



For the Moore Foundation headquarters in Palo Alto, CA, Mission Bell teamed with Blach Construction and HPS Architects using AutoDesk BIM (Building Information Modeling). Recycled and reclaimed materials were incorporated in this LEED Gold certified project, with a unique 'flying beam' design, glass bridge, and undulating recycled timber beams ©Marco Zecchin/Image Center.



Growing Bigger, Better and Faster

Mission Bell Manufacturing automates and speeds project management with sophisticated design applications.

by Bill Esler, Editor in Chief

Mission Bell Manufacturing may be the paradigm of an architectural woodworking business that has nailed down a business plan and hammered home a strategy for growth. As competitors struggle, Mission Bell Manufacturing boosted sales almost 18 percent, from \$22.9 million in 2009 to \$27 million in 2010.

The last time *Custom Woodworking Business* featured Mission Bell Manufacturing (July 2003), the commercial millwork and caseworks firm employed 108, operating in a 61,000-square-foot plant. Sales were \$13.9 million. The company had just embarked on an Employee Stock Ownership Program (ESOP).

In 2007 Mission Bell moved to a 103,000 square foot state-of-the-art plant in Morgan Hill, CA. Now, employment totals 145. And its ESOP owns nearly 50 percent of the firm.

Situated in Silicon Valley, Mission Bell Manufacturing's client roster reads like a who's who of high-tech firms, including Adobe Systems, Google, Intel, Genentech and Silicon Graphics. This year Mission Bell Manufacturing completed the architectural millwork, cabinetry and casework for the software giant Citrix's Conference Center in Santa Clara, CA.

Working with San Jose Construction on the \$1.3 million project, Mission Bell provided flat cut eucalyptus veneer wall paneling, numerous reception desks, banquette seating and casework in board rooms, conference rooms, and office areas throughout. A slip-matched maple veneer table with hardwood knife edge was custom built to match existing teaming tables.

Mission Bell is also seen as a leader among ESOP companies. Clint Ramsey, CEO, has been a featured presenter at meetings of the Employee Stock Ownership ESOP



Mission Bell Manufacturing has plenty of elbow room in its 103,000 square foot production center, opened in 2007.

Association. Mission Bell Manufacturing is among 2,500 companies in the group. In September, Ramsey revealed that his firm's ESOP currently has 160 participants, including 115 union members and 45 non-union members.

Last year, Bridge Bank, National Association, a business bank headquartered in Silicon Valley, provided \$5.5 million in financing to Mission Bell Manufacturing to

support working capital needs for its growing millwork and casework operations.

Ramsey said the bank provided a "credit facility that is creative and provides increased flexibility and liquidity that allows us to access working capital needed to maintain the highest quality and value our customers have come to expect."

Mission Bell Manufacturing started life as Morgan Hill Millwork in 1959, founded

by Leonard Scianna and his wife Marjorie, along with two other business partners. Renamed Mission Bell Manufacturing in 1963, as the company grew, Scianna bought out his partners

Mission Bell serves high-end institutional and fast-track Silicon Valley clients, as well as commercial and institutional clients.

The company also operates a showroom in the San Francisco financial district, close to all of the major general contracting and architectural firms that allows it to engage clients during pre-construction.

The showroom includes examples of Mission Bell's built-in work, offering customers and design and building professionals a setting to touch and see a wide variety of wood veneers and treatments in person.

Project Management

Mission Bell emphasizes its expertise in project planning and coordination. Its approach is to enter project planning as early as possible in the design and development cycle.

Its ability to interface with multiple project vendors is enhanced by its experience in AutoDesk-based project applications such as building information modeling (BIM) and Revit applications. Building information modeling is widely adopted in the architectural community, providing discipline-specific design and documentation software built on the AutoCAD software platform, specifically geared for all



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Clint Ramsey, Mission Bell CEO, was among firms featured last issue that are growing despite the downturn.

the participants in a project — mechanical, electrical, plumbing (MEP) engineers, structural engineers, designers, and drafters, including architectural millwork.

Mission Bell uses On-Screen Takeoff software in its project bids. This application analyzes blueprints and automates the creation of materials lists. By reducing the time to develop takeoff lists, it allows faster generations of bids as well. (See related story on page 12.)

Mission Bell says it is known for both its custom woodwork and high production plastic laminate casework and countertops. Working in commonly requested species like cherry and maple, it also sources rare, exotic woods, including eucalyptus, sycamore, anegre, zebrawood and pearwood, along with many types of laminates, metals, stone, granite and glass.

Mission Bell also designs and lays-up its own veneer panels, and provides clients with matched veneer faces specified for high-end projects.

Its experience working in projects geared to earn LEED credits provides a competitive advantage as well. An example is the \$1,600,000 project completed in 2009 for the Gordon and Betty Moore

Mission Bell likes to begin its participation early in planning, so it can advise on design issues, recommend materials, and produce detailed shop drawings.

All aspects of manufacturing are handled onsite — from custom woodwork, millwork and veneers, to plastic laminate casework. Custom architectural woodwork, millwork and casework average 6.27 percent of an overall construction budget,

according to Ramsey. “While millwork represents a small portion of the total project cost, it has a disproportionately significant impact on the success of the overall project,” he says. **CWB**



See Mission Bell Manufacturing's machinery list, and more projects at woodworkingnetwork.com.

“*Custom architectural woodwork is just 6.27 percent, of overall construction budgets.*”

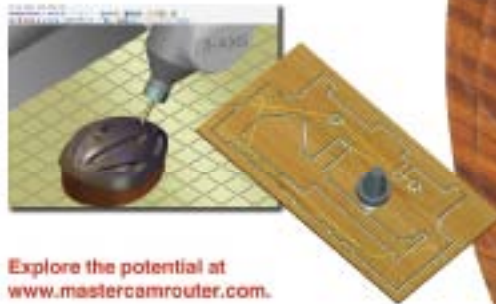
Foundation, in Palo Alto, CA. The foundation advances environmental conservation and science in the San Francisco Bay Area. So naturally for its new headquarters facility, achieving LEED Gold Certification was a high priority.

Mission Bell teamed early in the process with Blach Construction and HPS Architects using building information modeling to build a stunning project that includes many recycled and reclaimed materials. The design includes a unique “flying beam,” glass bridge, and undulating recycled timber beams. Cabinetry was made from Kirie Board, a wood substitute manufactured from reclaimed sorghum straw and no-added formaldehyde glue. Countertops in the breakroom were made from Vetrazzo, which is formed from recycled glass.

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