Episode 25 Plan Visualization Technology with Jay Schimpf of Authenticus Inc.

**Curtis:**  Hey, everyone. Welcome back to the **Your Project Shepherd Podcast**. We are doing a remote podcast today and we are here at the offices and studios of Authentic. Authentic is a 3D visualization company here in Houston that was started recently by Jim, and he is joining us today to kind of talk about what their services are and how they got started and how this benefits you as a consumer.

So, Jay, thanks for letting me come by your studio this morning and talking with me. So tell us about I guess first about your background, kind of what you did before this and then how you got started, how the idea came about.

**Jay:**  Yeah I’d be happy to. You know, like so many before me, it kind of started in construction, which is where, you know, this kind of stemmed from. And it was remodels, flipping houses and then moving into custom construction and kind of the high end building multiple, multiple projects at the same time just. Anyways, point was, it was a custom experience, and when you build custom, you've never built it before and there's always, usually a surprise. We tried to limit those as much as possible with our thoroughness, looking over plans. But even on plans, sometimes for a professional, you still can miss a couple of things. Staircases, for instance, might be just a hair off and kind of coming into a window or you never know what all you'll come across. But but anyways, one of the bigger things was clients and kind of the unhappiness or, you know, the middle of the project scenario where you started building it and all of a sudden it's not what they visualize and that happens way too many times and you technically can blame the clients because you're like, I explained it as best as I could. It's right there on the paper. The building specs say that's what we're doing. And the client, you sign off on all of it. But you know, clients don't like that. And, and one of the things that you just constantly I mean, you're always trying to please them, but it's just one of those things that, you know, never sits right with anybody and so that's kind of what started this process. It was just seeing what technologies was out there and that just kind of led into a lot of research and studying and that's kind of where we came in to projecting technology and then the 3D technology, the augmented reality, the virtual reality, the mixed reality, that there's a lot of realities out there. So that's kind of what started this was just how can we bring the visualization, which we'll call if you ask me, for a one sentence, what do you do? We've narrowed it down to: We are an immersive visualization technology service company. Yeah, say that ten times fast, but anyways, we want to fully immerse the clients in the experience and there's a variety of ways to do that and in those ways, you know, we start with the simple 2D plan, which is in our studio, which is just off a PDF. Everyone's got a PDF and we know a lot of architects and designers might not have converted to Revit, which is a program that designs, and they that program designs it into 3D and allows people to see plans in 3D. But not everyone has adopted that yet. So there's still a lot of people out there designing in CAD and just designing in the 2D world still. And I hate to say this, but I think some of you all up there would agree the residential construction is still a very archaic industry compared to a lot of the other industries out there and so we're trying to branch that. It's not been easy. But I feel like it is what is coming what is needed technically is already there.

**Curtis:** So that technology's been around for a while, but VR technology and gaming and lots of other industries and so know you guys may not be the kind of the first in this industry to do this, but you're the first that I know of in our market here in Houston. And I think what you guys are offering is, is is unique among other companies that do this. You've got so many different ways to help homeowners visualize what they're getting between, like you said, between the two projecting the floor plan. And for those of you who are listening to this recording, I would encourage you to go and check out the video version as well, because we're going to cut away and show you a lot of videos in their studio while we're talking. So you can kind of see what we're what we're discussing. But they projected the floor plan on the ground in this giant warehouse back here behind us.

**Jay:**  We like to call a studio.

**Curtis:**  Studio warehouse. It's really a warehouse, but it's a studio now. So but they project that floor plan so you can walk through your whole house, you can feel where the rooms are, and they've got furniture that you can that they will place in the floor plan. You can walk around your floor plan, say, this is where my couch is going, this is in my kitchen, this is where my cabinets are. This is where my washer dryer is in the laundry room and my bedroom. This is what it feels like to have a bed in this space. So if you're listening, I would encourage you to hop on the video side and watch and see some of the cutaways that we're going to do for this. But one thing that you mentioned that is it’s just so true. We've had this problem. I'm sure all builders have had this problem where clients had to sign off on something during the design phase and they think they understand. And then when it starts getting built, they're like, wow, this is not what I envisioned. And it's an area of conflict. And you know, and you've done this before. I'm sure I've done this. Most builders have done this and we have to do to protect ourselves, but we say, Well, that's what you signed off on, that's what you're getting. And I hate to say that, but at the end of the day, that's what that's how we have to protect ourselves and we have we have given the client as much information as we can to help them visualize that. So having this tool, I think, is a fantastic way to protect everyone. It protects me as the builder, it protects the client because everybody is getting a better picture of what it is that we're doing, Right. Yeah.

