STORY 2

From tradition to transformation: shifting from 2D to BIM in Cyprus

Formorethan seventyyears, theAri familyhas been building homes, landmarks, and trust. Founded in 1952 in Larnaca and re-established in Northern Cyprus after 1974, the company has grown into a well-respected contractor with around 100 employees. Its portfolio spans luxury villas, boutique hotels, mosques, and large-scale commercial projects such as a 15,000-square-metre logistics centre. It expanded into the training and education field in 2020 as an Autodesk Learning Partner.

Through generations, the company's reputation has rested on a simple promise:

"What we have done is the guarantee for what we will do."

Today, that same ethos guides the firm to push for change in the AECO market – one shaped by digital construction methods and BIM.

Legacy meets innovation

Sifa Ari, architect, academic and Autodesk Certified Instructor Silver, is the third generation to lead the family business. She recalls how her grandfather and father relied on paper drawings, personal trust, and face-to-face agreements in their work. Contracts were informal because the community was small and relationships carried more weight than signatures.

"The most important value I've inherited is trust," Sifa explains.

"As we adopt BIM, I want to keep that integrity alive while making our work more transparent, efficient and collaborative."

TheshifttoBIM hasnot been withoutchallenges. Many firms in Cyprusstillrely heavily on 2D drawings, with BIM adoption limited to a small but growing group of forward-thinking professionals.

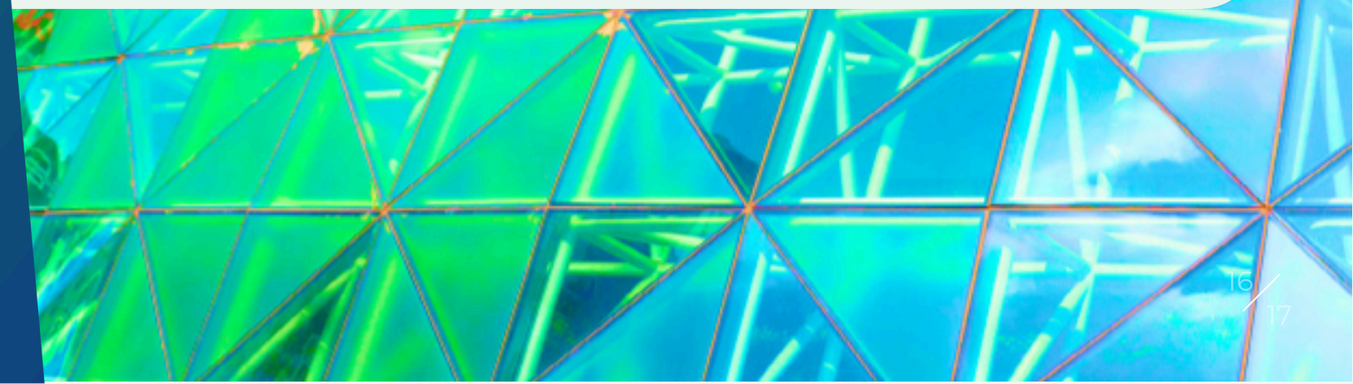
Yet for Sifa, the case for change is clear.

Why 2D is no longer enough

After visiting sites as a child and two decades as an architect, Sifa has seen the same issues resurface: miscommunication, mistakes, and delays caused by mismatched drawings. Architectural and structural plans failed to align, resulting in costly conflicts on site.

Even at the early stages of adoption within her company, Sifa has already noticed better organisation and clearer communication among teams, particularly with younger engineers who are naturally receptive to digital work flows.

BIM promises to have the greatest impact on construction site coordination and lifecycle management. Beyond design, it will make construction, maintenance, and demolition processes more sustainable and efficient.



BIM as a way of thinking

Sifawears severalhats:architect,part-timeuniversityinstructor,andAutodesk instructor. Each role gives her a distinct perspective:

- As an architect: BIM is a tool for accuracy and teamwork.
- As an academic: BIM is essential knowledge shaping the next generation.
- As an instructor: BIM is not just about software, it's a way of thinking that connects data, people, and processes.

She often counters misconceptions, such as the belief that BIM is only about 3D modelling and pretty visuals. *"BIM is about coordination. It combines data on cost, timing, and maintenance, involving everyone from architects to contractors."*

Her approach is to start small: introducing simple processes like clash detection or quantity take-offs that demonstrate immediate benefits without overwhelming teams.

Education as a catalyst

InCyprus,the useofBIMisvoluntary; no governmentmandate or standards yet exist. And, without hands-on training, there's a risk BIM simply stays theoretical.

These factors make universities and training providers key in accelerating change.

Sifa talks about how universities shouldn't just teach BIM software, but also integrate it into design thinking and project management. Universities are key to preparing students for the realities of modern construction.

At the European University of Lefke, she ran a seminar which attracted more than 100 students and young professionals, evidence of a growing appetite to learn. Their most common questions? How BIM will affect their careers, which tools to start with, and whether it's relevant in Cyprus.

Her answer is always the same: *"BIM is shaping global construction. Early adopters get ahead — and Cyprus cannot afford to be left behind."*

Overcoming barriers

Theroad todigital adoptionis notwithout obstacles. Cultural resistance among older professionals, the cost of investment, and a shortage of skilled personnel all slow progress. But Sifa is optimistic: with strong leadership, hands-on training, and gradual wins, these hurdles can be overcome.

She sees BIM having the greatest impact over the next decade on construction site coordination and lifecycle management – from design and build to maintenance and eventual demolition. Transparency, efficiency, and teamwork are the benefits she believes the sector needs most urgently.

A digital legacy

ForSifa, BIM is more thana professional tool; it is a personal passion. *"I've seen the problems it solves,"* she says. *"Being part of fixing those problems really motivates me."*

Her ambition is to honour her family's values of trust and quality, while preparing the business for a digital future. *"I want to keep the legacy alive, but also make our company more efficient, innovative and ready for what's next."*

Her advice to hesitant professionals is clear: *"Start small, but start now. Pick one process, test it, and see the difference. The future is digital."*

Sifa Ari is a BIM and digital transformation specialist. She runs her family construction business, lectures at Eastern Mediterranean University and is the founder of ARI EDUCATION an Autodesk Learning Partner in Taskinkoy-Lefkosa, Cyprus. The training business was established in 2020 to provide training to everyone who wants to improve themselves in the field of information technologies. Working with academia and companies, it enables people to be productive in their careers, helping them develop technical design and visualisation skills.

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