Robert Green's CAD MANAGER
BACK-TO-BASICS BOOTCAMP
Focus on key skills for maximum success!
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Back-to-Basics Boot Camp: The Lowly Kickoff Meeting

Every new project should start with a kickoff meeting to set expectations for your project from start to finish for every team member.

I'm often asked what are the basic, simple actions a CAD manager can take to get better results. Of course, that question has any number of answers and is why I started my occasional Back-to-Basics Boot Camp series. Sometimes it seems like the most basic solutions are the ones first forgotten.

As an example, as CAD/BIM managers have become more concerned with new technology challenges facing them, it seems they've forgotten that secret weapon that can tip the managerial balance back in their favor — the project kickoff meeting. So, in this edition of the CAD Manager's Newsletter, I'll focus on how you can use this classic technique in new ways to help manage even tough new challenges in your environment. Here goes.

Image source: Mihai/stock.adobe.com.

Too Busy to be Organized?
There's an old question that asks, "Why do we have time to do things twice but not right the first time?" As a CAD manager I'd like to rewrite the question like this, "Why do we always start new projects by copying old screwed up projects and fix them later rather than starting fresh with the correct files in the first place?"

Well, the project kickoff meeting is how you, "Do things right the first time," and how to prevent bad project data from infecting new projects. It used to be that the CAD tools we used were known and it was simply a matter of getting users to agree to project standards, but now we have to think about much more, including:

- Remote office file synchronization,
- Travelling/remote workers,
- Cloud-based IT permissions issues,
- File format and versioning issues,
- Deliverable formats for clients,
- and more.

Why Kickoffs are So Important
In recent years, I've come to embrace project kickoffs more than ever for the following reasons:

Viral propagation of bad data. Given that new technology allows more people to copy more bad data faster than ever, the need for proper project kickoff is as much damage control as it is solid management.

More variables mean more errors. There are a lot more variables involved with executing a CAD/BIM project than there were even a few years ago, so starting out organized is more crucial than ever.

Error = Rework = Cost. Put financially, the price we'll pay for being disorganized on a given project causes more rework and higher costs.

I hate fixing bad work. Selfishly speaking, I hate fixing things that should have been right in the first place, so why not get it right up front?

Proper Project Kickoffs — Completion Backward
Whether the project kickoff meeting is conducted by an architectural or engineering project manager (with you attending as the "CAD/BIM representative) or whether you run your own kickoff meeting, the goal is still the same — to understand how the project will work from a CAD point of view.

Whenever I attend a kickoff meeting, I always ask the following questions — which you'll note are in backwards order from how a project normally runs — and strive to have them answered at the end of the meeting:

- What will the CAD/BIM deliverables be?
- What project tools do we need to meet deliverable requirements?
- Who's on the team and what training do they need?
- Who's in charge: CAD Manager, PM's, or senior management?
- What is the timeline?

My reasoning for insisting on a kickoff meeting using completion backward-thinking is not just to get the above parameters defined, but also to get everybody thinking about the project workflow. It's better to start a project in an organized way and move forward than it is to start with anarchy and try to organize it later.

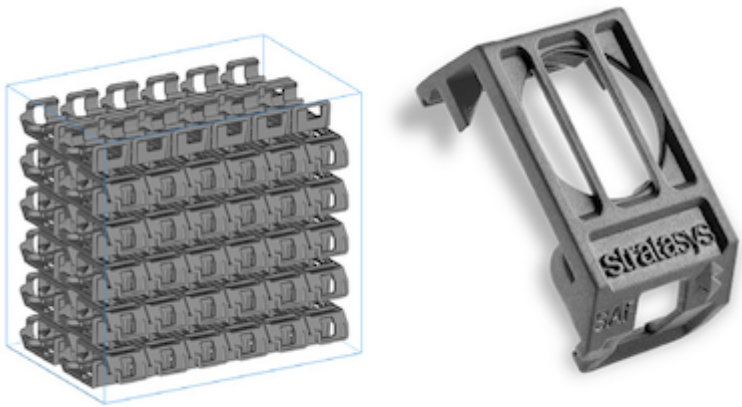
Next, find out the detailed questions you should ask. And, what's the most powerful result of this meeting? Find out! READ MORE >>

