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Williams Energy Services

Autodesk Buzzsaw Used to Help Widely Dispersed Teams Work Together

Williams Energy, based in Tulsa, Oklahoma, has at least 24 projects in process a year. With many of their projects taking place in remote regions of the southwestern United States, delivering documents and having in-person team meetings is a difficult and expensive proposition. The company looked to Autodesk for a way to improve workflow and reduce expenses. They got both with **Autodesk® Buzzsaw™**. Now Williams enjoys a faster, easier exchange of information within the firm itself and with external partners. Plus the firm is saving money by doing away with the expense of travel and document deliveries.



Not only has Autodesk Buzzsaw cut the cost and time to ship drawings and documents, but it's reduced the risk of misplacing or deleting project files as well.

Bill Aston,
Supervisor of Data and
Records,
Williams Energy Services

The Situation

Williams Energy builds and manages oil and gas pipelines, refineries, and storage and loading facilities. Since the spring of 2000, the company used the project collaboration service Autodesk Buzzsaw to help organize and manage its building projects throughout Oklahoma and Texas.

The Challenge

With a roster of at least two-dozen projects in progress throughout the year, the Williams design and engineering staffs face significant challenges in managing workflow. Many of the firm's pipeline and facilities construction projects take place in remote areas of Texas, Oklahoma, and the rural Southwest. Transporting documents from headquarters in Tulsa to field offices and project sites is difficult, and bringing team members together for regular meetings can be time-consuming and expensive. With the Internet playing an increasingly important role in everyday business, the Williams team began looking into online collaboration systems as a way to streamline workflow and reduce costs.

"Our goal was to find a design collaboration service that could help improve our management of internal work, and enable us to communicate better with external partners," says Bill Aston, Supervisor of Data and Records for Williams Energy Services. "Also, we didn't want to go to the expense of building an in-house system."

The Solution

After weighing several options, Aston and the Williams Energy team chose Autodesk Buzzsaw as their project management tool. In the first six months, Williams set up 30 ongoing projects and registered more than 100 individual members, including both internal employees and partners in the field. "We decided to go with Autodesk Buzzsaw because their application offered real ease of use and good stability, and because it integrates closely with AutoCAD," says Aston. "Perhaps most importantly of all, Buzzsaw has seamlessly meshed with our work processes and way of doing business. The system has been very easy to use—people can get a lot out of Buzzsaw with minimal training," concludes Aston.

Williams Energy

Williams stores a wide range of design files and project documents on its Autodesk Buzzsaw site, including AutoCAD .dwg and .dxf files, and Microsoft® Office documents. Because Buzzsaw provides collaboration tools and centralized materials accessibility, communication and workflow have both improved for Williams. Aston has also been able to use Autodesk Buzzsaw to bring a more methodical approach to the firm's projects.

"We've created a standardized project template within Buzzsaw," he says. "It helps us to manage and coordinate projects more consistently." The template that Williams Energy has created provides a uniform model for all new projects. The file folders are named and identified so that the Williams team and any external partners will quickly know where to place appropriate documents, eliminating the need to reinvent the wheel for each new project. Aston and his team are working to extend this model even further, by creating templates for large, medium, and small projects.

Aston lists a range of benefits that Williams has experienced. "Autodesk Buzzsaw ensures that all team members have up-to-date materials, and it's really decreased our reliance on courier services," he says. "Not only has Buzzsaw cut the cost and time to ship drawings and documents, but it's reduced the risk of misplacing or deleting project files as well."

When asked if Autodesk Buzzsaw has reduced his team's workload or helped foster the exchange of ideas and materials, Aston replies, "Yes on both questions. We feel that our external partners are now very much a part of our team. And because we have a single repository for project files, we are able to edit, view, and print drawings and documents from anywhere in the world—and that saves us money on travel costs. Autodesk Buzzsaw is enabling us to function as one unit."

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