WHY INVEST IN TRAINING?
A look into CAD training ROI

Investments in sophisticated CAD software are made to help companies produce higher quality products in less time, with fewer resources, and at a lesser cost. The return on investment (ROI) from these investments varies depending on the quality of their implementation, including establishing standards and end-user training. Training is too often the first line item erased from the annual budget of companies seeking to reduce cost. Consider this simple principle:

"An organization's staff is where they are currently, in terms of competence and success, in direct relationship to what they know and how well they apply what they know." (D. Wetmore)

CAD software is not 100% intuitive (although it's getting better every year) and new releases come out each year with more productivity enhancing features and functionality that can completely change daily workflows and procedures. Without formal end-user training, not only is an organization jeopardizing the productivity of its employees, the organization is diminishing all ROI on investments that were made to increase profitability in the first place. It's really a double-edged sword that, over time, can cripple your design team.

Common Misconceptions About CAD Training

- **We don't have the time for training.**

Effective CAD training is designed to save time. Someone that cannot spend a few days out of the office to attend training is looking at training as an <u>expense</u>. Training is an investment, just like the software that was purchased. Would you ever purchase software without installing it? No, that is a complete waste of an investment. Foregoing training to end-users will limit the power and ROI of your software investment and will ultimately decrease their productivity.

- **We can only afford to send one "power-user" to training.**

This training method can work, but just think of the risk involved. The key to maximizing the ROI of any type of training is knowledge retention - the more you learn and can apply, the greater the ROI. The risk with the "train-the-trainer" method is the amount of knowledge lost post-training. Secondhand knowledge is rarely as thorough and effective as the original training, plus you are taking your best "power-user" away from work for an additional period of time to train everyone else. Think of the savings and knowledge sharing your organization can experience if the training is done for everyone all at once.

Weighing the Benefits: Internal vs. External Training

Issue	Internal Training	External Training
Hardware	Limited hardware	Permanent facilities
Instructor	Typically not a trained educator	Trained educators/ knowledge experts
Content	Expensive and costly to maintain materials	Dedication to material/ content creation
Scope/ Availability	Subjects can be project specific	Regular schedule and subjects can be project specific
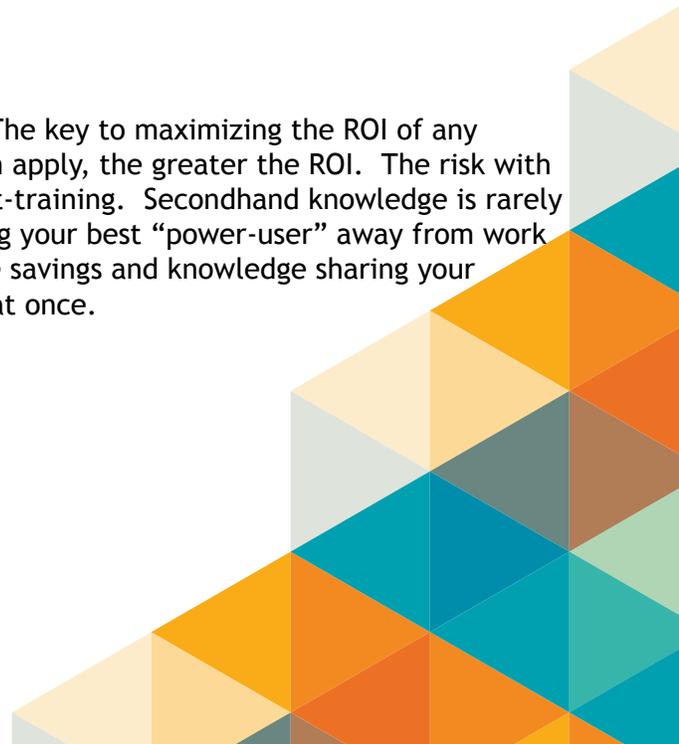
- **CAD training encourages engineers to leave the company for better jobs.**

Good people leave bad jobs with bad companies. Training shows your employees that you value their contributions so much that you're willing to invest in their continued development. Stop worrying about employees leaving and start thinking about ways to make their jobs better. Training is an excellent start.

- **CAD training only teaches "picks and clicks" and not how to apply the software to our business.**

A positive training experience is a direct result of the instructor and the resources used during training. A good instructor/knowledge expert has industry experience and can help their students bridge the gap between the features of the software and the application of those features to their projects. It's very important to assess the experience of your training provider before making your selection.

An Example ROI Analysis

Determining training ROI is fairly simple. Also, keep in mind the following general industry standards:
1. CAD users, on average, use only 10% of the sofware they own.
2. Students will become 10% more productive per week post-training. (conservative estimate)

Investment:
Cost of a four-day training class for one person: $2,000

Expense:
Engineering time lost: $100/hour x 8 hours/day x 4 days = $3,200

$5,200 Total Investment

Return on Investment:
Post-training productivity gain (at 10% gain): .8 hrs/day x 5 days/week = 4 hours/week
Payback: (.8 hrs/day x $100/hr) x 5 days/week = $400/work week = 13 weeks to acheive full payback

Exponential monetary ROI (per person):   1 year = $14,800   2 years = $29,600

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For over 25 years, Synergis has achieved its benchmarks by helping our customers achieve theirs. Our people are committed to your success with Autodesk solutions and will work tirelessly to ensure that your software performs seamlessly and ceaselessly for your business.

Our professional training and consulting services are designed to help your company maximize its investment in new design technologies and implementations.

Wetmore, Dr. Don (2010). Price of Not Training. Retrieved March 13, 2010, from www.salesvantage.com.