Tools & Resources

RAPID + TCT 2023 Tradeshow

May 2–4, 2023, Chicago, McCormick Place
Registration is now open to attend RAPID + TCT, which offers a collection of 3D printing technologies and insights from experts providing solutions to real-world challenges. The three-day event is produced by SME and Rapid News Publications. **Read more >>**

BIMCollab Now Works within Vectorworks
With this latest integration, users of Vectorworks will now have direct access to the BIMcollab issue management platform and will be able to comment and create issues on BIMcollab projects.
Read more >>



Case Study: Circuit Board Bracket from 3D Printer
Read how one company got around supply chain problems during Covid-19 manufacturing issues by using the H350 SAF 3D printer from Stratasys, saving money at the same time. **Read the study >>**

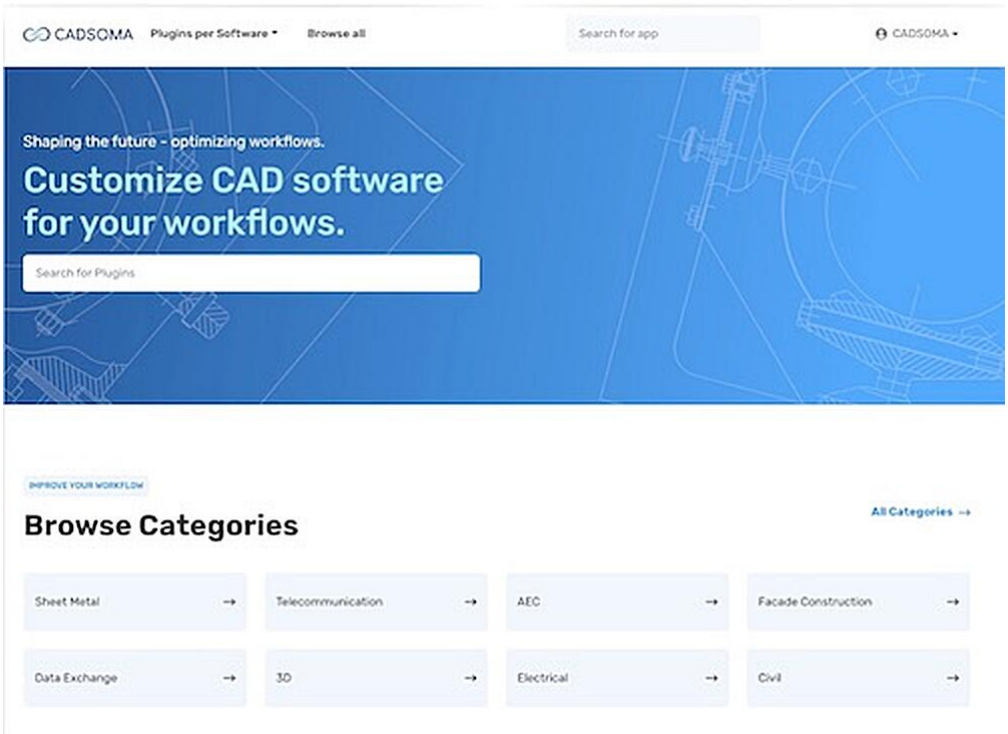
New BIM Tools for Architects and Designers

UFP-Edge, a manufacturer and supplier of siding, pattern, and trim products, has announced a partnership with BIMsmith, the product research platform for building professionals, for the development of new Building Information Modeling (BIM) tools for architects, engineers, and other construction professionals. The partnership includes a suite of new BIM product models for UFP-Edge products. These digital models contain key data representing both geometric and aesthetic properties of each product, allowing for early-stage design, according to the company. Each model integrates with Autodesk Revit. **Read more >>**

What's New from Our Sponsors

Digital Transformation: More Than a Shiny New Object

While AEC projects boom, the need for new ways to deliver continues to grow. Why must AEC firms look to technology to build success? Claire Rutkowski, Bentley Systems' CIO Champion, explains what makes a successful digital transformation: It's not just about the software. *By Claire Rutkowski, February 7, 2023*.
Read more >>



A Place for CAD Plugins

MERViSOFT GmbH, a company with more than 25 years of experience in the CAD sector, is launching a new independent marketplace,CADSOMA, for industry-specific CAD solutions, an app store for CAD plug-ins in April 2023. Find out more! *February 8, 2023*. **Read more >>**

