Prism Electric streamlines its BIM workflow with PlanGrid

For over 20 years, Prism Electric has built their name on the performance and hard work of employees dedicated to providing superior service. Today, Prism is ranked among the largest electrical contractors in Texas and Oklahoma with over $175 million in business annually. A PlanGrid customer since 2015, Prism Electric's portfolio ranges in size and complexity from one-day jobs to multi-million dollar projects in the commercial, industrial, institutional, healthcare and high-tech industries.

How a disconnect between BIM and the field created confusion and an unproductive workflow

While walking the job, Prism Electric superintendent, AJ Spear noticed an issue; the mechanical trade had installed a duct where Prism's electrical conduit was supposed to be placed. "Not again," he thought as he picked up the phone to call Marco Vara, the BIM Coordinator at Prism's headquarters. Marco pulled up the model, checked clash detection and said, "You shouldn't have an issue." As AJ stared at the conflict in the field, it was clear the BIM model in the office did not reflect the reality at the construction site.

Occurrences like these were common for AJ and Marco because communication between the field and the BIM department were often unclear, slow and very ineffective. As a result, a back and forth between what's in the BIM model and the actual construction took place. With dozens of change orders on some projects, it was difficult for the BIM department to keep track of the latest changes. To resolve any issues, the Prism team found it most effective to discuss the issue live on the jobsite. Meaning Marco had to drive to the jobsite and resolve the issue live with the field team. "With many jobsites an hour or two away from the office, I would lose a day of work just driving back and forth. It wasn't efficient, but it was the only way to get the issue resolved."

Project changes weren't the only source of disconnect. Prior to implementing PlanGrid, the BIM team wasted valuable time manually taking physical notes from the field, searching in the model for the correct location and updating the changes in the BIM model. Depending on who was taking the notes, they would be handwritten, emailed or even texts to individuals in the BIM department. Chris Baker, another BIM coordinator at Prism, remarked, "It was hard to keep up. With field notes in so many forms, there was no clear history or way to track changes that were made. We often juggle multiple projects so it was confusing and frustrating."

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— AJ Spear
Senior Superintendent

Streamlining the BIM workflow with PlanGrid

The wasted time added up. Prism Electric realized that they needed a change. They searched for a construction technology solution that would be the single source of truth, improve communication with the field and increase the team's efficiency. They landed on PlanGrid. With unparalled field adoption, the team at Prism was confident that the software would connect the field to the office. In fact, Prism chose to standardize on the platform, meaning all of their projects are run through PlanGrid.

With PlanGrid, confusion over field notes or document history has been greatly reduced. The BIM department has only one place to look for field notes and comments and has a robust history of when documents are uploaded and modified. PlanGrid has ultimately become the single source of truth.

To improve coordination between the field and BIM, Prism created customized issue stamps in PlanGrid for the BIM workflow. With the custom stamps, the team knows specifically what went wrong, what stage the issue is in and who is responsible for the next step. Marco commented, "Now our team has greater detail into what the issue is and who has it. It helps us a lot." In regards to the field, AJ commented, "with PlanGrid, I feel more connected to the BIM department, even if they're hours away."

In addition to the customized issue stamps, Prism saw an opportunity to utilize PlanGrid's API to reduce some of the manual workflows by building an integration between PlanGrid and Revit. The API pulls the issue stamps and details from PlanGrid and places them at the correct location within the BIM model. There is no more manually searching in the model for the correct issue location. With the integration, the issue stamps are already waiting there for the BIM team.

> "PlanGrid just kind of streamlines everything. Better communication and organization- it's all right there. We're giving the field the most up to date drawings and information possible."

— **Marco Vara**
BIM Coordinator
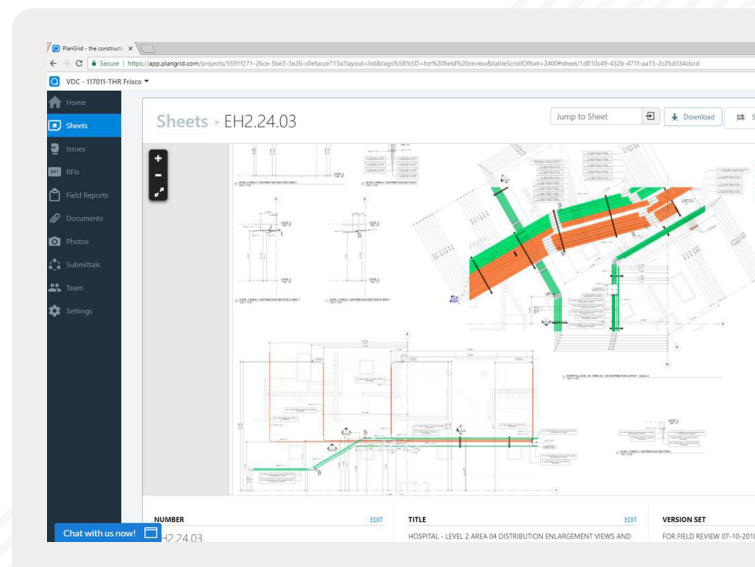
PlanGrid electrifies communication and time savings for Prism

Since standardizing on PlanGrid, the Prism team has seen great results that have 'sparked' improvement with BIM in the field. PlanGrid allows real-time communication between the BIM department and the field. AJ remarked that "PlanGrid has helped to resolve many field issues. By looking at the issue stamp the BIM Coordinators get a lot of information. The description of the issue, possible solution, clash detection and pictures are all there. The entire team can see field issues as they exist. It's like being in the field without physically being there."

In the office, the BIM team loves it. Marco explains, "We get all of the information we need and can communicate directly with the field without losing a whole day traveling." Additionally, the API has reduced the amount of manual work. With PlanGrid, the BIM team can focus on the issues that matter most, instead of the timely manual administrative work. Macro adds, "PlanGrid has helped us maintain organization. It is a huge time-saving."

Prism Electric saw increased office to field communications and improvement across the team. Marco explained, "With PlanGrid, our increased communication with the field has provided us with valuable insights. With all of the details in the issue stamps, we're able to better understand what issues the field faces and find ways to improve or avoid them for future projects."

Incorporating PlanGrid into the BIM workflow streamlined Prism's projects by providing enhanced communication and timeliness of data exchange which improves project results. Chris Baker sums it up, "People just don't know how powerful a tool PlanGrid is to use. The organization, communication, reliability and accountability. It's just a powerful tool that allows us to do our job."

Collaboration Stats

- **94,700+** Sheets
- **590,000+** Annotations
- **28,200+** Tasks and Issues Tracked