**Jay:** Well, and one thing I want to clarify with the studio versus virtual reality in the studio, you're getting a spatial feeling, okay, virtual reality can't do that. And I'm not discounting that because we do that too. There's a great realistic conceptual visualization with virtual reality, but you can't get the exact like dimensions in the feeling of what a furniture piece would be like or the wall with the furniture in the space and that's, you know, it seemed so simple, but that's what the studio is doing. It allows you to bring in stage a whole room and physically walk that room. And so we flush out so many unknowns with this process and it's good for I mean, it's very beneficial for the clients, but it's actually really good for the architects and builders, too. I mean, you know, we know what the plans are going to look like, but there's still things that we let slip. I mean, it might look it looks all gravy on the plans and then all said, Oh, we didn't realize that door swings that way and we just catch the lesson. I mean, we design on the fly all the time and custom and, you know, we, we can adapt and that's how we continue to do it, and, you know, but go through this process and it kind of eliminates a lot of that. And the biggest thing with that spatial is it actually speeds up the design process. I don't know how many times we've had people just think that it causes another step and causes more work. Well, it technically can happen if you do it at the wrong time, like say you're completely done with your plans and you're getting ready to start building and then you come in, you're going to find changes, right, and everyone's going to be upset with that. The builder is going to be upset because now they can start building architect or designer is going to be upset because now they going to go back and change all the layers. So we have found a good process to kind of put this into. And that's kind of like right at the floor. So you design the floor plan first and your red line it get that first version or I should say second version of the floor plan done before you start working on all the layers. And that has been the best time by just consensus of all the architects and designers out there saying, okay, I can do this at that point, get the floor plan completely solidified and and written off by the client, and then continue to proceed further and eliminate so many questions at the end. And to your point that you mentioned earlier with the clients like there's so many clients out there that they just won't speak up either because it's ignorance and they just don't know, and they don't want to admit that they don't know.

**Curtis:**  Or they are embarrassed.

**Jay:**  It can be embarrassing. I mean, there's a lot of variables that they might not know or want to speak up in that time. And so when do they speak up? Well, either at the end of design right before start and build, or you're in the middle of the build and they speak up. Right. And so, you know, let's flush all that out now.

**Curtis:** And it can erode confidence in the builder, too. You know, I can read confidence in the builder or the architect, because they feel like in their eyes that we're the experts. We're the ones that do this every day, you know, so they'll say, why didn't you tell me this was how it was going to be? So it's and.

**Jay:**  We try to say we came, we did it. How we drew it on the board. We drew more 2D, you know, I mean, we.

**Curtis:** Yeah, we drew an elevation. So I had my team from Crafted here in the studio a few weeks ago to do a tour and to show them this technology. And this is a great example of something that we were able (not on one of our plans), but on a sample.

**Jay:** Of course it wouldn’t be one of your plans.

**Curtis:**  Our plan doesn’t have mistakes – so yeah it was a sample plan that Jay had projected on the floor we were walking through and there was a laundry room shown and Jacob, our designer architectural designer, said, this looks kind of small on the on the on the plan. So we took there's some movable wall sections which we'll show you on the video here in a second. So we rolled walls into place on the projected plan. We rolled the washer dryer into the space, and we were able to see how tight this laundry really was. And so, again, if you're doing that early, if you're doing that during like a schematic design phase, it's not too late to change that laundry room. Once you get all the way through construction documents and you're ready to start construction, I mean, you can still make the change, but it's more expensive. It's more time consuming. Maybe you're changing permits, you're getting new bids from subcontractors that, yes, that's the wrong time to do it.

**Jay:** Yeah. I mean, you know, as much as we want business and we want people to come in to use our service, we will advise people don't come in at this stage. It is going to cause probably a lot more frustration and friction with everybody involved because there will be changes.

**Curtis:** In that example. You know, if if that spatial awareness didn't take place until the house was framed already or children had drywall going up and then you're like, oh crap, this laundry room is too small. I mean, now you either can't change it or it's very expensive to change it.

