THE LEADING BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR CONTRACTORS

MARCH 2025 | CONSTRUCTIONBUSINESSOWNER.COM

# CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS OWNER

## TRANSFORM YOUR FLEET WITH INTELLIGENT TECHNOLOGY

**HOW DATA-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS CAN IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS**



**IN THE OFFICE**
New cybersecurity requirements for government contractors

**IN THE FIELD**
Prepare your jobsite for severe weather this spring

HINO TRUCKS
A Toyota Group Company

# MORE THAN A TRUCK. BUILT FOR YOUR TOUGHEST JOBS.




When the job demands strength and dependability, Hino trucks deliver. Built to power through the toughest challenges, Hino has a proven record of durability and unbeatable performance - designed to keep up with the rigorous demands of the construction industry. But it's not just about toughness. Hino's spacious and quiet cab, designed with an automotive style interior and unmatched visibility, delivers exceptional driver comfort, even in the most demanding conditions.
With Hino Edge, our connected vehicle solution, an exclusive 5-year Allison Transmission warranty, and 24/7 HinoWatch roadside assistance, Hino provides the support you need to stay on schedule and deliver with confidence.
At Hino, our commitment goes beyond the truck itself. With The Ultimate Ownership Experience, we deliver **MORE THAN A TRUCK.**

ULTIMATE OWNERSHIP EXPERIENCE

HINO EDGE

24/7 ASSISTANCE HINOWATCH

Allison Transmission 5 YEAR WARRANTY

ELECTRIC INCLUSEV

HINO.COM




Progressive Casualty Insurance Co. & affiliates.

# STAND UP TO YOUR MONSTER TO-DO LIST? ☑ SAVE MONEY? ☑

Small business owners' to-do lists can add up. So see if you can save money on a commercial auto quote at **ProgressiveCommercial.com.**

PROGRESSIVE® COMMERCIAL

Get a quote online in as little as 7 minutes

# FROM THE EDITOR

**MEGAN BEAM**



CBO Editor
Megan Beam

At the time of writing this letter, the CBO team has just gotten back from a busy week in Las Vegas for World of Concrete. I know I speak for the whole team when I say it was such a delight to meet and chat with those of you who stopped by the booth or had visits scheduled throughout the week. It is always energizing to come back to working on print issues with your faces and perspectives fresh in mind.

For more coverage of the CBO team's experiences at World of Concrete, please visit constructionbusinessowner.com.

One of the more prevalent themes of conversations I was part of this year at the show involved labor shortages, recruiting and retention strategies. With the change in administration and the myriad executive orders shuffling about that first week, particularly relative to immigration, there were a lot of questions about the best way to secure and support the workforce across the construction industry. Undoubtedly, this is a conversation that will only broaden over time, and we are already partnering with trusted voices across the industry to bring their perspectives, forecasts and suggested strategies to support your business. Labor may remain an urgent challenge, but we are confident it is one that can be addressed with focused actions and collaborative strategy.

Finally, March is a busy month for CBO. And as you flip through this issue, you'll see that we have three great webinars to spotlight over the next few weeks. Visit constructionbusinessowner.com/webinars for the full list of free educational webinars hosted by some of the most well-known experts in the business. We look forward to seeing you there!

Thanks for reading,




CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS OWNER

**EDITORIAL**
Editor-in-Chief
Megan Beam
mbeam@cahabamedia.com · 205-314-8264
Senior Managing Editor
Carmen Capoccia
ccapoccia@cahabamedia.com · 205-961-3391

**CREATIVE SERVICES**
Art Director
Andi Shepard
Digital Production Designer
Matt Hodges
Web Developer
Greg Caudle

**PRODUCTION**
Client Services Coordinator
Sonya Crocker
scrocker@cahabamedia.com

**CIRCULATION**
Subscription Management
constructionbusinessowner@omeda.com
800-256-2785

**ADVERTISING**
Senior Account Executive
Van Imbragulio
vimbragulio@cahabamedia.com · 205-314-8263
Account Executive
Andrew Arnold
aarnold@cahabamedia.com · 205-961-3384

CAHABA MEDIA GROUP

Publisher
Matthew G. Conroy
VP of Sales
Greg Meineke
VP of Finance
Brandon Whittemore
Director of Content
Elizabeth Manning
Director of Operations
Laurie Tisdale
Director of Sales
Stacy Marshall
Director of Events
Bill Mattes

PO Box 530067, Birmingham, AL 35253



**EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD**

**Richard D. Alaniz**
Partner - Alaniz Law & Associates PLLC

**Dr. Scott Arias**
Professor – Eastern Kentucky University
CEO/Chairman of the Board - ACE Consulting Company

**Ben Ashburn**
Senior Trainer - Procore Technologies

**Brian Barksdale, CPA**
Partner - Carr, Riggs & Ingram LLC

**Cal Beyer**
Senior Director of SAFE Workplaces - SAFE Projects

**Steven Davis**
Senior Vice President, Director of Construction - McGriff

**Peter Hilger, AIA**
Faculty Director, Curriculum and Internship Adviser, FM Program Coordinator Construction and Facility Management Program - University of Minnesota

**Crawford E. McInnis**
Executive Vice President - Epic Brokers

**Joseph Natarelli, CPA**
National Construction Services Leader - Marcum LLP

**Gregg M. Schoppman**
Partner - FMI Corporation



Construction Business Owner (ISSN 1551-3246) is published by Cahaba Media Group, PO Box 530067, Birmingham, AL 35253. Periodicals postage paid at Birmingham, AL and additional mailing offices. Subscriptions: Free of charge to qualified construction business owners. Publisher reserves the right to determine qualifications. Annual subscriptions: U.S. and possessions $48, all other countries $125 U.S. funds (via air mail). Single copies: U.S. and possessions $5, all other countries $15 U.S. funds (via air mail). Call 800-256-2785 inside or outside the U.S. Postmaster: Send changes of address and form 3579 to Construction Business Owner, PO Box 271, Lincolnshire, IL 60069-9835.


©2025 Cahaba Media Group, Inc. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the written consent of the publisher. The publisher does not warrant, either expressly or by implication, the factual accuracy of any advertisements, articles or description herein, nor does the publisher warrant the validity of any views or opinions offered by the authors of said articles, descriptions or any advertisements. Submissions: We welcome submissions. Unless otherwise negotiated in writing, by the editors, by sending us your submission, you grant Cahaba Media Group, Inc. permission by an irrevocable license to edit, reproduce, distribute, publish and adapt your submission in any medium on multiple occasions. You are free to publish your submission yourself or to allow others to republish your submission. Submissions will not be returned.


VOLUME 22 ISSUE 2







# DEWALT POWERSHIFT™: THE POWER OF ELECTRIFICATION & SUSTAINABILITY

**FREE | MARCH 5 | 1 P.M. CENTRAL**
**AVAILABLE ON DEMAND**

CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS OWNER webinar

Sponsored by

DEWALT POWERSHIFT

**The DEWALT POWERSHIFT™ Cordless Equipment System optimizes the workflow of the concrete contractor and construction jobsites through electrification. This equipment system meets the critical needs of concrete professionals – power, runtime, and ergonomics – allowing users to transition away from gas-powered equipment, without compromising efficiency and performance.**

**Join us for a webinar exploring how this new product system is ushering in the jobsite of the future. The DEWALT POWERSHIFT™ Cordless Equipment System can produce up to 60% less CO2e emissions during use versus gas-powered equipment* enabling sustainable innovation in the construction industry.**

**This webinar will cover:**

- **Electrification with DEWALT POWERSHIFT™: Transitioning from traditional gas-powered tools to electric-powered alternatives and the resulting benefits.**
- **Battery Technology: Advancements in battery technology leading to longer run times, faster charging, and overall better performance for cordless tools.**
- **Sustainability: Designing tools that consume less power while maintaining or improving performance, and how these developments benefit the environment.**

## SPEAKERS



**Sara Godding**
*VP, Product Management*
DEWALT



**Chris Herrmann**
*Director, Category Management*
DEWALT



**Ricky Cacchiotti**
*Director of Product Management*
DEWALT

**REGISTER AT**
**constructionbusinessowner.com/webinars**







## FEATURE SERIES

FLEETS

**26 Transform Your Fleet With Intelligent Technology**
How data-driven solutions can improve your business

**30 Examining the Impact of Fleet Management Software**
How fleet solutions affect your bottom line







Photo Credits: Adobe Stock, Studson, Bobcat, Volvo Construction Equipment




Photo Credit: Volvo Construction Equipment

## IN THE OFFICE

The Business Council

**10 Gregg M. Schoppman**
State of the industry trends for 2025

**12 Caring Cultures**
How Valley Interior Systems builds success through its people

**14 CBIZ**
5 tax saving opportunities after year-end

**16 Guest Columnist**
The power of female mentorship in construction & design

**18 Workforce Management**
How goals, roles & tasks transform teams

**20 Risk Management**
A practical guide to insurance & risk management

**24 Contracts & Bidding**
Understanding pivotal new cybersecurity requirements for government contractors

## IN THE FIELD

**32 Equipment Matters**
Your maintenance checklist for compact track loaders

**34 Jobsite Safety**
Prepare your jobsites for spring severe weather

**39 Gear & Apparel**
Transforming safety with smart PPE

**42 Tech Support**
How wearables are changing the game




## IN EVERY ISSUE

**2 From the Editor**

**6 News**

**8 Industry Spotlight**

**44 Products**

**48 Stats**



# OUR LIBRARY OF EXPERT RESOURCES

## Case Studies

**Heavy Lifting, Minimal Downtime: Mazzella's Formula**
Learn how Mazzella Lifting Technologies optimized operations and kept their fleet moving with smart telematics solutions.
*Sponsored by: GPS Trackit*

**How CFOs Can Drive Growth Without Adding Headcount**
How automation can scale finance operations and focus on high-value tasks.
*Sponsored by: GCPay*

## White Papers

**Recognizing a Return on Your Construction Administration Software Investment**
Maximize the value of construction administration (CA) software.
*Sponsored by: Newforma*

**2025 Finance Trends**
Key technologies to watch in the coming year.
*Sponsored by: AvidXchange*

## Webinars

**Navigating the Basics of Prevailing Wage in 2025**
The essential knowledge every contractor needs to succeed in the prevailing wage landscape.
*Sponsored by: Beneco*

**How To Take the First Step in Automating the Entire Payment Application Process**
The construction sector has made remarkable strides in adopting technologies.
*Sponsored by: GCPay*

## eBooks

**Transform Construction Payroll With Modern Solutions**
Discover how smart construction businesses streamline workforce management and boost productivity instantly.
*Sponsored by: Acumatica*

**How To More Effectively Mitigate Davis-Bacon Compliance Risk**
Top five strategies for prime contractors navigating prevailing wage regulations.
*Sponsored by: LCPtracker*

**FOR MORE INDUSTRY EXPERTISE, VISIT CONSTRUCTIONBUSINESSOWNER.COM/SPONSORED**

### Sage & Tractics Announce Partnership to Deliver Cloud Solution for Heavy Civil Contractors

Sage, a software provider for small and midsized businesses (SMBs) in the construction industry, and Tractics, a provider of a cloud-native construction management platform for heavy civil contractors, announced a partnership that delivers an integration between Tractics and Sage Intacct Construction. Sage provides horsepower and an accounting backbone for businesses to remain competitive, while Tractics delivers a robust solution for office, field, fleet and project operations. This integration includes: centralized, wide visibility into construction operations, in a single, comprehensive platform; field apps for foremen and crews so time sheets are updated in real time; access to critical data for fleet managers, dispatchers and back-office staff to simplify operations and keep teams working in sync; customizable financial reporting and dashboards; anytime, anywhere access to real-time project data; dimensional general ledger and multi-entity consolidation; and automated work-in-progress (WIP) management. Visit sage.com.

### Peabody General Contractors & Horsepower Site Services Rebrand as HEI Civil

HEI Civil, a heavy civil construction company, announced the official rebranding of Peabody General Contractors and Horsepower Site Services to HEI Civil. Peabody General Contractors was acquired by HEI Civil in 2018, and Horsepower Site Services joined the company in 2019. This rebranding solidifies HEI Civil's position in the industry by uniting these entities under a single brand. This strategic alignment will enhance HEI Civil's ability to serve clients better by strengthening the brand, expanding reach and increasing operational efficiency. By unifying operations under the HEI Civil name, the enterprise will invest in new technologies and strengthen the company's workforce competencies to expand service offerings in the future. Founded in 1973, HEI Civil is a privately owned, heavy civil construction general contractor headquartered in Castle Rock, Colorado. The company currently operates in Colorado, Texas and North Carolina. The enterprise's current portfolio includes daily work on over 70 projects, over 800 team members and 500 pieces of equipment. Visit heicivil.com.

### Usman Shuja Appointed to the Executive Board of the Nemetschek Group



Usman Shuja

The Nemetschek Group, a global software provider for the digital transformation in the construction and media industries, is expanding its executive board. The supervisory board unanimously appointed Usman Shuja to the executive board. Shuja will continue to serve as chief division officer (CDO) of the Build & Construct Division and as CEO of Bluebeam Inc. With this appointment, Shuja became the third member of the executive board, alongside CEO Yves Padrines and chief financial officer (CFO) Louise Öfverström. Shuja joined the Nemetschek Group in September 2023. Under his leadership, he has already shaped the strategic direction of the Build & Construct Division with an improved go-to-market approach and the successful execution of Bluebeam's subscription transition. Another important milestone was the successful acquisition of GoCanvas, a software-as-a-service (SaaS) provider of field worker collaboration software. Prior to joining the Nemetschek Group, Shuja was vice president and general manager of the Connected Buildings Division at Honeywell. Other stages in his career included companies such as Boston Consulting Group, IBM and Dell. He was also a founding member of Avathon (formerly SparkCognition), a software company specializing in artificial intelligence (AI). Visit nemetschek.com.

### Topcon Announces Landmark Expansion of Topnet Live Network Across US

Topcon Positioning Systems has announced a significant expansion of its Topnet Live reference station network, introducing 200 new geodetic stations strategically positioned across the U.S. This comprehensive network upgrade expands the availability of advanced centimeter-level accuracy for precision-critical industries, including engineering, surveying, construction and agricultural sectors. The expanded network delivers sophisticated network corrections that streamline operational workflows across multiple market segments. Beyond traditional applications, the enhanced infrastructure supports technologies in diverse areas, such as automated turf management, precision line marking, imaging systems, and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) mapping and delivery operations. "This unprecedented network expansion represents our commitment to providing cutting-edge geospatial solutions for all industries," said Jason Killpack, director of business development for Topcon Emerging Business. "With these latest additions and our efforts throughout 2024, we have grown Topnet Live total coverage by 30% in the U.S. Our services are empowering users in a multitude of market segments through comprehensive, network-modeled solutions that address a broad range of

### 100 Years

Caterpillar will offer limited edition machines to honor its centennial celebration in 2025. The company will sell machines in a custom "Centennial Grey" paint scheme to recognize the original color of Caterpillar's first products. Models may include: compact, small and medium wheel loaders; backhoe loaders; skid-steer loaders; compact track loaders; small- and medium-track type tractors; mini, small, medium and large excavators; and motor graders. Visit cat.com.

professional requirements," he said. Visit topconpositioning.com.

