

BQE CORE CUSTOMER CASE STUDY



Los Angeles and Santa Barbara

25+ Employees

Architecture

abdesignstudioinc.com



Clarity in the Work. Confidence in the Business.



“CORE ties everything together for us. We spend less time digging into data and more time focused on project delivery and design.”

Josh Blumer AIA, NCARB
Co-Founder, Principal Architect



A Practice Built on Thoughtful Design

AB Design Studio was founded with a clear point of view about the role of architecture. The firm's work reflects a belief that design should respond to how people live and interact with their environment, not just how a building looks. That perspective has shaped a multidisciplinary practice spanning architecture, interior design, and urban planning, grounded in a strong commitment to environmental design principles and a high level of detail in execution.

As the firm grew, so did the complexity behind that work. More projects introduced more coordination, more financial variables, and more pressure to maintain consistency across every phase of delivery. The quality of the work depended not only on design talent, but on the firm's ability to operate with clarity and discipline behind the scenes.

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One of the big challenges in running an architecture firm is creating sound business practices. To be successful as an architect, you need to run a business well.

Josh Blumer AIA, NCARB
Co-Founder, Principal Architect

When Growth Outpaces the System

For years, the operational foundation of the firm relied on spreadsheets and a mix of disconnected tools. Time tracking, project management, and financial reporting existed, but they did not exist together. Each lived in its own software that didn't speak to each other.

What began as a workable approach gradually became a constraint. Reporting required manual effort, and even simple questions about project performance meant pulling information from multiple sources and reconciling inconsistencies. The process introduced delays at exactly the moments when clarity was most needed. By the time information was assembled and verified, it often reflected a past state of the project rather than its current condition.

This created a subtle but important shift in how the firm operated. Decisions were informed by reconstructed data instead of real-time insight. Coordination across teams required additional effort. Administrative work expanded, not because it added value, but because it was necessary to maintain visibility. Over time, the system designed to support the work began to compete with it. .

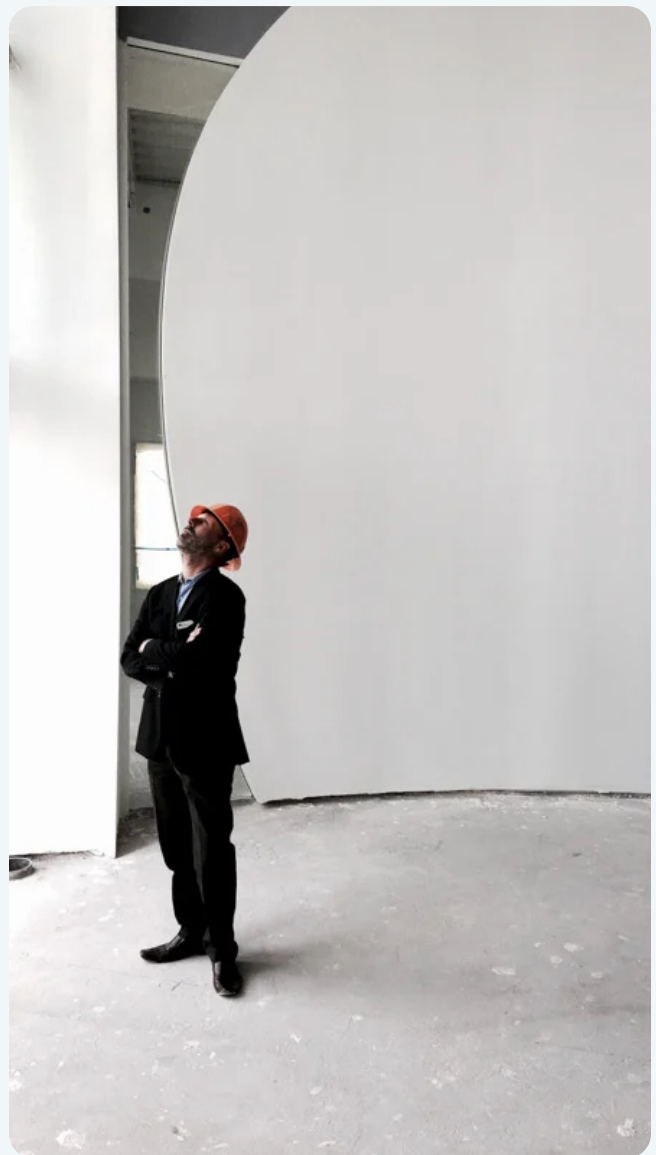
Rebuilding the Operational Core

The search for a better solution was not only about adding new capabilities – although that did add value. It was first and foremost about creating alignment across the processes the firm already depended on. Project management, time tracking, and financial data needed to exist within the same system so that each could inform the others without additional effort.

