

BSD SpecLink Helps Elness Swenson Graham Architects Exceed Expectations

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Craig Hess
Vice-President
Elness Swenson Graham



The Miccosukee Resort is a hotel/casino resort near Miami, Florida. Although the project was large and complex, it was the first one where Elness Swenson Graham decided to use SpecLink, which exceeded expectations.

Since the early 70s, Elness Swenson Graham (ESG) Architects of Minneapolis, MN has remained consistent in their commitment to excellence by helping clients create environments for living, business and community.

They are noted as a company of team players who deliver design solutions that are consistently creative and cost-effective. Every project at Elness Swenson Graham is led by award winning individuals with expertise in architecture, master planning and interior design.

ESG is a nationally renowned architectural practice with over 80 talented staff members. They have projects that span more than half of the fifty states. ESG strives to exceed client expectations, by listening to their clients, interpreting their needs, and then delivering projects within budget and on time.

ESG collaborates with clients in the residential, hospitality, senior living, corporate/commercial, urban design, mixed-use and higher education/student housing markets. For over 20 years, they have been a leader in multi-family residential design, with over 30,000 dwelling units constructed. Their design leadership in this and other markets is evidenced by their commitment to high quality creative architectural design. ESG also displays a comprehensive understanding of construction costs and their impact on financial performance.



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BSD CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

ELNESS SWENSON GRAHAM ARCHITECTS

The need: With an 80-person office and multiple spec writers, ESG needed a better way to standardize the process of managing their specifications. Says Craig Hess, Vice President, "In 1997, after I joined the firm as Quality Assurance Director, which was a new staff position, I discovered that there were multiple specification formats being used. Also, there were multiple 'masters' being used." With no consistency among specification formats in place, a decision was made to unify the staff and spec writing process with a new system and Office Master specification.

The solution: In 1997, ESG discovered the numerous benefits of BSD SpecLink. Since that time, they have used it on well over 200 projects. Hess has been involved with SpecLink's implementation at ESG since the beginning. He says, "There is now much better consistency among our spec writers because of their belief in the quality and high standards written into all of the pre-written master text provided by BSD and the edits made by ESG. They know that they can trust the standards incorporated into our Office Master now." Since many of the projects ESG works on require the same type of spec, they just have to select or de-select certain sections for each project.

As a first-hand user of SpecLink himself, Hess knows how important it is to have a reliable and a fast

system for producing specs, "SpecLink significantly speeds up the spec writing process. The retention of a 'fixed' database speeds up production and permits us to respond faster to short time deadlines. After having written multiple projects, we know what the default language is in certain sections, which expedites the editing time."

ESG is also very satisfied with the level of technical support and training they receive from BSD. "Technical support at BSD is top-notch. They are always readily available when needed," says Hess. They quickly learned the basics of how to use SpecLink on their own. After they had been using it for about a year, they took a training class. There they learned information on user-added links that was very valuable. This was something they may not have ventured into without the class.

The outcome: Reflecting on the decision to use SpecLink, Hess says, "We looked at several programs written for our industry. After considering and sampling all of them, we selected SpecLink. We felt that the SpecLink database system and automatic linking were best at addressing and utilizing the advantages offered by electronic specifications. After seven years of using SpecLink and having heard stories from users of one of the other systems, we are extremely happy with our choice."



Photographs courtesy of ESG

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**Craig Hess, Vice-President
Elness Swenson Graham**



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BSD SpecLink is a powerful specification writing, management and production system with built-in intelligence designed to dramatically speed up editing tasks and reduce specification production time while minimizing errors and omissions. Users' project files are each maintained in a single database, rather than in multiple word processing files. Several model projects are included that allow the user to start with a pre-edited set of complete specifications. Because the master data is always visible and never deleted, it is easy to review project choices or select alternatives. Users can also import their own custom sections and/or create model projects specific to company or project-related requirements.