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## Huntsman Architectural Group Expands Business with Autodesk Revit

### Cost-Effective Autodesk Revit Helps Architectural Firm Expand into Space Planning and Lease Management

Huntsman Architectural Group is a 23-year-old San Francisco Bay Area company with a 60-member staff, equally divided between architects and interior designers. Its business is primarily commercial and corporate interiors, including historic renovations, seismic retrofits and facility assessments. According to Huntsman, its staff needed a better tool to handle its facilities and leasing management.



*"The rendering and leasing and facilities functionality of Revit has proven to be invaluable. With the services and quality of work we provide, Revit enables us to eliminate a CAD programmer and fully utilize our administrative staff, and it enables us to expand our business into life-cycle management and provide better service to our clients."*

—Nick Modroo,  
Designer for Huntsman  
Architectural Group

#### A Landmark High-Rise: A Leasing Challenge

One of Huntsman's clients owns and manages a landmark high-rise in San Francisco that has been renovated several times over the past 70 years. Being a historic structure, the building consists of unique floor plates that make leasing more challenging than in a modern office building. Modroo explains, "because they aren't leasing entire floors, an office will be leased, while another office lease will expire." Huntsman needed a top-down system to manage all the bits and pieces of information and visualize it in a way that was not possible with a spreadsheet.

Using the Autodesk® Revit® building information modeler and AutoCAD® software, "we've done exploded 3D isometrics of the whole building with different suites colored different ways depending on when the lease is coming up," says Modroo. With Revit he was also able to create sheets that show which areas of the building had been equipped with sprinklers.

#### Saving Money and Time with Less Customization

But how do you provide extra bells and whistles for a job and still hold down customization

expenses? Autodesk Revit addressed both problems. "Customization overhead was much lower than what we saw with any other product on the market," says Modroo. It turned out that anybody in his office with basic Revit skills could make new content for the program. "It doesn't require a full-time CAD programmer." For example, Revit makes it easy to create an annotation family that pulls information from a room schedule or building model. By comparison, continues Modroo, "had we gone with a standard FM-type software, it would have required custom programming to get the same result."

Using other software solutions would have posed an expensive dilemma for Huntsman. Whenever a client wanted to track a new attribute or see building information in a different way, the design team would have to custom-code it on the spot (unless they had magically anticipated all "surprise" feature requests in advance). Ad-hoc coding is costly enough in itself, but wait, there's more! All the customization has to be redone when a new version of the software comes out, Modroo explains: "it becomes a giant money pit. Autodesk Revit is not only our competitive advantage but has saved us money and most importantly, time."

# Huntsman Architectural Group

## Better Renderings, Less Time

Although Huntsman owned rendering software packages before acquiring Autodesk Revit, Modroo conceded “designers spent a tremendous amount of time to achieve a basic level of detail.”

Revit, on the other hand, provides fluidity and parametric updating that allow design changes to be made quickly. As a result, designers can spend more time making the image look good, tweaking the surfaces, and moving the views around. “We end up with better renderings in less time.”

## Helping a Client Sell Leases

In another part of San Francisco, Huntsman is doing a seismic upgrade to an older brick building and putting in a flashy new lobby. When the owners wanted to see a couple of alternatives to the original scheme for the lobby, Modroo quickly created a Revit model and rendered the requested changes, which were approved. Going the extra mile, he

then formatted the new scheme into a marketing package for the building’s leasing manager. The manager, in turn, can use the drawings to generate tenant interest in the space before they can actually tour the renovated building.

## Helping End-Users Understand

At a historical correction facility, Huntsman was tasked with retrofitting several historic buildings used as administrative and education centers. The original structure consisted of five buildings that had become interconnected over a period of 150 years. Each building has different floor heights that, not surprisingly, don’t line up with each other. The client agency requested a model to assist the end users in understanding the design. “We quickly made a model of the building in Revit,” Modroo says, “rendered the various floors for their different uses, and created a cutaway 3D view.” Generating the model in Revit took less than half the time it would take using any other CAD

software, according to Modroo. “Ever since then, we have been developing more study models in Revit.”

## Intuitive Interface Saves Money

Data entry in Autodesk Revit is straightforward and requires no special training or programming. Huntsman often uses its administrative staff to enter data into a Revit project—information such as leasing dates and terms, tenant names, contact information, move-in dates, and right of renewal—without having to invest in product training. “Anybody who understands how to work with a spreadsheet could do the data entry,” says Modroo. The economic advantage of having an easy-to-use data entry interface was not lost on the accounting department. Delegating data entry to administrative staff frees up the more expensive time of designers and project managers and thus saves Huntsman valuable productivity time.

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