

Hellmuth, Obata + Kassabaum, Inc.

SUCCESS STORY

Global architectural firm embraces Adobe® InDesign® software to improve creativity and productivity

Hellmuth, Obata+Kassabaum, Inc.

- A global provider of real estate and facilities services, from strategic planning through design and ongoing facility management
- Size: 1,600 employees
- Headquarters: St. Louis, Missouri
- Founded: 1955

www.hok.com

Industry

Facilities Planning, Design, and Construction

Solution

Graphic Design

Products Used

- Adobe Acrobat®
- Adobe Illustrator®
- Adobe InDesign
- Adobe Photoshop®
- Adobe Classroom in a Book®

Company Profile

Hellmuth, Obata + Kassabaum, Inc. (HOK) has been the force behind some of the world's most beautiful and functional facilities. Noteworthy projects include the 150 California Street office tower in San Francisco; AT&T's Global Network Operations Center in New Jersey; Dubai Marina in the United Arab Emirates; and Edificio Malecon, one of the most technologically advanced office buildings in Argentina. HOK has garnered countless awards from the American Institute of Architects and other organizations.

New business proposals, presentation boards, and other materials that help prospective clients visualize facilities before they are constructed help drive HOK's success. To advance its marketing capabilities and equip its global network of 21 offices with the most advanced page layout software available, HOK converted from Adobe PageMaker® to Adobe InDesign software.

"We matched our user requirements against the capabilities of two top contenders—QuarkXPress and InDesign. Our analysis strongly favored InDesign," says Barbara Cronn, senior associate for HOK.

Challenges Faced

Find an easy-to-use solution with professional capabilities

Graphic designers and marketing professionals in HOK's offices worldwide generate countless marketing pieces annually—1,000 emanating from HOK's local marketing groups. PageMaker was the company's official standard for producing materials, but some offices also used QuarkXPress. Because software skills and requirements vary widely across HOK's user group, the company needed an intuitive page layout solution with professional features.

Streamline conversion

To minimize business disruption, HOK needed software that could easily open and edit existing PageMaker and QuarkXPress files, ensure an easy learning curve for employees, and proof and print files reliably.

Provide advanced design capabilities

HOK sought to advance its design capabilities and open new avenues for creativity by providing employees with the most sophisticated page layout tools available.

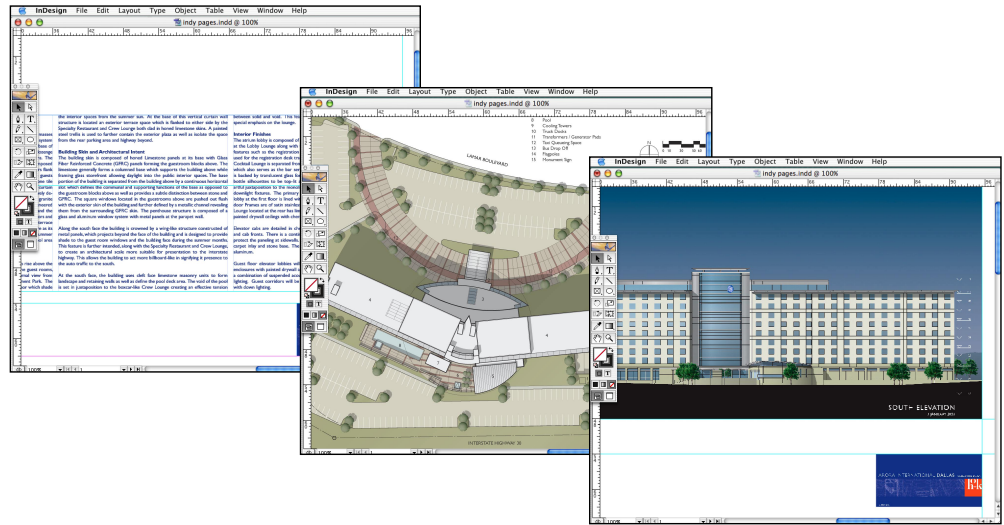
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HOK formed a task force, surveyed users, and read numerous software reviews. InDesign was the clear choice based on its ability to open and edit PageMaker and QuarkXPress files, provide high-end design capabilities without extra plug-ins, and smoothly export files to Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF).

HOK delivered InDesign to more than 100 of its marketing professionals and designers. Groups were free to convert to the new software based on their own timetable and could seek training if necessary. HOK's Professional Practice Group brought in consultant-led training, backed up by Adobe Classroom in a Book materials. Within six months, the conversion was 80% complete and, today, the conversion is complete with 110 copies of InDesign in use throughout the company.



HOK has standardized on Adobe InDesign software for its marketing materials. For complex illustrations requiring complicated transparency effects, HOK can create artwork in Illustrator and easily import it into InDesign. Multicolumn text frames provide easy column management for single-page narratives. Designers can render plan artwork with gradients and shadows, and use the InDesign layers features to easily overlay text for annotations and titling.



“InDesign has opened our marketing group to a higher level of excitement, potential, and creativity, ultimately enabling us to deliver a better product. We originally thought of InDesign as a PageMaker replacement, but now we use InDesign to do significantly more than we could in PageMaker.”

Barbara Cronn,
Senior associate,
Hellmuth, Obata + Kassabaum, Inc.

Benefits

- Conversion to InDesign caused minimal business disruption
- InDesign proved ideal for users with varying needs and software expertise
- Through extensive support for Adobe PDF, InDesign streamlined proofing
- InDesign advanced HOK’s creative capabilities

Cronn describes the conversion to InDesign as painless. Most designers adopted the software in a matter of days. “It simply happened, without any major problems or issues,” says Cronn. Skills learned in PageMaker were quickly transferred to InDesign. Employees could easily open and edit existing PageMaker and QuarkXPress files.

InDesign satisfies many different types of users within HOK. Marketing coordinators like the software’s ease of use. Designers appreciate sophisticated features such as integrated drawing tools, tables, variable display resolution, integration with Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop, and the ability to automatically check for font issues. Another bonus is the software’s ability to preserve formatting from Microsoft® Word, the application generally used for proposals. “From shortcuts to other tricks for working faster and more creatively, InDesign has a smartness about it that shows that designers requested features and Adobe responded,” says Trip Boswell, a graphic designer for HOK.

InDesign provides fast, integrated output to Adobe PDF, streamlining proofing. “Exchanging files internally and with clients got 100% easier after we moved to InDesign,” says Cronn.

HOK prints files in-house or sends them as InDesign or Adobe PDF files to the company’s dedicated service bureau, Creative Imaging. “We were ready to accept InDesign files almost immediately,” says Tony Hatzidakis, technical production associate and supervisor for Creative Imaging. “HOK’s marketing files typically feature large images, and many have drop shadows and transparency effects. All have printed reliably.”

For HOK, the primary advantage to moving to InDesign has been increased momentum. “InDesign has opened our marketing group to a higher level of excitement, potential, and creativity, ultimately enabling us to deliver a better product,” says Cronn. “We originally thought of InDesign as a PageMaker replacement, but now we use InDesign to do significantly more than we could in PageMaker.”

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