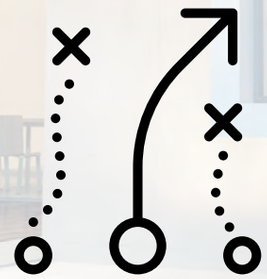
AUTODESK

Your BIM Action Plan

7 STEPS TO 3D DESIGN FOR SMALL ARCHITECTURE PRACTICES



Building Information Modeling (BIM) is more than just a snappy acronym for model-based design. It's an intelligent, 3D process that opens the door to efficiency and competitive advantages. Many leaders at small architecture practices have decided that the time is right for them to move to BIM and experience those business wins.

PUT BIM IN ACTION

Taking the path to greater efficiency

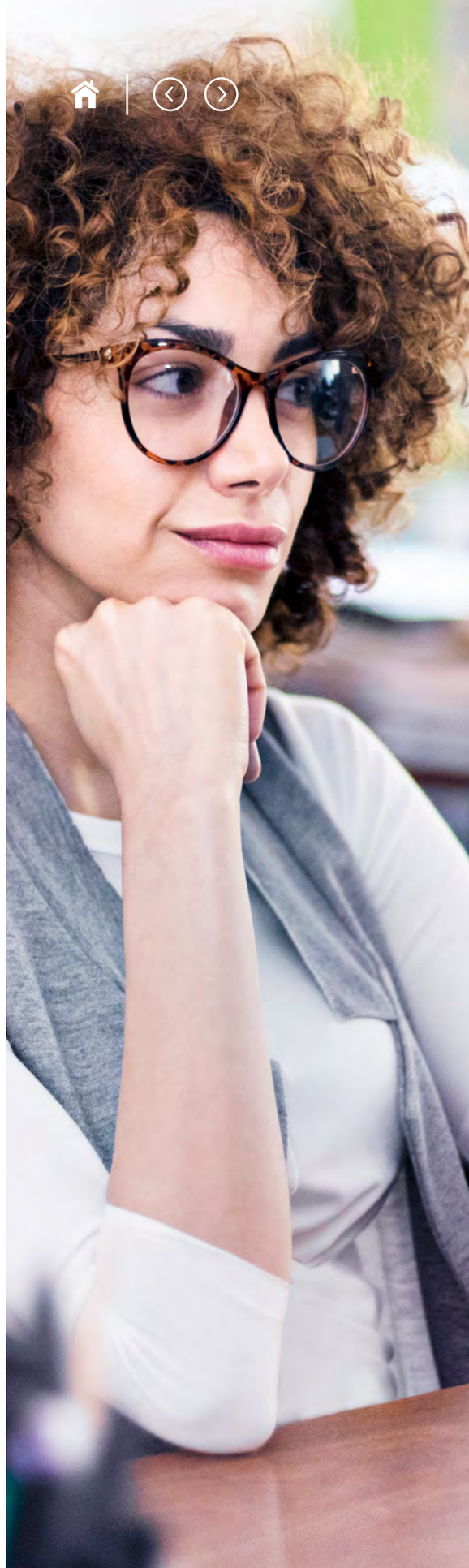
A model-based process transforms business at small firms in multiple ways. Significantly, the efficiency gains delivered by BIM help architects to take on and juggle more projects, so you thrive and operate more profitably when times are good. In addition, firms like yours can use the intelligent, 3D process to best larger architecture practices when contending for more complex projects. That's because BIM lets you compete as a bigger firm because you'll be producing the high-quality deliverables and visuals associated with larger practices.

Of course, when you bid for a project that includes a BIM requirement, you'll be well positioned to win the work. But you'll also be more resilient when times are tough since you'll be in the running for more projects.

What's held you back?

Some smaller firms have been reluctant to adopt 3D tools in part because of the time investment required. It does take time to learn new processes, but it can actually be less than you think. The timesaving action plan that follows can get you started.

At this point, the path to BIM is well-worn. Firms large and small have transformed the way they work – without too many headaches. You can benefit from their journeys with the following plan for small firms. As you'll discover, each step in the process is flexible, so you can adapt them to suit your preferences, schedule, and budget.



7 STEPS TO BIM

A Step-by-Step Plan

Step 1
Develop a game plan you can follow

Start your move by making a plan that accounts for the steps listed. As you develop your plan, take time to explore some of the basic ways that 3D design will change your processes. Talk to peers at other firms about what's different. For instance, with 2D tools, it can make sense to leave the details to the later stages of the design process. With models, you may need to include more detail in the early stages of the process – but that's not necessarily an inefficiency, because the intelligence of the process makes applying changes to details much faster.

