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Short-Staff CAD Management Strategies

As COVID-19 continues to tighten the labor market, find out how you can manage your staff and keep projects on target.

As much as I hate writing anything about COVID-19, we simply can't ignore the staffing problems this pandemic has caused. Besides the remote work issues that we've all dealt with, qualified workers are now harder to hire and, in turn, it is easier for people to go elsewhere, meaning that retaining the good people already on your staff is critical. As a result, many companies are now working with a smaller staff than before the pandemic. This short-staff problem creates real challenges for many companies. The bottom line seems to be that we are all under pressure to get more done with fewer people while at the same time doing everything we can to retain the good staff we have — this is not an easy task. In this edition of the CAD Managers Newsletter, I'll share some strategies for survival in a short-staff environment that makes sense for CAD managers. Here goes.



Image source: fatmawati/stock.adobe.com.

It's All About Efficiency

Of course, CAD managers are always concerned with efficiency, but with today's new staffing reality, it's even a bigger worry. We are no longer able to increase our work output simply by increasing staffing because it is so difficult to find qualified workers. In the end, we are compelled to get more work done per person. Efficiency is no longer something we should try to achieve over time, but a mission critical undertaking that must be achieved right now. So, how can CAD managers ramp up efficiency? Let's explore.

Set the Tone

The headache of trying to coordinate difficult projects with some people in the office, some people at home, and some people in different time zones, is something most of us are familiar with already. I've taken the approach that acknowledging the difficult situation and inviting everyone to get creative to help make things better is best. Don't say, "This stinks, but we have to live with it," say, "This is our chance to build our ideal work environment," instead.

Think back to the pre-COVID days when we had enforced office hours and procedures we had to follow. Now consider how those hours and procedures need to change. The good news is that we can be more flexible in how and where the work gets done, but the difficult part is regaining control after the initial free-for-all of working from home. As a manager, it is our responsibility to convey this message of control.

Should staff shortages become a problem, then the same concept of setting the tone realistically works as well. It is better to say, "We're shorthanded and we're going to have to get smarter about how we tackle these projects," instead of remaining silent and watching projects flounder. My expectation is everyone should be professional enough to understand the situation and work to be a part of the solution.

The goal in setting the tone is to get everyone to buy into the challenge of doing more with less as an active participant in the process. I realize that as a CAD manager you may not have the authority to drive this type of change, but your boss does and they should be willing to help you achieve this objective.

CAD management expert Robert Green reviews the importance of standards and communication, plus how to implement peer reviews and establish a reward system to help retain employees and keep your team successfully completing jobs. [Read more](#) »

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Tools and Resources

Bricscad v22

Bricsys, a part of Hexagon, announced the release and availability of new versions of BricsCAD Lite, BricsCAD Pro, BricsCAD Mechanical, and BricsCAD BIM. Now in V22, the BricsCAD family of products is optimized to improve design, construction, and manufacturing workflows. [Read more](#) » ▼▼▼



GibbsCAM 2022

CAMBRIO announced the new release of GibbsCAM 2022. The latest release includes a number of CAD enhancements for solid and surface modelling which include the ability to extrude multiple bodies with taper, and to create surfaces as a stitched body directly from closed 2D geometry. In addition, users can automatically create trimmed planar surfaces in any orientation at geometry depth instead of the CS plane. Further developments include new alignment capabilities which allow straight edges of solid bodies to be easily aligned with the working coordinate system in preparation for machining, and a new sectional view slicing plane which can be dynamically moved in any direction to easily view and select features within the interior of a solid body. [Read more](#) »

Education and Bentley Systems

Bentley Systems, expanded its education program, offering access to learning licenses of more than 60 Bentley applications, at no cost, to all eligible students and educators, from middle schools through higher education levels now world-wide, via the [Bentley Education](#) portal. With a blend of learning content created for students, the Bentley Education portal provides access to training resources and project-based learning content that is maintained in collaboration with major universities and industry partners. [Read more](#) »

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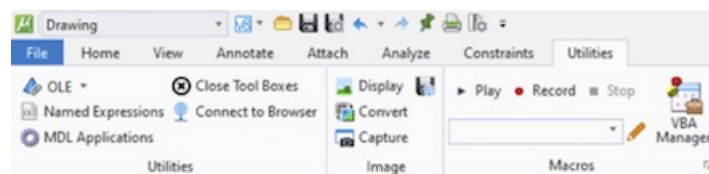


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CAD Programming: Using Macros and VBA

Macros and VBA give users an easy way to dip their toes into programming. *By Andrew G. Roe* [Read more](#) »

Herrera on Hardware: NVIDIA Ampere and AMD RDNA2: Cutting-edge GPUs for CAD

How do these GPUs stack up for traditional 3D CAD use, plus let's see how they perform under rendering pressure.

By Alex Herrera [Read more](#) »



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Cadalyst and Z by HP joined forces to write this white paper on generative design for AEC. Find out how you can get your design firm bought into this technology, what hardware you require, and how to secure funding for any upgrades you may need.

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Why buy it if you can get it for free!

The editors of Cadalyst, with help from our contributing editors and readers who are in the CAD trenches day in and day out, have updated everyone's favorite guide to helpful tools and resources that don't cost a cent. The latest edition of the "Fabulous Freebies for CAD Users" guide has something for everyone, including unit converters, file and text utilities, PDF converters, BIM tools, CAD management tools, and more!

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About the Author

Robert Green performs CAD programming and consulting globally and serves as Director of Implementation for Bricsys. He is the author of *Expert CAD Management: The Complete Guide*. Reach him via his [web site](#).

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