**Jay:** So, yeah.

**Curtis:**  You know, obviously the further you get along in the process, the more expensive those changes become. So as we've talked about before on the podcast, most architects and designers have a multi-step design process. Ones can be kind of conceptual where we're talking about, Hey, this is the general floor plan and schematic design, which is kind of where often the first PDF will take place and so during that schematic design, the architect will have a scalable PDF that they can send over to Jay and his team projected at that point. Then you walk through it and then it's often at that time it's no extra cost to the architect to make changes at that phase because it's already part of their design process to where they're making changes at these certain phases. So catching those mistakes very early on, is it a successful project.

**Jay:** Right, Right. And what you kind of mentioned there is is kind of coming through the studio then then when you do get to the end of the project, we can take it more steps further. And that's kind of where other services kind of come into play. When we start talking about the 3D world and creating a 3D model and being able to look through your own phone or smart device or even glasses that we have here or now, you're able to see the 3D object come to life to scale and that that we generally do that kind of at the end when you're like, okay, plans are done, great, since the plans will kind of flush out selections because we have a process ourselves and they might not be your final selections, but we want to get it as close as you can. So we'll take inspiration, photos, whatever, and we'll create a 3D model for you and then allow you to walk it or see it. And many different, many different tools or features that we kind of offer.

**Curtis:**  So we've talked about the projection services of the plans, the spatial planning. And then so the VR talked to us more about the VR side, what you see in the VR, what the application is for that.

**Jay:** Yeah. So after you kind of get through the spatial design, now it's more of the conceptual visualization and where people want to see at that point is the windows, the doors and ceilings. You know, something that you're not going to necessarily see in the studio? I mean, you can if there's side elevations done, but even then, you're getting kind of one sided of that and there's still value there. But when you take it to, hey, let's see what the ceilings look like, I got barrel ceilings or groin ceilings or some kind of cathedral ceiling that you're not going to be able to see on a 2D. You know, that's where the 3D world kind of really helps get people's minds around that. So that's kind of at the end of design, kind of right before you start construction is kind of what we suggest kind of doing that and we'll like I said, well, we'll up a model whether it was and you might already have a model some people designing that Revit software I was talking about and so then you already have a model so then it's just plugging into our augmented reality app and we created this app to be very convenient for everybody. It's actually free to download in the Apple and Android stores. It's just authentic as air and you can find it there and play with it right now. But the purpose of that was, you know, hey, let's just allow people to have the opportunity to walk their houses anywhere they can see a Dollhouse version and kind of see every single angle of the house right there on our table. They can go in the backyard and walk through their future house. We really thought, you know, why not make this very convenient? Because we have virtual reality. I mean, we got the 3D glasses (3D goggles) and you usually have to be tethered with the virtual reality. I mean, now the goggles are getting more advanced. It's wireless. You guys will see some of that here. Actually, we even have a couple of posts of Curtis in our studio, you know, playing with them as well. But you'll be able to see what that kind of looks like. It's a really cool experience. Very futuristic, great, great tool to use as well. And that doesn't have to be done here. It can be done elsewhere. But the whole point of the augmented reality app was, hey, you can take that home with you and you can pull it up whenever you want to. You know, it's always available to you. And so it's a very simple process and that's kind of why we created it, because not everybody can use goggles. Not everybody wants to use goggles. So but everyone's got a smartphone. I mean, I would think so, at least at this point. There's a couple of flip ones out there still.

**Curtis:** So the so the other service that you showed us is we can give you photos of a space of a either a completed kitchen or yet typically it's very models, right? It's like it's a pleated kitchen.

**Jay:** It could be a 3D model; it can be a 3D image. It doesn't matter. So, yes, it's what we call our selections visualizer, and it's a masking technology. You literally take any photo, whether it's a kitchen, you're outside and you just might not be sure what your selections are yet. We start with somewhere. We start with either the picture, whether it's a 3D model picture or I mean, the current house or kitchen or whatever it is, or a 3D representation of that specific area, and then we mask it and then we just send you a link. Again, we've tried to do this whole thing as a quick, simple process for people and try to even keep it very affordable as well because, you know, you just take that photo, mask it, we just send you a link. You don't have to buy any software. You don't have to go through the process of learning software. It's just a link. When you get that link, it's your picture. And then the picture then has every little part of it that you can modify, and you can change it with. You know, we have the database which we're constantly uploading more and more and more manufacturers. We actually just uploaded another 35 manufacturers in there. So now we got know like Marvin Windows, Jordan Windows, Pella windows. I mean, we've added a bunch of just manufacturers that are really well known and just continuing adding more and more because that was our goal.

