



CASE STUDY

Kitchell Builds Trust and Accountability on Public Projects with Cupix

Since its founding, Kitchell has established itself as a leader in capital expenditure management, acting primarily as an owner's representative on public works projects.

With a deep specialization in the educational and healthcare sectors, Kitchell operates as a seamless extension of their client's team. This close partnership requires a profound level of trust and transparency, especially on active, public-facing campuses.

DETAILS

LOCATION:

San Francisco, CA

FIRM TYPE:

Construction Manager

PRIMARY INDUSTRY:

Commercial, Education

PROJECT TYPE:

University Expansion

PROJECT SIZE:

195,000 sqft (2 buildings)

For its work on two major buildings at the City College of San Francisco (CCSF), the 115,000 sq. ft. STEM building and the 80,000 sq. ft. Student Success Center, Kitchell needed a single source of truth to keep complex projects on track and all stakeholders aligned.

\$500k change order reduced with visual evidence

80,000 sqft captured in approximately 1 hour



Finding a True Partner for Reality Capture

On large-scale public projects like schools, success hinges on seamless coordination, a challenge that becomes even more complex when navigating an active school campus with students and faculty nearby.

“We’re not just working for a public client,” says Ken Smith, Program Manager at Kitchell. “We have the students and faculty right there working next to us.”

Kitchell had previously trialed a different reality capture solution but found it lacking, with expensive, unnecessary add-ons and inadequate training and support. The team knew they needed a more cost-effective and user-friendly platform that could be standardized across projects to provide consistent value.

After evaluating more than half a dozen platforms, the Kitchell team knew they had found the right solution.

“We needed to get some consistency,” says Rafael Martin, Executive Director of Technical Support Services at Kitchell. “Through that evaluation process, we thought Cupix was a great fit for us, our needs, and also the budgetary demands that our clients had.”



Better Value Leads to Better Outcomes

After a thorough review informed by online research and peer recommendations, Kitchell chose Cupix. The team was impressed by the ease of use in the field, as well as sophisticated functions like BIM Compare, which would help the team identify and prevent costly construction errors much faster.

“Cupix provided an equal to or better solution at a better cost.” Rafael notes.

In addition, the platform's capabilities such as the ability to do multiple scans and flexibility to scan spaces using various methods including a phone and 360° camera, combined with expert support from a team with deep construction knowledge, further solidified their decisions.

The transition was seamless and the impact immediate. The Cupix team not only provided excellent training but also helped import four months of historical data from the previous platform, ensuring perfect continuity.

"We got up and running in the transition from OpenSpace to Cupix seamlessly," says Ken. "You all were somehow able to integrate all our old files into the point clouds that we ended up building later."

With a simple workflow using a 360° camera, the team began capturing the STEM and Student Success Center buildings two to three times per week, with each walk-through taking about an hour. This consistent stream of visual data quickly became the bedrock of their project management workflow.

"Capturing the site was pretty intuitive," says Dylan Olson, Project Engineer at Kitchell. "The Cupix team also provided us with some really helpful videos of how to use the cameras and best practices, which was really helpful to get us up to speed really quickly."



Delivering a Single Source of Truth for Project Teams

By implementing Cupix as their definitive project record, Kitchell unlocked significant benefits across every phase of the CCSF projects:

- **Drastically Reduced Change Order Costs:**

The team used Cupix as “undisputable evidence” to resolve disputes quickly and fairly. In one instance involving expensive ductwork installation, the visual timeline helped clarify the sequence of events. “It really helped us get a change order that was close to \$500,000 down to \$125,000,” says Ken.

- **Streamlined Workflows:**

- **Schedule Updates**

The team replaced cumbersome paper schedules and highlighters with side-by-side reviews of the schedule and the latest Cupix capture, allowing them to instantly see progress and identify problem areas.

- **Billing Verification**

Project managers could easily verify contractor progress for monthly billing directly within Cupix, ensuring accuracy and saving valuable time. “Cupix allowed us to leave the paper [schedules] behind,” says Ken. “We’d do our captures and then we’d go through and compare progress with the schedule.”

- **Remote Collaboration**

With projects located up to 60 miles away, Cupix allowed team members to “walk the site” from anywhere. This was invaluable for providing virtual walkthroughs to stakeholders like teachers and students who couldn’t safely access the active construction site. Also, this helped with on-site modifications for RFI and changes without having to be physically on-site.

- **Clear Client Communication**

Kitchell was responsible for coordinating with numerous stakeholders including 20 different university department chairs as part of this project. The Cupix captures were a vital communication tool to keep their clients informed and engaged, especially for the non-construction professionals. “When the furniture started showing up, everybody was like, ‘What is my layout going to be? I like this and I don’t

like that,’” says Abhishek. “So we would pull up Cupix and help everyone visualize what was there currently and get input on how they would like things changed. This made it so much easier to drive a lot of our day two, on-site modifications.”

- **Closeout and Handover**

The consistent documentation created a detailed visual as-built record, which has proved invaluable for the facilities team and for post-occupancy modifications. “Now, we are using it for Day Two,” notes Ken. “As we begin to do modifications, we can see where utilities are, conduits are, duct runs, and other things. We are using it in a lot of different ways now after occupancy as we were during construction.”



- **Improved Quality and Proactive Problem-Solving**

Using the BIM Compare feature, the team caught critical installation errors before they became major rework items. “There were a couple of instances where we looked at BIM Compare and identified instances where the height of the wall was not aligned to the curtain wall,” recalls Abhishek. “We called it out, and the subcontractor revised it to match the design.”

- **Holding Teams Accountable**

The visual record created a culture of transparency, motivating contractors to stay on schedule. Ken explains, “If the other side thinks that you probably know [the facts], they’re less likely to want to mislead you.” With Cupix, both Kitchell and the general contractor had full transparency on everything going on at the site.

As Kitchell continues to manage complex projects for its clients as an owner’s rep, Cupix has become an indispensable tool for mitigating risk, enhancing communication, and delivering on their promise of being a trusted partner.

