

3D Lift Plan is the 'Rolls-Royce' of Planning Tools

Sam Davis, crane rental manager for CCS Constructors in Morrisville, Vt., says that without a new web-based lift planning tool he would not have been able to successfully bid and win a recent job. Using 3D Lift Plan, actual lift simulation is viewed in high-quality 3D graphics depicting detailed jobsites, changing machine configurations, load charts, landscape, and site obstructions. Once a plan is set, an engineer-scale lift plan complete with notes and logos can be printed from any angle to document the lift plan.

Davis, who has used other types of lift planning software in the past says, "The difference between them and the 3D Lift Plan is like the difference between a Yugo and a Rolls-Royce."

The planning tool is being offered to Link-Belt customers through Link-Belt Preferred, the manufacturer's customer support program. Link-Belt Construction Equipment Co., Lexington, Ky., commissioned A1A software, Jacksonville, Fla., to develop this industry-first web-based application. Link-Belt cranes in 3D Lift Plan are complimentary, but customers can add other makes of cranes for a fee.

Development began in June 2007, taking advantage of the latest three-dimensional technology being used in other industries, such as movies and commercials, explains Tawnia Weiss, president of A1A Software. "We made the program completely open in design, so as technology changes, we can make those changes quickly and easily," she says.

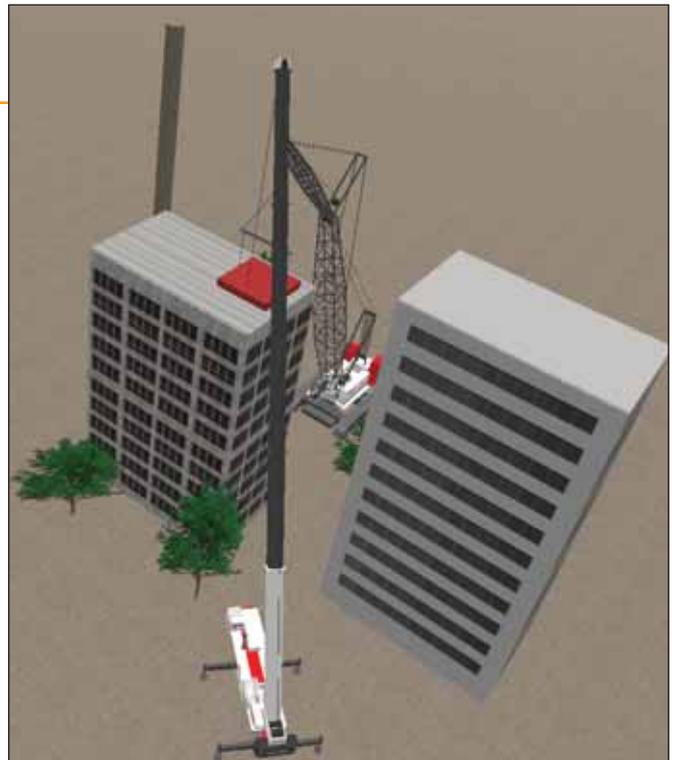
Davis had a challenging job to bid on when he saw the 3D Lift Plan after ConExpo, where 3D Lift Plan was announced. The job was a confined space project. Davis needed verification that a certain crane would physically fit in the space and have the necessary capacity for each of the picks. The 3D Lift Plan confirmed that for him and he credits the program with helping CCS Constructors win the bid.

A lift plan for everyone

In recent years, Link-Belt found that users wanted one place to store all crane data and that data must be current and available at all branch and jobsite locations. All Link-Belt's cranes, both current production and historic models, are included in 3D Lift Plan. Likewise, data on other manufacturers' cranes can be purchased and added to a user's customized list of cranes. "They can purchase the use of the crane for as little as a week or as much as a year," says Weiss.

Accessibility was key in the development of the 3D Lift Plan. "There are no setup fees to use the site," says Weiss, referring to www.3dliftplan.com. "And there are no maintenance or upgrade fees. By having an online application, when changes are made to crane data or graphics, or when we add new features, the user will immediately benefit without having to update anything."

Link-Belt customers were also asking for a program that was graphically accurate, printable, and exportable to a CAD program.



Using 3D Lift Plan, actual lift simulation shows changing machine configurations and site obstructions.

The tool offers secure storage of any lift plan, complete with metric or English units, and load and rigging data.

According to Link-Belt, other lift planning programs are CD-based and must be manually and individually updated with new features and data at each location. They generally require software purchases and extensive training.

In the near future, 3DLiftPlan.com will feature four languages, tandem picks, various rigging and block configurations, as well as custom loads and jobsite objects. According to Weiss, some of the loads and objects will be free, while others can be purchased. In addition, "We are working on adding a rigging module to 3D Lift Plan so users can create rigging plans," says Weiss.

Since 1993, Link-Belt has made substantial investments in developing Link-Belt Preferred online applications, starting with technical parts and service information for every crane made over the last 55 years. In 2001, Link-Belt introduced a web-based groundbearing pressure calculator for on-the-job crane users. Today, the groundbearing pressure calculator, coupled with the new 3D Lift Plan, gives crane users the ability to plan lifts in real time, anywhere in the world, 24/7.

With more than 35 years experience, A1A Software got its start in the crane industry by developing a well-known lift planning program. In addition to the new 3D Lift Plan, the company also offers A1A Dispatch, provides custom designed websites and website hosting. ■

www.link-belt.com
www.3dliftplan.com
www.a1asoftware.net