

Whitney Architects, Inc.

Customer Success Story

AutoCAD® Architecture

AutoCAD Architecture makes it easier for all project team members to work together. It's much more intuitive and less tedious [than our old CAD application]. Our drawings are much better now, not only because the quality control process is easier, but also because the interface with all of our consultants and clients is easier and more exact. As a result, we save time on projects—and make more profit.

—Stephen Bures, AIA
President
Whitney Architects, Inc.

Profit by design.

AutoCAD® Architecture software enhances collaboration and helps Whitney Architects, Inc., boost productivity by 35 percent.

Project Summary

Located just outside Chicago, Whitney Architects, Inc., is an interior architecture firm that specializes in design projects for large corporations, financial services firms, and hospitality providers. Working in small, multidisciplinary studio teams, the firm's employees have successfully delivered a broad range of technical and design services—including strategic planning, construction documentation, furniture development, project management, and disaster recovery—since 1984. To better provide this diverse blend of services and foster improved collaboration with extended design team members, Whitney adopted AutoCAD Architecture software in 2003. "At the time, many of our clients and consultants were using AutoCAD software," says Stephen Bures, president of Whitney. "Because we were using another CAD application, we often had difficulty interfacing with them." Purpose-built for architects, AutoCAD Architecture provided all of the functionality of AutoCAD® software plus an array of tools designed specifically for architectural drawing, design, and collaboration.

The Challenge

Since adopting the new software, Whitney has completed almost 600 major construction projects, including a two-story office building belonging to Gibson Electric & Technology Solutions, one of Whitney's frequent electrical subcontractors. "They wanted to move into a new 25,000-square-foot office building and an adjacent 27,000-square-foot warehouse," says Richard Lott, project manager. "It involved setting up a significant number of drawing sheets that needed coordination."



"On projects like this, our old CAD application was a real hardship," says Bures. "Beyond the difficulty we had sharing files with our consultants, we needed more support from our software vendor. We also consistently ran into trouble training new employees. They were familiar with AutoCAD, but none of them knew our previous CAD application, resulting in a steep learning curve and increased costs. That was a big part of our decision to make the switch."

Autodesk®

The Solution

The initial implementation went smoothly. “We mandated the change and sent all of our existing employees to classes,” says Bures. “Now, our new people get up and running immediately because they’re already familiar with AutoCAD. And because we’re on subscription, we receive excellent support from Autodesk and can upgrade every year. That puts us in a really good position with our clients and consultants.”

Enjoy Out-of-the-Box Productivity

“Using the software’s drawing management tools and built-in wall and door tools offers huge productivity benefits—without any customization,” says Lott.

Adopt Advanced Features at Your Own Pace

With training, Whitney employees take advantage of the software’s more powerful features, such as the Project Navigator drawing management system. “On the Gibson project, it helped us to structure the entire project in advance,” says Lott. “That encouraged discussion among the disciplines and saved us a lot of time in the end. Using the software’s drawing management tools to manage our projects makes teamwork much smoother and more efficient.”

Take Advantage of Extraordinary Flexibility

The drawing management capabilities in AutoCAD Architecture also help the firm develop standards for components, such as layers and blocks, that are consistent across multiple projects. “Standards make our construction drawings more accurate,” says Bures. “They also enable employees to work on many projects at once and switch as needed.” Standardizing the structure of project drawings enables employees to switch between projects and easily find exactly where to draw a new detail or where to insert a new sheet.

Collaborate Smoothly

“On most projects, we collaborate extensively with other consultants, including mechanical, electrical, and plumbing engineers, and structural engineers,” says Bures. “Because they all use AutoCAD, it’s easy to exchange information using DWG files. The software really encourages collaboration.”

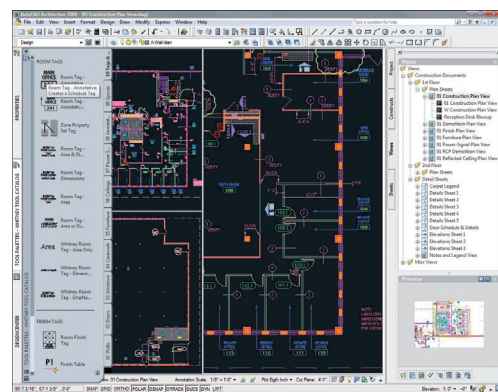
Customize for Increased Productivity

For further productivity gains, Whitney customized AutoCAD Architecture. “As needed, we incorporated existing AutoCAD blocks and details into our system or customized entirely new ones,” says Lott. “Plus, using Dynamic Blocks, we reduced the total number of project prototypes from three to one, helping our designers be more productive and make better decisions on the fly. Since then we’ve transferred blocks from hard-to-reach folders into tool palettes right on the desktop, and developed many blocks into dynamic tools, which give designers flexibility, reducing the amount of wasteful CAD work.”

The Result

“AutoCAD Architecture makes it easier for all project team members to work together,” says Bures. “It’s much more intuitive and less tedious [than our old CAD application]. Our drawings are much better now, not only because the quality control process is easier, but also because the interface with all of our consultants and clients is easier and more exact. As a result, we save time on projects—and make more profit.”

For more information about AutoCAD Architecture, visit www.autodesk.com/autocadarchitecture.



Right out of the box, AutoCAD Architecture helps us save roughly 35 percent in time spent on drawings. With all of the time and schedule constraints we deal with, that is tremendously helpful. It also helps the bottom-line profitability of our firm.

—Stephen Bures, AIA
President
Whitney Architects, Inc.