

D BUSINESS

The Dallas Morning News

THE NEW WORKFORCE

Job security hopes fading

Offshoring, automation and more are leaving workers unsure how to adapt

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FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Labor flexibility breeds job insecurity

When Humphreys & Partners Architects needs 3-D, computer-generated drawings of its projects, it turns to a network of firms in Russia, India, Argentina and Uruguay.

The Dallas architectural firm pays a fraction of the \$4,000 to \$8,000 it would cost to do the drawings in the United States, says chief executive Mark Humphreys. And the process couldn't be any easier. Humphreys employees e-mail their instructions, photos and hand sketches. The information speeds across the ocean in seconds, and the over-

seas firms can return renderings in three days vs. the minimum of a week in the United States.

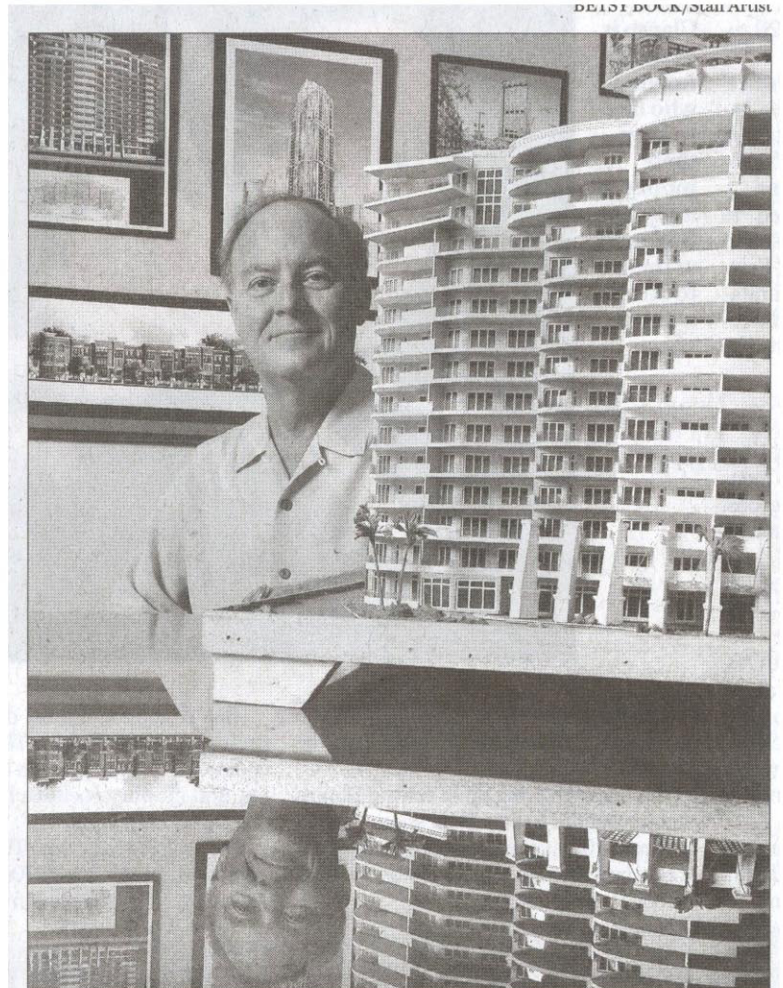
The drawings were so expensive and time-consuming that Humphreys had relied on 2-D renderings and hand sketches. The company's 90 employees were too busy designing new condominium towers, apartment buildings and homes to waste precious days making the drawings.

"To us, that's not architecture," Mr. Humphreys says. "A lot of these companies are on the other side of the world, but they are only a click away. I was surprised they had the same capabilities that we did."

And the business relationship has evolved. Mr. Humphreys has swapped news stories and family photos with a Russian woman at one of the firms in Moscow.

"We don't feel we are taking away U.S. jobs," he says. "We feel we are good American ambassadors."

The architectural firm is now planning to hire one or two individuals in Dallas to coordinate all the work done abroad.



RICHARD MICHAEL PRUITT/Staff Photographer