

AS322665

Big Team, Small Team

—Differences in BIM Management Between Large and Small Firms

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Learning Objectives

- Learn how to differentiate workflow management challenges as they vary across variously sized teams
- Gain insights into the practicality of custom tool development and the impacts it can have on smaller offices
- Learn about the benefits and constraints of not having a full-time, nonbillable, design support staff member(s)
- Gain tools to justify hardware and software purchases that may not be used as fully as in a large firm

Description

Small firms constitute almost exactly half of the fields of architecture. It is always great to hear about all of the amazing scripts and tools that our peers from large firms are able to show off at conferences, but smaller firms often do not have the depth of support staff (or the overhead hours) to dedicate to custom tools and add-ins, or even a support queue. Let's talk about how the work of a BIM Manager and technical support staff is different in a small firm. Not only are different tools needed, but also different workflows shine at different scales. We will talk about what works well in smaller offices, and what does not translate down from larger practices. This class will be a lightly moderated discussion trying to find some consensus (or at least good debate) on how smaller firms function in the time of big data BIM. This roundtable was kicked off earlier this year at Midwest University. Takeaways from that discussion will be used as a jumping-off point.

Speakers

Michael Freiert has many hobbies, has had a few professions, and is a strong believer in cross discipline problem solving. He has worked in ACAD since R12, Revit since 6.1, and has learned a bunch of things from working with Legos, wood, scenic design, special effects, security, live sound, machining, sewing, cooking, explosives and gardening - all influencing his design philosophy, choice of tools, and preference for using the most apt, if sometimes unconventional tools for a particular task. He has been working primarily in BIM Management roles for the last 15 years with a healthy stint as a BIM mercenary.

Robert Beckerbauer, Jr. is BIM Coordinator at RDG Planning & Design in Omaha, Nebraska. His architectural experience ranges from small tenant renovations to large senior living projects. Robert took the BIM Coordinator role three years ago and provides software and training support for 30+ Revit users. He is the office expert for all things Revit, and continues to develop his BIM knowledge, while at the same time becoming the office Navisworks lead. He continues to chair RDG's Omaha office BIM Committee and serve on the Learning Community with the other RDG offices. Robert has also earned the UW-CERC/Skanska Building Information Modeling (BIM) Professional Certificate.

Contextual Information -

This discussion was initially created for Midwest University 2019 based on a series of observations at Autodesk University and Midwest University that certain content and practices, while very useful at scale, did not necessarily translate well to small practices.

The latest US national firm data in 2019 is the 2018 AIA Firm Survey Report, which looked at 2017 numbers:

50.8% of staff is at firms of 50 or more persons	those firms constitute 56% of billing
29.8% of staff is at firms of 10-49 persons	those firms constitute 30.3% of billing
19.4% of staff is at firms of 1-9 persons	those firms constitute 13.7% of billing

According to the Firm Survey Reports, these percentages have all been reasonably stable since 2005 ($\pm 1-4\%$).

A widely suggested level of BIM support staff is that one support person is able to support between 20 and 100 design users. Anecdotally most BIM Managers seem to put this at around 30-60 minutes of "BIM support" per 40 hours of design staff, or half an hour to an hour per user per week.