

Teck Breaks Bid Records by Using PlanSource

How Innovative technology is driving AEC Industries to greater success

Being a pioneer company doesn't mean being an old-fashioned company. If it did Boeing would be an asterisk in history rather than a world leader. No, being a pioneer company often means being a cutting edge company.

Certainly that description fits Teck Construction of Langley, B.C. Founded 50 years ago by Al Tecklenborg the company is still going strong at the same location under the management of his two sons Albert and George.

Teck is a mid-sized general contractor working primarily in the Fraser Valley. They concentrate on commercial projects such as car dealerships, supermarkets, big "box stores" and warehouses.

In the early 1960s they were among the companies who introduced the concept of design build to the local scene. Today design build represents between 80 and 90 per cent of their work. A lot of things have changed since the 1960s. One thing that hasn't changed however is Teck's willingness to adapt to new ways of doing old jobs. It is still key to their corporate philosophy.

That's why Teck is among the first wave of general contractors in British Columbia embracing a computer-based method to tender its projects.

PlanSource, the system Teck is using is supplied by Infinite Source Systems Corporation (ISSC) of Vancouver. It was recommended to them by one of their sub-contractors.

PlanSource can deliver an array of services. In Teck's case the company is new to the system and so far is concentrating on reaching subtrades, getting them to bid and streamlining not just the communications between themselves and their trades but also the whole process of requesting and receiving plans. Teck designs a project on computer, ISSC places it on their system and the subtrades download it from there. There is no more running around, getting caught in traffic and



racing to get back and forth to plan rooms. From a trade contractor's viewpoint it's hard to knock it because for him it is free. Teck covers all the costs.

Why does Teck pick up the tab instead of passing it on to the trade contractors?

"There are two reasons," says George. "One is current market conditions. We want to attract more bidders. And the second is to save time.

If a trade contractor wants to bid to Teck the first thing he must do is get on Teck's list of approved contractors.

When he is invited to bid on a particular project he is



granted access to it on Teck's PlanSource. Using PlanSource he can then move around the project plans very easily finding and viewing information. If he decides he is serious about going ahead another click lets Teck

know he intends to bid. To get architectural drawings he simply orders them from PlanSource. They will be supplied by ISSC and couriered to him. There is still no charge. In some cases, where a company has a plotter in their office they will simply print their own plans. George estimates that about 25 per cent of firms bidding to his company have the necessary equipment to do that.

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Once a job has been awarded a further level of security is added that restricts access to only those trades who were awarded contracts.

A real key benefit Teck has discovered with PlanSource is the ability to instantly inform all trade contractors about addenda. The system will alert everyone concerned to check for an addendum the minute it is posted. Teck knows which trades have which plans and when they received them and there is also no danger somebody is working from an old plan.

They've been using the system for less than a year but already are convinced of the efficiencies it is providing. When they purchased PlanSource Teck was hoping it would improve the accessibility to plans and the distribution of plans along with giving them the ability to track plan distribution and attract more bids from more trade contractors. PlanSource, Teck says, has been successful on all those fronts.

"We recently bid 10 projects in a two-month period," says George. "Never in the history of Teck have we done that volume of bidding in that short a time.

"I believe this technology can make us more efficient and make life easier. Therefore it makes us more competitive and in turn we provide better service to our customers. We're confined to drawings and communications at this point but PlanSource can do much more than that - and we'll be expanding our use."