### Ian Aarsvold Joins Takeuchi-US as Southwest Region Product Manager



Ian Aarsvold

Ian Aarsvold is the new Southwest region product manager for Takeuchi-US. A current resident of Des Plaines, Illinois, Aarsvold is relocating to the Dallas-Fort Worth area during the first quarter of 2025 as he takes on his new role. As the Southwest region product manager (RPM), Aarsvold will be responsible for supporting Takeuchi's dealer and national rental accounts support within a multistate territory. Aarsvold will also work with dealer sales teams and their customers to demonstrate, promote and support Takeuchi's compact equipment product line. He will collaborate with other associates to develop and implement new product road maps and discover opportunities within the construction equipment market segment. Aarsvold held a role as a regional manager for the Association of Equipment Distributors (AED) in Chicago, where he was responsible for a territory of approximately 115 off-highway equipment distributors. There, Aarsvold allocated resources to best support dealer business growth through regular communication and in-person travel to dealer locations throughout his territory. He also led AED's Emerging Leaders Council which consisted of around 50 future owners and executives of AED member organizations to create a valuable peer network. Visit takeuchi-us.com.

### TMG Construction Corporation Announces Jason J. Lynch as New President

TMG Construction Corporation (TMG), a general contractor and design-builder, announced that Jason J. Lynch has been named president of TMG. This is TMG's first new president since it was incorporated in 1992. For over 20 years, Lynch has played a role in the construction industry. He has served in various leadership capacities, most recently as vice president of operations at TMG. Lynch has extensive knowledge of design-build, bid-build and task order contracting. He has overseen the construction, renovation and modernization of a wide variety of commercial, institutional and government facilities. The company noted his skill with operations, workflow management and building streamlined project teams that work cohesively to deliver multiple, concurrent projects on aggressive schedules. He has demonstrated success at building profitable construction operations, expanding TMG's geographic footprint and exceeding customer expectations. "After more than 30 years as TMG's president, I will be stepping back from this role. It is time for fresh, new leadership and I am delighted to see Jason transition to president of TMG Construction," said Tanya Matthews, TMG chairman of the board and president emeritus. TMG Construction is a national general contractor and design-builder for the federal, commercial, municipal, institutional and aviation markets. Visit tmgworld.net.

### JCB's Hydrogen Engine Is Approved for Use

JCB has cleared hurdles in its development of the world's first hydrogen combustion engine after securing landmark rulings from licensing authorities allowing it to be used commercially in machines. JCB is the first construction equipment company to develop a fully working combustion engine fueled by hydrogen, and a team of 150 engineers has been working on the $121 million development for over three years. In January, JCB confirmed that 11 licensing authorities across Europe have now given permission for JCB's hydrogen engine to be sold across Europe — with authorities in other countries set to follow suit with certification in 2025. JCB confirmed that the Netherlands' Vehicle Authority RDW was the first licensing authority to issue official certification, giving permission for the engine to be sold in the Netherlands. Other licensing bodies across Europe have followed RDW's lead by issuing the necessary certification, including Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Germany, France, Spain, Belgium, Poland, Finland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Licensing authorities in other countries are set to follow with certification during 2025. JCB has already produced more than 130 evaluation engines, which are powering backhoe loaders, telescopic handlers and generator sets. Real-world testing of JCB's hydrogen equipment on customers' sites is now at an advanced stage and progressing well. Visit jcb.com.

### Matt Dyer Appointed as New CEO of Merchants Fleet



Matt Dyer

Merchants Fleet, a national provider of fleet solutions, announced the appointment of Matt Dyer as CEO. Dyer brings decades of industry leadership and expertise to the role, including four years as CEO of LeasePlan USA. Dyer's extensive career includes leadership roles across the global fleet management industry. As CEO and president of LeasePlan USA, he improved the company's client net promoter score, implemented scalable operations, launched a portfolio of products and invested in tech innovations that resulted in historic growth for the company. Following the successful sale of LeasePlan USA, Dyer played a role in the integration of the business with Wheels. Dyer's appointment succeeds interim co-CEOs Brad Burgess and Kirk Hoffman who will return to their roles as senior vice president of sales and marketing and senior vice president and chief financial officer respectively. For more than 60 years, Merchants has provided the fleet industry with flexible funding, vehicle remarketing and fleet acquisition options, plus complete end-to-end electrification solutions. Visit merchantsfleet.com.

**NEED MORE NEWS?**
constructionbusinessowner.com/news




# Sustainable Building in New Jersey & Beyond

## PREMIER Design + Build Group completes industrial project with national developer

BY KRISTIN EASTERLING

When Brookfield Properties looked to build new distribution centers in New Jersey, they wanted to work with a construction firm with the same sustainability goals. PREMIER Design + Build Group ultimately won the bid to build the Montrose 287 Logistics Center in South Plainfield, New Jersey, completing the project in December 2024.

The new logistics center is part of a 112,191-square-foot industrial development featuring a 36-foot clear height, 27 dock doors, two drive-in doors, 98 car parking spaces, and an ESFR fire sprinkler system, along with a built-to-suit office area tailored to meet the tenant's specific needs, PREMIER said in a press release about the project.

Construction on the project began in 2021, as the world was emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to supply-chain challenges and long lead times, said Alexis Graziosetta-Tobias, vice president, project development for PREMIER.

"During procurement, our project management team was facing lead times significantly above average, in some cases nearly double what it typically is," Tobias said. "Distribution and manufacturing within industrial construction was experiencing a large influx of new development throughout the Northeast."

PREMIER partnered with design professionals, trade vendors and key subcontractors to help mitigate some of the supply chain issues, proactively procuring items for the project and initiating contracts and awards in an efficient manner.

Sustainability in the design was not a significant challenge, Tobias said. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification has been around since 1998, and most new construction today follows the standards laid out by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), which oversees the certification. New construction is ranked on a set of points by a USGBC inspector. The highest level of sustainability is recognized with a platinum rating.

"We've all adapted to LEED," Tobias said. "It's just determining the level [of the project]. Are they platinum? Are they gold? ... It really isn't a challenge; it's just having the contractor adapt to

what that means so the developer can meet the certification."

In line with LEED certification, the Montrose 287 Logistics Center features water-saving plumbing fixtures and energy-saving lighting. The building also features carbon-reducing concrete slabs. The concrete slab features a higher load-bearing capacity than traditional concrete, making it ideal for industrial applications.

"The saw joints are at the column lines, so the quantity is minimal," Tobias said. "It reduces up to 75% of silica materials, is only 6 inches thick, and uses chemical additives and fiberglass instead of traditional concrete. It saves more than 200,000 tons of CO2 from entering the atmosphere when compared to traditional slab on grade [construction]."

PREMIER is a design-build company, meaning they can enter a project from the conceptual level. With the Montrose 287 Logistics Center, Brookfield already had a full plan and specs, but that didn't change the way PREMIER approached the project, Tobias said.

The project started in the conference room, she said, building trust with Brookfield, who is one of the largest developers in the U.S.

"From PREMIER's executive team to field operations, early communication is key," she said. "We have everybody buy into the plans. We open the lines of communication with the engineers and the architects very early on."

PREMIER is on track to complete another property for Brookfield in 2025. The Union Distribution Center in Union, New Jersey, will be a 151,676-square-foot, Class A distribution facility, including 4,000-square-foot build-to-suit office space, 36-foot clear height, 28 dock doors, two drive-in doors, 16 trailer parking stalls and 123 car parking stalls. This project will also feature carbon-reducing concrete slabs and other sustainability attributes. The company is also bidding on projects across the country, both for Brookfield and other developers. ▲

*Kristin Easterling is a freelance writer for Construction Business Owner.*







Photo Credits: PREMIER Design + Build Group

# The Year of Thinking Strategically

State of the industry trends for 2025



GREGG M. SCHOPPMAN is a partner with FMI Corporation, management consultants and investment bankers for the construction industry. Schoppman specializes in the areas of productivity and project management. He also leads FMI's project management consulting practice. Prior to joining FMI, Schoppman served as a senior project manager for a general contracting firm in central Florida. He has completed complex construction projects in the medical, pharmaceutical, office, heavy civil, industrial, manufacturing and multifamily markets. He holds a bachelor's degree and master's degree in civil engineering, as well as a Master of Business Administration. Schoppman has expertise in numerous contract delivery methods, as well as knowledge of many geographical markets. Contact Schoppman by email at gregg.schoppman@fmicorp.com. Visit fmicorp.com.

In what appears to be a continuation of the previous year's performance, the construction industry continued to see either growth or stability in all its sectors in 2024. Anchored by a large thrust in the residential sector once again, businesses largely flourished. Most organizations have seen stability in both profitability and the competitive landscape, according to FMI's Civil Infrastructure Index. Below (Figure 1) is an excerpt from FMI's last quarterly outlook of 2024, illustrating the market sector perspective.

In a sizable juxtaposition to the industry's performance, there are also lingering signs of troubled waters for all businesses. For instance, within that final snapshot, FMI's predictive indicators of a potential recessionary market, flagged in four of the five core categories. The yield curve inversion, unemployment rate, new home sales and the overall supply of new homes were the troubling signs of a potential recessionary market. The one bright side was a positive change in year-over-year residential construction employment, which showed strength. By no means is this to say we are in a recession nor are we necessarily headed for one, but business leaders would be wise to remain vigilant and strategically focused in 2025.

With cautious optimism, contractors largely appear to be creating backlog faster than they are burning it. There are several trends that appear to be on the forefront of everyone's mind leading into this year. Some appear to be extensions of themes that have persisted for several years, either through a continued evolution of those themes or a general lack viable solutions.

## Dramatic Changes in the Digital World

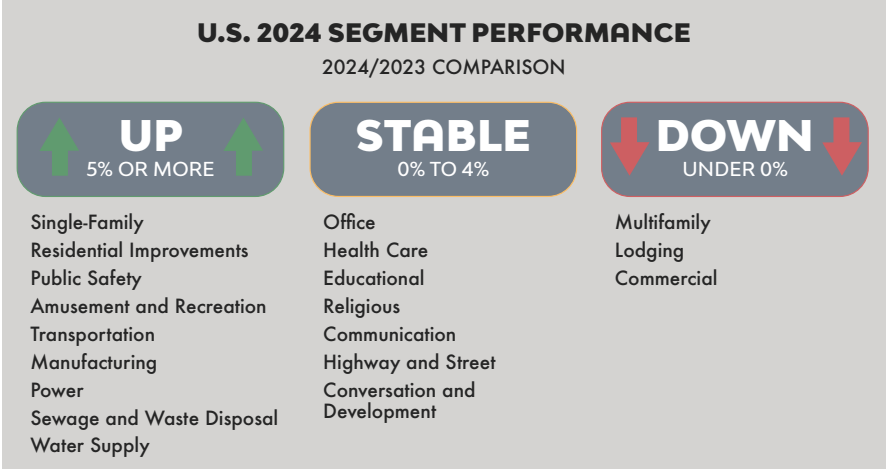



Figure 1. Fourth quarter market sector performance

One of the largest themes remains the increase of digital solutions in the market and the need to capitalize on artificial intelligence (AI) with an appropriate strategy. Every industry is continuing to investigate avenues to leverage AI to improve every aspect of their business. Construction leaders are similarly trying to find the angle, balancing an industry heavily predicated on human capital and equipment all while integrating the correct tools. Technology firms are moving at an exponential rate to provide sophisticated applications, while constructors appear saturated with options as they navigate the most cost-effective solution to improve productivity, drive utilization, increase bid accuracy, enhance safety, improve quality assurance/control and, ultimately, reduce risk. More importantly, firms have created a higher level of integration between what has been traditional "information technology" and "operations." Put another way, there is a strategic push to have a leader within the realm of technology work arm-in-arm with all facets of the business versus the traditional support role.

## Continued Talent Woes & the Proactive Push

In what seems to be a continued theme for the last decade, if not longer, is the constant refrain of the shortage of qualified associates, both tradespeople and management. However, the greatest difference from previous iterations of this statement is the push toward creating a solution. For years, leaders have lamented the lack of workers, only to realize that the solution may be an easier solve than previously thought: Become an employer of choice. This does not mean there will be a massive surge in the supply of workers, but rather a focused cultivation of talent within the four walls of a business. The most progressive organizations have created a strategy that focuses on onboarding, employee development, training, career progression and principles that retain top talent. Ultimately, the firms that focus on creating an employee-rich culture are able to leverage said culture more effectively. In the end, creating and developing talent begets more talent.

## Surge in Strategic Growth

According to FMI's fourth quarter Civil Infrastructure Index, 94% of the survey respondents indicated that their organizations had plans for expansion. The majority appear poised to grow organically while a small portion will utilize mergers and acquisitions. Whether this includes the expansion of current firm capabilities or some horizontal or vertical expansion, there is connective tissue between the firm's talent strategy and this growth vector. A firm that adds a new division or department will need appropriate leadership. If this person comes from within, the firm is now responsible for finding an adequate replacement in order for the growth to make practical and profitable sense. Additionally, this push across the construction landscape could create a new host of competition issues. As stated previously, there appeared to be stability in the competitive ranks. Does 2025 create an influx of new strategic issues as companies add new "game pieces" to the board that previously did not exist?

## Risk Management

Construction still remains one of the riskiest industries in the world. For years, firms have capitalized on risk management and even risk absorption to generate higher margins. However, the context around risk continues to be a sizable element that creates anxiety for firm leaders. Risks such as cybersecurity have become such commonplace for every industry that failure to create mitigation strategies is unacceptable. Full comprehension of risk management in finance, safety, technology, contract law and human capital is required and no longer the role of one person ensuring there is the appropriate policy coverage.

## The Rise of the Machines

While it seems redundant to discuss technology twice, the same thrust in the technology arena is one of the growth engines. Previously, there was the push in electric vehicles, battery production and large-scale charging stations. While still prevalent, the same fervor lies in data centers and the need to create complementary and scalable solutions to the nation's technological infrastructure needs. In some cases, the push to build such facilities creates a sizable burden on the labor market simultaneously. For example, consider the labor needs to construct a $30 billion data center in a midsize market. Now consider the ramifications of finding labor if you are not involved in the construction of said data center. Ancillary businesses see a boon in growth, which is welcome, while also creating an added wrinkle in the competitive landscape.

The "megatrends" that are the cornerstones of 2025 would be incomplete with adding a high level of uncertainty. As a new administration takes over, there are questions about immigration reform and its impact on the labor market. Additionally, there remain persistent concerns about macroeconomic landscape and how world markets will react to continued global strife.

