cadalyst

CAD Manager's Newsletter

STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS FOR THE REAL WORLD
By Robert Green

July 13, 2022
Issue #494

You've Got to Have a Plan

There are so many facets to your job as a CAD manager, you must have a plan that you reference throughout the year. Find out what you need to keep track of to help yourself, your team, and your company be successful.

Sometimes I marvel at how many things CAD managers must handle on a day-to-day basis. Dealing with so many moving pieces and responsibilities combine to make the job astoundingly tough. So, how best should you deal with all of it? Well, it starts with having a plan.

Do you have a CAD management plan? Is it realistic? Is it optimal? In this edition of The CAD Manager's Newsletter, I'll take you through a rapid assessment and action item process you can use to adjust your CAD management plan. Here goes.

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What's in Your Plan?

This is the best place to start because if your plan doesn't take the right issues into account, you'll forever play catch up. The answer should be: "Everything pertaining to the care and feeding of your CAD ecosystem." While you may not be responsible for every item on this list at present, you should, at minimum, be concerned with these items:

- Software usage and licensing,
- Hardware specification and purchasing,
- Standards and IT policy,
- Training,
- Ongoing support,
- Budgeting, and
- Cost reduction and optimization.

If you've ever tried to explain to someone why CAD management is such a tough job, just show them this list! There's a lot to worry about.

So, like any big problem, let's break our plan into manageable chunks and get started by answering some questions in each area and assigning action items as required.

Software Usage and Licensing

Do you know how many licenses you have, if they are fully utilized, and how your needs might change next year? Do your users really need the software they have or could they get by with less expensive tools? If you have too many licenses of one product, can you afford to let their subscriptions lapse at the next renewal date or should you up/cross-grade or change to another product? Could network or remote access licensing allow you to own fewer copies of expensive analytical or rendering software?

Your responses to these questions allow you to truly understand your software needs and costs for at least the next year. It is often surprising how many software licenses companies have that are underutilized, such as having a full BIM suite license for an engineering manager that doesn't do CAD work, or could be shared amongst many users. Since CAD software is expensive — and is becoming ever

more so — it literally pays to understand all the variables and make sure you have the correct software licensing.

Action items:

- If IT is responsible for licensing, then insist on doing a detailed assessment with them — they'd probably love to have your expertise.
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- If you find ways to save, write it down in an executive summary and report to your boss!
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- If your company is growing, try to forecast future software needs so management knows about upcoming increases in software budgets.

Conclusion. With software becoming so expensive, licensing can be one of the best places to find future savings.

Hardware Specification and Purchasing

Do you have a firm understanding of what workstation configurations you need to run BIM, mechanical modelling, and general CAD? Will you be replacing desktop hardware with more mobile workstations? Do you know which users will need specific graphics processors for new usage scenarios like virtual reality, coordination tools, or video rendering? Are you involved in specifying these parameters or do you live at the mercy of what IT chooses to give you?

Your responses to these questions predict how well your CAD tools will run on your user's desktops so it is very important to be involved in the configuration phase.

Action items:

- Create software specific hardware specifications like Desktop BIM user, travelling general CAD user, Desktop rendering user so that each person gets the right machine based on their software and travel profile.
- Work with IT to hone hardware specifications and source the best deals based on IT's purchasing policies.

Conclusion: Get involved! If IT buys the wrong hardware you — and your users — will live with those bad decisions for years.

Standards and IT Policy

Are your standards up to date? Do your users know what your standards are? Do your users understand IT policy as it applies to CAD topics like cloud file storage, data loss, and the use of personal electronic devices? Do senior managers support your standards and empower you to enforce them?

Your responses to these questions indicate how well thought out, trained, and supported your standards program is. If you answered no to all these questions you are in deep trouble! If you answered yes to all these questions you are golden. A mixture of yes and no answers indicates some issues that need to be resolved.

Action items:

- If your standards are in disrepair, update them.
- Be sure that IT standards protect CAD files from security threats.
- If you're not training users on your standards, you must begin to do so.

- If your management doesn't support you in your standards quest, then make them understand why they must.
- Read my article: **Back-to-Basics Boot Camp — CAD Standards** for more detailed strategies.