BQE CORE introduced that structure. Instead of relying on separate tools connected by manual processes, the firm moved to a single platform where project activity and financial performance were inherently linked. Data no longer had to be gathered and assembled. It was already connected at the source. The single firm management platform allowed them to replace multiple software subscriptions, simplifying their tech stack.

This change altered how information flowed through the firm. Project performance became visible as work progressed. Financial data reflected the current state of each project rather than a delayed snapshot. Teams no longer depended on periodic reporting cycles to understand where things stood. The system itself provided a continuous view of performance.

Just as importantly, the platform scaled with the firm's growth. As new projects and team members were added, the underlying structure remained consistent. The firm did not need to redesign its processes or introduce new tools to keep up with expansion. The system adapted alongside the business.



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CORE's main value is that it serves the direct needs of an architecture. Other systems required a higher level of accounting knowledge and were more difficult to implement.

Josh Blumer AIA, NCARB
Co-Founder, Principal Architect

From Visibility to Better Decisions

With connected data in place, the role of information within the firm began to shift. Reporting was no longer the end goal. It became a byproduct of the work itself.

At the project level, this meant that teams could see how effort aligned with fees and budgets as work unfolded. Trends that once required manual analysis became visible in the moment. This allowed project leaders to respond earlier, adjusting resources or approach before small issues developed into larger ones.

That same clarity extended into how the firm collaborated internally. Meetings no longer centered on gathering and validating information. Instead, they focused on interpreting what the data already showed and deciding how to move forward. Shared visibility created a common understanding across roles, reducing the friction that often comes from working with incomplete or inconsistent information.

The result was not simply faster decisions, but better ones. Choices were grounded in current data, and the time between insight and action narrowed significantly.

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Access to clear, actionable data in CORE allows us to make confident decisions about what needs to happen next. We spent so much time creating reports, tracking time, and correcting mistakes that it became difficult to move the firm forward.

Josh Blumer AIA, NCARB
Co-Founder, Principal Architect



Shifting Time Back to the Work That Matters

One of the most immediate changes was how time was spent across the firm. Previously, a meaningful portion of effort was dedicated to maintaining the systems that supported project tracking and reporting. That work was necessary, but it did not directly contribute to project outcomes.

With an integrated platform in place, much of that effort was no longer required. Processes that depended on manual input and verification became part of the system's normal operation. Information stayed accurate without constant intervention. Administrative tasks that once took 30 minutes now take less than 10, reducing friction in billing workflows and freeing time for higher-value work.

More time could be directed toward design, coordination, and problem-solving. The team



was able to engage more fully in the parts of the process that define the quality of the final result. And more of their time was billable, instead of wasted on admin tasks.

For a design-focused practice, that shift is meaningful. It aligns the firm's time investment with the areas where it creates the most value.

Making Data Part of the Culture

As the system became embedded in daily workflows, access to information expanded across the firm. Data was no longer concentrated within a small group or limited to specific reporting cycles. It became part of how teams understood and managed their work on an ongoing basis.

This accessibility changed how responsibility was distributed. When project teams could see the financial and operational impact of their decisions, accountability became more immediate and more practical. The connection

between actions and outcomes was easier to understand, which supported stronger decision-making at every level.

Equally important was the usability of the system itself. Because it was designed with architects and designers in mind, it did not require specialized accounting knowledge to navigate. That lowered the barrier to adoption and allowed more people within the firm to engage with the data in a meaningful way.

Over time, this contributed to a more informed organization, where decisions were supported by a shared understanding of project performance.

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CORE gives us the ability to distribute data across the firm so people can see what they need to see and focus on doing great work.

Josh Blumer AIA, NCARB
Co-Founder, Principal Architect



A Foundation That Supports the Work

AB Design Studio's approach to design has remained consistent. The firm continues to focus on creating thoughtful, high-quality work shaped by a clear point of view. What has changed is the foundation supporting that work.

With a connected operational system in place, the firm has greater visibility into its projects, stronger alignment across teams, and more confidence in the decisions that guide each phase of delivery. The administrative burden that once slowed progress has been replaced by a structure that supports it.

As the firm continues to grow, that foundation provides stability without limiting flexibility. The systems behind the work now operate with the same level of intention as the work itself.

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My job is to make sure our team has the right tools to do their best work. With CORE, it's a system that's very well thought through in terms of ease of use, accessibility, and setup. We spend less time digging into data and more time on project delivery and design.

Josh Blumer AIA, NCARB
Co-Founder, Principal Architect

Your ambition scales, clarity grows, and creativity thrives with BQE CORE.

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