What's New at Cadalyst

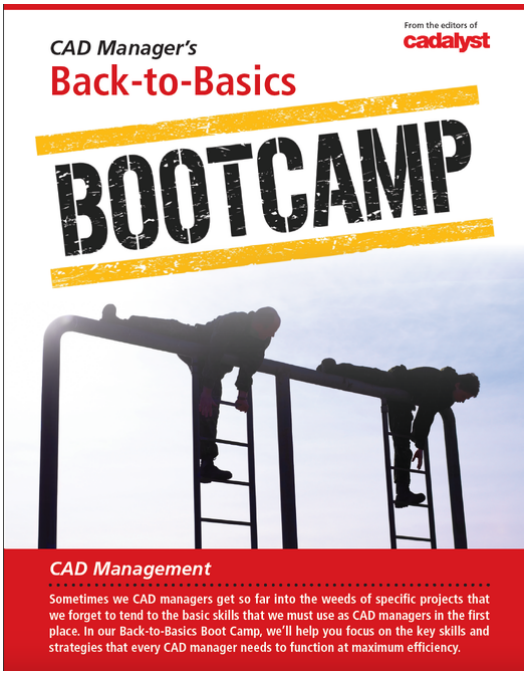
Herrera on Hardware: What's In a Name? Little to No Difference in a Processor's SKU Can Translate to a Big Impact on Performance, Part 2
High-power components like GPUs often have performance reined in to fit in more compact form factors. . . and you may not notice from the brand and SKU. *By Alex Herrera, January 26, 2023.* **Read more >>**

CAD Manager Column: What Management Really Wants
Approach your job in a way that meets management's expectations so they value you and your CAD team more. *By Robert Green, January 25, 2023.* **Read more >>**

CAD Cartoon

By Roger Penwill Keep 'em Laughin'!

Free Resources



White Paper
CAD Manager's Back-to-Basics Bootcamp

Sometimes CAD managers get so far into the weeds of specific projects that it's easy to forget the basic skills that are needed as CAD managers. In our Back-to-Basics Boot Camp, we'll help you focus on the key skills and strategies that every CAD manager needs to function at maximum efficiency.

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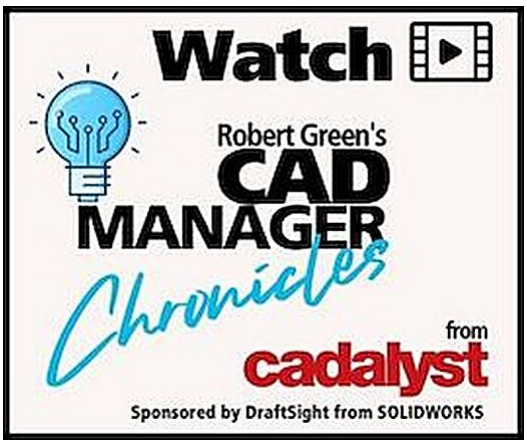


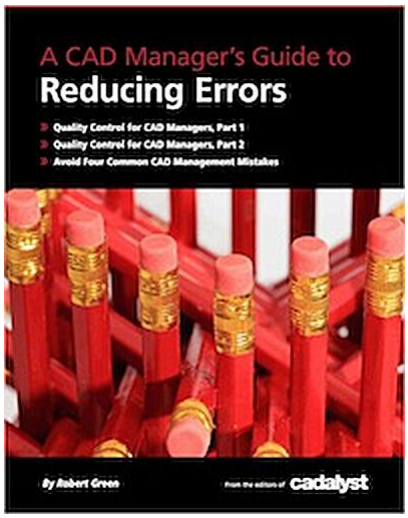
CAD Manager Chronicles Video Series

Episode 4: Making Upgrade Decisions

In this fourth episode of Cadalyst's CAD Chronicles, Robert Green discusses how best to make decisions around upgrading your software. When, what, how much,

which seats? Find out how to make the best decisions for your work place. *By Robert Green*

WATCH NOW



A CAD Manager's Guide to Reducing Errors

Whether your problems stem from users who ignore standards, a company culture that doesn't prioritize quality, or self-sabotaging management techniques, this guide will set you on the path to greater efficiency, fewer mistakes, and better results. *(Compiled from Robert Green's CAD Manager's Column.)*

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More Digital Design Solutions

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