Conclusion. Standards are the only thing protecting you — and your company — from chaos, so make sure everyone understands that standards are a priority.

CONTINUE READING HERE>> Dig deeper and find out how to plan for training, offer ongoing support to your team, budgeting, and cost reduction and optimization. Following these clear considerations and action items will help you and your team continue to be successful. Read more >>

Tools & Resources

GIS Data Collector

Trimble announced a new data collector for its Mapping and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) portfolio—the Trimble TDC650 handheld. Built for GIS data collection, inspection and asset management activities, the TDC650 offers scalable high-accuracy Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) positioning for professional field workflows. The TDC650 is integrated with today's GIS data environment, powered by the Trimble Software Development Kit (SDK) that enables GNSS positioning for apps such as Esri ArcGIS Field Maps and Trimble TerraFlex software. The TDC650 is also a scalable solution that allows customers to choose their desired accuracy down to the centimeter-level to meet needs and budget requirements. **Read more >>**

Siemens' Xcelerator as a Service

Siemens announced Siemens Xcelerator — an open digital business platform that will accelerate digital transformation and value creation for customers of all sizes across industry, buildings, grids and mobility. The Xcelerator platform originally integrated Siemens' portfolio of engineering software, services and application development. Now, as part of its transformation into a technology company,

Siemens is applying this same approach across all parts of the business and expanded Siemens Xcelerator from a portfolio into an unique digital business platform for the entire company. **Read more >>**

Autodesk University 2022 Registration is Open
Autodesk University is returning to in-person—in New Orleans. Learn from innovators who are progressing design, manufacturing, architecture, engineering, construction, and media and entertainment. AU 2022 includes 450+ expert-led classes and Theater Talks, General Session keynotes with announcements, networking events and activities with peers and leaders. Save $500 when you register by July 23 for the Full Conference Pass. **Register today >>**

Introduction: Transforming Industries with NVIDIA Omniverse Enterprise
NVIDIA Omniverse Enterprise is an open platform built for virtual collaboration and real-time physically accurate simulation. Get an introduction to Omniverse and RTX technology, and learn how you can accelerate 3D design workflows. **Watch now >>**

What's New from Our Sponsors

Here Comes ZWCAD 2023: Efficient, User-Friendly, Connected
ZWSOFT, a provider of all-in-one CAx solutions, released its latest version of flagship 2D CAD product — ZWCAD 2023. **Read more >>**

What's New at Cadalyst

GIS Solutions: GIS Helps Build Transportation Equity
With government agencies across the U.S. placing a greater emphasis on transportation equity, GIS tools are playing key roles in identifying and achieving equity goals. Find out how on city is working with stakeholders to map strategies. *By Andrew G. Roe* **Read more >>**

Viewpoint: Businesses Are Getting Back to Work with Printers
How technical professionals are leveraging printers at home, the office, and on the job site. *By Jacob Hardin* **Read more >>**

CAD Cartoon

— By **Roger Penwill**   **Keep on Laughing!**

Free Resources

CAD Manager Chronicles

Introducing Cadalyst's new CAD Manager Chronicles video series from CAD Management Expert Robert Green. In this kickoff episode, Robert discusses how best to use elevator pitches to make sure your CAD team gets the hardware, software, and support they need to be successful. **Watch the video**
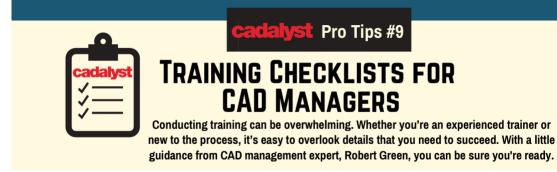

White Paper

Mobile vs. Desktop Workstations for CAD

The Evolving Role of the Mobile Workstation

It comes down to physics — a deskside can always outperform a mobile workstation. Cadalyst hardware expert, Alex Herrera, looks under the hood of both to break down the pros and cons of each form factor.

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Cadalyst Pro Tip:
Training Checklist for CAD Managers

Training is an essential task on every CAD manager's to-do list. But with all those little details to remember, preparing a clear, informative training session can ve overwhelming. Use this handy checklist from CAD management expert Robert Green to help you be successful.

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