These disrupters have manifested in the short term, wreaking havoc in logistics and supply chains in recent years. It appears that as one string is pulled, there is a domino effect of changes that leaders must consider. There certainly is optimism about 2025, but success will be achieved through careful and strategic actions. ▲

# Building Success Through People

Valley Interior Systems' commitment to culture



CAL BEYER, CWP, is senior director of SAFE Workplaces for SAFE Project. Beyer is a longtime national advocate for workplace mental health, substance misuse, suicide prevention, and opioid risk reduction and overdose prevention. This grew out of his work on human capital risk management and worker well-being. Since 2016, he has served as a member of the editorial advisory board for Construction Business Owner. Reach Beyer at cal@safeproject.us or 651-307-7883. Visit safeproject.us.

Over the past 30-plus years of organizational consulting experience in risk management, safety/health and well-being, I've had the pleasure of supporting hundreds of organizations. The importance of culture cannot be overstated. Culture is how an organization communicates how things get done. The building blocks of organizational culture consist of values, beliefs, attitudes and norms. By norms, I mean the typical established behaviors and practices of each organization, operating department or division and/or the work group level. Norms are the "rules of engagement" of how people are expected to interact.

Every organization has a prevailing culture and can have one or more subcultures. I have always been fascinated by the companies that truly put people first. I have observed how these companies sound, look and feel differently than other companies. These companies seem to have a "secret sauce" that typically make them more productive, effective and profitable. This people-first ethos is baked into the DNA of the company.

One of the companies I have enjoyed meeting over the past five years is Valley Interior Systems (Valley) in Cincinnati. Valley began in 1981 as a union specialty subcontractor focused on interior construction. Over the decades, the company has expanded its scope to include complex and challenging exterior projects, all while staying true to its roots in framing, walls and interior finishes.

With five additional regional offices (Columbus, Dayton and Toledo in Ohio; Lexington, Kentucky; and Nashville, Tennessee) and a team of over 1,300 employees, Valley's growth has been fueled by its intentional focus on a people-first culture. Valley's leadership has focused on building a culture that actively unites more than 1,200 field workers with roughly 110 office staff serving in various roles.

## A People-First Approach?

"The way you treat your working family will determine everything else in your company," said Christopher Sanders, vice president of safety, who has been with Valley for 25 years. "By putting employees as your priority, they will put your business objectives as theirs. We see this reflected in our production levels, quality and safety observations." This philosophy drives a culture where employees are invested in both the company's growth and their own.

## What Makes Valley Interior Systems Unique?

- **Commitment to safety** — With 20 safety team members and a robust safety orientation led by the safety department, Valley intentionally combines physical safety and emotional well-being.
- **Training and development** — From Day 1, employees are immersed in Valley's culture and programs, emphasizing that they are valued both as professionals and as individuals.
- **Athletic trainers to support return to work for injury rehabilitation** — Valley provides ongoing support,

including access to athletic trainers for medical conditions and assistance with off-the-job injuries for employees and their families.
- **Weekly culture discussions** — Foremen lead conversations about the company's 24 fundamentals, fostering a shared understanding and commitment to excellence.

## Core Values in Action

Valley's commitment to culture is deeply rooted in its leadership and core values. The company has identified 25 cultural fundamentals describing "The Valley Way" that are actively instilled at every level of the organization. Each week, one fundamental is reviewed on every jobsite, led by foremen to foster accountability and positive reinforcement among field and management teams alike. This process ensures that culture isn't just a talking point but a shared experience.

The following eight examples are among the 25 cultural fundamentals or values of Valley:

- Take pride in your work
- Do the right thing always
- Honor commitments
- Think safe, work safe
- Add value
- Get clear expectations up-front
- Listen to understand
- Speak straight

Supporting each of the 25 cultural fundamentals are simple practice statements to help ensure adoption and consistent application of the desired behaviors. This includes a brief descriptive summary of how to live out the core value in their work. Sanders has shared that "Many employees talk about how living out these cultural fundamentals at home and outside of work have improved the quality of their lives, and improved communications and relationships in their personal lives."

## Sustaining a People-First Culture

As Valley has grown, senior leadership has been intentional about maintaining its people-first culture through various methods. Three specific practices are ingrained into the company's operations:

- **Purposeful hiring** — Ensuring that new hires align with the company's cultural values.
- **Comprehensive training** — Day 1 orientations led by the safety department set the tone for Valley's employee-first ethos. Safety works closely with human resources to deliver a thorough orientation to all new hires.
- **Continuous support** — Employee assistance programs (EAPs) and additional resources ensure employees have the support they need to thrive both personally and professionally.

## Industry Leadership & Advocacy

Beyond its internal culture, Valley is highly active in industry associations, including the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC); Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industry (AWCI); Builders Exchanges in different marketplaces; the Ceilings & Interior Systems Construction Association (CISCA); Signatory Wall and Ceiling Contractors Alliance (SWACCA); and Spirit of Construction (SOC). These partnerships allow Valley to advocate for workforce development, professional growth and industry advancement.

## Established Leader in Workplace Mental Health

Valley is also at the forefront of workplace mental health and suicide prevention. Sanders, a military veteran, leads the "2 Tuff 2 Talk" (2tuff2talk.com) initiative, a joint labor-management mental health and suicide prevention program. This innovative program was jointly started by the AGC of Northwest Ohio and the Construction Employers Association (CEA) in northeast Ohio. Sanders serves as the elected president of the initiative and as a dedicated lead trainer. Sanders has also been a proponent for the adoption of naloxone in the company's workplaces and jobsites to help reverse the effects of opioid overdoses.

Valley has also been active in the Blueprints for Well-Being Council sponsored by the Builders Exchange of Central Ohio. Valley was an early supporter of this group of leading construction companies and service providers committed to build a healthy culture at their companies. The focus of this group is to promote holistic education from experts in well-being and share best practices with the goal of normalizing help-seeking behaviors among the construction workforce.

An outgrowth of Valley's commitment to mental and behavioral health is the unique Valley Family Fund that's designed to help employees experiencing an emergency or crisis to receive financial support from their colleague employees. Office staff donate to a fund that supports all employees facing personal challenges, reinforcing the sense of community within the company. "We feel all employees are people first, employees second," Sanders explained.

"Valley created a fund to help our working family handle personal challenges. By supporting employees through tough times, we help them refocus at work and provide for their families."

Valley is a visionary company that continues to attain success and growth. Company leadership attributes this success to its adherence to safety and its other core fundamental values centered on being a people-first culture. I am proud to share the story of Valley and its unique culture in this first profile of companies in this new featured column. ▲

# Too Late to Plan, but Not to Save

5 tax-saving opportunities after year-end



JEFFREY JACKSON is a managing director at CBIZ in the company's Nashville, Tennessee, office. He is experienced in working with construction contractors, real estate developers and manufacturing businesses. He provides tax accounting for long-term contracts, accounting methods and look-back filings for large and small contractors, evaluating current accounting methods and potential tax-saving method changes. He also advises on new partnership formation for real estate developers and exit strategies upon asset disposition. Reach out to Jackson at Jeffrey.Jackson@cbiz.com. Visit cbiz.com/industries/construction-national-practice.

Tax planning is critical in managing cash flow and ensuring the government gets no more than its fair share. Most contractors know they must manage taxes but may be too busy to plan. All tax planning strategies have deadlines, and most tax savings tactics must be implemented by the end of the calendar year. However, there are still options to mitigate tax liability. Below are five tactics that contractors can implement right now.

## 1. Analyze Current Accounting Methods

Contractors have many accounting methods to choose from and may identify cash-saving tax deferrals by changing to the most advantageous method. The IRS allows two types of method changes: automatic (accrual to cash, accrual excluding retainage), which can generally be made after year-end, and nonautomatic (completed contract method), which must be made before year-end. Since nonautomatic changes must be requested before year-end, we will focus on automatic changes.

### Automatic Changes (Can Be Made After Year-End)

#### *a. Accrual to Cash (Overall Method)*

A contractor may have multiple methods because they have an overall method of accounting and a method of accounting for long-term contracts.

The overall method of accounting is how they account for all aspects of the business, except long-term contracts, and is typically cash or accrual basis. Small business taxpayers with average annual gross receipts of less than $30 million for the prior three years can choose cash or accrual, generally choosing the most beneficial method. Generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) typically requires accrual for financials, but it isn't always the most advantageous method of accounting for contractors as they are taxed on their overbilling.

#### *b. Accrual Excluding Retainage (Overall Method)*

One potential tax-saving method for large taxpayers with average annual receipts greater than $30 million could be accrual excluding retainage, an automatic change that can be made after year-end. This method allows a contractor to defer recognition of retainage receivable and payables on non-long-term contracts. This deferral can be significant, as retainage is a large part of any specialty subcontractor's receivables and payables.

## 2. Ensure Proper Tax Percentage on Long-Term Contracts

Long-term contracts, which begin in one tax period and end in another, must be accounted for under the percentage of completion (POC) method, but to no surprise, the tax code requires taxpayers to calculate POC differently for tax purposes than GAAP purposes. Because of this difference, the tax return will (or should) show a gross profit and net income different from the GAAP financials.

The IRS requires taxpayers using the POC method to allocate selling general and administrative expenses (SG&A) to the jobs. This contradicts GAAP principles and can increase the estimated cost to complete the jobs, resulting in tax deferrals on profitable, uncompleted jobs. The requirement to allocate SG&A to the jobs is not an election but a requirement imposed by the tax code. Therefore, the taxpayer can analyze and implement the tax percentage of completion calculations after year-end.

## 3. Choose the Best Reporting Method for Non-Long-Term Contracts

### *a. Identify Contracts*

Earlier, we mentioned exceptions to using POC for large contractors. One often overlooked exception occurs when a taxpayer lumps all their contracts into the POC method instead of just the long-term contracts. Long-term contracts span a taxpayer's year-end and must be accounted for under POC, but jobs started and finished in the same year are not considered long-term and should be accounted for under the overall method of accounting. The contractor should analyze whether changing to the cash or accrual excluding retainage methods would be beneficial.

### *b. Contracts That Are Less Than 10% Complete*

Contracts less than 10% complete at year-end may be excepted from the long-term contract requirement to use POC. There is no election associated with the less than 10% complete exclusion, so taxpayers who haven't previously implemented the strategy can still implement it after the end of the year but before filing their returns.

### *c. Home Construction Contracts*

Another exception that can be applied after the end of the year relates to home construction contracts. A home contract exists where each building constructed has four or fewer dwelling units. Townhomes also meet the definition of a home construction contract. A taxpayer does not need to recognize income on POC for home construction contracts but can recognize it in its overall method of accounting. The IRS generally requires all costs and revenue associated with home construction to be capitalized until the home is sold, resulting in taxpayers' ability to defer all gross profit on home construction contracts until completion.

## 4. Analyze Depreciation Methods & Elections

Bonus depreciation provisions can generate significant tax deductions for contractors. For 2024, the default rule is that 60% of each eligible asset must be depreciated in the first year, with the remaining 40% depreciated under the MACRS rules over the specified useful life of the asset.

The bonus depreciation percentage was 100% until 2023, when it decreased to 80% and 60% in 2024. It will decrease by 20% annually until it reaches zero at the end of 2026. When the bonus was a 100% write-off, taxpayers had less reason to consider which method of expensing was best, but as the percentage decreases, it is more important to analyze the method used.

IRC Section 179 allows a taxpayer to expense the entire cost of the eligible property (up to $1.22 million) the first year it is placed in service. The election can only be used if the taxpayer has positive income after the deduction and the taxpayer only places a certain amount of assets in service during a year ($3.05 million for 2024).

With the bonus at 60% for 2024, it is vital to analyze whether to capitalize an asset or expense the cost as a repair. Repairs do not improve or extend the useful life but maintain the asset's normal operating condition. However, with some of the larger pieces of equipment, the benefit of expensing versus capitalizing is significant.

## 5. Consider Cost Segregation Studies (Even If the Asset Was Purchased in a Prior Year)

Many contractors require substantial real estate to operate, including equipment repair shops, equipment yards, office space and more. If the contractor owns the real estate, it is possible to increase and accelerate depreciation deductions on the depreciable aspects of the real estate.

A cost segregation study allows the taxpayer to break each asset component into the proper bucket for tax, generally resulting in costs moving from the bonus-ineligible 39.5-year asset to shorter terms from five to 15 years, which are typically bonus eligible. The savings could be substantial, and a cost segregation study increases tax deferrals and provides audit protection if the IRS ever questions the deduction.

The study may also be completed any time up to three years after the asset is placed in service, and the depreciation can be caught up in the year the taxpayer completes the study by filing an accounting method change related to the depreciation on that asset. This method change can be made at any time up to the extended due date of the return, so there still may be time to complete a study if the contractor placed an asset in service in a previous year.

While it is objectively better to complete tax planning during and before year-end, these are just a few opportunities to save in the new year. ▲

# The Power of Female Mentorship in Construction & Design

How women are breaking through in a male-dominated industry



ELIZABETH HOOVER is the vice president of people and marketing at Bravas Home Experience Design, a leading national custom integrator of smart home and automation solutions. Visit bravas.com.

The construction and design industry, historically an industry that's predominantly male, is currently changing before our eyes. With more women entering the field at all levels, there is a growing trend toward seeking guidance from other fellow females. This change highlights the growing importance of female mentorship and support, which is becoming a benefit in advancing women's careers and improving the industry's work environment.

## Women Making Their Mark

Women are increasingly making their presence felt in construction, with roles expanding across project management, design, engineering, sales and various supporting trades. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, women constituted approximately 11% of the construction workforce in 2023. While this is an improvement, it also calls attention to the ongoing need for mentorship and support in this industry.

Women entering construction today face several obstacles, from confronting stereotypes to navigating a male-dominated culture. Female mentorship offers support, helping new employees navigate such challenges more effectively.

## The Importance of Female Mentorship

Female mentorship is becoming an important element for women in construction. It offers more than just career advice; it provides emotional support, insights into industry dynamics and strategies for career progression. For women who may be the first in their families or communities to join the field, having a mentor can be critical, especially in the early years of experience.

Research reinforces the importance of mentorship: Women who have mentors are 77% more likely to still be working in the industry after three years compared to those without mentorship. Thus, mentorship not only supports individual career advancement but also improves retention.

A Forbes article notes that mentoring can be particularly beneficial for women, emphasizing that women with mentors are more likely to experience career growth and overall satisfaction. This highlights the importance of mentorship in helping women navigate and succeed in male-dominated industries.

Mentorship bridges the gap between entry-level positions and leadership roles. Women mentors offer valuable perspectives based on their own personal experiences, helping newcomers understand the industry and overcome obstacles firsthand by personal understanding of what is needed to overcome many challenges along the way.

