

“

It's not just a model. A model is just part of the process. Fundamentally BIM will outline how information is to be used and managed..

”

This week we sat down with the Director of Resolve, Amalia Athanassopoulos, to discuss the wonderful world of BIM.

How would you best describe BIM (Building Information Modelling)?

I would describe BIM as a process and not necessarily a model. I think, straight off the bat, when some people say BIM they think of a model...it's not necessarily just a model. A model forms part of the process. Fundamentally, BIM will outline how information will be used through a project.

So, what does that mean? If I use a live project for instance, when the design teams starts, each design team and team member across the project needs to know the information structure, how to present and name information and ultimately how to use it...for example...is it for information only? For approval?

That means for the project team all the way through from start to finish, no matter who comes onto this project, no matter which team you're on - when you look at something you should know straight away, what its purpose is, and so at the core of it we can structure information in a way that everyone follows, everyone adheres to...it just means that this structured information can be used for more purposes across a project.

When everyone was working in 2D, we were very limited with what we could do with that information. Now we can do so much more with BIM, stakeholders can now see the project development before their project starts construction and use the data rich sources in a number of ways. I think that's where it's becoming more important, refining what's captured and understanding what's important, for example, what actually needs to be shown? What do stakeholders need to see in order to make informed decisions and how does this need to be represented?

For people who have a basic understanding of the benefits of using BIM, how would you describe the process?

I think the benefits of using BIM are that there's a streamlined approach with tighter controls. BIM is all about process so it's understanding what the information is, who's going to use it and how that information can be used for the project. For instance, if we take a drawing, for example, you'll have it for tender or for review, for design...then you might go and issue this for construction. Multiply this across all the project disciplines, design packages, you end up will A LOT of drawings and information. But what you're seeing on that 2D sheet is only scratching the surface.

“

**At it's core its understanding
the process of how
information is developed.**

”

At it's core its understanding the process of how information is developed and used, how each piece is to be used e.g. for information, review, construction, then being able to translate the same consistent information into multiple uses e.g. for drawing review, for a BOQ, for construction sequencing, for tracking etc

It's knowing how to navigate through all the multidisciplinary project information and how to best use it, for example, on a single project there are a lot of different information streams - it can be quite challenging understanding what the latest information is, how it can be used and particularly for decision makers who need the best information available to make quick informed decisions. By applying BIM to projects you're able to bring all the information to same playing field, meaning everyone follows the same rules, what the rules mean, why they exist and knowing how everyone else is using them. Bringing some order and consistency to managing the mass of project information.

Why did you decide to get into BIM?

I think what interested me was...when someone showed me an example of what BIM could do many years ago I think I saw straight away what the difference was between traditional methods (being drawings, highlighters, manual paper mark-ups etc) versus the use of smarter tools and using the existing digital information to represent project information in a scalable, interactive, enhanced way and how it really trumped the usual methods of doing things.

“ I think what excites me is the potential and the opportunity to do what has been done previously but in more interactive ways and then taking it further.

”

What does the start of a project look like for you? At ground zero?

The first thing that happens is meeting with the client to understand their needs, what their expectations are and what a successful outcome looks like. When that is understood, then it's about defining the roadmap to get to the end goal and meeting these targets. This could potentially start with comparing the roadmap against an existing team, for instance how many team members are there? How do they need to be informed? What do the teams need to understand about the BIM process for this client? And then we can start facilitating this to meet the client's needs. For instance, setting up their systems and ensuring that everybody has access to what they need, setting up all the documentation so that they can refer to it at any time, making sure that all software used can interact with each other and then providing training and support throughout the project.

What excites you about BIM?

I think what excites me is the potential and the opportunity to do what has been done previously but in more interactive ways and then taking it one step further. Pens, paper and spreadsheets are great, and still necessary, but it's expanding on what we already have and to then digitise that. There are so many tools available to us now where it's not actually a big deal to actually transfer a few of these across into our new systems. Everyone's already on their phones... everybody's already logged in...so it's just about connecting the dots from where you are in your 2D highlighted space and leveraging that into a connected platform that connects to other project information and team members.

“ When someone showed me an example of what BIM could do many years ago I think I saw straight away what the difference was between traditional methods versus the use of smarter tools and using the existing digital information to represent project

”

Describe a typical day for you...

A typical day will be across a number of different projects. What meetings are there for today? What, in terms of projects, need to be delivered this week? And next week? Then my day usually involves speaking to different project team members to make sure that everything is running correctly.

If somebody wanted to get into the world of BIM, what would be your advice to get into it?

It would be, first of all, having a genuine interest in improving the general systems that you're using right now. Thinking about how they can be improved and the best ways to achieve this. Looking globally at what's out there to improve the workflows that matter to you. I think generally an interest to find and discover new ways to enhance project processes in a faster, smarter and more engaging ways.