**Curtis:** And then a paint like paint colors their Sherwin-Williams color and even more color.

**Jay:** We got the whole library of those, which we may add another actually. Now we do have one more. It's one up north that's not necessarily applicable, see or franchising as well. So we're kind of all over the country. So we're adding different manufacturers from different parts of the country. So we've realized that we kind of do that too.

**Curtis:** Which manufacturer did you add?

**Jay:** I believe it's all my paints. It's somewhere up north Michigan, Minnesota area that wanted to get in that. So anyways, yeah.

**Curtis:** But countertop tiles have cabinets, flooring, all that kind of stuff so people can pop in different colors and finishes to really see what their space is going to look like with. So even if you can't find your exact brand that you're choosing, more than likely you're going to find something that's very darn close. You can get a really good visualization of what that space is going to look like with your selected finishes in it.

**Jay:** And that was the other goal was you can go to a render or someone to, you know, just do a generic library of just colors and that also so that works, but that we tried to get a little bit more realistic with real selections and even some of the real selections we've just added another neat feature where you can click the button and it has an AI button on it for that specific product. It'll take you directly to that manufacturer's website and then you can actually order samples. So just another added feature there for, for some of the products.

**Curtis:**  And if people do renderings, because we've done this before, we've seen plans and selections off to the rendering company and they send it back. That's, that's great. But if you want to make changes to it, it's a wait, you know to wait. And it's a more cost. Right. And so with this, you set it up one time. It's a one-time cost to create the model or the masking layers. And then you can sit at home on your couch for as long as you want to and just keep changing those selections.

**Jay:**  Yeah, some people love it, some people hate it. But, you know, it's one of those tools that it's there. And we're seeing a lot of DIYers, like the remodelers that want to do it themselves. Yeah, we're seeing a lot of people gravitate towards that end, and people, the real estate agents actually.

**Curtis:**

What are the differences between that visualizer and some of the ones that are already on the market like the I think Sherwin-Williams has a has a visualizer and some other companies. What are the available. Sure.

**Jay:**  So and that's a good question because you know we didn't create the wheel here. What we did was we saw all these different visualizer out there that are that manufacturer's specific product. So like a roofing company garage or a company, a paint company like, yeah, you could upload a picture of your house and then you'll be able to see their product on your house, right? And so it's the same concept. Only we said, hey, let's give them everything right. Let's give them all the manufacturers, let's give them all of the components of the house under one tool. And, and nobody was doing that because And I understand why not because I mean, they're not trying to sell other people's products. And so that's the difference here. And the bigger difference is that we opened this up to the public. So anybody can just kind of quickly upload it and do it. And, you know, and it's very quick and easy.

**Curtis:** So I think I think on some of the on some of the free ones, the quality is not always that great, too. Like I've played around with some of the ones that are, you know, manufacturers apps that you can download, and it might be okay for just a quick hey it is this same kind of work but the quality of the of that image isn't all that great. Whereas the ones that I've seen of yours are at a much higher quality, much more realistic ceiling.

**Jay:** So and we do offer two options there. So I'm glad you pointed out, which both of them the masking technology itself is done. So we do it where it's actually being done with a combination of AI and people. So there's an AI technology that quickly masks things and then a person comes behind it and corrects anything that doesn't get corrected where some of those ones that you might just see online is completely all AI and you might get like a tree. That kind of skews the whole view of it and it makes it all blotchy or whatever. And so anyway, so that's, that's part of it. But we also have an added feature, you know, there's an added cost because it adds more work to the process, but you can do just a standard photo and we can just standardize it, but we can also add shadows and glare as well. So to make it more realistic, we called RHD experience so it takes a little bit more time, but we can still do it for a little extra cost, but it makes it that much more real.

**Curtis:** So do you offer this service just through someone's builder or architect? Can the public come to you directly? Like how do you work with people?

**Jay:** Sure. So both we prefer to work directly to the architects, builders, designers, developers out there just because, you know, from a business standpoint, we want repeat business, but because of my background, because of knowing our industry, I really wanted to, you know, kind of partner with companies and say, hey, let us be an extension of your service.Let us be an added value to you. And so, you know, with that in mind, we have a membership that we've created. And if you become a member, then, you know, then there's discounted rates to and other benefits to our members, which are usually, you know, the architects, builders or designers, because again, we just want to be an extension of your of your services. But people can come to us. We do have people that say it's probably 30% right now off the street and then 70% businesses that come in right now. So we can and we will, you know, service whoever needs help.