## Changing Industry Practices

The rise of female mentorship is now also influencing broader industry practices. Companies that support mentorship programs often experience benefits such as improved employee retention, higher job satisfaction and enhanced team performance.

Companies that invest in mentorship programs are supporting their employees and boosting their own competitiveness. An inclusive and supportive work environment leads to more innovative solutions and better outcomes.

Diverse teams have been shown to outperform their peers in profitability and productivity. According to McKinsey & Company, gender-diverse teams are 39% more likely to outperform financially. This data highlights the value through initiatives like female mentorship, which helps build more effective and innovative teams.

## Addressing Challenges

Despite its advantages, female mentorship in construction faces challenges. Identifying qualified mentors can be difficult, especially in industries where women are underrepresented. The effectiveness of mentorship programs also depends on the commitment of both mentors and mentees.

A successful mentorship relationship requires dedication from both parties. Structured programs can help ensure that mentors and mentees are aligned, and that the mentorship process is productive.

Data from Mentorloop indicates that 87% of people with mentors report increased confidence in their careers. This illustrates the need for well-organized mentorship initiatives to support women in the industry.

## The Future of Female Mentorship

Looking ahead, the role of female mentorship in construction is likely to become even more important. As the industry evolves, there will be a continuous need for experienced women to guide newcomers and advocate for systemic changes that promote gender equity.

Organizations are increasingly recognizing this need and are supporting female mentorship through training programs, networking events and women-focused industry conferences. These initiatives are essential in creating a supportive network for women at all stages of their careers.

The emphasis on female mentorship represents a need in addressing gender disparities and fostering a more inclusive work environment. As women continue to make significant contributions to the field, mentorship will be key in guiding their success and shaping the future of the construction industry.

Female mentorship is not just about providing support to individual women but about changing the industry into a more dynamic and inclusive field. Embracing mentorship can help the industry reach the full potential of its diverse workforce, drive innovation and set a positive precedent for future generations. ▲




# The Power of Clarity at Work

How goals, roles & tasks transform teams

BY KATE ZABRISKIE

Imagine a team starting a project with energy and optimism. Ideas are flying, everyone's ready to contribute and the excitement is high. But a few weeks in, the team is struggling, and the wind is out of their sails. People are frustrated, deadlines are slipping and, despite all the effort, they're behind. Sound familiar?

That's the cost of confusion. When teams aren't clear on goals, roles and tasks, even the most talented group can lose direction. Clarity isn't just nice-to-have — it's what keeps teams aligned, productive and, yes, drama-free. When everyone understands the bigger purpose behind their work, their unique role and the tactical steps needed to get there, teams don't just function — they thrive.

Let's look at what can go wrong without clarity, explore the benefits of getting everyone on the same page and break down how to make clarity part of your team's culture.

## The High Cost of Confusion

Without clear goals, roles and tasks, the impact on teams can range from demoralizing to destructive.

## Double the Effort, Half the Results

Picture Doug and Arora, both assuming they're leading the next client pitch. They each spend hours preparing, researching and crafting slides. Finally they meet, only to realize they've both been working on the same thing. Instead of doubling their productivity, they've doubled their workload — and they're left wondering why it happened in the first place.

## Missed Deadlines & Frustrated Teams

Imagine a content team tackling a project with a tight deadline. They're confident they can get it done, but no one's clear on roles. Karen thinks Colin is handling client follow-ups, while Colin assumes Karen's on it. Hours pass as they scramble to sort out tasks. By the time they've sorted it, out the deadline has passed, and trust fades as frustration sets in.

## Burnout on the Horizon

Consider John, a team member new to



Photo Credit: Platoo Studio - stock.adobe.com

the project. He's eager to contribute, but no one's clear on his role. Days pass in uncertainty, and over time, the lack of direction drains his energy. Without a clear role, John isn't just unproductive — he's on a fast track to burnout.

## The Blame Game

When roles and responsibilities are unclear, accountability fades. If something goes wrong, the response becomes "not my job" or "I thought someone else was handling that." Blame circulates, and soon the team is more focused on defending actions than solving problems.

## The Magic of Clarity

The cost of confusion is depressing, but when clarity is present, a team transforms from a group of individuals into a coordinated unit. Goals, roles and tasks create a structure where every person can confidently contribute, knowing how their work ties into the bigger picture. The following sections show how targeted clarity works.

## Clear Goals Connect to the Greater Purpose

Clear goals give everyone a sense of purpose. When goals link to a bigger "why," people make better decisions about where to spend their time and energy. Imagine the team's goal is to increase customer satisfaction scores by 20% this quarter. Why? Because high satisfaction improves retention, loyalty and referrals. Each team member understands that by improving these scores, they're building stronger client relationships that will drive future growth. Clear goals turn work into a shared mission.

## Clear Roles Keep People in Their Lanes

When roles are defined, each team member knows their unique contribution. Patrick focuses on research, while Karen leads presentations. They can each focus on their strengths without worrying about overlap or missed tasks. Clear roles promote accountability and empower people to bring their best without fear of stepping on toes.

## Clear Tasks Get the Sausage Made

Tasks are the tactics that bring goals to life. Clear tasks provide a road map that makes daily work straightforward. Vague instructions like "make customers happy" create hesitation. But if the task is specific — "send follow-up emails to five top clients this week"— each step brings the team closer to the goal. Clear tasks are what keep the wheels turning and make meaningful progress possible.

## 5 Simple Steps to Building a Culture of Clarity

Making clarity part of your team's DNA doesn't have to be complicated. Below are five steps to bring goals, roles and tasks into focus.

### *Step 1: Set Specific, Measurable Goals*

Goals should be like a GPS pin. Move away from vague ideas like "improve client engagement." Instead, set a target like "increase customer satisfaction by 15% by the end of the quarter." When goals are measurable, they give the team a clear destination — which helps everyone stay focused and motivated.

### *Step 2: Define Roles With Purpose*

Each team member should understand their specific part in the mission. If Rod is responsible for research and data analysis, make sure everyone knows that's his lane. Defined roles mean less confusion, fewer overlaps, more accountability and more confidence.

### *Step 3: Break Big Goals Into Actionable Tasks*

General instructions leave too much to interpretation. Break big goals down into bite-sized tasks. Instead of "make the product launch successful," assign tasks like "prepare a launch strategy proposal" or "organize a demo day with top clients." When tasks are actionable, team members know exactly what needs doing.

### *Step 4: Encourage Open, Consistent Communication*

Clarity isn't a one-time fix — it's a habit. Create an environment where team members feel safe to ask questions and clarify expectations. Open communication keeps misunderstandings small and creates a culture where clarity is everyone's responsibility.

### *Step 5: Use Tools That Keep Everyone Aligned*

Use shared tools to keep goals, roles and tasks in one place. When everyone can access a shared road map, confusion decreases, alignment improves and the whole team can focus on what really matters.

## Wrapping It Up

Clarity isn't just about getting things done — it's about giving your team the foundation to thrive. When everyone understands the goal, their unique role and the tasks that bring it all together, work becomes more than a to-do list. It becomes a shared mission where each person is confident in their contribution. ▲

---

*Kate Zabriskie is the president of Business Training Works Inc., a Maryland-based talent development firm. She and her team provide on-site, virtual, and online soft-skills training courses and workshops to clients in the U.S. and internationally. Visit businesstrainingworks.com.*



# Navigating Insurance & Risk Management: A Practical Guide

The lowdown on your insurance options

BY ALBERT SICA

In today's complex business landscape, understanding and managing risks is no longer optional. Whether it's negotiating contract terms, purchasing the right insurance policies or ensuring compliance with subcontractor requirements, every decision has a direct impact on your company's financial health and operational resilience.

Risk and the financial impact of risk is something that merits a risk-insurance plan that will identify the various areas the firm is exposed to risk, and the mitigation strategies available to the contractor to reduce the risk they are exposed to. That sounds like a bunch of mumbo jumbo, but it is the core of a good risk management strategy.

Stated simply, think: "What can happen? How bad (financially) can it get? What can I do about it?" Thinking about how to approach your business operations with an eye to reduce or avoid surprises is a prudent balance to managing your business operations.

First, think about risk and financial impact — some risks your firm is exposed to can be mitigated in a few principal ways — through negotiating better contract terms and buying the "right" insurance. This article explores five critical areas where effective risk management can protect and strengthen your business.



Photo Credit: ImageFlow - stock.adobe.com

## 1. Risk Provisions in Contracts: Upstream & Downstream Considerations

Generally, it is challenging for a contractor to negotiate attractive risk terms in contracts with upstream parties. Those parties can be project owners, general contractors (GCs) or others who are dictating terms. The goal is to establish a reasonable standard in risk transfer you accept. Many contractor firms are multigenerational, and to "bet the farm" because you are not aware or willing to push back on overreaching contract terms is not advisable. The way risk is allocated in a contract can significantly impact a company's exposure.

• *Upstream risks (GC to owner)* — When negotiating contracts with an upstream party (a project owner or general contractor), scrutinize indemnity clauses, insurance requirements and liability caps. These provisions often determine who bears the financial burden if something goes wrong. For example, overly broad indemnity clauses could force your company to take

responsibility for issues outside your control. Work with legal and risk management professionals to strike a balance that protects your interests without jeopardizing the deal.
- *Downstream risks (GC to subcontractors)* — The same diligence applies to contracts with subcontractors. Transfer appropriate risks to subcontractors by including clear insurance requirements, waiver of subrogation clauses and flow-down provisions that mirror your obligations to the owner. Ensure subcontractors carry adequate insurance, and verify compliance before work begins.

Having a competent attorney familiar with construction terms and the venue you are dealing with is a must. Work with counsel collaboratively to develop your "standard" upstream contract which would be the preferred format to start with if possible. Another opportunity is to write an effective "downstream" contract you would use with your subcontractors. You should try to have a comprehensive risk transfer structure in that contract as well. A few quick tips:

- Having a reasonable indemnity that is tied to insurable risks is ideal.
- Limiting your risk for noninsurable items is certainly a goal.
- Having comprehensive insurance provisions in both upstream and downstream contracts is preferred to avoid misunderstandings on what is "compliant."
- Limit your exposure to "consequential loss." Taking responsibility for loss of earnings or something other than the direct damage that is caused without a cap is a bad idea.

## 2. Buying Insurance: Understanding Coverage

Purchasing insurance is more than just checking a box. It's about building a safety net tailored to your business's unique risks. The competition for writing insurance in the contracting space is intense, but the brokers who have the market relationships and technical knowledge are far more limited. Buying proper insurance is your ability to protect your balance sheet and the overall financial health of the company.

Your business is highly dependent on you having proper insurance: You cannot win jobs or satisfy upstream insurance requirements without comprehensive insurance. Finding a reputable insurance broker who is familiar with the operations your firm provides can make all the difference in securing proper insurance.

There are a few key considerations:

- Interview brokers to determine their experience and other clients of similar size and scope they write. Get references and speak to the principals of those firms.
- Get details about your broker team. Who is your account executive? Are they involved in your account 365 days a week? You want a good captain who is not going to leave the ship after landing the business.
- What other broker services do you need? Help with contract review? Issuing certificates of insurance within 24 hours or less? Do they have a claims department? Meet the team — they will be your team!
- Which insurers does that broker have direct relationships with? Are they simply going to hand your business to a wholesaler you do not know and who doesn't know you? Understand how that works from the broker.

Let's get comprehensive coverage placed! Below are some steps.

- *Identify key risks* — Work with a knowledgeable broker to conduct a risk assessment. Identify exposures specific to your industry, such as property damage, cyber risks or professional liability. Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) has a risk management page (agc.org) that can provide useful information to help you structure your exposure survey. The best thing is to think as if you were your insurer: How would the insurer want to understand your business and look for ways you mitigate your company's operational risk?
- *Understand policy language* — Insurance policies are dense and technical, but understanding coverage and exclusions is crucial. For example, does your general liability policy cover contractual liability? Are there exclusions for common risks like water damage or pollution? This is not something you are going to self-study easily, but it's an area where a knowledgeable broker or consultant can assist. When you are presented with proposals, go over the coverage carefully. What is covered? What is not covered? Do you understand the terms being presented? I am a big advocate of the broker spending time reviewing the proposal and the terms and conditions in detail. Go one by one, and ask about each provision.
- *Assess coverage limits* — Limits of coverage can be driven by exposures you have (property that needs to be insured) or by requirements you have with others. This is an area where good risk management can have a huge effect on how the risks associated with your operations are viewed by the insurance market. Ensure your policy limits align with the potential size of your losses. Inadequate limits could leave your business financially vulnerable. Some standard coverages a contractor would consider include: general liability, workers' compensation, automobile, excess liability, contractors professional liability, contractors pollution liability property insurance (building, tools, equipment), loss of income (extra expense), crime coverage, directors and officers liability, and employment practices liability.

- *Negotiate terms* — As stated earlier, you need to understand what you are buying and how the coverage (protecting you) is being negotiated. This coverage transparency can't be emphasized enough. Don't accept the first offer. Work with your broker to negotiate terms that better fit your needs, such as reduced deductibles or expanded coverage endorsements.

## 3. Claims Management: What Is (Really) Possible?

Filing an insurance claim is often a stressful process, but proper preparation and management can make a significant difference.

- *Documentation is key* — Keep detailed records of incidents, including photos, witness statements and repair estimates. These will strengthen your case when filing a claim.
- *Understand the process* — Know the steps involved in filing a claim, from notifying your insurer to negotiating a settlement. Familiarize yourself with policy conditions, such as time limits for reporting claims.
- *Be proactive in mitigation* — Demonstrating that you took steps to mitigate losses can improve your claim's credibility. For example, if your property is damaged, arrange temporary repairs to prevent loss.
- *Leverage expert assistance* — Claims adjusters work for the insurer, not you. Consider hiring a public adjuster or working with your broker to ensure your interests are represented.
- *Set realistic expectations* — Not all claims result in full recovery. Understand your policy's limitations and exclusions to avoid surprises.

## 4. Workers' Compensation: Maximizing Your Influence

Workers' compensation premiums are heavily influenced by your experience modification rate (EMR), which compares your company's claims history to industry averages. A lower EMR means lower premiums, so actively managing this metric can save significant money.

- *Prioritize safety* — The most effective way to lower your EMR is to prevent workplace injuries. Invest in robust safety programs, employee training and regular inspections.
- *Manage claims effectively* — When injuries occur, act quickly to provide medical care and facilitate a return-to-work program. The longer an injured employee is out, the higher the claim costs.
- *Verify claim accuracy* — Errors in your claims history can inflate your EMR. Regularly review your loss runs to ensure all claims are accurately reported and closed promptly.
- *Leverage safety incentives* — Many insurers offer credits or discounts for implementing proactive safety measures. Explore these opportunities to reduce costs.

