JAS ARCHITECTURE GROUP

"It's absolutely awesome what the BigTime tool can do. It makes our invoices and timesheets look exactly the way we want them to. We didn't have to compromise or change the way we operated our business to accommodate the software. Instead, we made it bend to our needs."

— Jon Sammer, Founder, AIA, LEED-AP

IF TIME IS THE CURRENCY OF YOUR BUSINESS, YOU CHOOSE YOUR TIME TRACKING SOFTWARE WISELY.

"Time tracking is very important for us," says Sammer, who attributes a large part of his firm's success over the past 20 years to his emphasis on fostering long-term client relationships while keeping the business side of things lean.

"Although we're small, we operate as a larger firm — we cover a lot of ground. And previously I handled all of the accounting in the office: invoicing, tracking, reimbursables, everything. It just wasn't efficient given how many invoices we send out, how much money we manage. We desperately needed an accounting and time records upgrade."

THE BENEFITS OF LINKING EVERYTHING TOGETHER.

Sammer's goal was to find a tool that integrated seamlessly with JAS's QuickBooks software while also enabling project managers to handle projects and time records without direct access to it. "With BigTime's strong link with QuickBooks—which is huge — we were able to achieve this," he says, along with full integration of the firm's timesheets, invoices and proposals, which had previously been handled separately.

Now when JAS receives payment for a project, that paid invoice is simultaneously recorded in both QuickBooks and BigTime. "Our previous time-recording programs weren't linked with QuickBooks, so it was never easy to tell how we were doing, time- and budget-wise, on a project. Now it is."
Sammer says that while he originally adopted BigTime to "Our initial goal was to simply give project managers the ability to run invoices independent of QuickBooks," recalls Sammer. "But the more we've used it, we've stumbled upon a lot of fantastic features just through trial and error." Bottom line, he says, is that the software is helping BigTime has made our business model very sophisticated and much easier to use. There are still money-in/money-out and cost-tracking activities involved, of course, but streamlined now," Sammer says. And the best part? "We didn't have to change anything in our business to do it."

Sammer also appreciated being able to link those project phases with original estimates submitted to the client, and the ability to convert the software's "Estimate" format to the firm's preferred "Proposal Form." Other key features he cites include the ability to add detailed descriptions of expenses in client invoices, as well as the power to work with multiple billing rates simultaneously.

"We now have the ability to do almost any type of reporting — time on a project, reimbursing expenses — plus the added flexibility to alter the terminology to better suit our needs," Sammer says. "For example, we were able to modify BigTime's 'Budget' tool to call it 'Phases of a Project,' which just works better for the way we do business."

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"BigTime has made our business model very sophisticated and much easier to use. There are still money-in/money-out and cost-tracking activities involved, of course, but of those business processes have been refined and streamlined now," Sammer says. And the best part? "We didn't have to change anything in our business to do it."