

# BIM Building Blocks

## *Contractor Representatives Get In Tune With Business Aspects Of BIM, IPD*

BY BRIDGET FROELICH

Industry experts concur that Building Information Modeling (BIM) and Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) will soon be the norm rather than aberrations on construction sites nationwide. On February 24, Builders Association members got a better look at what that future looks like.

The Builders Association hosted *The Business Side of BIM and Integrated Project Delivery* at the DoubleTree Hotel in Oak Brook. Fifty members were in attendance for the presentation and open forum, which discussed time and money-saving elements of using BIM as well as issues to anticipate and how to resolve them when integrating BIM into project planning. Misconceptions related to non-technical aspects of BIM were addressed, such as legal and processing issues, liability, and exposure and risk management.

“(BIM) saves time, increases communication between designers and contractors, allows for better pre-planning and more efficiently plans project into execution,” said Dwight Larson of Mortenson Construction. Larson was joined by Walsh Construction Group Vice President Bill Ernstrom and Pepper Construction Company Project Engineer Allison Smith as presenters.

BIM’s common information platform allows projects to be executed with greater efficiency and can potentially end the issue of information chaos. Communication and collaboration are enhanced during all aspects of planning, reducing risk. Presenters covered how designers and contractors can work better together on a uniform media that is relational with data-centric inputs, and the 3D model allows for greater visualization of the project, which prevents costly errors during production.



*Walsh Construction Group Vice President Bill Ernstrom begins his presentation at the industry knowledge event in Oak Brook. The meeting was the first in the Association's BIMForward series.*

Speakers detailed the importance of effective integration.

“The trick is to not start at zero but to integrate BIM according to how you already do your project,” Smith said. “You should let BIM enhance it and clarify your project, not overly complicate it.”

Keeping in mind the type of projects you currently work on is helpful when determining which ways to integrate BIM to enhance them, Smith added.

One issue raised during the question-and-answer session dealt with how the collaborative use of BIM reallocates liability. As explained by Ernstrom and Larson, BIM does not reallocate liability, as responsibility is a function of the roles and those responsibilities are issues found completely outside of BIM.

The key to any planned project is process control, Ernstrom explained in his presentation. BIM is merely another process

to be managed for greater functionality.

Owners are in the best position to ensure that the key BIM decisions are made in time to be implemented into project delivery from the beginning and incorporated into the project contracts.

Members discovered that the greater the integration of BIM, the greater the potential for efficiency.

Though integration brings process change, which can bring its own difficulties and its own issues to manage, remaining in control and clearly stating expectations to all parties so everyone has the same expectations can allow for the best integration of BIM and for a more efficient and cost effective execution of any project.

Maximizing the value of BIM and managing potential were discussed, and it was suggested that contractors explicitly state an early agreement to address intellectual property issues ahead of time.