

A ROBOT CHANGES HOW A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FIRM COLLABORATES

Step into the offices of ██████████ on any given day, and you'll probably see a robot whiz by – yes, a robot.

██████████ is not a tech company or a new startup. The firm has been around for more than sixty years. ██████████ is not into gaming (although their employee lounge rivals anything you might see at one of these companies); they're not an App company – they provide project and construction management, forensic architecture, building envelope consulting and structural engineering services.

They have four offices – Seattle, Olympia, Spokane and Silicon Valley – and they do business nationally and internationally. The 'robot' is not a prop or a gimmick. It's a collaborative tool that has revolutionized how they work with clients, partners and design teams.

The 'BEAM' is a five-foot-tall 'robot' piloted by a member of ██████████ staff. It allows remote users to be 'present' via a mobile screen in real time at meetings and events. With a camera, a 17-inch screen and the ability to turn, pivot, and view rooms and meeting spaces from different angles, the BEAM robot offers a unique, highly collaborative experience unmatched by teleconferencing or online meeting programs.

"The thing about BEAM is it's not a sporadic voice breaking up on a console in the middle of the table. The person transmitted on the screen is there, in real time. He or she is able to see plans, brain storm with the group, contribute ideas and be present as the team interacts," says Shawn Mahoney, Managing Principal for ██████████



A BEAM user focuses on a design element presented by OAC staff.

Kyle Richardson, ██████████ Senior Project Manager, explains, *"The BEAM robot has completely changed how we conduct meetings with people offsite. We can engage clients and our partners in such a much more meaningful way by having them 'present' during the meeting. We've seen kick-off meetings completely transformed, design development charrettes go from really only the people physically present to an engaged discussion with clients in a whole other state."*

For ██████████ the BEAM robot has improved company-wide meetings by allowing different people at other offices to be present and offer active, engaged information and responses to the rest of the company. It's also greatly improved their ability to utilize talents and skills present in other offices. Through the BEAM, a structural engineer with specialized experience with educational facilities in California can join a team meeting in Seattle, or a construction manager can go over plans and schedules with a client in New York City.

The 'robot' has also enhanced the services presented by the company.

“Design and construction are true collaborations. A successful project is all about collaboration. Any tool that improves this improves how we serve our clients. BEAM gives us face-time with our clients, with their team, in meetings, where we can show them our designs, our process, our approach, work together to refine and elaborate on ideas, and ultimately develop stronger relationships through these collaborations,” said Chris Heger, [REDACTED] Associate.

By having a presence during design decisions, as a project progresses, the BEAM robot has changed the way [REDACTED] serves its clients and community. It has allowed a greater level of interaction, opened up collaborative processes between large teams, and given clients more access to their consultants so they can make better, quicker decisions. This has improved schedules, reduced costs (flights, gas, utilization, etc.), and improved communications – all aspects of successful projects.

“Our goal is for every project to be a success – we pride ourselves on our ability to provide this to our clients on a consistent basis. We have spent years devoted to refining how we can improve project schedules and budgets, and what we’ve found is communication is an essential ingredient,” said Kasey Wyatt, Senior Associate. *“BEAM fits right in with this – it is technology that enables us to better serve our clients. That to us – and to them – is priceless.”*



A design team has a meeting to discuss a project.