

VisiSpecs® Case Study

The Visual Specification System

Kalin Associates has written construction specifications for more than 40 years, spanning 8,000 projects with a total construction value exceeding \$60 billion. Led by Mark Kalin and Jay Ford, the firm provides specification writing services to architects and corporations, with work spanning private and public bid projects, LEED specifications, master specifications for design offices and corporate owners, guide specifications for building product manufacturers, and specification management and education. For more information, please visit kalinassociates.com.



The Challenge: Kalin Associates' spec writers had already worked with the leading platforms in the industry and knew exactly what a specification tool needed to do to earn a permanent place in their workflows. With 12 spec writers producing specs for over 400 projects a year, productivity and accuracy were imperative.

One member of the team, Ken Chappell, went even further. After years in management roles at Arcom (now Deltek, authors of Masterspec) and SpecLink (RIB), he began independently building his own specification writing and management application, convinced that the existing tools lacked needed functionality. He was three months away from handing his prototype off to professional programmers to build a production version.

That's when Chalkline reached out to Kalin Associates looking for beta testers for a new product: VisiSpecs. Mark Kalin connected them with his in-house spec writer, Ken Chappell.

For the Kalin Associates team, the challenge was to find a specification solution that could meet their high standards, address the gaps they had identified, and eliminate the need to build a better tool themselves.

The Solution: The beta test quickly became a stress test. Ken went in "fully intending to break it," pushing VisiSpecs on editing, document management, and the everyday challenges spec writers face.

He provided Chalkline with detailed user feedback regarding bugs, potential improvements, and desired features. Chalkline reviewed and considered that feedback as part of its ongoing product development process, along with input from other users and its own product priorities.

As VisiSpecs met the standards he had set for his own product and was on track to reach the market a year sooner, Ken archived his prototype and shifted his focus to using, submitting enhancement requests for, and ultimately championing VisiSpecs at Kalin Associates.

The Results: Today, VisiSpecs is part of the daily workflow at Kalin Associates, with nearly every team member using it. For a group of spec writers who are naturally exacting about the tools they rely on, the response has been remarkably consistent: no complaints.

The team reports meaningful time and cost savings even with minimal training, while additional training can lead to what they describe as "a major leap" in productivity. For power users, the impact has been career changing.

For a firm producing specifications at Kalin Associates' scale, consistency and accuracy are essential. Their confidence in VisiSpecs comes from not simply using it, but from helping shape it. Having tested the software against decades of industry experience, other tools in the market, and even against a tool one team member was building himself, the Kalin Associates team has seen firsthand how VisiSpecs measures up.

"As a construction specifier I think I currently have or have tried every spec writing/editing tool available. I would not even consider preparing a set of project specifications without VisiSpecs."

~ Ken Chappell,
Kalin Associates

Case Study Key Benefits

Time & Money Savings

Boosted Productivity

Easy to Learn & Use

Responsive Tech Support

Word & Revit Integration



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VISIONARIES IN TECHNOLOGY



Best in USA Award: VisiSpecs

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