennings, P.E., principal of SJ Construction Consulting LLC, who's also a former construction firm owner. "It shows a lot of clients that you're on the leading edge of technology."

## **How Contractors Can Market BIM Skills**

For construction companies, demonstrating the leading edge is crucial to not only setting themselves apart from the competition, but also maintaining existing clients. The loyalty of those customers is vital since 80% of a company's future revenue will come from just 20% of existing customers, according to research from the Gartner Group.

Experts such as Jennings say that clients who experience the advantages of BIM when working with you will come to associate

those benefits with your firm — and keep coming back. One clear benefit to owners and firms alike is a reduction in the number of RFIs and change orders.

"The more you can get your design documents to match what you can actually build, the fewer changes you'll have," Rawlings says. "We found that we can reduce change orders by up to 40%, if we implement BIM strategy to begin with."

But while those figures are impressive and marketing worthy, Rawlings says it's often BIM's other showier abilities that help his company stand out from the competition.

"In some site utilization plans we've put together where we included drone footage, or laser scans, owners have come back and said it helped them make their decision" to choose Okland, says Rawlings.

### **Why BIM Helps Keep Existing Clients**

It's important to not only use BIM in presentations, but also as your company expands its BIM capability, to market those skills to existing clients — and how those skills benefit them.

For example, companies can send out notices to existing clients letting them know that the firm is now working with clients using intelligent 3D models. Then explain how those skills help your entire project team work faster and smarter, which in turn saves time and money.

Rawlings says that strategy has worked well for Okland. "About 90% of the work we do is repeat clients," he says. "Our BIM technology skills have helped us to increase that level of confidence that we know what we're doing, and we know how to build."