

A COMPREHENSIVE CLOUD RESPONSE

Steinberg Hart Transforms Network Connectivity to Foster Improved Collaboration, Creativity and Connections



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Best known for its design of structures that connect with community, Steinberg Hart has become an internationally recognized name. California projects such as the two-tower MIRO mixed-use residential project in downtown San Jose and the 200-room boutique Thompson Hollywood Hotel in Los Angeles reinforce that reputation.

The full-service architecture firm achieves these creative yet practical visions with considerable help from technology for inspiration and visual interpretation as well as communication of those ideas.

When technology advancements threatened to slow the creative and collaborative process, the company partnered with U.S. CAD to ensure platforms and applications continued to enable, not inhibit, innovation.

NETWORK EVOLUTION

The rapid evolution of BIM and interoffice collaboration in the last five years has been a steep learning curve for many in the industry including Steinberg Hart.

Gautam R. Shenoy joined Steinberg Hart as the BIM/VDC Director in 2016

to help resolve the emerging disconnects. “At the time, a majority of project data was shared across a distributed team located in multiple offices, primarily in California. At the time, communication was based on a wide-area network (WAN) and local area network (LAN), which meant the status of projects and even the timeliness of data shared was compromised between offices because of speed limitations.”

One of Shenoy’s first tasks was to expand the use of Revit Server. “We scaled up the capability of the servers and the number of projects that were hosted,” he adds.

As a foundational tool for work sharing, Revit Server supported project collaboration across a WAN. It brings models together from Revit Architecture, Revit Structure, Revit MEP, and Autodesk Revit. Through it, multiple team members can access and modify models at the same time.

Shenoy’s next step was to standardize and digitize interoffice collaboration for markups and project tracking. He confirms, “It was very common at the time for traditional designers and directors mark-up drawings on paper. It took about 4-6 months to shift that paradigm to the digital environment.”

THE CLOUD CONNECT

By early 2019, Steinberg Hart needed to prepare for another technology shift that would require some outside expertise.

“One of the tectonic shifts in our practice has been the transition from network-based project environments to



the cloud,” Shenoy explains. “Starting in early 2019, we were seeing a growing demand to use Autodesk BIM 360 web-based applications to streamline communication from our customers and partners. While we had the BIM 360 platform, we had some growing pains with regard to application of it. We did not have the expertise or required network infrastructure on the front end to facilitate the transition.”

Undaunted, he reached out to long-time colleague, Precious Yong, Territory Account Manager and her associate, Nathan Lamont, Director of Sales, with U.S. CAD. Shenoy adds, “I’ve known and trusted Precious for 15+ years. One of the things that I’ve always appreciated about the U.S. CAD people is that they are proactive about keeping in touch and sharing insight—and it’s a human connection, not an email or 800 number.”

He relied on that connection to help facilitate the enterprise-wide transition to BIM 360. Lamont and Shenoy reviewed Steinberg Hart’s applications and processes and then developed a plan to scale the company’s network to the cloud.

“It’s great that U.S. CAD already fully

understands the Autodesk licensing procedures, so they were able to help us bring on more seats with ease,” Shenoy says. “More importantly, they were able to achieve this scale-up without a break in our ongoing work continuity. It’s been extremely seamless with no lags in the process.”

Once accessibility was attained, Shenoy and his U.S. CAD partners set out to help design teams become proficient and efficient on the BIM 360 platform.

A MEASURED APPROACH

In every instance, the team members feel rejuvenated. With their better understanding of BIM 360 they spend more time on solving project related issues and less time figuring out how to use the platform.

U.S. CAD training and education plans are custom developed to suit a company's unique processes, platforms and people.

"U.S. CAD is particularly strong in delivering effective change management training procedures and practices to help team members become proficient on more advanced platforms with speed and clarity," Shenoy says. "It's a very measured methodology."

In this instance, Shenoy and Lamont took a project-by-project approach, training individual project teams, rather than the entire office. The first training exercise met with a Los Angeles-based team."

During this two-hour long class, U.S. CAD technical experts stepped

through tools and techniques within the BIM 360 platform that team members could then easily apply to their specific projects, once they returned to their desks.

