

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Vance Smith

CURRENT ROLE: **BIM Leader, CAD/BIM Project Technologist**

LOCATION: **Victoria**

YEARS WITH RJC: **8**



Think you know Vance?
His story might put a smile
on your face.



75 Years

Vance Smith

He's a clown. Literally. When he's not doing his day job as BIM Leader, Vance is the ringmaster for the Shriners clown unit in Victoria; he and his wife perform in local parades in support of children's hospitals in the US, Mexico, and Canada. But he gets equal satisfaction from his work in the tech-heavy world of structural engineering and teaching the next generation of pros—a career path he's been carving for 30 years.



Vance started high school thinking he wanted to be a machinist; anything that would challenge his mind by building or creating something and keep him off the physically gruelling career path his father took as a mechanic. He started in manufacturing doing steel detailing and fabricating, doing the drawings for steel structures. Working on some very interesting and challenging projects introduced him to some of the city's structural engineers who were intrigued by his digital skills. Computer modeling was not yet the norm in the 1990s when many were still hand drawing on the drafting board.

He was invited to join a firm where they taught him “everything structural” and mentored him for nine years as he started to define the next phase of his career. One of Vance's memorable experiences during this time was working on the pool design for the Commonwealth Games in Victoria; he modeled the whole interior pool and was able to give the camera crews video angles of the divers so they could tweak where the structures were going to be to maximize visibility.

Vance says one of the most important lessons he learned during the early part of his career was how to be adaptable—to changing technology but also to market ebbs and flows. In the coming years he would work in multiple sectors, from house design to marine engineering; he worked for established firms and even freelanced for a while. He would eventually join RJC after closing his consulting business. He had multiple offers from other firms but had his sights set on RJC because of its reputation for excellence and its employee-owned and managed structure.

In his eight years with the firm Vance has seen a positive shift to even greater collaboration, where technicians are less siloed on projects and frequently have the opportunity to work together and across other teams. He approaches his job as BIM lead with the same verve he has for his other roles—he's an active volunteer with the Shriners as ringmaster for the clown unit and as a freemason. And he's a teacher, too, for a college engineering graphics technician program.

This passion for giving back and teaching is evident to everyone who works with him on the BIM team; Vance is always encouraging the team to look for learning opportunities, to share knowledge gained from their individual experiences, to pitch in and support one another wherever possible.

Vance has seen technology evolve drastically over his 30-year career and he knows more big changes are imminent as fewer young people are technically trained and machines and software will take over many of those roles. He also knows, though, that there will always be a need for people who understand the technology and he's excited to continue mentoring the next generation of professionals—as BIM leader, college instructor, freemason, and yes, clown.



75 Years