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Holly Jordan, FCSI, CCS, A-SCIP, LEED AP BD+C
Senior Associate Director of Specifications Perkins+Will



Above: The state of the art reception area at Perkins+Will, Dallas Office

Perkins+Will Dallas Office uses SpecLink to work faster, improve coordination and stay on the leading edge of innovation.

Industry leader Perkins+Will has been creating innovative, award winning designs for the world’s most forward-thinking clients since 1935. The firm’s commitment to excellence extends to its Dallas office, which develops corporate, commercial, civic, healthcare, higher education and K-12 education projects with an emphasis on sustainability. Consistently ranked one of the top five architectural firms in Dallas/Fort Worth, Perkins+Will Dallas is home to more than 170 top design professionals.

Dallas also serves as the specification hub for the firm’s Texas operations; in addition to Dallas/Fort Worth, the office produces specs for Perkins+Will projects out of Houston and Austin. A drive to stay on top of industry trends and solidify its position at the forefront of architectural firms in North America led Perkins+Will to start using SpecLink.

SpecLink

“At an architectural firm, the architects need to have every new product, every upgraded tool and every innovation at their fingertips,” said Holly Jordan, Senior Associate and Director of Specifications at Perkins+Will. “I want us to be at the forefront of spec writing, to be on the cutting edge. I want Perkins+Will to be first. That’s why I wanted to add *SpecLink*.”

While *SpecLink* has been on the firm’s radar for years, it was the launch of *SpecLink Cloud* that enticed Perkins+Will to add the forward-thinking software solution to their arsenal of tools. Industry-advancing features like BIM integration and cloud collaboration enticed the firm to adopt the software, but Perkins+Will was also drawn to the time-saving benefits and efficiencies of *SpecLink*’s intelligent database.

“SpecLink is going to help us speed things up,” said Jordan. “And the cloud is going to help us streamline our process and make coordination easier.”

CONTENT CUSTOMIZATION

The ability to customize content in their office masters was crucial for Perkins+Will. “That was one of the first questions we asked,” said David Combs, Associate Principal and Technical Director at Perkins+Will. “Can we import our content into the *SpecLink* masters? It was a key element in deciding to pull the trigger on *SpecLink*.”

When building specs, Perkins+Will provides a significant amount of supplementary content in various sections. The firm uses customized masters to preserve their preferences and institutional knowledge, and improves efficiency and accuracy in the process. “From lessons learned to liability risk management issues, we’re bringing that into our *SpecLink* masters so we have the content there rather than having to figure out how to get it in there for every project,” said Combs.

ENHANCED COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

Successful collaboration is at the core of what makes Perkins+Will industry leaders. Take the new 300,000-square-foot Baylor Scott & White Sports Therapy & Research complex. Adjacent to the Dallas Cowboys headquarters, the Perkins+Will designed complex represents a first-of-its-kind collaboration between a major healthcare provider, an NFL team, and a local school district.

Perkins+Will knows that projects of this magnitude require fine-tuned coordination and collaboration, which is why the firm was eager to start using *SpecLink*’s cloud collaboration and 3D viewer tool. Streamlining collaboration with everyone from colleagues in different offices to owners and facilities departments will save Perkins+Will significant time and resources.

“A lot of clients want to scrutinize every spec section and every paragraph,” said Combs. “Having the viewer tool so they can go in and make comments, rather than us have to travel to Austin or Houston to have a four-hour sit-down meeting is really great.”

Along with saving travel and meeting time, embedded comments also help Perkins+Will deliver exactly what the client wants. According to Combs, “Feedback really helps us out a lot in terms of getting the specs right. Clients can comment on a line-by-line basis if they have additional feedback or want changes. They can import photos and other information into the project notes for that spec section so we have that as a reference.”

Combs and Jordan also appreciate the permission restrictions in *SpecLink*. The ability for collaborators to go in and comment, without allowing them to make physical changes to the project keeps quality control in check — especially when working with professionals who aren’t specification writers.



Above (left to right):

Henry D'Elena
Senior Associate
Director of Specifications

David Combs
Associate Principal
Technical Director

Holly Jordan
Senior Associate
Director of Specifications

Perkins+Will is eager to start using BIM integration as well. The firm has begun working with their BIM coordinators in Dallas and Houston to integrate the BIM interface into their workflow, and expect to be up and running very soon. As far as the firm's goal with the advanced technology, Jordan says, "I'm hoping we'll have better coordination. That's always the goal, to have our documents coordinated better."

TOOLS TO STREAMLINE PRODUCTION AND IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

With a history of working on often cumbersome word processing based systems, Perkins+Will has embraced the benefits and efficiencies of *SpecLink's* database technology. Advanced features like intelligent links, editing by selection and the ability to switch between outline, short form and full spec mode with the click of a button streamlines Perkins+Will's workflow and saves the firm significant time.

"Specs are in a constant state of advancement, adjustment and tweaking," said Combs. "Even after the job goes out to bid, we're still making adjustments or incorporating last-minute design decisions. The ease of being able to toggle text on and off, and to add additional text makes it a very attractive tool."

For Perkins+Will, continuous automatic updates are one of *SpecLink's* strongest features. Gone are the days of waiting for quarterly updates and manually replacing endless static word processing files to keep project specifications current.

BSD's in-house staff of design professionals monitors over 3,000 reference standards from more than 300 issuing agencies every single day. Up-to-the-minute information can automatically merge with Perkins+Will's data without disrupting their workflow or affecting their edits.

“I can’t get that in any other software,” said Jordan. “Other than speeding up workflow and moving us forward, up-to-date reference standards are my number one thing.”

Partners in implementation

RIB (formerly BSD) worked closely with Perkins+Will to ensure efficient on-boarding and a customized *SpecLink* experience that meets the firm's needs and optimizes their existing workflow.

Chip Bullock, BSD's Director of AEC Content, helped train Perkins+Will's Texas team on *SpecLink* and aided with content customization. “We’ve been really pleased with the service,” said Jordan. “Working with Chip has been a dream. He gets it.” added Combs.

Though still new to *SpecLink*, the firm is already experiencing significant time-saving, improved coordination and enhanced collaboration.

Poised to take the next step with BIM integration, the firm plans to harness the transformative power of *SpecLink Cloud* to lead the industry forward and solidify Perkins+Will's position on the cutting edge of innovation.

SpecLink

Find out more about how your company can benefit from SpecLink by contacting our team of experts at SpecLink.Sales@RIB-Software.com, calling 1-888-273-7638, or by visiting our website at www.bsdspeclink.com.