"We hit the ground running in these sessions because it's truly on-the-project learning," confirms Shenoy. When asked why the training is customized to the specific project, Shenoy believes the benefits are twofold. One it's the best way to build acceptance and therefore encourage adoption and two, every project has unique specifications.

"One of the things that can get lost in today's digital conversation is the variety of project delivery procurement systems," says Shenoy.

A design/build has a completely different set of parameters and requirements as compared to a design/bid/build. As well there are unique regulatory agency requirements. Drawing sets have to be put together with different levels and degrees of completion to meet the criteria of that specific job.

He continues, "Our platform, in this case BIM 360, must be able to provide a path of least resistance to meet our milestones and deadlines."

Shenoy says the feedback after a training session has been very positive. "In every instance, the team members feel rejuvenated. With their better understanding of BIM 360 they spend more time on solving project related issues and less time figuring out how to use the platform."

ENGAGED AND CONFIDENCE

Our people are meeting benchmarks on a timely basis. And we're seeing more engagement.

The broad adoption of BIM 360 is evidence of a growing confidence in the tools and the platform. When Steinberg Hart teamed with U.S. CAD in 2019, the company had one project on BIM 360. Today, they have 10. As well, the company has jumped from 5 seats to 75 seats.

"Our people are meeting benchmarks on a timely basis," Shenoy adds. "And we're seeing more engagement. For example, our project managers are typically platform agnostic, but in the last six months, they have begun to ask whether they should use BIM 360. To me, that awareness shows that they understand the potential advantages."

The next training session will focus on features and functionality of computational design. For this area, U.S. CAD will help in identifying customized modules to develop and foster learning for each level of capability: new, experienced and advanced.

Current events such as the coronavirus pandemic, are shaping new directions for the Steinberg Hart team to communication and collaborate.

Shenoy confirms, "For so long, everyone assumed communication through

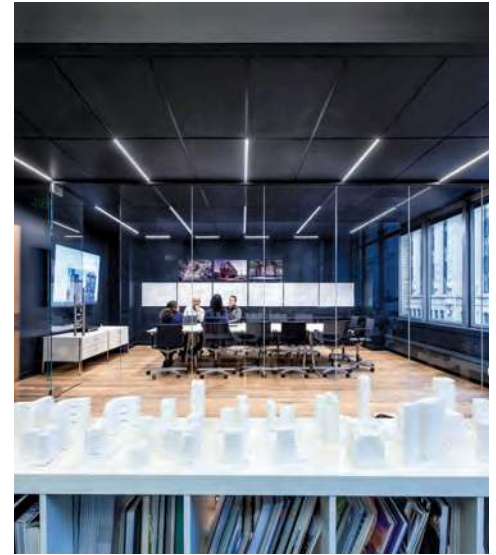


email as the norm. But now, with social distancing, video conferencing has become one of the most important tools to keep the conversation going. The physical distance has made us more present and engaged in the moment, which has sparked the need to explore technology to bring us together, even closer.”

He believes that from a platform standpoint, the shift to virtual engagement creates an even greater need for cloud-based solutions that allow all team members to work in real time. Shenoy adds, “It’s my team’s responsibility to

keep those connections growing—with help from U.S. CAD.”

When asked to summarize the U.S. CAD relationship, Shenoy concludes, “They’ve been able to supply us with these tools, but, more importantly, the expertise and support for us to grow the level of proficiency of our team members. One of the things I like about U.S. CAD practices is that we’re not a client. It’s always been an engaging and rewarding partnership. They’re a huge differentiator for how we create, collaborate and connect.”



ABOUT STEINBERG HART

From the foundation established in 1953 by Silicon Valley architecture pioneer Goodwin Steinberg, FAIA, and through leadership of Chairman Rob Steinberg and current President and CEO David Hart, AIA, Steinberg Hart has built a progressive portfolio of award-winning projects spanning multiple continents and diverse sectors. Today, Steinberg Hart is headquartered in Los Angeles, California with offices San Jose, San Francisco and San Diego, California, as well as New York City, New York, Austin, Texas, and Shanghai, China. The 135-person firm specializes in education, residential, urban mixed-use, hospitality, civic, and commercial office projects.

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