

ARCHITECTURAL & ENGINEERING

Digitally Driving Business Outcomes

Part 4: Enabling Your Workforce
A Five-Part Series



The last two years of dramatic change driven by the global COVID-19 pandemic has placed a spotlight on key business outcomes and accelerated Digital Transformation in Architecture and Engineering (A&E) firms. Each of these outcomes, coupled with how people and processes can be empowered digitally through the application of technologies, will be explored in this five-part series for firms. The series aims to provide insights into the five critical business outcomes:

1. Understanding Your Customer;

2. Optimizing Your Business;

3. Protecting Your Digital Assets;

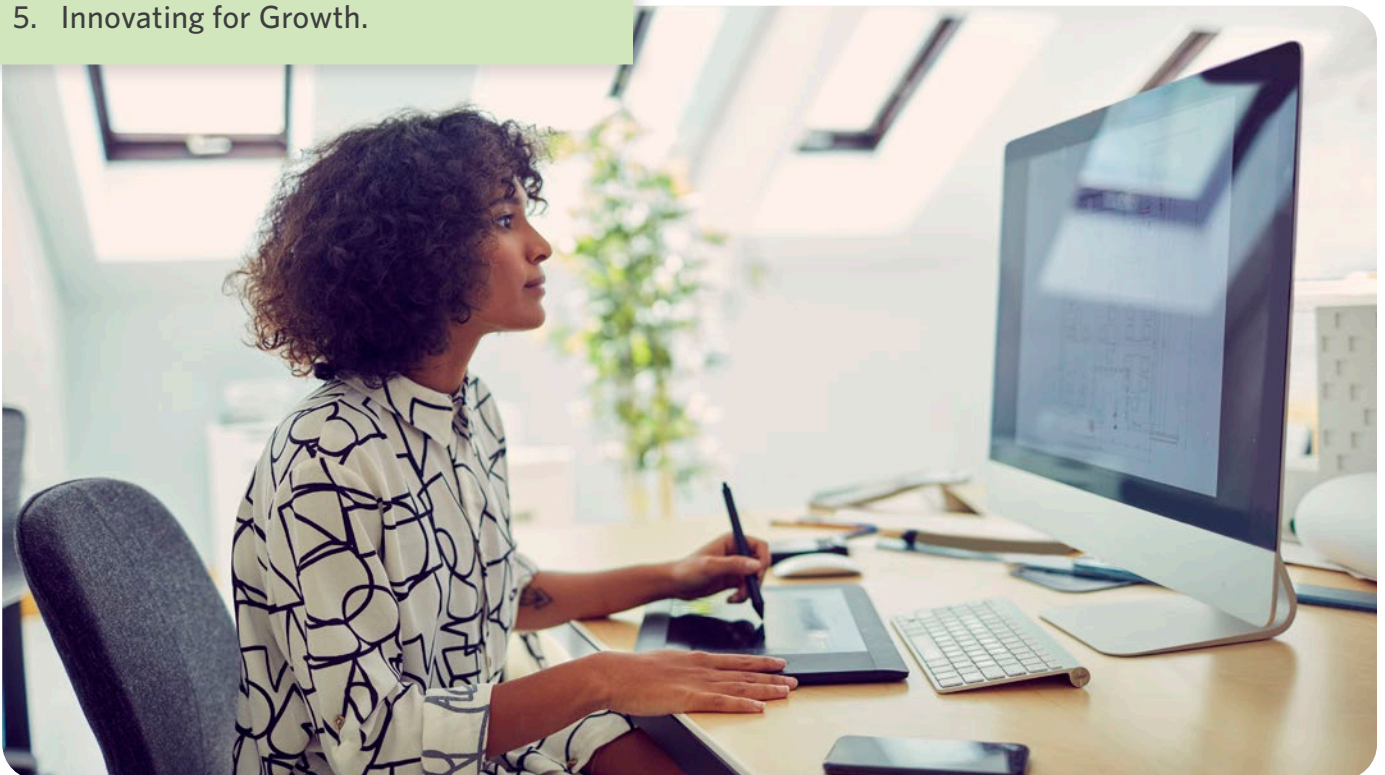
4. Enabling Your Workforce; and

5. Innovating for Growth.

Part 4: Enabling Your Workforce

A&E firms must aspire further for relevancy to deliver value to customers in a way that improves business performance and enables them to compete effectively. As A&E firms continue to pivot to a more future-friendly firm, building a progressive, modern, and relevant culture to address both the workforce and its need to serve younger clients are key themes. According to the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) publication, it was reported that 50% of experienced engineers would retire over the course of the next three years.¹ Currently, with an industry fueled by new talent, A&E firms must continue to focus on enabling their workforce with the culture and tools necessary to succeed.

Creating a culture that is rooted in the firm's mission, but also appeals to the younger workforce hearts and minds, will attract and retain top talent. Key themes such as sustainability, transparency, purpose, and growth resonate as younger employees dismiss legacy practices and strive for more creative and flexible approaches to their work. Not only has a younger workforce required A&E firms to approach a different tomorrow, but the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the need to navigate and adopt new business models. Many A&E firms are rethinking their policies,



practices, and experiences, and given the disruption of the pandemic, many are revising business strategies and how to be more deliberate about their execution.

Technology is fundamental to a firm's performance. Digital technologies and solutions are fundamental to a firm's growth. With much of the workforce now remote, firms will need powerful technologies to maintain high levels of productivity and efficiency, enabling architects, designers, and engineers with the ability to work from anywhere. The remote workforce needs to achieve a seamless workflow and quickly interact and iterate renders using advanced 3D design and visualization software.

The simplicity and flexibility of digital solutions like GPU (graphic processing unit) virtual workstations in the cloud provides a virtual user experience without the requirement of a physical workstation, enabling users to easily collaborate with their colleagues and enhance networks from any location. These virtual stations are cost-effective, requiring the firm to only pay what is needed. With the combined GPU and CPU (central processing unit) processing units of these workstations, users can run graphic-intensive applications – all in the cloud – with no disruption to performance, providing the user with ultimate flexibility to work-on-the-go.

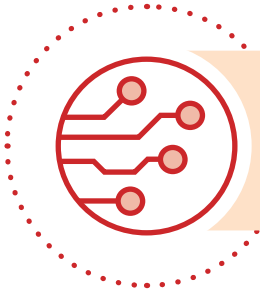
With the design process being iterative and complex, firms need strong collaboration platforms to work with multiple

entities from various locations at any given time, and efficiency will be paramount. By leveraging centralized virtual cloud-based streaming technologies, users can edit and render designs in real-time, which positively impacts the speed cycle of the design work and eliminates workflow redundancies.

Extended reality (XR) technologies offer users and their clients the ability to experience the design in an immersive virtual reality. These immersive solutions provide an entirely new way to experience a design, consequently, enabling users to make proactive decisions and apply productive and cost-efficient changes pre-construction.



With high-powered virtual workstations and the right collaborative and innovative technologies, A&E firms are empowering their workforce with an agile workspace and the flexible tools and resources needed to meet both their needs and those of their clients.



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We Can Guide You Forward



Scott Duda, CPA
Partner, Assurance Services
Professional Services Industry Practice Leader
919.782.1040
sduda@cbh.com



Robert (Bob) Misch, PMP
Partner, Digital Advisory
Business Strategy & Digital Transformation
703.548.8346
bob.misch@cbh.com

Resource:

1. Greengard. "As Veteran Engineers Retire Who Will Fill the Gap," *Engineering, Inc.*, July/August 2018, pages 11-15. <https://docs.acec.org/pub/9f3789be-c14e-0ded-12be-4cffba46d353>

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