



Company of the Month: Wesbuilt Construction Managers: Digital construction technology innovator wins clients by accelerating project delivery and eliminating change orders and conflicts

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Hutong restaurant - 731 Lexington Avenue, New York City, NY

New York, NY When president Donal McIntyre, later joined by principal Mark Galway, established Manhattan-based Wesbuilt Construction Managers in 2012, they understood the construction industry was lagging behind in reaping the benefits of digital technologies that other industries were rapidly adopting. What followed was a determined focus on innovation and a rapid growth of the firm into a \$100 million construction enterprise with returning clients spanning the largest commercial and multi-family real estate developers/owners in the U.S., major retail and fitness club chains, large office tenants, restaurants, and international luxury fashion brands as well as numerous healthcare organizations and public and educational institutions.

Today, Wesbuilt – a general contractor, construction manager and design/builder – continuously transforms the construction industry through its technological innovation. The company was an early adopter of the Building Information Modeling (BIM) and Virtual Design and Construction (VDC) technologies, which the firm has combined with 3D laser scanning of all projects into what is now called the “COLLAB by Wesbuilt,” a complete digital project management tool and record of each project, from the initial existing conditions to post-construction record of locations, dimension, equipment models, and warranty details. Operating a full-service in-house BIM-VDC department, Wesbuilt is unusual among medium-size builders as until recently these technologies mainly

remained the domain of large international infrastructure project management consortiums.

Wesbuilt's innovation hasn't gone unnoticed, as the firm was recently recognized by what is considered the ultimate accolade in the regional AEC industry: Engineering News-Record New York magazine's title of Contractor of the Year, the award historically given to much larger firms. The competition's jury cited the company's continuous technological innovation as the deciding factor in its selection.

Wesbuilt's process brings numerous benefits to its clients, including eliminating infrastructure conflicts, dimensions discrepancies, and architectural and engineering design issues in the preconstruction phase.

"Once a client contracts us, we create a detailed digital model that incorporates 3D scans of existing conditions as well as architectural, structural and MEP designs. This process allows us to recognize and address any potential conflicts prior to commencing construction. This helps our clients avoid costly change orders and creates a truly collaborative team spirit between designers and builders, as potential challenges are addressed early on," said Galway.

Wesbuilt is renovating and redeveloping the 200,000 s/f 450 Washington Street in Manhattan into a 176-unit luxury condominium. Photo by Ola Wilk.

Wesbuilt continues to test and implement new technologies as soon as they become available. For example, it recently tested and adopted Clear Edge, a comprehensive scan-to-BIM software package, to capture details of existing plumbing infrastructure that must remain in place in renovation projects. The software recognizes pipes' dimensions from 3D scans and inputs this data into a point cloud to create a model that quickly integrates with new construction plans.

"If we were trying to model the existing conditions of a 20,000 s/f office space by manually collecting measurements, dimensions and locations, it would take us three or four days to model all the mechanical, electrical and plumbing details," said McIntyre. "Now we can do it in a couple of hours."

Collaboration is a crucial focus of Wesbuilt's operations and is the reason why the company operates in-house BIM capabilities under the banner of its COLLAB process. "If we get awarded a job today, the first thing we do is start our BIM-VDC department on the coordination drawings," Galway said.

He added that Wesbuilt has a fully coordinated set of shop drawings ready to submit to architects within three weeks of starting on a project, which saves the same amount of time on the typical 14-week build-out schedule. As soon as it's awarded a contract, the company completes an in-depth 3D point cloud scan and gives subcontractors an accurate scan of the existing conditions for their

drawings, an unusual value-added benefit of working with Wesbuilt, as this task is usually assigned to subcontractors. The BIM team also tracks the progress of on-going projects in real time, giving clients and partners a very good understanding of each project's status at any time. Galway said that all of this collaboration and communication provides accurate measurements and cuts down significantly on human error, project delays, change orders and work stoppages.

Wesbuilt's clients and partners are well aware of how the company's technological innovations make their jobs easier and more efficient. Austin Welsh, owner of L&M Air, an HVAC contractor that works with Wesbuilt, said, "It's a gift. They're taking a cumbersome part of the project off of us and doing it themselves."

The company has built numerous Orangetheory Fitness gyms throughout New York City.

Thomas Furman, associate partner at SLCE Architects, which worked with Wesbuilt on a Manhattan residential renovation project, said, "The scan plus the BIM enabled us to figure things out in real time, and then have discussions with the client group in real time so they can understand the technical issues and make decisions and give direction quickly."

McIntyre and Galway both immigrated to New York from Ireland and worked at prominent regional construction firms before joining forces to establish Wesbuilt in 2012. McIntyre holds degrees in Quantity Surveying and Construction Economics from Limerick Institute of Technology in Limerick, Ireland.

The firm's recent projects include the 200,000 s/f core-and-shell renovation and repositioning of the Mall at Cross County in Yonkers; the 300-unit condominium conversion of 450 Washington St. in Manhattan; the 80,000 s/f Amber Charter School in New York; the 20,000 s/f Apella Life Science conference center in Manhattan; the 15,000 s/f Mark Morris Dance Studio in Brooklyn; multiple Orangetheory Fitness gyms; the 60,000 s/f office of the United Teachers Federation in Forest Hills; and the 15,000 s/f luxury Hutong restaurant at 731 Lexington Ave. in New York City.

The company and its employees are very involved in their community as well. Most recently, Wesbuilt has raised more than \$500,000 for the Little Baby Face Foundation (LBFF), which helps children around the globe who were born with facial deformities receive access to care from world-class surgeons in New York City.

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