## 5. Subcontractor Insurance: Compliance & Certificates

Subcontractor compliance is a critical component of risk management. Failure to ensure proper insurance coverage can expose your business to significant liabilities.

- *Establish requirements* — Clearly specify insurance requirements in your subcontractor agreements. Typical requirements include general liability, workers' compensation and automobile liability coverage with minimum limits.
- *Verify certificates of insurance* (COIs) — Don't take COIs at face value. Verify their authenticity and confirm that coverage meets your contractual requirements. Pay attention to policy expiration dates, and ensure renewals are received.
- *Track compliance* — Use software or third-party services to track subcontractor insurance compliance. Automated systems can flag expired or noncompliant policies, saving time and reducing risk.
- *Audit coverage* — Periodically audit subcontractor insurance policies to ensure they provide the coverage specified in the COI. For example, a subcontractor's general liability policy should not exclude key exposures like roofing or excavation if those are part of the project.

Effective risk management is about more than mitigating potential losses — it's about positioning your business for long-term success. By addressing risk provisions in contracts, purchasing the right insurance, managing claims effectively, influencing your workers' compensation EMR and ensuring subcontractor compliance, you can create a comprehensive strategy that safeguards your business.

Invest the time to understand these principles and partner with experienced professionals to implement them. The result will be a more resilient, competitive and profitable business. ▲

*Albert Sica, founder and managing principal of The ALS Group, brings over 30 years of expertise in risk management with a focus on real estate and development. The ALS Group are fee-based advisors who do not sell or broker insurance and provide project owners with practical, tactical strategy implementation around insurance related matters. Sica partners with executive leaders to drive effective risk management strategies aligned with their strategic goals. Visit thealsgroup.com.*



# Laying the Groundwork for AP Automation in Construction



**FREE • MARCH 13 • 1 P.M. CENTRAL**

CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS OWNER webinar

As finance departments face pressure to streamline processes, cut costs and boost productivity, many leaders are prioritizing digital transformation. According to AvidXchange's 2025 Trends survey, 61% of finance leaders cite operational efficiencies as their top priority for 2025, with 57% focused on advancing digital transformation. Despite this, more than a third remain hesitant to automate, often due to limited understanding or expertise.

Accounts payable (AP) automation offers a powerful solution, yet many organizations are reluctant to adopt it without a clear understanding of its benefits.

## SPEAKERS



**Mark Brousseau**
*President*
Brousseau & Associates



**Rhonda Greene**
*APSC*
AvidXchange



**Alexis Bates**
*Director of Construction & Development Accounting*
Robert High Development

Sponsored by

avidxchange

REGISTER AT
CONSTRUCTIONBUSINESSOWNER.COM/WEBINARS

# Pivotal New Cybersecurity Requirements for Government Contractors

## Understanding & complying with the CMMC

BY MATT GILBERT

Government contractors and subcontractors face a pivotal year when it comes to cybersecurity. In late 2024, the Department of Defense's (DoD) Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) program went into effect, creating a chain reaction across various industries reliant on government contracts as part of the defense industrial base (DIB) supply chain. The CMMC program, which aims to safeguard federal contract information (FCI) and controlled unclassified information (CUI) within the DoD contracting community, will require contractors of all sizes to adopt more robust security protocols and adhere to specific guidelines. Since the construction industry plays a vital role in building, updating and maintaining the DoD's infrastructure, bases and facilities, they must be prepared to comply with CMMC to continue participating in DoD contracts.

Increased use of technology, access to sensitive data and relative lack of cyber maturity make construction businesses attractive targets for attackers. CMMC's primary goal is to safeguard the DoD's supply chain from cyber threats, making it a business priority for construction companies handling FCI or CUI. Certification levels vary, with Level 1 requiring self-assessment and Level 2 necessitating certification from a certified third-party assessment organization (C3PAO). In addition to providing an opportunity to improve cybersecurity protocols and demonstrate cybersecurity readiness, early adoption of CMMC standards offers construction businesses a competitive edge, as fewer than 100 companies can conduct Level 2 assessments, while over 80,000 organizations are expected to seek certification.



Photo Credit: NicoElNino - stock.adobe.com

Determining CMMC applicability can be complex, especially for subcontractors further down the DoD supply chain. Construction companies can determine their applicability by asking clients and partners if they have Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) clauses indicating CUI handling, or if there's any language in proposals or agreements that mention being CMMC compliant. If prime contractors have CUI or CMMC clauses in their contracts, then those clauses and requirements must flow down to subcontractors handling CUI or covered defense information as well, ensuring compliance throughout the supply chain.

The CMMC level 2 certification process, managed by the Cyber

Accreditation Body (Cyber-AB), is designed to be straightforward, with an expected time frame of four to eight weeks, depending on the scope of the evaluation. The process involves implementing the full set of 110 controls, without exception, and preparing necessary documentation. For a portion of the controls, if something is not met during the process, conditional certification may be granted with a six-month remediation phase to address unmet items. Organizations must allocate resources effectively and assemble a dedicated team to prioritize compliance as failure to select the right team could result in delays and added costs in the process.

To prepare for CMMC assessment, construction companies should begin by properly identifying and organizing their scope in alignment with the five distinct CMMC-defined asset categories to allow for effective allocation of resources. By limiting the size and complexity of the in-scope assets, the certification process becomes faster, easier and more cost-efficient. Companies should then complete a system security plan (SSP), document CUI data flows, conduct self-assessments and consider engaging external advisors with CMMC expertise as they can help streamline the process and reduce costs and potential operational strains.

With CMMC's final rule effective from Dec. 16, 2024, construction companies should begin the certification process immediately to avoid delays, especially given the potential for long C3PAO waitlists. Proactive measures, such as internal assessments and engaging knowledgeable advisors, can ensure successful certification and maintain competitiveness in securing DoD contracts.

Want to learn more about what CMMC certification entails and how to get started? Scan the QR code to read the extended article with additional information on the process and what construction organizations can do to prepare. ▲

*Matt Gilbert leads Baker Tilly's CMMC and government contractor IT risk suite of services. Gilbert is actively engaged in supporting government contractors, grant recipients, state and local governments, and federal agencies to navigate the CMMC requirements but has extensive experience supporting NIST 800-171 and 800-53-related assessments. Visit bakertilly.com.*






WHAT'S TRENDING NEXT HAPPENS HERE FIRST

Boldly stake your claim in the competitive homebuilding and remodeling industry when you master the trends and innovations shaping the future of tile and stone.

At Coverings 2025, you'll discover the most extensive global showcase of products, tools, and resources, alongside opportunities to develop valuable industry connections.

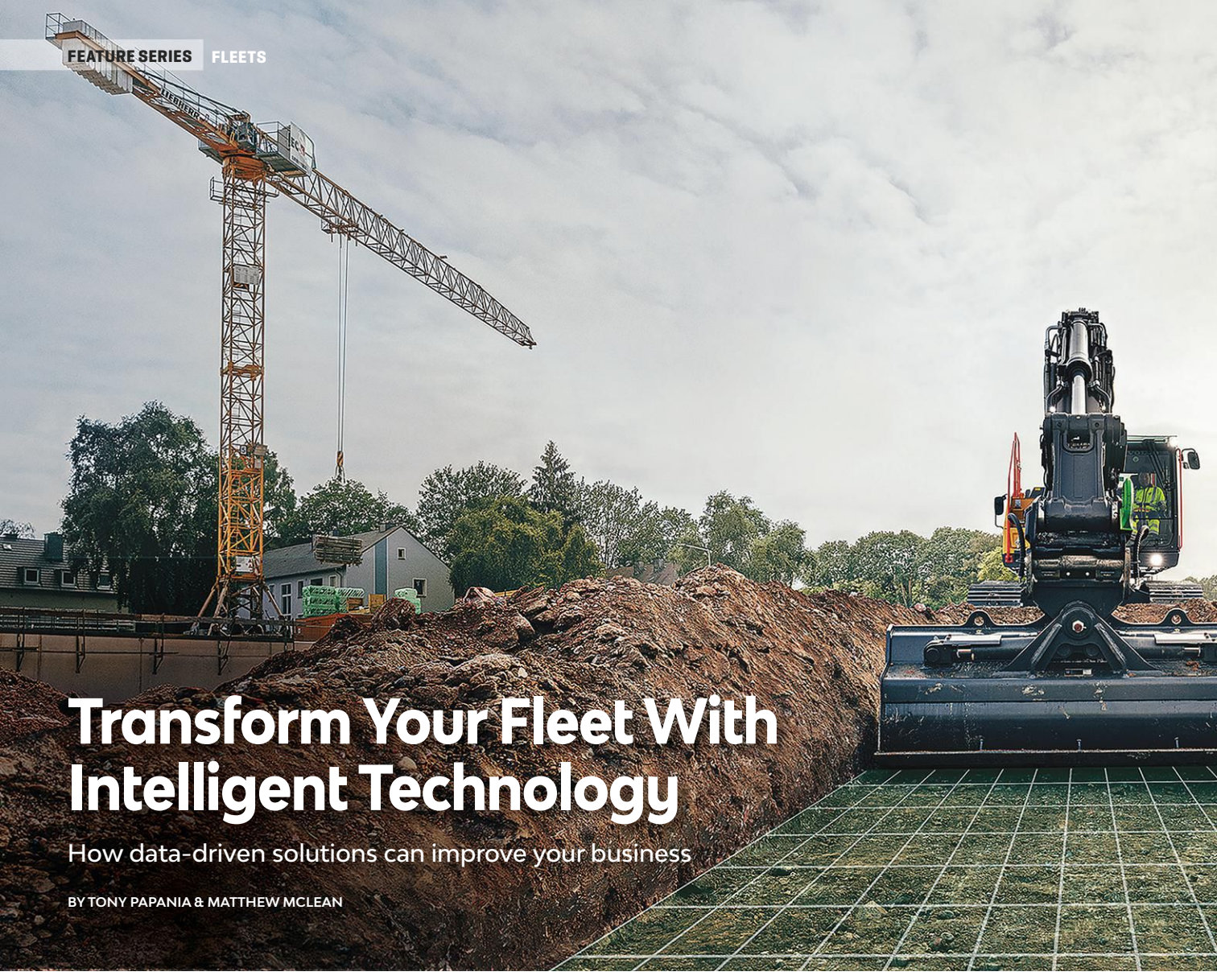
Coverings empowers builders and remodelers to lead the conversation and remain ahead of the curve.

**Everything Tile and Stone, Covered.**

- Discover new tile and stone products and cutting-edge techniques
- Uncover business strategies to boost profits and enhance ROI
- Tap into complimentary resources designed to elevate your business
- Foster and grow valuable connections

**Orlando, Florida April 29 - May 2, 2025**
REGISTER NOW AT **Coverings.com**

Coverings®
THE GLOBAL TILE & STONE EXPERIENCE



# Transform Your Fleet With Intelligent Technology

## How data-driven solutions can improve your business

BY TONY PAPANIA & MATTHEW MCLEAN

Photo Credits: Volvo Construction Equipment

The construction industry is one of the most competitive sectors, driven by tight profit margins, strict deadlines, rising material costs and increasing client expectations. Contractors face constant pressure to deliver projects on time and within budget while maintaining high standards of safety and sustainability. Effective resource management, including equipment and labor, is crucial for staying competitive in this challenging environment.

The good news is that advanced technologies are starting to play more of a transformative role in simplifying project and site management efforts. Beyond fleet management, these innovative products and services help contractors save time, reduce fuel consumption, improve safety and ensure overall project success. From real-time jobsite visibility tools and performance tracking to sophisticated telematics systems and beyond, modern construction technologies offer a wide range of benefits that can streamline operations while boosting productivity.

### Start With Better Jobsite Visibility

It goes without saying that comprehensive jobsite safety is the top priority. That often starts with operator visibility, which is why so many manufacturers are putting more research and development into technologies that help operators "see" more of the work environment around them. Some tools can provide a clear, real-time overview of all vehicles, machines and personnel on-site, which can greatly enhance decision-making and coordination. Intelligent positioning services help contractors make less risky, more efficient choices by displaying the exact location of all assets, whether they're brand-specific machines, support vehicles or temporary site visitors.

By offering total traceability, these tools also help optimize traffic flow across a jobsite, reducing congestion, travel time and fuel usage. For example, a contractor using this type of technology can identify bottlenecks and adjust equipment deployment for smoother operations. Some tools even allow a






site manager to set speed limits that are automatically applied to certain machines. Instantaneous communication of critical site updates — such as restricted zones or precautionary alerts — also contributes to a safer work environment.

## Track Performance in Real Time

The ability to track and analyze operational data is also essential for maximizing productivity and fuel efficiency on construction sites. Tools that provide real-time data on production levels, fuel consumption and machine cycle times enable contractors to make data-driven decisions that keep projects on schedule and within budget.

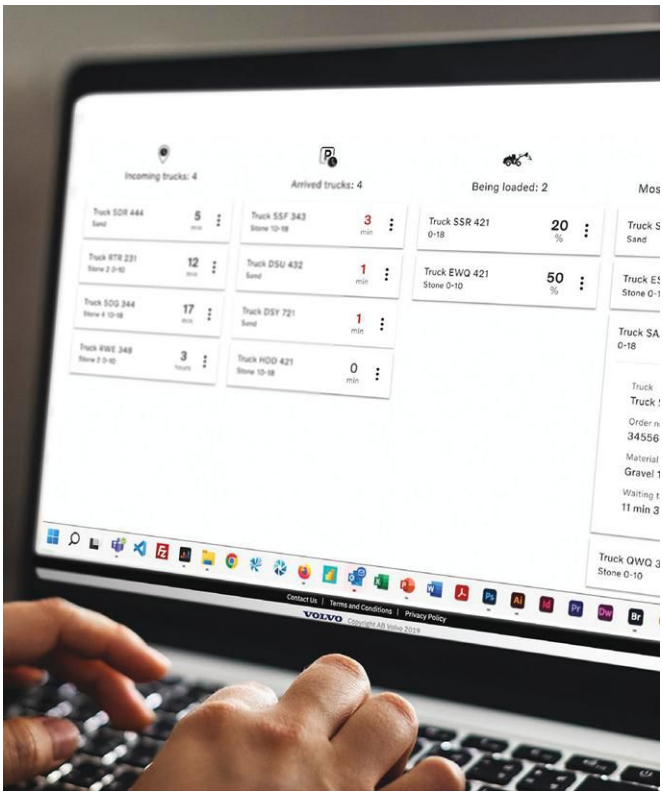
Oftentimes, multiple tools can be combined to provide contractors with a more well-rounded view of what's happening. Contractors can visualize both real-time positioning and performance data for a holistic view of their operations,enabling fact-based adjustments on the fly.

## Eliminate Costly Rework

Modern in-cab assist programs aren't new, but their popularity among operators seems to be gaining momentum, even among the more seasoned pros. Also referred to as machine control systems, these technologies empower operators with immediate guidance to enhance accuracy, reduce costly rework and save fuel. They provide operators with information that improves task execution and ensures that the right machines — and machine features — are used appropriately.

