

# SpecLink Helps Otwell Associates Streamline Their Specwriting Process

*"The user interface and master notes . . . both make SpecLink an invaluable tool for me!"*

**Scott Westbrook**  
**Design/Project Manager**  
**Otwell Associates,**  
**Architects**



**Otwell Associates, Architects, was established in 1979 to provide architectural design and planning services to clients in the southwest.**

The firm specializes in historic preservation, solar and energy efficient design, and preservation of natural site features. William Otwell, AIA, is principal of Otwell Associates, Architects. He is a native Arizonan, born and raised in Phoenix.

Otwell Associates provides architectural design services for clients throughout Arizona, but primarily focuses on work in central and northern Arizona. Mr. Otwell and his staff have a thorough working knowledge of the local environment, which gives their projects a strong

sense of connection and compatibility with the location and climatic conditions.

Otwell Associates' work has been devoted to school, municipal, medical facilities, and site-specific residential design. They provide both new construction and restoration of schools, public, and governmental projects. Additionally, Otwell Associates understands the need for the use of more "green" products in construction and has developed a palette of durable and energy efficient construction materials.



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**The Need:** Otwell Associates' familiarity with the Arizona landscape gives them valuable insight into the types of design that work well in their community. This knowledge allows them to work with the natural surroundings, creating designs that delight their clients.

As they looked at their specification writing process, they realized that they could benefit from a detailed knowledge of the types of products specified and why specific products were used. Scott Westbrook, Designer/Project Manager with Otwell Associates, knew there were two ways to obtain this knowledge. He could continue using his in-house specification writing system and do all the research himself. Or, he could find a specification writing program that had already done the research for him.

**The Solution:** In 2004, Westbrook decided to make the switch to SpecLink. He says, "The master notes are a wonderful resource to help me understand what some of the types of products specified really are and their implications. It also explains some of the standards that are followed and why. These notes give me a more complete picture of what I am specifying which makes for a more complete and accurate specification."

Time savings was another benefit Westbrook wanted to achieve with SpecLink. He notes, "The time it took to write specs did not decrease initially, but that is due to an increase in detail that I was learning - details that I didn't realize I needed to put into my specifications. The end result is that the specifications we are creating are more thorough and complete, leaving less room for conflict during construction." With SpecLink he was able to create better, more comprehensive specifications in the same amount of time.

**The Outcome:** SpecLink also provided Westbrook with productivity advantages in other areas of his specification writing. "Since I started using SpecLink, the spec writing process is more enjoyable and a better learning experience," he says. "The user interface is intuitive, well thought out, and easy to use. It definitely streamlines the spec writing process."

Westbrook took a "learn as you go" approach to learning SpecLink, working his way through his first project with the Users Manual. When asked what he liked best about the software, he stated, "It's a tie between the user interface and the master notes. They both make SpecLink an invaluable tool for me!"



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Images courtesy of Otwell Associates, Architects.



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For more information on BSD SpecLink, contact Bryant Hendricks:  
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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.