

Harris & Associates Architects/Planners, LLC “Hooked” on BSD SpecLink

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Raymond Harris
President
Harris & Associates,
Architects/Planners LLC



Valley Creek Treatment Plant Administration Building

Raymond Harris, AIA, founded Harris & Associates, Architects/Planners LLC in 1987. The practice is located in Birmingham, Alabama.

They specialize in four main areas of architecture: educational, county and municipal (city halls, animal shelters), commercial (retail, shopping centers, office buildings) and residential, both multi-family and single-family.

Being involved in a wide range of project types brings variety to their practice. It also gives them wonderful opportunities for networking, by connecting with clients

who have diverse requirements.

Working across several design disciplines also allows them to carry over learning from one type of project to another. The staff at Harris & Associates enjoys this variety, as it enhances their creativity and gives them a broader picture of architectural methods and processes. This inspires them to produce innovative designs to respond to client requests.



Building Systems Design, Inc.

3520 Piedmont Road, Suite 415
Atlanta, GA 30305

888-BSD-SOFT
(273-7638)
Fax: 404-365-8912

www.bsdssoftlink.com

The Need: Ray Harris has been writing specifications for over 33 years. He has seen many “new” solutions that have been introduced to make the process easier and more streamlined. In 1998, he was still using a word-processing based system. The process of writing specifications and updating the information was time-consuming and sometimes inaccurate. While Harris enjoyed spec writing, he wanted to free up some of his time so he could attend to other business matters. That’s when he decided to take a look at SpecLink.

The Solution: “Using SpecLink, editing is very simple and precise, and it lets me work more quickly and efficiently,” says Harris. “BSD’s SpecLink has saved the firm time by allowing us to complete specs quickly and more accurately.” He estimates that he has been able to trim 30% off his spec writing time while at the same time increasing accuracy. This is time he can spend on other aspects of his business.

The quarterly updates to SpecLink are a huge advantage, too. Harris states that these frequent updates have “made their specification management more accurate and up-to-date. Manufacturers or product model numbers that have merged, changed names or are no longer in business are correctly listed.” As these manufacturers and their products change more rapidly, Harris & Associates is able to stay current by using SpecLink.

These two features – time savings and an up-to-date, accurate database – have had another influence on how Harris writes specifications. He says, “We are now able to start specification preparation later in the project, when working drawings are more complete. This means we are less likely to omit something that has been added at the last minute.”

The Outcome: Since instituting SpecLink in 1998, Harris & Associates has set up Office Masters, which has been another time-saver. They currently have two Office Masters – one for public projects and one for educational – and are working on one for residential. This allows them to easily put together specifications for their various client types. It also ensures that the project fits the client rather than trying to fit the client into the project.

Harris also likes SpecLink’s flexibility, “It is easy to customize to my personal and professional preferences. It can take advantage of my knowledge, while maintaining a standard format.” And the support he receives from the SpecLink technical staff is first rate: “They have great support – just the best! I’m able to call and have a question immediately answered.”

With Harris liking so many things about SpecLink, was there anything else he could add? “This is the best specification system I have ever worked with. I am hooked on it!”



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Images courtesy of Harris & Associates.



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For more information on BSD SpecLink, contact Bryant Hendricks:
bhendricks@bsdsoftlink.com

BSD SpecLink is a powerful specification writing, management and production system with built-in intelligence designed to dramatically speed up editing tasks and reduce specification production time while minimizing errors and omissions. Users’ project files are each maintained in a single database, rather than in multiple word processing files. Several model projects are included that allow the user to start with a pre-edited set of complete specifications. Because the master data is always visible and never deleted, it is easy to review project choices or select alternatives. Users can also import their own custom sections and/or create model projects specific to company or project-related requirements.