**Curtis:**  Yeah, I don't want to get into specific pricing because I don't want to kind of date this recording necessarily because today's pricing might not be six months from now or a year from now. But, you know, I think that for what you guys are offering for the advantages that it offers the consumer, you know, the cost is very, very reasonable. And if you're working with authenticates through your builder or architect, often they'll already have those costs built into their design process. So depending on your contract with your builder, your architect, that may already be to be a part of it with no extra costs. Or they may say, Hey, it's too new, the service at X dollars more.

**Jay:**  Well, and I would just say, I mean, on average, you know, you could expect to spend maybe 1000 to 3000. Is that the range? Okay. To use a combination of our services, and that's a combination of our services there in that range. And, you know, you kind of compare that to a change order of, you know, a 5000, 7000, 10,000 or change order.I mean, it's you know, it's small, but yeah.

**Curtis:** I mean, to me to go back to my earlier laundry room example, if we caught that in the studio here during schematic design and say zero cost item and your only cost really is that's the only thing you caught, your only cost was the cost of the services here, which again, if it was that 1 to $3000, no big deal in the grand scheme of things. But if let's say you get all the way to construction, the framing and you walk into there, you're like, well, my washer dryer not going to fit in this space. Now you're talking.

**Jay:**  Tens of thousands.

**Curtis:**  Three or four times that to make a change. So, you know, spend, spend two or three thousands a day to save $10,000 later, it makes sense to me.

**Jay:**  Well, from that cost standpoint, I would say it's there's a couple other benefits here. One, we want this to be an experience, like we want people to enjoy coming in and they do. They come in and they're like, first, you know, they kind of had the wow factor of walking this to you, not really expecting what they expect, you know, to see and then and then we want we want them to enjoy the experience, you know, so, you know, we're here to serve them. And so, you know, whether it's drinks and snacks or music or just comfort and laughs or whatever, it is, like we want this, you know, to be a full experience and so we want you to take that memory home with you and yes, it hopefully will save some money as well.

**Curtis:** So. All right. So, well, again, we'll be showing some clips of this kind of interspersed with our conversation here on the video version of the podcast. So if you're if you're listening to us, please go check out the video as well. So, Jay, why don't you tell us really quickly how people can contact you guys if they would like to, to learn more about your services?

**Jay:**  Sure. You contact him as your builder, and he will come to us to use our services. You go to our website WW dot authentic his services dot com and you will be able to see we've spent quite a bit of time on there just kind of showing each individual service with a couple minute video kind of explaining a little bit better because we can stay here and talk about it all day. But again, this is a visualization company, so you got to see it to believe it kind of thing. And so we spent some time on those commercials just so people can kind of see and then we allow you to contact us different ways on there. You can set up a phone call, book an appointment. If you're a trade as in like an architect or builder, you can schedule a tour because we do tours all the time. We want you to come in. We want you to see it firsthand yourself, just so we can show you what the value is.

**Curtis:**  Awesome. And they're also very active on social media. So if you go to their Instagram, all that's their social media side, they have a lot of good video clips on there.

**Jay:**  And we have a competition to see who can like more photos each day. I mean, we're kind of back.

**Curtis:**  Yeah, exactly. Yeah. We try to like each other's posts on Instagram and LinkedIn and everything, so. So you can find them on, on, on all those platforms too. So the last thing I'll say again, you know, the thing that we talk about on the podcast over and over that we mention is that that for cited the diagram of a house. You know, the foundation is proper planning the left walls, your team drywall is communication, the roof is proper execution. We use that visual over and over and they are a kind of a key component on several of those, you know, first of which is planning. But then they're also a member of the team and then their tool helps everyone communicate to ensure that proper execution on actually all that ties in the other piece that beautiful, isn't it? So to me, their services are a part of all four sides of that house diagram that we talk about. Thanks for joining us again on this episode of the Your Project Shepherd Podcast. Please check out Jay and Authenticus on all their channels. And if you have any questions about their services, reach out to us again. We do a Q&A episode at the end of each season, so shoot us some questions may have Joe Jay into the studio with us to answer some of those questions. If you have them, and we'll answer those as best we can. So thanks for joining us again and we'll talk to you soon. But.