

# SpecLink

## For consistency across facilities, *Spectrum Health* uses SpecLink to save time and create professional design standards and specs

Thirteen hospitals, 300 physicians and 150 facilities make *Spectrum Health* the largest healthcare system in west Michigan. And with over eight million square feet of facilities to manage, maintaining standards for clinical and administrative spaces is no small task.

At the helm of this effort to strike a balance between consistency and innovation is Andrew Aulgur, RA, NCARB, who left private practice to become one of the system's senior architects.

Aulgur works closely with a team of architect facility planners, interior designers and equipment planners to develop project specifics, such as cost and budgets, and gain strategic alignment from the leadership team.

Perhaps the most important aspect of his role, Aulgur maintains facility design standards and best practices that ensure the same materials are used consistently from site to site, across projects for the system's 13 hospitals.

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RA, NCARB  
Senior Architect  
Spectrum Health



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Although a goal for Aulgur and his team, the system's design specification process wasn't delivering design consistency in projects across its facilities.

Relying on word processing documents to manage and share specifications, which were then maintained by individual departments, was resulting in formatting discrepancies, inaccuracies and wasted time. Internal conflicts between different specifications emerged and when internal architects needed a unique specification for a project, it wasn't accessible or easy to find.

Aulgur also worked with outside contractors and architects, but without a central source for standards and specifications, it wasn't easy to share that information with partners, which created problems when outside resources specified materials and products the healthcare system didn't want or couldn't support.

"Without a central clearinghouse, our specifications and standards were maintained in whichever software the person responsible felt most comfortable using, and they were being updated in static documents that were impossible to share across departments," said Aulgur. "They were all over the place."

With years of experience using RIB's SpecLink in a previous role, Aulgur and others suggested to the leadership team that SpecLink could alleviate the inconsistency problems, help establish and disseminate design standards and save time.

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Built-in intelligence for more efficient design standards and spec creation Aulgur uses SpecLink to produce detailed design standards and three-part specifications that include commonly used and specified products found in RIB's database, as well as proprietary specifications for standardizing, best practices and national purchasing agreements.

SpecLink's built-in intelligence dramatically speeds up editing tasks and reduces specification production time while minimizing errors and omissions. With over 300,000 links between related paragraphs and embedded choices within those paragraphs, SpecLink provides intelligence that helps Aulgur build comprehensive, accurate and coordinated design standards and specs.

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**...a feature that reduces production time by 50 to 70 percent...**

“It’s very intuitive and easy to use,” said Aulgur. “SpecLink links related paragraphs and uses simple traffic signals — red, yellow, green — to prompt us with smart questions and suggestions that identify issues and prevent turning on something that will create a conflict later in the body of the spec.”

*SpecLink’s* user-friendly checklist format makes it easy for Aulgur to quickly select the items he wants to include in the spec, a feature that reduces production time by 50 to 70 percent for most *SpecLink* users. And, information omitted from a project is never deleted — it’s always available for future use.

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“*SpecLink* saves me a tremendous amount of time,” said Aulgur. “Working in a database instead of word processing files gives us the option to take advantage of time-saving features like auto-formatting and checklists that greatly simplify our workflows.”

**An unexpected benefit: tighter bids from contractors** Aulgur and his team also use *SpecLink* to create specification documents for safety requirements. “We’ve created several proprietary specifications in *SpecLink*,” said Aulgur. “For example, we created a 30-page specification document for owner safety requirements that is based on historical data and OSHA regulations, along with our own policies and procedures.”

The system also used *SpecLink* to build a three-part specification document that captures the design standards and requirements for the healthcare system’s infection control and prevention projects.

“Being able to provide this detail in written format allows bidders to more appropriately bid our projects,” said Aulgur. “After moving to *SpecLink*, we noticed right away that our construction costs were coming in with a tighter spread because, for the first time ever, all of the bids were based on consistent material standards and specifications. It’s helped tighten up the bidding process. The bids are based on the same specs, so we have an apples-to-apples comparison that helps us select the most qualified contractor.”

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**Consistent, professional and always up to date**

Aulgur is the common clearinghouse for specification information across the system. He relies on *SpecLink’s* formatting features to easily produce specs that are consistent and look professional. “Before *SpecLink*, multiple employees were updating the specs, so documents looked disjointed,” said Aulgur. “I really like how polished and cohesive our specs look with *SpecLink*.”

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The various teams send their comments and requests to Aulgur and he incorporates them into the master document. “I’m able to adjust the standards and quickly disseminate the updated version to the entire system,” said Aulgur.

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*SpecLink* has not only driven consistency across *Spectrum Health*, it’s also helped cut costs. “Before we began using *SpecLink*, inconsistency was a big problem that went beyond brand image and design,” said Aulgur. “For instance, the one-time use of a certain door hardware that didn’t meet the specified design standards would have a ripple effect. With a common baseline for the material standards, our maintenance costs go down and our shops don’t need to carry multiple types of door hardware per se. This saves us a lot of time and money.”

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Find out more about how your company can benefit from SpecLink by connecting with one of our experts at [SpecLink.Sales@RIB-Software.com](mailto:SpecLink.Sales@RIB-Software.com), 1-888-273-7638, or by visiting [www.bsdspeclink.com](http://www.bsdspeclink.com).