

## case study

# The Hillier Group



You can tell a truly successful company within a few minutes of entering the premises. There's something in the air, in the demeanour of the staff, in the blending of creativity and discipline. You notice it immediately upon entering The Hillier Group's largest office, in Princeton, New Jersey.

The Hillier Group's track record is remarkable. Founded by Bob Hillier in 1966, it is now the third largest architecture firm in the USA. It employs 400 people and has a record of completed projects in 41 states and 18 countries outside the USA. These projects cover a range that includes the Star City Casino at Sydney Harbour in Australia, the 450,000 square foot SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals science complex in Essex, England, and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in Chevy Chase, Maryland. A variety of professional services are provided, including historic preservation, land-use planning, landscape architecture, and strategic planning as well as architecture and interior design. A design-oriented and highly entrepreneurial approach ensures that The Hillier Group remains successful, with 41% revenue growth predicted for the current year. Further information can be found on their website at [www.hillier.com](http://www.hillier.com).



## Studio based organisation and infrastructure

Bob Hillier is quick to give the credit to his employees. The Hillier Group is organised into "studios" of 25-30 professional staff. Each studio has its own specialities, and a good degree of autonomy. Some large projects are tackled by several studios working collaboratively. The studio-based organisation promotes the formation of centres of excellence, and also provides a flexible framework which accommodates growth and large projects. Because the studios are small in size, every employee feels like a "big fish in a small pond".

In order for the studio approach to work effectively, The Hillier Group has made a significant investment in infrastructure. All of the offices are connected by a high speed data communications link. Every workstation in every office has access to the Internet and to the HillierNet, the company's fully developed Intranet. This ensures that any two employees working on the same project have instant access to the same information, irrespective of their working location. The link is also fast enough to support teleconferencing.



The CAD system used - **MicroGDS** from Informatix Software International Ltd and distributed by NextWave Technologies - was chosen largely because of its innate ability to support simultaneous access by multiple users from multiple

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disciplines and multiple locations. The Hillier Group runs 235 seats of **MicroGDS Professional** in 6 office locations. Another factor in the selection of **MicroGDS** was its ability to highly structure CAD data and to enforce standards, a key requirement with so many geographically dispersed users accessing the system.

## Sprint New World Headquarters

The organisation and infrastructure is currently going through its most demanding test to date. The Hillier Group is the lead architect for Sprint's New World Headquarters at Overland Park, Kansas. The project covers 200 acres and is virtually a small town, including a seven acre lake and two outdoor athletic fields. It is the largest corporate building project in the history of the American Mid-West.

When finished in around four years time, the scheme will provide 3.9 million square feet of office space for 14,000 employees in 22 different buildings. The CAD data and the on-site **MicroGDS** workstations will be handed over to Sprint for ongoing Facilities Management.

Bob Ritger, Director of CADD Operations at Hillier, comments:

*“Work on a project of this magnitude is an honour and an exciting challenge both for ourselves and our software suppliers. We have relied heavily on **MicroGDS** to orchestrate this complex project and we look forward with confidence to working with **MicroGDS** and Informatix in the years ahead”.*