For example, some tools can help an excavator operator dig to the right depth the first time, while others allow wheel loader operators to track real-time load data to prevent overloading. There are similar technologies available for articulated dump trucks, soil and asphalt compactors, and so on.

Machine control systems not only boost productivity but also enhance safety by reducing operator error and unnecessary




machine movement, which means less fuel is burned and operational costs are minimized.

## Find a Telematics Solution That Works for You

Telematics systems have become a cornerstone of effective project and fleet oversight by providing remote monitoring capabilities that improve logistical control and decision-making. These systems collect data on machine health, fuel consumption and usage patterns, allowing fleet managers to address maintenance needs and prevent costly downtime.

Some telematics platforms require contractors to monitor data and make timely decisions on their own — but if that becomes too cumbersome, issues can get overlooked or ignored. The good news is that there are telematics solutions that do a lot of this work on the back end, filtering data and delivering only the most critical machine alerts to fleet managers and dealers. By eliminating nonessential fault codes and providing clear recommendations, advanced telematics systems help companies maintain uptime while reducing data complexity.

Some platforms provide fleet utilization reports, allowing managers to identify underused equipment, adjust fleet size and make sure the right machines are deployed for the right tasks.



This proactive management not only extends equipment lifespan but also improves project efficiency by keeping machines in peak working condition.

## Key Takeaways

Intelligent technologies are reshaping the way construction companies manage projects and sites by helping them focus on productivity, fuel consumption, safety and operational efficiency. Key tools to consider include the following:

- *Jobsite visibility tools* — Real-time positioning systems can help optimize jobsite traffic flow and minimize idle time while improving safety.
- *Performance tracking solutions* — These data platforms offer insights into production and fuel efficiency, allowing proactive adjustments.
- *Machine control systems* — These in-cab tools empower operators with on-the-spot guidance for more accurate and efficient work.
- *Advanced telematics* — Proactive monitoring by an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) simplifies data management, helping contractors monitor and act on the most critical issues in a timely manner.

By leveraging technologies like these, construction firms can gain a competitive edge — maximizing both operational efficiency and profitability. As the industry continues to evolve, embracing data-driven solutions will be vital to building smarter, more sustainable projects.

All-new fleet management technologies are undoubtedly on the horizon, so keep an eye out for innovations that can further transform how you manage your projects, stay competitive and meet the ever-evolving demands of our industry. ▲

*Tony Papania started with Volvo as a service manager in 2004 and has since held various roles in customer and product support. In 2022, Tony became a connected services territory manger and recently transitioned to solutions sales manager, supporting Volvo's advanced technology services.*



*Matthew McLean joined the Volvo team in 2004 as an engineer, working with various construction machines. He became a crawler excavator product manager in 2015, moved to wheeled excavators in 2017 and, in 2020, became the product manager for Volvo's Dig Assist software platform. Visit volvoce.com.*



**SELECT ALL IMAGES WITH TVH PARTS**



***KEEP YOUR CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT GOING AT PEAK PERFORMANCE WITH PARTS AND ACCESSORIES FROM TVH.***

With over 8 million parts for construction equipment, you can count on TVH to have the parts you need when you need them. Browse our wide selection of parts for small earth movers, telehandlers, and mobile elevating work platforms today!

TVH®



# Examining the Impact of Fleet Management Software

## How tech solutions affect your bottom line

BY HAYDEN PRICE

Photo Credit: Dabarti - stock.adobe.com

Efficient fleet management can make or break a company's profitability. For midsized general contractors working across various nonresidential sectors, managing a diverse equipment fleet is a critical challenge. This article explores how modern fleet management software can address common concerns and significantly improve operational efficiency.

### Understanding Fleet Management Software

Fleet management software is a powerful tool that provides comprehensive oversight of all equipment in a construction fleet. It utilizes telematics technology to capture and analyze data on various aspects of fleet operations, including:

- Equipment location
- Maintenance alerts
- Low parts inventory warnings
- Parts utilization tracking
- Fuel consumption and costs

The software's primary function is to collect real-time data directly from equipment engine control units (ECUs) and present it in an actionable format. This allows fleet managers and owners to identify areas for improvement and address inefficiencies promptly.

### The Critical Role of Fleet Inspections

Regular fleet inspections play a crucial role in maintaining safety, compliance and operational efficiency in construction fleets. By integrating inspection processes with fleet management software, companies can schedule and track regular inspections automatically, create digital inspection checklists tailored to each equipment type, and record and store inspection results for easy retrieval and analysis. Additionally, they can generate alerts for upcoming or overdue inspections and identify trends in equipment issues across the fleet. This systematic approach to inspections helps extend vehicle lifespan, reduce penalty fines and prevent accidents.

### Streamlining DOT Compliance

For construction businesses operating commercial vehicles, fleet management software is an invaluable tool in preparing for Department of Transportation (DOT) audits and ensuring ongoing compliance. These official safety check-ins ensure compliance with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) and Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMRs). New fleet operators are subject to an automatic New Entrant Safety Audit, with potential follow-up audits if areas for improvement are identified.

It's important to note that certain factors may attract DOT attention, such as unsafe driving practices, expired licenses or certifications, high accident rates and failed vehicle inspections. By prioritizing fleet inspections and maintaining proper documentation, construction companies can better prepare for DOT audits and minimize the risk of noncompliance issues.

### Addressing Key Concerns

Despite recent legislative measures such as the Infrastructure Investments & Jobs Act (IIJA), the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) Act, many construction companies continue to face significant cost pressures. Fleet management costs, including maintenance,

insurance and fuel, have remained high in recent years. These fluctuations can lead to project disruptions, delays and even terminations, all of which negatively impact a fleet's bottom line.

Moreover, labor costs in the construction industry have seen a substantial increase. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average hourly wage in construction has risen by 19% since 2019, with further increases expected. In this challenging economic environment, fleet management software becomes an essential tool for trimming costs and maintaining profitability.

## Proactive Maintenance & Cost Reduction

One of the most significant benefits of fleet management software is its ability to facilitate proactive maintenance. By setting up predefined thresholds based on calendar days, run-time hours and equipment mileage, the software can automatically trigger maintenance activities such as vehicle inspections, cleaning and part replacements. This proactive approach helps maximize equipment uptime and extends the lifespan of fleet assets.

Without a robust preventive maintenance plan, construction companies may face two costly scenarios:

1. *Equipment repairs* — While less expensive than full replacements, frequent minor repairs can accumulate significant costs.
2. *Equipment rebuilds* — When preventive maintenance is neglected, equipment may require extensive rebuilds. These are not only expensive but also result in extended downtime and potential rental costs for replacement equipment.

By implementing a comprehensive preventive maintenance strategy through fleet management software, construction businesses can avoid these costly scenarios and keep their equipment in optimal condition.

## Optimizing Equipment Utilization

Efficient equipment utilization is crucial for maximizing return on investment. Without reliable fleet management software, construction companies often struggle with equipment over- or underutilization. This inefficiency can lead to unnecessary wear and tear on some machines while others remain idle.

Advanced fleet management solutions provide detailed insights into equipment utilization rates, remaining equipment life and equipment costs. This data enables informed decision-making regarding budgeting and equipment purchases, ensuring that each piece of machinery is used optimally.

## Fuel Cost Management

Fuel costs represent a significant portion of operational expenses. With rising inflation, accurately tracking and managing fuel consumption is more critical than ever. Traditional methods of estimating costs by dividing total fuel expenses by equipment productive time are often inaccurate and inefficient.

Modern software offers precise tracking of fuel consumption, including fuel dispensing and purchasing data, real-time fuel burn rates, and detailed cost analysis per equipment unit.

This level of detail allows construction companies to make data-driven decisions on how to recoup fuel costs from operations and maintain project profitability.

## Leveraging Technology for a Competitive Advantage

Implementing comprehensive fleet management software can provide construction businesses with a significant competitive edge. Here are some key advantages:

1. *Real-time data and decision-making* — With access to real-time data on equipment performance and location, managers can make quick, informed decisions. This agility can be crucial in responding to project changes or equipment issues, potentially saving days or even weeks of downtime.
2. *Improved safety and compliance* — Many fleet management systems include features like dashcams and electronic logging devices (ELDs). Dashcams can help monitor driving behavior and provide valuable evidence in case of accidents, potentially reducing insurance costs. ELDs ensure compliance with federal regulations, helping companies avoid costly penalties related to fleet compliance.
3. *Enhanced financial planning* — By providing detailed insights into equipment costs, utilization rates and maintenance expenses, fleet management software enables more accurate budgeting and financial planning. This can be particularly valuable for midsized contractors managing multiple projects across various sectors.
4. *Streamlined operations* — Automation of routine tasks such as maintenance scheduling, fuel tracking and compliance reporting frees up valuable time for managers to focus on core business activities and strategic planning.

Efficient fleet management is no longer a luxury — it's a necessity. By providing real-time data, facilitating proactive maintenance and offering detailed insights into fleet operations, these software solutions enable companies to make informed decisions, reduce costs and improve overall efficiency. As the construction industry continues to evolve, embracing these solutions will be crucial for businesses looking to thrive in an increasingly competitive landscape. ▲

*Hayden Price is a seasoned technical product manager at HCSS, leveraging over a decade of experience in the construction software industry to innovate and develop software solutions in the fleet management realm. Price manages HCSS Equipment360 and HCSS Dispatcher products, working closely with fleet industry users to streamline day-to-day operations and create cutting-edge solutions for businesses. Visit hcss.com.*





Photo Credit: Bobcat

# Ready for Anything

A maintenance checklist for your compact track loader

BY RYAN SAUNDERS

Completing a comprehensive spring maintenance checklist for your compact track loader is crucial for maximizing productivity and minimizing unexpected downtime. To ensure your machine is fully prepared for the start of the spring working season, consult your operation and maintenance manual for detailed service schedules and preventive maintenance tasks.

Consider the following maintenance recommendations as you make sure your equipment is in top shape for a productive season ahead.

## Inspect the Battery

If your loader has been idle or used intermittently for tasks like snow removal, test the battery to make sure it is fully charged and that terminals are clean and corrosion-free. Some batteries may slowly run down, which means they require charging before operation unless you have done regular maintenance or disconnected them during periods of inactivity. Additionally, low batteries can also freeze and expand during colder months, potentially leading to battery cell damage. To avoid these issues, always keep batteries fully charged and clean.

## Check Fluid Levels & Filters

Before operating your machine, inspect all fluids, including fuel, engine oil, coolant, hydraulic fluid and drive motor lubricants, along with greasing all recommended pivot locations. Ensure fluids and lubricants are appropriate for the ambient temperature and adhere to the manufacturer's recommendations to prevent downtime.

Fuels are also an important consideration as winter shifts to spring. A No. 1 or No. 2 ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel is the most common specification in the industry. No. 2 grades should be used at temperatures above 15 degrees Fahrenheit; however, it is recommended to use a blended or No. 1 diesel fuel and/or anti-gel additives when temperatures drop below 15 degrees Fahrenheit.

Inspect filters monthly or at the start of the spring season if the machine has been idle. Filters should be changed at scheduled intervals; however, the number of hours a machine is in use and in what type of environment the work is being done may require more frequent replacement. Dirtier and dustier conditions require more frequent changes of filters, because a dirty or clogged filter can compromise sensitive components and negatively impact your compact track loader's performance.

To protect today's advanced components in compact track loaders, it is recommended to choose original equipment manufacturer (OEM) parts and components when replacements are

needed, as they are uniquely built for compatibility and best performance for your specific loader.

## Examine Your Tracks & Undercarriage

It goes without saying that you shouldn't operate your compact track loader without reviewing the condition of your tracks. Inspect your tracks for excessive or uneven wear, and ensure proper tension. Tracks that are too loose can come off. Tracks that are too tight can inhibit power or cause excessive damage to the undercarriage. Properly tensioned tracks ensure top performance of your compact track loader as well as extend the life of your undercarriage.

To get the longest life from your equipment, complete a full undercarriage inspection for excessive or uneven wear on undercarriage parts, and review for damaged or missing components. Inspect the rollers, idlers and drives for oil leakage. Oil leaks could indicate a failed seal, which could lead to a major failure in the rollers, idlers or track drive motors. For ongoing uptime, use shovels and pressure washers to clean remaining debris at the end of each workday.

## Prepare Attachments Ahead of Time

Attachments require the same attention to maintenance as the machine itself. Before operation, visually inspect hydraulic hoses, cylinders and guards. Everything that engages with the ground, including cutting edges, blades and trencher/planer teeth, should also be inspected for signs of wear or damage.

Checking attachment performance in the spring will help ensure everything is in top working condition when the busy season is underway. Connecting attachments, testing them and ensuring proper pressure buildup is good practice and an effective way to ensure your attachment hasn't changed while idle.

Proactively completing your maintenance checklist is a simple and effective way to make sure you and your compact track loader are ready for anything — including a productive spring season. Your local dealer is always ready to assist you when it comes to service and obtaining proper OEM parts. ▲

*Ryan Saunders is a senior marketing specialist for Bobcat Company. He is a creative marketing professional passionate about educating construction company owners and operators about solutions that create new opportunities for their businesses. Visit bobcat.com.*



THIEMAN
Hydraulic Tailgates
Quality Liftgates for Every Application
Full Line of Custom Liftgates
Light-Medium-Heavy-Duty
**THIEMAN TAILGATES, INC.** markets a full-line of hydraulic liftgates for light, medium, and heavy-duty trucks and trailers. Toplifters, Stowaways, Railgates, Sideloaders, and Conventional models are all part of the **THIEMAN** line-up.
For many years **THIEMAN** has been customizing liftgates to meet specific needs. If a special need arises, give us a call. From 1000 lb. to 6600 lb. lifting capacities, **THIEMAN** can provide a liftgate for almost every application.


NTEA
THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE WORK TRUCK INDUSTRY
MEMBER
"Raising Performance To New Levels"
THIEMAN
Hydraulic Tailgates
600 E. Wayne Street • Celina, Ohio 45822
**Ph: (800) 524-5210 • 419-586-7727 • Fax: (419) 586-9724**
**Email: info@thiemantailgates.com • Website: www.thiemantailgates.com**



Photo Credit: aapsky - stock.adobe.com

# Don't Get Sidetracked: Prepare Your Jobsites for Spring Severe Weather

Minimize downtime, maximize safety & build resilience into your projects

BY RANDY DOMBROWSKI

Recent years have brought a rise in severe spring storms that pack stronger winds, increased hail and torrential rainfall. These destructive forces contributed to at least two dozen billion-dollar disasters in 2024 and a record number of such disasters in 2023. Flash floods turned construction sites into lakes, hailstorms pummeled equipment and materials, and spring winds, once considered manageable, now have the potential to cause considerable damage.

