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AvalonBay Communities

Autodesk Buzzsaw Keeps Design and Construction Partners Informed and Current on Design Standards

Executives of AvalonBay Communities, Inc., a real-estate investment trust headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, found that they were spending too much time updating and distributing updated information to their project teams. With as many as 25 design projects in the works at any given time, their paper-based system was expensive and often led to project delays. After exploring several options, AvalonBay chose **Autodesk® Buzzsaw™** as a solution. Now team members can get the information they need, whenever they need it. The company has eliminated delivery costs, and teams are collaborating more successfully than ever before.



Autodesk Buzzsaw is being used not only to facilitate communication among team members working on the same project, but also to begin dialogs that extend knowledge sharing across individual projects.

Joe Demshar
Director of Design,
AvalonBay Communities, Inc.

The Situation

A real-estate investment trust headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, AvalonBay Communities, Inc., develops and manages luxury apartment buildings in some of the most desirable areas of the United States. With more than 150 apartment communities in supply-constrained markets such as Manhattan and San Francisco, AvalonBay has a strong presence in locations where luxury apartment living meshes well with the high-energy lifestyles of urban professionals. "We target people who rent by choice in areas with diverse, vibrant economies," says Joe Demshar, AvalonBay's Director of Design. "Though building in these areas is sometimes challenging due to limited space and tough regulations, we have the experience needed to reap the rewards of adding new properties in hot markets."

The Challenge

As AvalonBay expands, it becomes critical that the firm share design standards and information with its numerous partners in the design and construction industries. Demshar and his assistant found that they were devoting increasing amounts of time to maintaining and sending out binders with the latest information to architects, engineers, and contractors. "Managing a paper-based library of design standards and ensuring that the latest information was in the hands of the people who needed it was an immense task," says Demshar. He added that, "We have as many as 25 new communities in design or construction at any given time. If a binder was misplaced or outdated, I would get a call. My assistant and I were constantly having to copy and courier overnight our design standards in order to get questions answered and avoid project delays."

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The Solution

Demshar saw online project management tools as a means of storing and sharing AvalonBay's design standards and other project information.

After exploring several options, he selected Autodesk Buzzsaw. "Autodesk Buzzsaw allowed me to set up an online library of design standards where the lessons we've learned as a company can be posted. Now no matter where our design teams are located, they have instant access to the up-to-date information I need them to have. Though it's easy to use and navigate, Autodesk Buzzsaw is really a very sophisticated means of sharing information." Now that all of AvalonBay's architectural and engineering consultants and in-house design and development staff are using Autodesk Buzzsaw to access the latest information, they are also beginning to use it to drive communication and collaboration. "As we have begun to establish Autodesk Buzzsaw sites dedicated to specific projects," says Demshar, "it is being used not only to facilitate communication among team members working on the same project but also to begin dialogs that extend knowledge sharing across individual projects."

The Result: Saving Time and Enabling Collaboration

"Having a real-time library of information is a tremendous time-saver for my assistant and me," says Demshar. "Autodesk Buzzsaw has definitely reduced the frustration associated with managing our library of design standards. Now that all relevant project documents are on the Web, we're no longer spending our time sending out the latest information, and we've eliminated the costs of delivering that information to our various project locations." In addition to the fact that Autodesk Buzzsaw meets his expectations for document storage and sharing, Demshar sees growing use of the collaboration element of Autodesk Buzzsaw: "The architects and engineers we work with are beginning to use Autodesk Buzzsaw to collaborate with each other, and I haven't had to devote any time encouraging or managing that process. They see the potential and how easy it is to use, and enthusiasm for exploiting that potential seems to have naturally taken root."

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