

Clayco

Selling clients on the benefits of BIM



“We talk to clients about the benefits that BIM helps us to deliver ... such as clearer designs, compressed timelines, and a better built environment.”

— **Tomislav Žigo**
Director of virtual design and construction
Clayco

A full-service real estate development, design-build, and construction firm, Clayco is committed to delivering high-quality buildings on time and on budget. The firm was founded in 1984, and today it employs more than 1,000 people. This interview was conducted at Autodesk University 2013.

Q: What types of projects does Clayco undertake?

A: Clayco is a design-build firm headquartered in Chicago and with an office in St. Louis. We take on a diverse range of projects, including education, health care, corporate, and hospitality. We don't shy away from any project because we feel we have the expertise and know-how to deliver a range of projects.

Q: On what percentage of those projects do you use BIM?

A: BIM plays a role on 100% of our projects, although our level of BIM engagement may vary based on the project. Design is 100% BIM, and so is coordination. On many projects, we also use more advanced BIM processes, like sustainability analysis, estimating, scheduling, field deployment, and commissioning.

Q: What is the value of BIM?

A: BIM increases the clarity of the design. This clarity delivers benefits that touch many aspects of a project. It's easier to convey design intent to clients, so they can then provide more complete feedback sooner. BIM compresses coordination time. Field crews see and understand the intent of the design more clearly. We also see benefits using models to conduct building performance analysis. It adds value that goes beyond project delivery. It helps us design better buildings, where environments may be healthier for work or more energy efficient.

Q: Is BIM helping you to win more work?

A: We don't view the selling process as being about specific projects. We're trying to sell clients on our expertise—our ability to deliver the buildings they need. BIM is what we do, and we try to do it really well.

Q: How does BIM play a role in your sales process?

A: We talk to clients about the benefits that BIM helps us to deliver. We discuss our expertise in managing information and how we can deliver the benefits I mentioned earlier, such as clearer designs, compressed timelines, and a better built environment. Those are things clients want. The BIM process is part of our DNA, and has been for 10 years. But BIM can seem like a trendy technology or buzzword. So, we try not to mention the term "BIM" in interviews with prospective clients. Instead, we explain how we use a model-based process to deliver better, more integrated projects.

Q: How is this approach reflected in how you work with clients during projects?

A: As an industry, we need to be more engaged with trying to understand what our clients need. We also need to be more understanding of clients' business models. By this, I mean that we must never lose sight of how buildings will be used after they have been delivered. The building model should reflect the client's goals, and we work with clients to define those goals. The goals inform the performance analysis that BIM enables. Again, it comes back to creating a better built environment along with better project delivery.