US Construction Industry Trends
Survey Findings

OVERVIEW

Every year Avitru/AIA conducts an industry status survey to provide a few insights into the current project specification management processes in the AEC Industry. In this year's survey we found a few nuggets of information that we all should be aware of and excited about. Though the level of concern about errors and omissions stay consistent from year to year, a more systematic approach is being used to improve the status quo. An increase in the use of BIM based applications and integrated data migration seams to
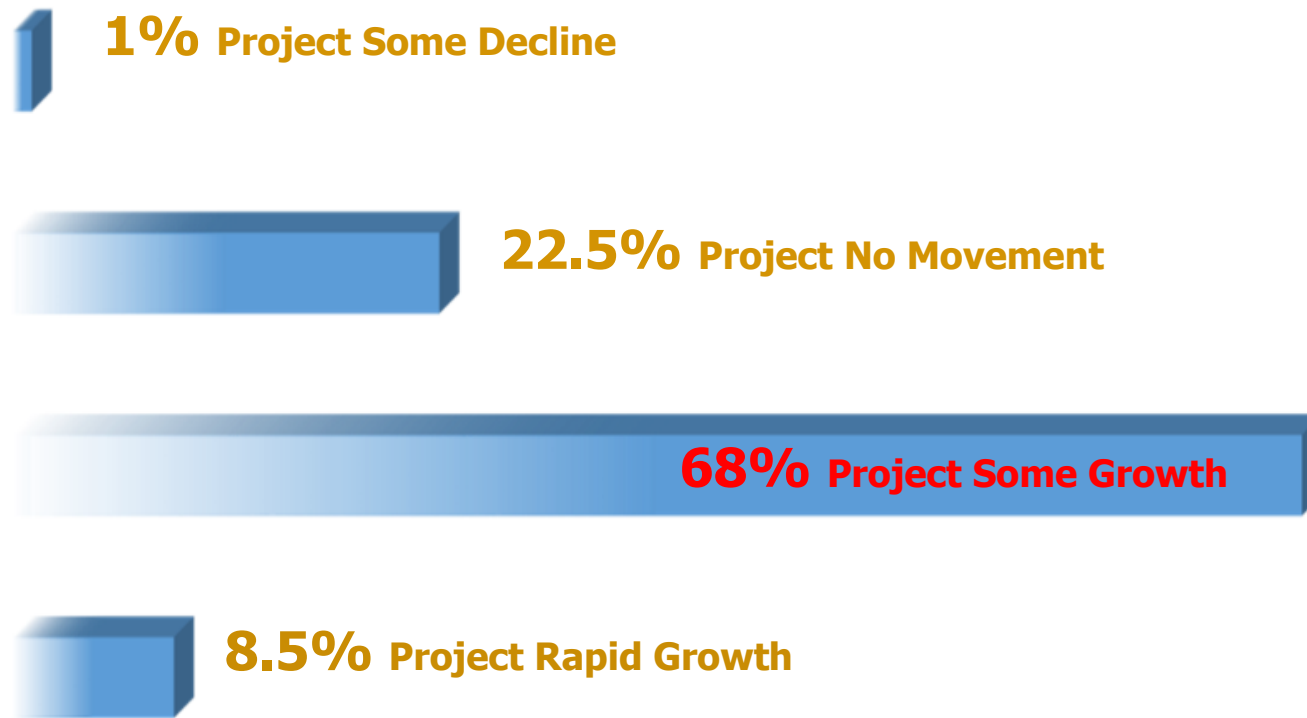
SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Survey participants were professional from a variety of businesses. The industries they practice in are divided as follows:

