

(All Times in Central Time)

8:30 am – 9:00 am

Breakfast Meet-and-Greet

9:00 am – 9:15 am

Welcome, Objectives, and Workshop Structure

9:15 am – 9:45 am

Session 1: From CAD Automation to Design Intelligence: What's Actually Working Now

Before debating the future, we should honestly assess the present. This opening session establishes the baseline: rule-based automation, scripting, template-driven production, clash and routing assistance, code checks, quantity extraction, and design-option generation. We'll examine what firms are actually deploying — not what vendors are promising — and where the gap between experimentation and production is widening. We'll discuss what is earning its keep on real projects today, where automation is quietly transforming production teams, and which capabilities should be considered table stakes before firms pursue more ambitious AI initiatives.

9:45 am – 10:00 am

Session 2: Generative Design in Practice: Where It Creates Value and Where It Doesn't

Generative design has been promised, prototyped, and re-pitched for nearly a decade — so where is it creating value, and where has it fallen short? This session focuses on site planning, massing, layout studies, structural and system optioning, and early-stage tradeoff exploration. The central debate: is generative design best used for exploration, performance optimization, or client persuasion? Participants will share candid examples, including what didn't work, and discuss what conditions are needed for generative workflows to move beyond demos into everyday practice.

10:00 am – 10:30 am

Session 3: The New Stack: BIM, OpenBIM, IFC, APIs, and Interoperability

Automation fails when data is trapped. This session looks under the hood at the technology stack that determines whether design intelligence can scale: Revit ecosystems, Rhino/Grasshopper, Tekla, Civil 3D, Archicad, and the common data environments connecting them. Participant CTOs will weigh in on platform strategy and API roadmaps, while CAD managers discuss the everyday interoperability issues that break standards in practice. Expect a frank discussion of IFC and openBIM handoffs, where they work, where they don't, and what firms should demand from vendors as the industry moves toward more open, federated data architectures.

10:30 am – 10:50 am

Coffee Social

10:50 am – 11:20 am

Session 4: Tactical Digital Twins: Connecting Automated Design to Operations

Design automation that ends at handover leaves much of its value on the table. This session explores how digital twins extend the design model into operations and how that downstream value should reshape upstream decisions about modeling rigor, data structure, and authoring discipline. This will be a tactical discussion of deliverable-by-deliverable twin strategies, the connection to facilities management and asset performance, and the open question of how much design automation should be judged by lifecycle outcomes rather than design-phase efficiency.

11:20 am – 11:50 am

Session 5: AI Copilots, Agents, and Design Assistants: Hype, Help, or Hazard?

AI copilots and agents are arriving across the design workflow: spec drafting, family and content generation, model querying, standards lookup, document production, code checking, and RFI/submittal support. Where do copilots save minutes, where do they save weeks, and where do they introduce risk that outweighs the time saved? Panelists will share concrete deployment stories, surprising places agents are working or failing, and a realistic view of how far firms are from scaling agentic workflows reliably.

11:50 am – 12:30 pm

Lunch

(All Times in Central Time)

12:30 pm – 1:00 pm

Session 6: Quality and Values: Data Governance, QA/QC, and Liability in Automated Design

The killer apps for AI may not be the flashy ones. This session focuses on the governance backbone that makes automation defensible: model provenance, prompt and version control, audit trails, design intent capture, standard libraries, approval workflows, and professional liability. Returns on AI are repeatedly constrained by data quality and trust issues and as automated outputs increasingly carry a stamped engineer's signature behind them, governance moves from back-office concern to executive priority. CTOs, design leaders weigh in on what "good" looks like.

1:00 pm – 1:15 pm

Session 7: The Future of the "CAD Department"

As complexity becomes the dominant factor in design, what does a "CAD Department" even mean? This session examines three models for how firms are organizing production: a traditional centralized CAD/BIM group, a federated model embedded in design teams, and a hybrid platform-and-product structure. Panelists discuss where each model creates friction or unlocks speed, how the role of "designer" itself is evolving, and what leadership needs to understand about the shifting boundary between production and design.

1:15 pm – 1:30 pm

Session 8: The Automation Operating Model: Who Owns It: IT, Digital Practice, or Production?

One of the most important questions in scaling automation isn't technical it's organizational. Who owns the script library, the AI stack, the data standards, the training program, and the support model? This session compares centralized vs. federated automation teams, the role of citizen developers, the emerging discipline of platform engineering inside design firms, and the budget structures that make (or break) sustained investment. Expect candid comparisons across firms of different sizes and a sharp discussion of what works at scale.

1:30 pm – 2:00 pm

Session 9: Workforce Transformation: What Happens to the CAD Manager, BIM Lead, and Junior Designer?

The room will already be thinking about this so let's address it directly. Rather than rehearse "will AI replace designers?", this session asks the more useful question: which human skills become more valuable as automation expands? Panelists discuss role redesign, upskilling, the new expectations around computational literacy, and how firms preserve judgment, mentorship, and craft while automating repetitive production. Honest perspectives from CAD managers, BIM leads, and early-career designers themselves.

2:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Session10: The 2030 AEC Design Firm: What the Winning Automation Strategy Looks Like

A future-facing capstone. Panelists describe the winning firm in 2030 across platform architecture, talent, data strategy, business model, client expectations, and delivery speed. Expect specific bets not platitudes about where the industry will consolidate, where new entrants will disrupt, and what design firms need to start building (or stop investing in) today. The session is designed to send attendees back to their organizations with concrete inputs for platform roadmaps, budget cycles, and talent planning.

2:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Closing Coffee Conversation