



Driving Collaboration in a Virtual World with a Unified Construction Management Solution

Oktra, an award-winning office design and build company with dedicated teams across the UK, are driven to create spaces that inspire people to do amazing things. Specialising in the design and build of commercial spaces, the company works across a wide collection of clients from law firms and banks to technology companies and gyms. Oktra delivers a range of services for tenants, landlords and service office providers, often working at high-speed on projects that have short timescales.

Matthew Bidmead is the BIM Manager for Oktra. He is responsible for the design and delivery of the company's Building Information Modelling (BIM) adoption strategy. Oktra's journey with BIM started with the implementation of Autodesk's Revit – a design and documentation solution, supporting all phases and disciplines involved in a building project. Initially, Oktra began using Revit to aid faster and real-time collaboration with a client based overseas: Matthew quickly saw the benefits that technology like this could bring to every project.



Customer Snapshot

| | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| FIRM SIZE: | <500 |
| FIRM TYPE: | DESIGN/ENGINEER |
| REVENUE: | 105 MILLION |
| FOCUS AREA: | COMMERCIAL |
| HQ: | LONDON, UK |

PHASE:



PRODUCTS:



VALUE DRIVERS:



Schedule



Quality

When Virtual Collaboration Becomes a Necessity

Early in 2020, as the world began to feel the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK government issued a nationwide lockdown which forced Oktra's teams to work remotely.

Matthew reflects: "As part of our agile work strategy, our team were empowered to work remotely as they all had laptops, but during the first lockdown, we soon realised there were gaps in our approach to document management. We also had some issues accessing high-resolution models on our home networks, so the decision was made to pilot Autodesk's BIM 360 document management system with our team based in the North of England."

The team piloting the software began using BIM 360 within Autodesk Construction Cloud™ as a document management system but also explored the additional features it offers. "BIM 360 has a huge range of capabilities and some of our team started using these without being shown how to – the fact that the platform is so intuitive and easy to use helped them trial and test different functionalities," says Matthew.



Leveraging a Digital Solution to Deliver More

Oktra were able to leverage these additional features with one of their clients based in the USA during a virtual project review meeting. They used BIM 360 to host the project visuals and share drawings live with their client from their Autodesk Revit models. This allowed the whole project team to review and comment on the same project documentation in real-time. "During the session, one of our team members captured feedback on the drawings and marked these up in real-time. By the time the session had finished, they were able to re-submit a new set of drawings to the client with the comments and changes discussed," says Matthew. "Our client was so impressed by how we were using technology to collaborate, despite the fact that we were all working remotely."

The success of this experience led Oktra to review their design and build processes, exploring how they could use technology to improve information sharing and better store project documentation for a single source of truth for project data.

"The need for better collaborative processes is so much more when everyone is separated from each other, so technology plays an important role. When you have many people working from multiple platforms, there's a risk that communication can breakdown and document control can go awry. Whilst we were well equipped to work remotely as a result of Covid-19, the effects of the prolonged period of remote work accelerated our need to adopt software that is more secure and stable," says Matthew. They also required a solution that could scale alongside their evolving needs.

Improving Collaboration and Communication

As remote working continues to be a reality for many Oktra teams, storing and managing documents in one central place has improved collaboration and communication on projects. Matthew has supported the teams by building their understanding of the technology and the benefits it can bring, but has also identified how it could support other teams at Oktra by digitising some of their more traditional ways of working.

Oktra are constantly exploring how they can use the functionality of BIM 360. "Increasing our use of Autodesk products and introducing BIM 360 has shown us how we can drive continuous improvement through better insights and data," comments Matthew.

"And we're looking to use all the functionality available. As an example, we're planning to use the approvals workflow on projects – it will help bring another layer of accountability to our projects so the team can understand why issues arise and then use this information to improve what we do in the future."

In addition, the team wants to introduce the use of the issues functionality to produce project data dashboards which will capture improved live project information. Matthew says: "For me, this is all about iterative improvements for Oktra. Our projects are very fast-paced so we can take a flexible approach to the way we do things, and this will help us test new ways of working and provide us with the data to support these discoveries."

The next step for Oktra is focusing on how technology can support the way the project team collaborates with supply chain partners and how it can support the company's ambitions to be digitally driven. "From a sustainability angle, we're committed to becoming a paper-free organisation, so this technology is another step towards that. BIM 360 will touch on all aspects of what we do – from the supply chain partners we choose to work with and the way we carry out our quality control processes, to how we approach recruitment," says Matthew.

“

During the session, one of our team members captured feedback on the drawings and marked these up in real-time. By the time the session had finished, they were able to re-submit a new set of drawings to the client with the comments and changes discussed.”

-Matthew Bidmead
BIM Manager,
Oktra