PROJECT COLLABORATION SOFTWARE

By Dave Burstein, P.E.

Here are some links to project collaboration software that is commonly used in A/E firms:

Newforma
http://www.newforma.com/

M-files
http://www.m-files.com/en/architecture-engineering-construction

Project Trek
http://www.axium.com/projecttrek/about-project-trek-software.aspx

CadacOrganice (A/E app using Sharepoint)
http://www.cadac.com/organice/en/solutions/Pages/default.aspx

GamePlan
http://www.gameplancloud.com/solutions/architects-and-engineers/

Buzzsaw
http://www.autodesk.com/products/buzzsaw/overview

Wetransfer
https://www.wetransfer.com/

Kona
https://www.kona.com/welcome/

We'd love to hear your experiences with these or other collaboration software products. Send your comments to Dave Burstein at *dburstein@psmj.com*. ●

4 RULES FOR WORKING FROM HOME

By David Whitemyer, AIA

A few years ago I took a stab at freelancing. Working from home, I did project management, writing, and taught a college course. Now, back to work as an employee, I'm very fortunate that my boss allows me to work from home 1-2 days a week, provided there's no meetings or travel requiring me to be in the office.

These 1-2 days per week save me 3-6 hours of commuting time (plus adding years to my life by avoiding the stress of traffic), but working from home also has its challenges and stresses.

If you or any of your team members are considering working from home—or already are—make sure these rules are being followed. They'll help keep you on track, showing your supervisors and firm owners that working from home does, in fact, work. It's not all goofing around.

1. Hide Away
I set up shabby-chic office space in the upstairs of a small barn. It's cold in the winter and hot in the summer, but it allows me a secluded place that blocks the distractions and temptations from being at home.

If possible, set up your office in a separate room—don't work in the middle of the dining table—where you can close the door. Bring water and snacks with you so that you're not frequently getting up to wander into the kitchen.

2. Structure Your Breaks
When I first started freelancing from home, I frequently stopped working to do things like vacuum the house, put a meal in the Crockpot, or browse my social media. These breaks destroy the flow of concentrated work. If you know that you'll want to take care of a few chores while working from home, clearly schedule them into your day. Block them on your calendar! The same goes for lunchtime. If you typically take an hour for lunch, schedule it!

3. Always Be Available
Coworkers and supervisors may be resentful if you're working from home in your slippers while they're stuck in the office, or they may not believe you're working as hard as you say. So prove them wrong. Make sure that you are always available and communicative.

If your phone rings and it's someone from the office, answer it. This is no different than if you were in the office and a coworker stopped by your desk to ask a question. Also, if you have a different home phone number than office number, make sure that your clients know how to contact you.

4. Start Early or Work Late
On the days I work from home, I tend to get up around 4:30 AM, make coffee, and sit down at my desk. I can get about two hours of work done, in the quiet dark, before the rest of the family wakes up and starts making commotion.

This extra time in the morning allows me a, sort of, Distraction Pass for later in the day, in case I want to add in an extra non-work chore or run an errand. Of course, not everyone is a morning person. If you're a night owl, consider adding a few hours to your work after everyone is tucked in bed. ●