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Centex Homes

Autodesk Buzzsaw Reduces Costs and Speeds the Design Process

Centex Homes, based in Dallas, Texas, is one of the largest multimarket, single-family home builders in the United States. With numerous offices nationwide, the company felt it was important to find an effective means of online collaboration. They adopted **Autodesk® Buzzsaw™**, which enables them to store and share project drawings, documents, and information in a central location. Using Autodesk Buzzsaw for collaboration has expedited the design process and eliminated the need for travel. As a result, Centex has improved project management at all levels and achieved a new level of efficiency and productivity.



Since Centex adopted Autodesk Buzzsaw, the architect simply has to pull up the drawings and do the necessary redlining locally. Nobody has to travel anywhere!

Kevin Scott
Vice President
of Architecture
and Design
Centex Homes

The Situation

Centex Homes, one of the nation's largest multi-market, single-family home developers in the United States, is the only company to rank among the top U.S. homebuilders for each of the last 30 years. Based in Dallas, Texas, Centex builds and sells homes in more than 60 metropolitan markets in 19 states and the District of Columbia. Recognized as the most profitable homebuilder in the nation, Centex built approximately 25,000 new homes in 2001.

The Challenge

With six regional offices, 50 divisional offices, and dozens of consultants and subcontractors, one of the principal challenges facing Centex's architectural services division is ensuring effective communication between all parties. "Centex recently deployed new architectural drafting software to some 160 people within the company," said Kevin Scott, Vice President of Architecture and Design at Centex Homes. "But we really had no effective tool for online collaboration. That was a primary concern for us."

Architectural designs for Centex properties are produced both in-house and by outside contractors. The process of creating, reviewing, and modifying drawings is extremely paper intensive and time consuming. Whether designs are created internally or externally, the process demands extensive collaboration, often requiring architects to make multiple trips to a division office before a design is finalized.

"The design work for a new community is usually created through the regional offices, while the working drawings are developed by the divisions," said Scott. "In this manner, we maintain consultant/client relationships even within the company." Centex needed an effective tool to help facilitate communication and collaboration between all the offices, as well as outside sources, including architects, consultants, and subcontractors.

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The Solution

By adopting the Autodesk Buzzsaw service—which enables organizations to securely store and share project drawings, documents, and information in a central location—Centex has improved project management at all levels.

The main role of the architectural services department at Centex's corporate office is to assist the regions and, through the regions, the divisions by providing software, training, standards, and methods. Keeping everyone informed about upgrades and changes was a tremendous challenge. "We needed someplace that we could use as a centralized storage area and communications platform," said Scott. "Autodesk Buzzsaw is outside the corporate firewall, so all of our consultants have access to it. Everybody who is on board with a project can use it just like an Internet newsgroup. Not only does everyone have access to updates, they can easily share information, ask questions, and send us their wish lists for future versions."

Autodesk Buzzsaw has enabled Centex to expedite the design process at both the regional and divisional levels. Previously, the process for designing a new project entailed a regional architect spending a week or more at the divisional office creating the initial design. After the division reviewed the design, the architect would have to schedule a return trip to make modifications. Kevin Scott explains: "If it's a brand new product, the architect may have to spend only a day or two at the division, then all other reviews

and modifications can be handled online. And, if it's a continuation of an existing product, they can simply use Autodesk Buzzsaw to collaborate, and eliminate the need to travel altogether."

The paper-intensive, time-consuming design process was only compounded in the working drawing phase. The working drawings are produced by the division, but compliance verification has to be done by the regional architects. This requires yet another trip to the division. "Talk about a process tailor-made for Autodesk Buzzsaw," said Scott. "Since Centex adopted Autodesk Buzzsaw, the architect simply has to pull up the drawings and do the necessary red-lining locally. Nobody has to travel anywhere!"

The Result

Since implementing Autodesk Buzzsaw, Centex has realized tremendous improvements in communication between the corporate office, the regional and divisional offices, and outside resources. Additionally, by reducing or eliminating the need for face-to-face collaboration between regional architects and division offices, Autodesk Buzzsaw has helped the company measurably reduce travel costs and speed the design process by 25 to 30 percent. "Across the board, Autodesk Buzzsaw is probably the most effective, error-free, and user-friendly tool that we have," said Kevin Scott. "It's taken us to a whole new level of efficiency and productivity."



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