

## **CASE STUDY:** **BSD SpecLink helps WHR Architects save time and money**

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*With over 160 people located in Houston and Dallas, the 30-year-old firm is working on projects throughout the US for top-tier public and private medical and educational institutions.*



*TMH Outpatient Center*

**Background:** WHR Architects is a full-service architecture, planning, and interior design firm focused on projects in health care, education, science, and technology. WHR's commitment to critical thinking is balanced by an ingrained empathy that results in both improved project outcomes and positive working experiences with their clients. Research and evaluation, participatory process, and applied innovation are the hallmarks of WHR's work.

These characteristics not only help deliver a high level of client satisfaction, they are bringing a new accountability to design and consulting while meeting the challenges of technology, operational and financial performance, safety and productivity. WHR's holistic approach and design leadership bring particular value on technically complex projects with multiple stakeholders, user groups and decision makers. Successful integration of building technology, functional efficiency and aesthetics demands a profound understanding of business and construction issues.

WHR's innovative thinking results in enhanced environments for patient care, research, teaching and learning. WHR has been recognized for achieving the highest level of business performance as one of only 40 firms in the US to be listed on PSMJ's Circle of Excellence. WHR was also the only architectural firm included in the 2007 list of Best Companies to Work For in Texas.

**The Need:** WHR found that specifications took too much time to develop using their home-grown office master in word processing. As WHR's number and size of projects increased and the demand on a single specification writer reached a tipping point, they began looking for a new solution. WHR had been searching for a process that would shift more of the specification task down into the individual project teams while maintaining consistency and quality control. The specification director could then focus on firm-wide Project Manual quality control, consistency, product research and specification practice development.

**The Solution:** SpecLink offered WHR a tool that would allow project architects — who were not spec writers — to perform preliminary specification section editing of Part 2 Products for each section, recording initial selections and choices of materials and systems being employed in the project. SpecLink functionality made it much more efficient for WHR's dedicated spec writer to complete the sections while performing quality control review of the project team's edits. In addition, specification production using word processing was not keeping pace technologically with software being used for project management, accounting, marketing, design and construction drawing production within the office. SpecLink brought specification production technically on par with these other software programs, elevating specifications beyond simple word processing to the level of an intelligent, interactive database.

**The Outcome:** BSD SpecLink helped WHR custom tailor an office master to address the issues of the company's primary building type (health care) while maintaining a “memory” of decisions within the office master across projects. Using SpecLink resulted in significant reduction in time spent updating references and resources, thereby allowing more focus on project issues. WHR says that using SpecLink has resulted in a time savings of 40% over other specification programs. Productivity advantages include retention of knowledge across projects, and the ability to add or remove information quickly and efficiently. The ease of incorporating new word processor based sections within the system has allowed WHR to develop over 50 new sections to address specific materials and systems employed routinely in their practice. They have also found global page formatting to be a huge timesaver — not to mention the ability to print a complete project in minutes.