The impact of these storms can be devastating to construction projects. Beyond the immediate damage to property and equipment, they can lead to costly delays, worker injuries and even project shutdowns. With the added risk of repair and replacement costs having risen in recent years,

commercial contractors face a confluence of risks.

The good news? By taking proactive steps, you can build resilience into your jobsites. With thorough preparation and the right financial protection, you can keep your project timelines on track and on budget.

## Strategies to Safeguard Your Construction Sites

Be aware of the growing threat posed by severe convective storms (SCS). Heavy rain, damaging winds, hail and lightning can cause floods that inundate jobsites, damage exposed materials and equipment, disrupt power supplies critical for construction activities and lead to lost revenue.

The following steps can can help you safeguard your projects — and your business.

- ***Establish a risk mitigation plan*** — Consider hiring a company to conduct a topographic survey (also referred to as a land survey or ground survey) to identify various elevation points. This can bring to light concerns with steep grades, existing human-made structures and other problematic conditions such as areas prone to flooding. Do this before construction begins to ensure the proposed project designs work in all conditions.
- ***Work safely in trenches*** — Trench collapses or cave-ins pose significant risk to workers' lives. Any trench 5 feet deep or greater requires a protective system. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires you to inspect trenches and protective systems daily and as conditions change. That's especially important following severe weather that may have caused erosion and changed soil conditions.
- ***Secure outdoor equipment and materials*** — High winds can turn loose materials into dangerous projectiles. Store equipment and materials inside a secure building whenever possible. Otherwise use straps, ropes, cables, chains or other means to securely anchor them when severe weather approaches.
- ***Move materials to high ground*** — Suppliers will drop equipment and materials anywhere on a jobsite. Sentry Insurance handled a claim involving $500,000 worth of equipment left in a low-lying area that filled with water. If you must store equipment and materials outside, have your project manager move them to high ground to avoid potential flooding from heavy rains.




**Heavy rain, damaging winds, hail and lightning can cause floods that inundate jobsites, damage exposed materials and equipment, disrupt power supplies critical for construction activities and lead to lost revenue.**

- ***Enclose openings*** — If you're building a structure, enclose openings such as roofs, windows and doors as quickly as possible to prevent damage from wind and rain. If there's no time, cover openings where practical with tarps, and safely secure them.
- ***Prepare for lightning strikes*** — Lightning can damage equipment and spark fires. Clear brush, grass and other debris around your project site to reduce fire hazards. Install lightning protection systems on structures.
- ***Don't let water win*** — Ensure proper drainage is in place to handle heavy downpours. Standing water can create safety hazards, damage building materials and cause delays.
- ***It's spring; revisit those safety reminders*** — Aside from preparing for severe weather, remember to revisit your safety training as projects ramp up. Train subcontractors, too.

## Invest in Resilience: Build Smart, Save Money

When you implement additional risk mitigation strategies, consider using hail, wind and fire-resistant materials in your construction. This can help reduce overall risk, which may lead to lower insurance costs for you and your customers. It's an up-front investment that pays long-term dividends.

## Protect Your People

Your workers are your most valuable asset. Never more so than today in a tight labor market. Prioritize their safety:

- ***Form a response plan*** — Develop a comprehensive emergency response plan outlining procedures for various severe weather scenarios. This plan should include designated evacuation routes, on-site safe havens and clear communication protocols to ensure everyone knows what to do before severe weather strikes. Consider text alert systems, call trees or loudspeaker systems.
- ***Train your team*** — To ensure a swift response, talk about your plan at the onset of a project and during daily safety briefings. If possible, conduct occasional drills with your on-site crews. This will help them understand your plan and better equip them to carry it out.

## Ensure You're Financially Covered When Severe Weather Strikes

Don't get caught short. Review your insurance coverages and limits before you need to file a claim. Having an ongoing dialogue with your agent and insurer is crucial to ensuring your business recovers if severe weather strikes.

- ***Factor in higher costs*** — Replacement costs for damaged buildings and equipment have gone up. Construction input costs alone remain 39% higher than five years ago. Discuss replacement value coverage limits with your insurer to avoid significant out-of-pocket expenses. And keep an up-to-date inventory of materials and equipment. That will help expedite your insurance claim.
- ***Consider business interruption insurance*** — This coverage helps you recover lost profits and cover ongoing expenses if a weather event disrupts your project. Many contractors are extending this coverage from six months to a year or more due to delays in replacing materials or equipment. The cause is often demand surges for materials following a severe weather event. Extra expense coverage can help cover the cost of unforeseen expenses required to get your project back up and running.
- ***Protect your business further*** — Additional coverages can be added to your policy, such as utility service interruption or contingent business income if a supplier is affected by severe weather. As a contractor, you may have additional industry-specific coverages that have been affected by inflation in recent years:
  - ◊ *Installation floater coverage:* Insures specific, high-value property and materials that you plan to install against damage when in transit or at a worksite prior to being installed.
  - ◊ *Builder's risk coverage:* Helps cover damage to property during the actual construction process — think of a storm damaging a project halfway through completion, a scenario playing out across the country. Think of prefabbed walls, materials, machinery, scaffolding and storage containers.
  - ◊ *Contractor's equipment insurance:* Like materials, your equipment costs more today to repair or replace. Contractor's equipment insurance helps protect equipment and tools at jobsites, during transit or in storage. With higher equipment values, you'll need updated valuations to stay adequately protected. An inflation guard provision can help with that, too.
- ***Update your inventory*** — Be sure to add coverage for any new equipment purchased during a project. In the beehive of activity, it's easy to forget.

# Managing Construction Payroll Complexities

CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS OWNER webinar

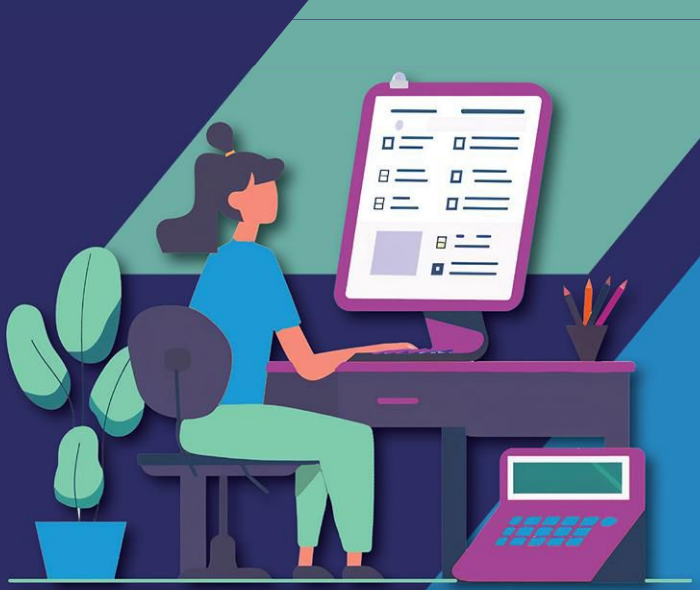
Sponsored by Deltek ComputerEase

FREE > March 20 > 1 p.m. CST

**Construction payroll is uniquely complex, with variables that differ by business and job. These variables can impact compliance. Contractors who manage payroll meticulously are less likely to face legal issues, penalties or disruptions.**

**In this webinar, you will learn:**

- **The variables involved in construction payroll that make it complex**
- **Best practices for managing prevailing wage/certified payroll and union payroll**
- **How to manage payroll tax compliance in multistate and multilocal scenarios**
- **How to avoid common payroll pitfalls and compliance best practices**



## SPEAKER



John Meibers
*Vice President & General Manager*
Deltek ComputerEase

**John has led Deltek ComputerEase, serving over 6,000 contractors, for over 25 years. His role involves ensuring the company provides cutting-edge technology to customers. Before that, he spent 10 years as a controller for a large mechanical contractor.**

**>> Register at constructionbusinessowner.com/webinars**

- ***Make sure subcontractors are insured properly*** — This is especially important on the liability side.

Should your project sustain a covered loss, you'll be glad to have the appropriate coverages and limits to help get your project back on track quickly and with little impact to your bottom line.

## Plan How You'll Get Your Project Back on Track

Spring storms can disrupt your construction schedule, but a solid business continuity plan can get you back on track quickly. Here's a three-step approach:

- ***Identify critical functions*** — Conduct a business impact analysis to pinpoint the essential processes that keep your project moving. This includes your people, payroll, inventory and suppliers.
- ***Develop recovery strategies*** — For each critical function, create a detailed plan for swift recovery. This could involve securing backup suppliers for materials in case of delays or having a stock of essential replacement parts for key equipment to minimize downtime. It can also include having a roster of backup subcontractors should you need to rebuild quickly.
- ***Communication is key*** — Establish clear communication protocols for everyone involved. This includes employees, clients and subcontractors. During a disaster, clear communication minimizes confusion and ensures everyone's aware of the situation and your recovery plan.

## Don't Leave Your Success to Chance

Spring storms can be unpredictable, but by following these tips, you'll take a big step toward safeguarding your sites, crews and profitability.

Remember, this is just a starting point. Talk to your insurance provider and other construction safety experts to build a comprehensive preparedness plan specific to your project needs.

With proper planning and proactive measures, such as updating your insurance coverages and valuations, you can minimize disruptions, keep your workers safe and ensure your projects stay on track — even when spring delivers unwanted challenges. ▲

*Randy Dombrowski is the director of safety services for commercial lines at Sentry Insurance. He works with commercial construction businesses through the industry to improve safety and reduce risks. Visit sentry.com.*







Photo Credits: Studson

# Transforming Jobsite Safety & Operations Management With Smart PPE

Why investing in digitized operations can improve your organization

BY CHRISTIAN CONNOLLY

Scott starts his daily high-stakes juggling act long before dawn breaks. By 5:30 a.m., he's already at his company's headquarters, scanning multiple computer screens, monitoring his eight active jobsites across the region and planning which sites to visit that day. As the owner of a family-run midsize construction company, his morning routine ensures the business runs smoothly: checking crew attendance across sites, reviewing material delivery schedules for all builds and scanning the previous day's incident reports. His office is a constant reminder of the industry's persistent paper chase, with documents stacked in a wire basket on his desk to review, a row of filing cabinets against the wall filled with worker documents and past project binders atop the cabinets.

Later that day, Scott's site management teams will ask each worker to present required documents. Workers will dig folded papers or laminated certificates

from their pockets or the liners of their hard hat hats to prove they can work the site and operate specific equipment. Because they often work outdoors, the materials can be weathered and illegible from rain, sweat or constant handling. In an industry where every minute counts and one missing delivery or safety oversight can derail a multimillion-dollar project timeline, these seemingly small inefficiencies can cascade into significant operational challenges.

For construction business owners like Scott, managing personal protective equipment (PPE) isn't just another line item — it's a fundamental responsibility that directly impacts worker safety and regulatory compliance. Beyond the daily operational complexities, owners must navigate strict Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements under 29 CFR 1926.28(a), requiring the distribution of appropriate PPE for each worker. Organizations must maintain meticulous records, conduct regular equipment inspections, and project and order inventory for new workers. They must also require ongoing safety training and verification for every worker across every site.

## Smart PPE & Its Impact on Construction Businesses

While construction has always been an industry built on precision and skill, many companies are tethered to outdated administrative processes that drain time and resources. Site managers still shuffle through paper sign-in sheets at dawn, manually verify worker certifications and rifle through filing cabinets for safety documentation that should be instantly accessible.

These manual processes are no longer sufficient. And as a result, the industry is at a technological tipping point, with many construction companies eager to transition to digital processes, including PPE management. Today, PPE integrated with near field communication (NFC) and other technology has emerged as a critical component of the industry's digital transformation. This advancement turns essential safety gear into powerful data collection points. For owners, this means replacing manual paper trails with digital efficiency replaced by embedded



chips, allowing them to focus on what truly matters — delivering projects on time while keeping their workforce safe.

## Revolutionizing PPE Inventory Management

Standard items like hard hats, safety vests and harnesses with next-generation, embedded NFC technology can turn each piece of equipment into a digital storage device. When scanned with smartphones or tablets, the PPE allows instant access to critical worker information, certifications and documentation. This simple yet powerful integration eliminates the need for workers to carry physical documentation while enabling site managers to quickly verify compliance and access emergency information with a simple scan. The technology integrates with existing safety management software systems, transforming time-consuming manual verification processes into effortless digital interactions that can be completed in seconds.



Colloquially known as "smart PPE," these items convert the traditionally cumbersome equipment management process for construction site managers into a streamlined digital operation. Instead of maintaining lengthy spreadsheets or countless paper logs, managers can instantly see when each piece was issued, who it was assigned to and its current age, all from their phone or tablet screen. The technology provides real-time visibility into equipment life cycles, automatically flagging when hard hats approach their replacement date or when fall protection harnesses need recertification.

## Advancing Worker Safety Compliance

Smart PPE also revolutionizes inspection management by creating an automated digital ecosystem that ensures consistent safety compliance. When PPE digitally connects to safety management software, construction managers gain visibility into their entire PPE program. Such a system could also automatically generate timely reminders for scheduled inspections and equipment recertification, eliminating the risk of overlooked maintenance or expired certifications.

This proactive approach empowers management teams to identify and address noncompliant workers before safety issues arise. At the same time, automated life-cycle monitoring tracks each piece of equipment from initial deployment through retirement. By digitizing the entire PPE life cycle, construction companies can shift to proactive management, ensuring workers always have properly inspected, compliant equipment when needed.

## Improving Incident Response Times

Construction sites present inherent dangers that can demand swift emergency response — from falls and heavy equipment accidents to electrical hazards and confined space incidents. During these critical moments, when workers may be unconscious or unable to communicate, smart PPE serves as a vital lifeline.

Medical information stored within an injured worker's digitally enabled hard hat or safety vest can be instantly accessed by safety managers or coworkers — typically the first responders in a jobsite emergency — with a quick smartphone scan. They no longer need to stuff pieces of paper inside their hard hats or pockets. Critical details like blood type, allergies, preexisting conditions and current medications become immediately available. Smart PPE also holds personal contact information, enabling faster and more informed emergency care decisions. The technology can accelerate incident response times by eliminating the frantic search for paper records or the delay in contacting family members for medical history.

Every second saved in accessing critical information can mean the difference between life and death during these moments. This capability proves especially crucial on sprawling construction sites or in remote locations, where smart PPE can also transmit the exact location of an injured worker to colleagues and emergency response teams.