72%
Architecture

11%
Engineering

16%
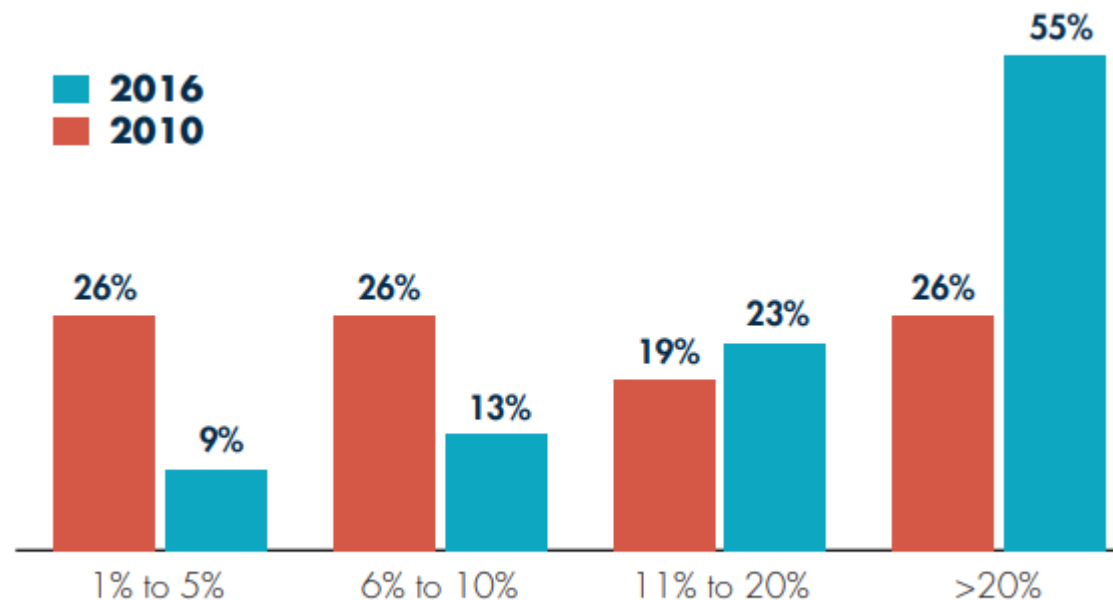Architecture & Engineering

1%
Other Industries

FIRM GROWTH

While the majority of firms expect some growth, fortunately no firms reported a rapid decline. The following details the expected growth through the next 12 months for respondents and are similar to last years expectations for growth:

1% Project Some Decline

22.5% Project No Movement

68% Project Some Growth

8.5% Project Rapid Growth

Prefabrication Spikes

1. BIM and Prefabrication go hand in hand with making decisions earlier in the design process.

2. VIM Becoming more prolific to pre-assess constructability.

3. 66% report that project schedules are decreased—35% by four weeks or more.

4. 65% report that project budgets are decreased—41% by 6% or more

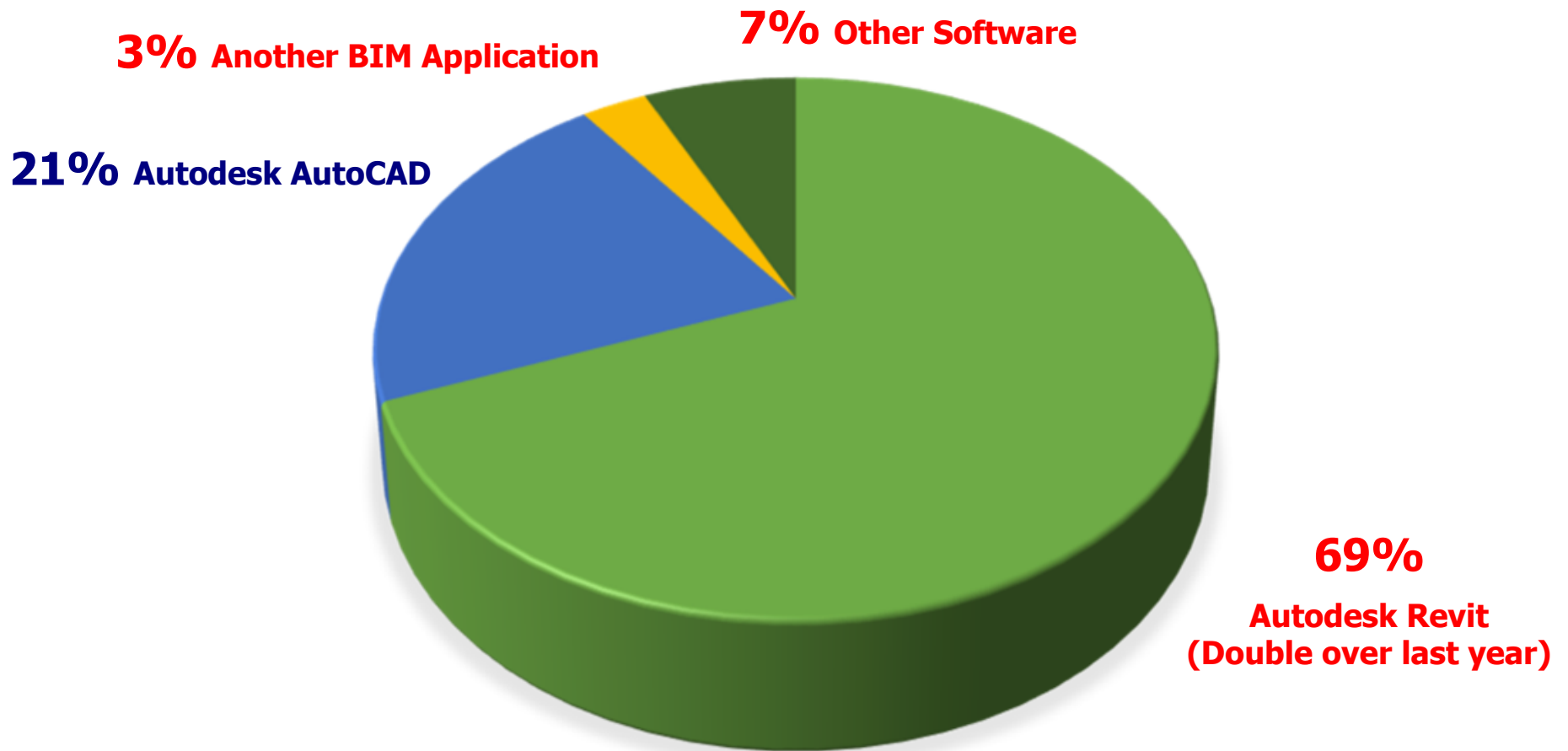5. 77% report that construction site waste is decreased—44% by 5% or more

