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Overlay of Revit Model and Real-World Construction Waterfront Residence in Annapolis, MD

"Embrace the Fact That You Will Have to Re-think the Way You Work"

update 3/2009



How to Keep the Leading Edge from Becoming the Bleeding Edge

In a recent TV commercial concerning retirement strategies, the actor Dennis Hopper tells us, "...you need a plan!" This advice is no less applicable when preparing to convert your office from 2D CAD to BIM software. Undertaking such a paradigm shift without careful planning is perilous at best—especially in our current economic environment.

This month, we at Purple Cherry Architects find ourselves at our two-year anniversary of converting our entire CAD production efforts to using Building Information Management (BIM) software—specifically Autodesk Revit. Looking back over the months, this experience has been very rewarding for us with many success stories. However, the journey has not been without its bumps. If we were to counsel a firm—perhaps one such as yours—on how to successfully manage this process from the start, our recommendations would include keeping the following five "BIM Realities" in mind:

Reality Number One: Embrace the Fact That You Will Have to Re-think the Way You Work
The very nature and design of BIM software requires us as design professionals to re-think the methods we use to accomplish our work—both for production and management staff alike. Click [here](#) for more information.

Reality Number Two: Get Professional Training
The learning curve for BIM software can be steep. Click [here](#) for more information.

Reality Number Three: Don't Dabble With It—Commit To It
One of the surest paths to failure when converting to BIM is to "dabble" with the software without developing a plan and a commitment to use it on actual projects. Click [here](#) for more information.

Reality Number Four: Don't Fight the Software—Learn to Work With It
Staff frustration with new software can be a detrimental factor in converting to BIM. Human nature is to try to do things "the old way" with the new software. Click [here](#) for more information.

Reality Number Five: Be Willing to Invest Development Time Outside of Billable Projects
Investing overhead in developing a BIM resource library will pay back dividends in man hours for future projects. Click [here](#) for more information.

Looking back over the last two years at Purple Cherry Architects, converting to BIM software has given us greater ability to produce highly integrated designs and documentation, and much more effective visualization of our designs for both clients and contractors alike. At times, we still do a small project or two in 2D CAD if it makes more sense economically. However, there is no question in our minds that BIM is the future of our industry. We are glad for that and for our efforts over the last two years to achieve that goal.

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Brian Bassindale, AIA is a Senior Project Manager with Purple Cherry Architects. With over 30 years of experience in custom home design, 12 years using 3D BIM software to include AutoDesk Revit, Mr. Bassindale says, "The advantages of BIM software to the design community are immeasurable. I would not want to be doing building design work with any other tool."



Cathy Purple Cherry, AIA, LEED AP - A wholly-integrated design firm, Purple Cherry Architects services include architecture, interior design, space planning and programming, construction administration and graphic support for marketing and fundraising efforts. Our work is dedicated to the enhancement of daily life and community through architecture.

