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CAD Manager's Newsletter (#465)

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By: Robert Green

Keep Calm & Solve the Problem

Use situational awareness to help you find out the cause of a problem so you can better solve it and make sure it doesn't happen again.

Over the years, in *The CAD Manager's Newsletter,* I have covered the soft skills required to be an effective CAD manager. Recent events working with a client have made me keenly aware of one such soft skill that never goes out of style: situational awareness. Knowing more about a problem, not just the end result, can greatly inform how you do your job.

In this month's installment, I'll share some practical examples from which you can learn how to improve your situational awareness and provide recommendations of how to react in common scenarios I've dealt with. Here goes.

Image source: sabelskaya/stock.adobe.com

What is the Root Cause?

If everything were perfect, you'd never have to deal with anyone who was angry, irrational, or simply expecting the impossible, right? The reality is that everything is not perfect, so we will all deal with a variety of difficult situations, especially in a CAD manager role. The question really becomes, "How can I best deal with these problems and situations to get the best possible resolution?"

The answer is to be aware of not only the problem, but also the situational circumstances around the problem. In my experience, you can have exactly the same problem, but circumstances dictate different solutions.

Don't believe me? Read on for real-world examples.

Problem: Standards Violation

You've discovered that a few models were delivered to clients that contained a standards violation that has now caused a problem big enough for the client to reject the work. You now face the task of solving the problem. How can you best do so? The answer is, "It depends."

Here are scenarios that may have caused the standards violation (all are actual scenarios I've had to work through):

Case #1. The user knew the standards but ignored them.

Case #2. The user didn't know the standards.

Case #3. The user was told by a project manager to override the standards at client request.

Case #4. The user was told by someone in management that the project was behind and to cut any corners necessary to send out the models and not using the standards cut time.

As you can see, while the standards violation is the result in all cases, the situations that caused the violation were entirely different. I think we can agree that the response required in each case must then also be different.

Be Aware: Understand the Cause

From each scenario, we can draw a few conclusions right away:

Case #1 is the user's fault. This is a case that requires intervention with the user directly (and perhaps their supervisor) to assure that willful disregard for standards doesn't happen again, plus they need to redo the work.

Case #2 is where fault is likely shared between the user, project management, and maybe even the CAD manager. The core response in this case is understanding how a user could work inside the system without knowing there was an applicable standard in place.

Case #3 is often encountered when project management wants to say, "Yes," to the customer without thinking through the possible downstream consequences. These cases require direct intervention with the project management team and not the poor user who was only doing what they were told.

Case #4 is the most insidious of all because it comes from management on high. When senior management teams undercut their CAD manager like this, it is often a sign of poor project execution at all levels that lead to an unsatisfied customer. This can signal real problems for not just the CAD manager, but for the company in general.

But how do you handle each case? **Read more** »

Tools and Resources

Autodesk Revit 2021 Learning Guide

ASCENT Center for Technical Knowledge recently released Autodesk Revit 2021 Fundamentals for Residential Design, a guide focused on residential design in both print and eBook; learning guide and instructor guide available. Topics include understanding the purpose of BIM and how it is applied in Autodesk Revit, navigating the workspace and interface, setting up and creating a project and 3D model, and more. ASCENT offers guides for other Autodesk, Dassault Systèmes, and PTC products. **Read more** »

Vectorworks Open House

Design and BIM software provider, Vectorworks, will host its first open house for all users, Wednesday, April 21, 2021. This interactive, virtual event will provide customers in the architecture, landscape architecture, and entertainment design industries the opportunity to meet the minds behind the software, ask questions of product experts, and learn about new software features. Topics include collaboration, 3D modeling and rendering, site design and GIS workflows, BIM and data management, and more. Wednesday, April 21, 2021. 9 a.m. until 7 p.m. ET. Read more »

Design Engine Training
Online training company, Design Engine offers a variety of online tutorials and scheduled training specific for CAD professionals. The company has classes coming up for Creo and SolidWorks, plus has a variety of online tutorials for Alias, MODO, Maya, and more. **Read more** »
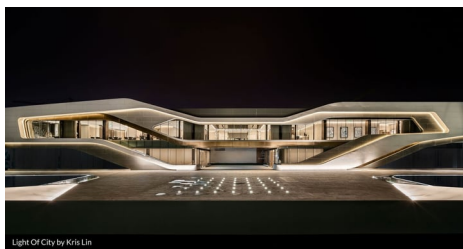
You Can't Win, if You Don't Enter!

The Farmani Group offers numerous chances for your design firm to win a design contest. Two to consider:
The 2021 Architecture Awards are now open with an extended early bird entries until April 30; regular entries due June 30. Enter for the best design of the year award in architectural design, interior design, and landscape or urban design; architectural firm of the year; or architectural product of the year. **Read more**»
The International Design Awards (IDA) 15th annual international designer of the year competition is now open; early bird deadline is May 30, final deadline October 30. The company recently announced last year's winners. *Image below: Kris Lin, Gold winner in IDA Other Architectural Design.* **Read more** » ▼ ▼ ▼

Light Of City by Kris Lin

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