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WB Engineers | Consultants

Improving The Way Things Are Done

How did a four-person operation become a major player in the engineering sector? In the case of WB Engineers | Consultants, the answer is simple: treating clients well and taking a risk on advanced technologies.

These two tactics have proven extremely effective for WB Engineers. Since the firm's inception in 1999, it has gathered a notable list of clients, which includes Verizon, Gensler, Swig Equities, Jones Apparel, Tiffany & Co., Jones Lang LaSalle, Citigroup, NIKE, Reebok, TSC Design, Mancini Duffy, and Brookfield Properties.

The firm currently has three offices in the Northeast and recently opened its first office abroad, in Dublin, Ireland. In addition, in each of the past eight years, WB has enjoyed consistent annual growth in revenue and personnel of 15 percent.

WB Engineers was founded by partners David Bonifacic and Vincent Warner, who met as colleagues at a Manhattan-based engineering firm. Although both enjoyed working on the various projects, the long hours with little opportunity for change or growth stimulated entrepreneurial thoughts. As a result, the two founded WB Engineers. Peter DeBernado and Peter Dussault joined as founding principals.

Due to the partners' background and shared interest in the mechanical/electrical/plumbing (M/E/P) design sectors, their new enterprise was established as a M/E/P firm. Its services have since grown to include fire protection (FP) and information technology (IT).

An M/E/P firm's typical role on a project team is to be the client's advocate with regard to code and design issues. This includes negotiating with local authorities and contractors; advising and making recommendations for the selection of the various M/E/P and IT systems; developing and documenting design so that contractors may bid and construct; and observing the construction process to ensure that the project is built to the owners' expectations.

WB's methodology has always been to provide personalized client service and customized solutions. The firm established a presence by offering depth and a wide range of expertise, while ensuring that clients receive the kind of personal service and attention that is often lacking at larger firms. Although WB currently has 55 employees, the business model has not changed. Most of WB's work derives from repeat clients, which include end-users, architects, project managers, and building owner/managers.

It's no secret that the engineering industry is a conservative one. However, Managing Partner David Bonifacic believes that a 21st century firm can only succeed if it embraces the new technological advances. The firm sees each new product as a new opportunity; and the recent BIM (Building Information Model) phenomenon provides a perfect demonstration of WB's willingness to embrace new technologies.



David Bonifacic

BIM is a three-dimensional model that is updated and maintained throughout the lifecycle of a building. The data built into this model can be retrieved, organized, and documented at any project phase with the assurance that changes made in one view will be coordinated throughout the project. Moreover, it enables the design team to visualize what is being built before they build it. David refers to BIM as a way to "test drive the building and all the alternatives."

The usage of BIM ensures that the design team would be able to share its design much earlier in the process, thus having a significant impact on the project schedule. Problems are fixed on a three-dimensional model rather than after construction. Although WB regards BIM as a powerful tool with significant potential, many other design firms have been hesitant to accept this new instrument. In fact, WB has been rebuilding its infrastructure to be able to support BIM. The firm is setting up a software training program for its personnel and the staff commits to be in BIM by the beginning of 2008.

WB's personnel count recently expanded past 50, which is a tremendous milestone since the firm's development has been strictly organic. David hopes to continue this steady growth, particularly in the New Jersey and New England offices.

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