

Back To BIM Class

While owners in Chicagoland and elsewhere are asking for Building Information Modeling (BIM), many of them may not understand what it is they're asking for.

David Webster of MasterGraphics has seen a number of contractors who are in the same precarious position when it comes to BIM technology and processes.

"BIM is a process, not a software," Webster said. "It's not just pretty pictures or one little product. It has to be a change in the way we do things."

In order to both better educate contractors about what BIM is and help them get started with these processes at their own firms, the Builders Association hosted the first two courses in the AGC of America's BIM Education Series. The Chicago Regional Council of Carpenters Training Center was the site for both BIM 101 in January and BIM Technology in March.

Webster served as the instructor for BIM 101, which included sessions on:

- What is BIM?
- Spatial coordination uses
- Scheduling, estimating and facility management
- Getting started

Dan Klancnik of Walsh Construction Group, who oversaw the implementation of BIM processes from start to finish at C.G. Schmidt in Milwaukee, guided a two-day BIM Technology class that went over the finer points of BIM processes. Specifically, he discussed the benefits of the BIM approach, how to match certain tools with their function, interoperability and what to expect when first using BIM on projects.

"You've really got to have somebody at the executive level in your company who decides 'this is what we're going to do' and stick by that," Klancnik said. "You need your executives to have that commitment because it's going to take some time until everybody on the project team gets comfortable with it."

"You'll get some push back from sub-contractors or others who are resistant to



Instructors David Webster of MasterGraphics (above) and Dan Klancnik of Walsh Construction Group helped Builders Association members catch up on recent developments in Building Information Modeling and learn more about the process of implementing it at their own companies.

using it. In my experience, after one project, those same people are ordering tools and getting themselves educated because they realize the benefits."

While it requires an up front investment and some time to get started, both instructors outlined how making those investments will give a contractor better buildings at a quicker pace.

"It does take some growing pains and some time to get used to it and get everyone on the same page," Webster said. "Once

you do that, however, you're going to find that you can do things in a third of the time, and do them better."

Through programs in the last four years, the Builders Association has worked to educate its members on the advantages of BIM. The AGC's BIM Education Series is ongoing, as is its online BIMForum, and the Association plans to present a BIM for Owners class in conjunction with the American Institute of Architects (AIA) later this year.