Step 2
Explore your new toolbox

To get started, you'll need training. You'll find a wealth of training resources available online at no cost. But if you do have the time, consider instructor-led training. While not essential to success, you may learn more skills more quickly in a structured class led by an instructor. You'll also be less likely to pick up inefficient habits. You can easily augment instructor-led training with other resources.

The chart below ranks available resources; each can play a useful role:

GOOD

Online Revit user forums and BIM-focused LinkedIn communities; these resources are good for asking questions and getting answers from peers.

BETTER

Autodesk University Online class recordings, Autodesk Design Academy, Autodesk Knowledge Network, YouTube, and Lynda.com; these resources provide online classes and tutorials.

BEST

Instructor-led training by a reseller or Authorised Training Center; you'll get started fast with help from an experienced instructor.

Step 3
Choose the right pilot project

Most firms transition to 3D design with a pilot project rather than by shifting all new work at once. The first step is to choose that pilot project. Your largest, most complex new job might be an ideal candidate for BIM – but not for your pilot. Instead, choose a project that's highly typical for your firm. It should also have a reasonable timeline. With a familiar project, you can focus on learning new tools; you already know what success looks like at every stage of a typical project. If you have time, you can even recreate a project that you've already completed in 2D using BIM tools.

For a step-by-step guide and checklist of what you need to consider on your pilot, download the **BIM Deployment Workbook.**

"Pick a pilot project type that you and your firm have mastered. If that's a library or even a single-family home, great … We didn't bite off too much with our first BIM project, and it launched us into the BIM world very successfully."

Architect Jay Martin, Miller Hull Partnership

Step 4
Set a reasonable goal for your first project

BIM opens a world of possibilities. You can explore building performance, create stunning visualisations, and offer more design alternatives to clients in less time. But as you progress in your first project, focus on developing and delivering your contract documents. A more ambitious initial goal could be overwhelming or inefficient. After you create a couple of sets of contract documents, you'll be ready to take advantage of more project-enhancing benefits.

Step 5
Dive in and start swimming

When you've had a little basic training, start modelling your new project. You could even get started with almost no advance training – just follow online training for each step in the process. While not an ideal way to start, it's better than trying to master model-based design before even starting a project. You'll gain more confidence by enhancing a little basic training with real experience than by taking several tutorials that cover the same skill without applying what you learn.

Step 6
Use existing content

Consider relying heavily on out-of-the-box standards as you get started. You may not love how portions of your design models look. But you'll avoid the frustration of trying to control every aspect of your process as you learn a new tool. Creating standards for models that match your preferences will take much less time on later projects.

Step 7
Celebrate your success

After you deliver your first BIM project, celebrate! You've taken the first step toward a more efficient, powerful design process. Using new tools and more intelligent data, you designed a project and delivered the contract documents. Take a moment to reflect on what went well. Many architects new to the process immediately like the fact that they can make changes so quickly to established models. Some even find that this offsets a portion of the time invested in learning as early as the first couple of projects.

Assess and improve

You'll likely note a few things that could have gone better. Plan to spend a few hours focusing on those areas before your next project. For instance, you might have found it particularly frustrating to model doors and windows. Review online tutorials that walk you through those topics. You'll be glad you did as you tackle the next project.

GET STARTED

A new era of productivity

On the path to designing with intelligent models, the most important step is the first one. You can take it for little or no upfront cost. The emergence of subscription-based software access plans makes that possible. Take Revit LT™ building design software from Autodesk, as an example. It's ideally suited to the needs of smaller firms. It brings intelligent, 3D models into your design process and produces high-quality documents. You can get started with a free trial, and then the monthly subscription fee is £65 or €75, with lower pricing available for longer commitments. Revit LT Suite subscriptions include AutoCAD® LT design and documentation software, so you can keep using it for tasks and projects where you prefer to use 2D tools.

GET STARTED

Your peers at small firms find that Revit LT software provides what they need to deliver exceptional designs and gain a competitive edge.

> *"We use Revit LT and it really works for us because we work at the smaller end of the market. We're able to use more adventurous designs for our market knowing that we can resolve problems before we get on site … we do market heavily the fact that we work in 3D … we've won lots of work off the basis of 3D images."* Vanessa Bizzell, Owner and Founder of Bluemouse Ltd in Sheffield, UK

Put your BIM implementation plan into action today. After just a few projects, you'll likely start seeing the productivity, efficiency, and client satisfaction gains that have led so many of your peers to make intelligent, 3D models central to the way they work.

Ready to get step up to BIM?
Make the move to 3D BIM software
with **Revit LT.**