

Impressing Customers, One at a Time

ABC Imaging Adds Innovative Internet-Based Tool



MICHAEL COLEMAN – The Washington Construction News Special Feature

When Medi Falsafi launched ABC Imaging in downtown Washington, D.C. nearly 20 years ago he had a simple goal: *“To Impress Every Client...Every Time”*.

Nearly two decades of explosive growth later, almost everything about the company has changed except the original mantra. Today, ABC Imaging, a national printing and reproduction company has four different divisions, but it is still working to impress every client, every time.

The company has launched an exciting new Internet-based tool called BlueprintOnline.com that is already beginning to revolutionize the way in which architects and contractors interact.

BlueprintOnline.com is an online document management service that allows the various parties on a construction job—from general contractors to engineers to architects—to view and make changes to blueprints over the Internet, greatly reducing the inconvenience and cost associated with traditional mail.

BlueprintOnline.com was a natural extension of ABC Imaging’s effort in the past few years to upgrade its computer capabilities as much as possible. The improvements came as customers demanded faster and faster turnarounds on their documents. Of course, for years ABC Imaging had used drivers to pick up and deliver jobs for its clients.

Today, much of that labor is done by computer. ABC Imaging has 23 servers, including DNS servers, mail servers, news servers and Web servers. The technology is the backbone of BlueprintOnline.com, the company’s fastest-growing operation.

“The beauty of it is that it saves the owner of the project a lot of money on drawings and reproduction and mailing expenses,” Falsafi said. “Everybody who needs to view and access the documents can view them from a computer.”

Falsafi, an architect with a background in urban design, also spent a year studying at the e-business graduate school at Harvard University. He said everything about BlueprintOnline.com was designed with the customer in mind.

“We’ve constantly looked at the needs of this industry and tried to come up with solutions,” Falsafi explained during an hour-long interview in his modern office overlooking 20th Street in downtown Washington. “By having this product in use the customer helped us improve it. We made it fast, efficient and powerful.



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Falsafi said BlueprintOnline.com is the easiest technology of its kind to use, and that's a big reason why the company is leaving its competitors behind.

"This service is the easiest to use on the market," Falsafi said. "It is also the most secure with the HTTPS having a 128-bit encryption."

Falsafi said any client who needs to access drawings can do so using special passwords. The system tracks every person who logs in and out and what activity they engaged in while in the site.

"It's very secure, it's very powerful and it has a fantastic search engine and reporting tools – it keeps track of every activity," Falsafi said. "You can get



reporting on who did what from the site."

The site also features a "non-changeable" format in TIF, PDF, plot files, etc.

Falsafi said the company did \$30 million in sales last year and expects to reach

\$45 million to \$60 million in sales this year.

"ABC Imaging is growing at the rate of 50 percent to 100 percent each year," Falsafi said.

BlueprintOnline.com also is growing geographi-

cally, with new locations expected to open in Chicago, Boston, Seattle, Orlando, Dallas, and Portland by the end of the year. But in the virtual world of computer document management, physical addresses don't always matter much.

"Because we're Web-based, we're international," Falsafi said

The entrepreneur said he is extremely excited about his firm's newest national client – HNTB a leading architectural and engineering company with more than 60 offices throughout the nation. HNTB initially considered 17 different firms from across the country to handle its extensive

and expensive blueprinting needs. Soon, HNTB whittled that list down to 10 firms and ultimately chose ABC Imaging.

David Olguin, a spokesman for HNTB in Arlington, Virginia, said his company intensely scrutinized a lot of different firms before deciding to give BlueprintOnline.com a national contract. Olguin said that although he was reluctant to say too much about BlueprintOnline.com before the ink was dry on the contract, there is no doubt it will be a beneficial decision for his company.

"They were sure we were the best choice even though we don't have a footprint all over the coun-

try yet," Falsafi said. "They realized we had the infrastructure to do the job."

He said the company's cutting-edge technology usually wows potential clients when company representatives show up to make a sales pitch.

When the opportunity presents itself to display BlueprintOnline.com's strong evidence of specific services and accomplishments, we often get the job because the product achieves desired results – and does most everything the client wishes it would do.

The company built its name catering to private developers, but recently added the federal government to its roster of potential clients. BlueprintOnline.com was recently added to the General Services Administration's vendor list – a development that Falsafi hopes can help his company grow, as well as make the government more efficient.

He said his company's aggressive growth is sustainable because demand for BlueprintOnline.com's unique services is so high. But he vowed that the expansion would never compromise the company's commitment to customer service.

"Our mission statement remains the same—to impress every client every time," Falsafi said.



Matt Henneman, director of Blueprint Online, and Medi Falsafi, president and CEO of ABC Imaging.



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