Source: 2017 FMI/BIMForum Prefabrication Survey

TECHNOLOGY

The number of respondents using Revit more than doubled this year from 32% of respondents to 69%. Respondents using AutoCAD were similar but those designing in another BIM application dropped dramatically from 21% to 3%. As well, those designing in "other software" dropped from 20% in 2016 to only 7% in this year's survey. This years breakdown is as follows:

3% Another BIM Application

7% Other Software

21% Autodesk AutoCAD

69%
Autodesk Revit
(Double over last year)

SPECIFICATION GUIDES

Respondents shared using an average of 2 sources for their specification documents.

These included, in order of popularity:

1. **Office Masters based on AIA MasterSpec**
2. **AIA MasterSpec libraries**
3. **The firm's custom Office Master**
4. **Re-using previously written project manuals**
5. **Government Masters**
6. **Country specific masters**

With one exception, the popularity of the items on this list have not changed from last year. The exception: "Office masters based on AIA MasterSpec" swapped placed with "AIA Master-Spec libraries" as the number 1 selected specification guide used by respondents.

CHALLENGES OF SPEC WRITING

61% of respondents agree

Ensuring that building products are still current is a challenge.

This is a slight increase from last year's results: **56%**.

48% of respondents agree

Problems occur due to reusing old specs.

This is similar to the **45%** of respondents from last year.

48% of respondents agree

Specs are written last minute.

48% of respondents agree

Formatting of the final document is time consuming.

This is an increase from **30%** of 2015's respondents.

44% of respondents agree

There is a lack of consistency in managing specs.

This an increase to the **23%** of respondents in agreement last year.

SUMMARY

- *More Architects surveyed this year with a trend towards larger firms generally lead by a **growth through M&A strategy**.*

- *A Small increase in the number of project architects writing specs verses a dedicated staff although the **number staff members writing the specs remains the same, the number of projects have almost doubled.** The conclusion is that more work is required by the same number resources resulting in increase in the errors and omissions caused by too short a time frame for developing concise and accurate specification.*

- *A substantial increase in the use of Revit is leading to better work flows and movement of project data eliminating duplication of effort and data transfer from one process or application to the next.*

- ***Standardized office masters are increasing to address lack of consistency and to increase efficiencies.***

- *Current building product data and omissions due to using old specs is still the biggest concern yet **25% of those surveyed still use old specs** as a starting point. This is a significant contrast to a large jump in the use of office masters.*