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Closing the Loop

Using BIM to Integrate Building Design and Planning With Post-Construction Facility Management

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Government facility managers have a difficult but essential job: They must ensure that a building and its services are functioning as designed and as required by the building occupants. They work mainly behind-the-scenes supporting their customers—the agencies and departments that depend on the electrical, mechanical, and other building systems to perform their jobs.

At times, the role of the facility manager is made more difficult when mission-critical data is not easily accessible or is missing altogether. That's why Building Information Modeling (BIM) is increasingly being used to integrate building design and planning with post-construction facility management.

With traditional 2-dimensional computer aided drafting methods used to design and document a project, much of the valuable information created and used to plan, design, and construct a building facility does not transfer to the post-construction phase of the building life cycle. This lost information results in costly and inefficiently managed buildings.

BIM changes that quite significantly. BIM is a computer-based building design and documentation methodology for the creation and use of computable building related information in design and construction. It creates in effect, a single coordinated and internally consistent database for the building.

By using BIM during the planning and design phases, it is now possible to retain valuable information and relationships about the various components that comprise a building. In digital form, the building information can more readily be shared and analyzed during the post-construction phase to improve facility management decision-making. This improved decision-making can in turn reduce operating costs, improve facility performance, extend building life and improve occupant efficiency.

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