While the initial investment in smart PPE and training requires careful consideration, the technology's ability to streamline PPE management, ensure compliance and potentially save lives through rapid emergency response makes a compelling business case. For construction business owners, the benefits extend beyond basic safety improvements — digitized operations reduce administrative burden, enable better resource allocation and create a more efficient organization capable of handling increased project loads. Smart PPE represents a complementary element of broad systematic change toward a more efficient, safer and technologically advanced operation. ▲

---

*Christian Connolly is CEO of the Swedish company Twiceme, which is dedicated to creating technology solutions that empower bystanders to become helpers. With Twiceme sensors integrated directly into protective equipment, users connect using smartphones to communicate valuable information, leading to faster response times, improved communication during emergencies and safer experiences. Visit twiceme.com.*



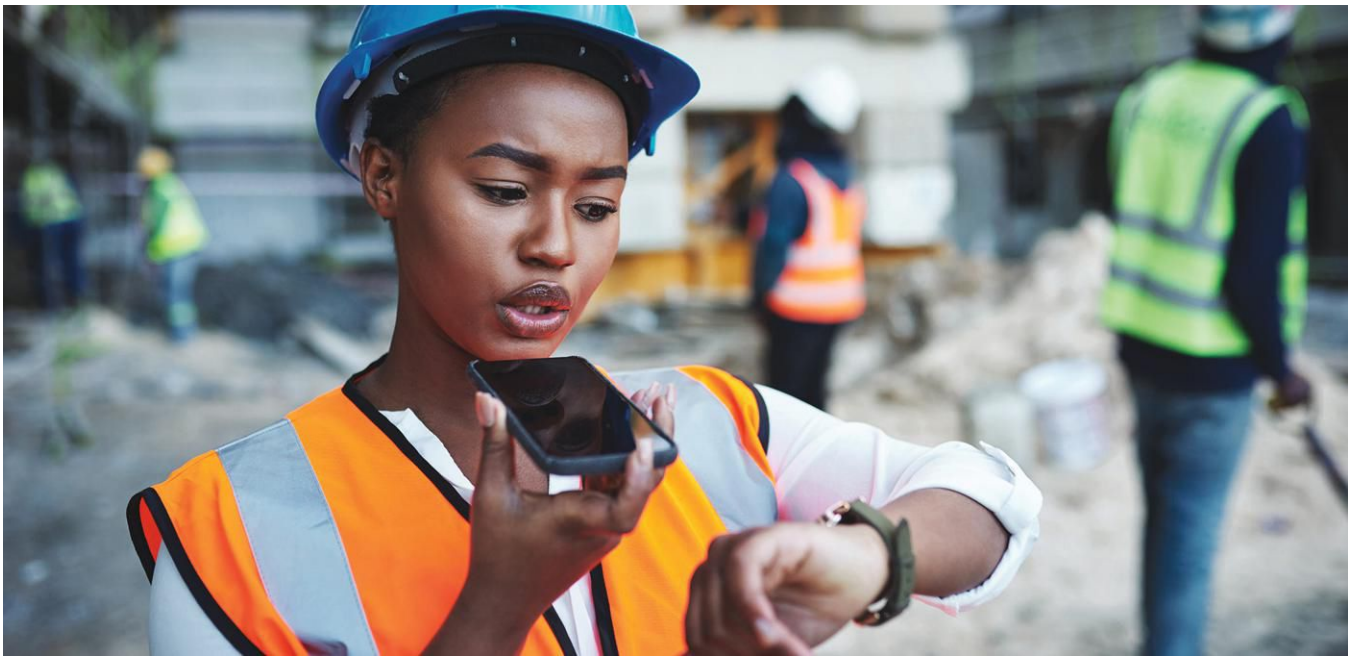


Photo Credit: peopleimages.com - stock.adobe.com

# Safety Wearables Are Changing the Game in Workplace Safety

Determining if connected devices should be part of your company's tool kit

BY DAN FEGEL

Technology has reshaped almost every corner of our lives in recent years, and workplace safety is no exception. Safety wearables — high-tech devices that can monitor vital signs, detect falls and even call for help — are making waves in industries like construction, law enforcement and manufacturing.

These Internet of Things (IoT) safety gadgets hold real potential to improve how we protect our people on the job. But, like any new technology, they come with their own set of questions. Are they as effective as they promise to be? And are they worth the investment?

With over 28 years in risk management, I've seen my fair share of safety trends, and this is my take on where wearables fit in the big picture.

## 1. The Backbone of Wearables: Staying Connected

When it comes to wearables, connectivity is everything. These devices are packed with features — fall detection, location tracking and, in some cases, automatic emergency calls — that rely on a stable internet connection to work.

While IoT can increase safety for your employees, without that connection, the device is just another piece of gear — unable to perform when it's most needed. Think of it this way: If you have workers in remote areas or deep within buildings where connectivity isn't guaranteed, there's a risk that the wearable might not deliver when it counts.

So, before investing in wearables, closely examine your jobsites. Ask questions like: Will the device maintain its connection on all parts of the site? Are there known dead zones?

These examinations can help you decide if wearables will deliver the safety boost you hope for.

## 2. ROI: Are Wearables Worth the Price?

Let's talk about the price tag. Safety wearables often come with a hefty up-front cost, so it's essential to weigh whether they're worth it. Sure, they can reduce workers' compensation claims and speed up emergency responses, but that doesn't necessarily mean they're the best fit for every team. To know for sure, you need a solid return-on-investment (ROI) analysis for IoT safety tools.

Think about this: For companies with remote workers or employees who often work alone, wearables can provide peace of mind that help is never too far away. For instance, if a lone worker on a construction site has a device that alerts the office in an emergency, that could be a game changer. However, the investment may not have the same impact for other teams.

My advice? Look at your team's unique challenges and see if wearables could address specific safety gaps.

### 3. How Wearables Drive Safer, Smarter Workplaces

One of the most extraordinary things about safety wearables is the data they provide. These aren't just passive gadgets; they can deliver real-time insights about everything from steps taken to potential accident risks.

This data can help your organization make proactive decisions to keep people safe. For instance, wearables can identify high-risk areas or trends over time, giving you valuable information to improve safety protocols. Moreover, research shows that businesses that use wearable safety technology see fewer workplace injuries.

Think of wearables as a way to anticipate risks rather than react to them. By monitoring data over time, companies can make informed changes that foster a safety-first culture — the proactive approach that keeps everyone safer.

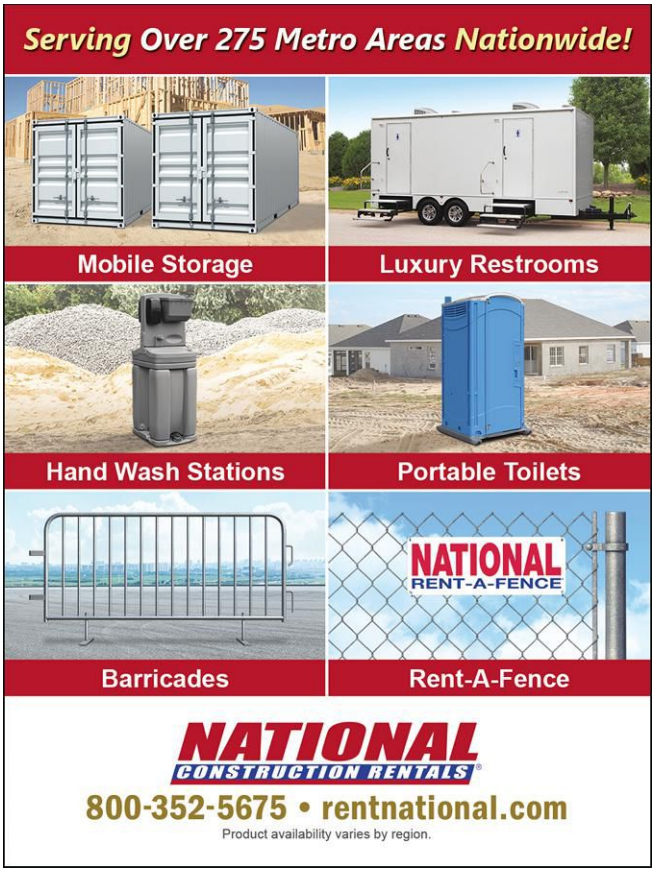
### Are Safety Wearables in Your Future?

Safety wearables offer an exciting path to keeping employees safe, but they're not a one-size-fits-all solution. From connectivity issues to determining whether the investment is justified, wearables require a thoughtful approach. You can determine whether wearables are the right addition to your safety tool kit by assessing your specific needs.

Wearables are more than just gadgets; they're tools that, when used strategically, can provide real safety benefits and help to reduce your risk points. They bring a mix of high-tech monitoring, real-time insights and immediate response capabilities that can transform safety culture on the job. So, if you're ready to innovate, give wearables a look — but do it with an eye toward what's practical and effective for your team. ▲

*Dan Fegel, CSP, CSHM, TRA is the head of risk control at Trucordia. With over 28 years of experience in risk management, loss control and safety, Fegel has established himself as a distinguished professional in the field. Fegel is a practiced accident and fatal investigator, bringing a wealth of knowledge and expertise to his role. Visit trucordia.com.*








# New Products to Watch

Selected by the editors of Construction Business Owner, these new-to-the-market products are just a few of our favorites recently released to the construction community. Stay tuned in every issue to find out what you need to know about the latest gear, solutions & industry-leading innovations.




## ◂ MECALAC

Revotruck 9

**Released: 1/8/25**

**Availability: North American market**

**What's new?** The Revotruck is the first site dumper to feature a rotating cab, offering maximum visibility in all directions. The cab can be rotated 225 degrees. The rotating cab also increases operator safety by eliminating the need to twist and turn for visibility of the travel path and jobsite. The Revotruck is a valuable tool for construction, concrete, landscape and golf course applications.

**Specs:** Designed with a four-wheel steering chassis that offers stability and permanent traction on all types of terrain. The central link between the two parts of the chassis offers up to 20 degrees of oscillation. The chassis is complemented by four equal-sized wheels with a switchable steering mode, allowing operators to cycle between two-wheel steering, four-wheel steering and crab steering. This machine has a 9-ton payload.




## ◂ GENIE

S-85 XC FE hybrid boom lift

**Released: Early Q3 2025**

**Availability: Global markets**

**What's new?** New configurations allow usage on jobsites that require quiet during day performance or emissions-free performance. The dual capacity XC model means operators can load the platform up to 1,000 pounds for the majority of the lift's range, and up to 660 pounds through the full envelope. This increases productivity by supporting heavier lifting jobsite needs. Improved solid-state proximity switches have replaced limit switches. Switches are now fully sealed, preventing weather damage.

**Specs:** Four independent AC drive motors, four-wheel drive and active oscillating axles enable operators to easily navigate rough terrain. The 24-horsepower engine that delivers hybrid power is DPF free, which means it does not require complex after treatment, reducing maintenance costs. This smaller engine also experiences less wear and tear, costing less to maintain. The machine's cable tracks have been better organized, improving both serviceability and longevity. Durable separators are now found every second track, spacers separate hoses and cables, and hose and cable wear has been tested to prevent overlapping and rubbing.

## OTR ENGINEERED SOLUTIONS ▸

Liftboss A/T Tire

**Released: 1/30/25**

**Availability: U.S. market**

**What's new?** This new all-terrain tire provides multi-surface traction for optimized performance in construction and material handling environments, including asphalt, concrete and gravel. Excellent rolling resistance helps to reduce fuel consumption, and a low profile provides excellent lateral stability and sidewall protection.

**Specs:** This tire is engineered with a step-down tread and mud breakers for self-cleaning. Integrated sipes maximize traction to enhance safety on freshly poured slabs, while the unique center lug design improves wear life and off-road stability. Available in the most popular telehandler sizes, including 13.00-24, 14.00-24, 370/75-28 and 400/75-28.





## VOLVO CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT

A50 articulated hauler

Released: 1/28/25

Availability: North American market

**What's new?** The A50 delivers 10% more productivity and 8% greater fuel efficiency compared to the previous generation's A45G FS. It also features improved full-suspension technology for faster travel speed and a smoother ride. This machine has faster cycle times and fills a market need with its 50-ton capacity. Includes a wider field of vision, a tailgate with longer arms (to open wider and faster) and a host of improvements inside the cab.

**Specs:** A new electronic system and a new Volvo-developed transmission boost fuel efficiency, and the machine's design allows for adaptation to future drivetrains as needed. Volvo Co-Pilot display shows operators information they need and offers a range of smart solutions like Haul Assist with onboard weighing. These digital tools can boost uptime, further reduce fuel consumption, improve site logistics and maximize productivity. Maintenance costs are reduced by up to 6% over 12,000 hours of operation due to simplified servicing and longer change intervals.

## SAGE

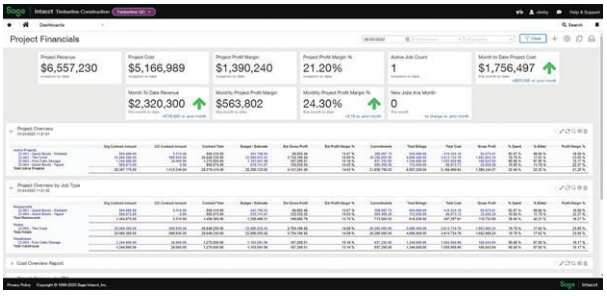
Sage Cloud-Native Construction Packages

Released: 12/18/24

Availability: U.S. & Canadian markets

**What's new?** The new end-to-end cloud-native packages are designed to meet the needs of submarkets within the construction industry. Sage for Real Estate Developers, Sage for Home Builders and Sage for General Contractors are built to address the respective challenges faced by real estate developers, homebuilders and general contractors.

**Specs:** The packages bring together the must-have solutions for each submarket, ensuring that their bases are covered from preconstruction to operations and finance, all built on the power and flexibility of a cloud-native platform. The submarket packages include Sage Intacct's finance and operations solution at their core, along with additional solutions that are tailored to the demands of that submarket.










SCHWEISS
DOORS
HYDRAULIC – OR – BIFOLD
ONE-PIECE DOORS STRAP LIFT DOORS
507-426-8273
SCHWEISSDOORS.COM

FEEL
STUCK?
Achieve your goals with like-minded business leaders.
JOIN A PEER GROUP TODAY!
FREEDOM FORGE COACHING
Contact Eric:
319.329.0314
eric@FreedomForgeCoaching.com
www.FreedomForgeCoaching.com

PROfiles
ARE YOU A PRO?
Want to see your company's leaders featured in the PROfiles section of our next issue?
*Email Editor Megan Beam at mbeam@cahabamedia.com to share the story of your growing business and its people, practices and strategies.*




## ▲ BOMAG

### BOMAG BW 177 BVO-5 PL single-drum roller

**Released: 1/23/25**
**Availability: U.S. market**
**What's new?** This single-drum roller features three compaction modes — high and low amplitudes plus oscillation — making it ideal for a range of soil compaction applications on small and medium construction sites. With oscillation compaction technology, this versatile roller offers granular and mixed soil compaction on challenging subgrades or on sensitive applications, such as compacting backfill over pipelines or close to buildings.
**Specs:** The optional padfoot segment kit enhances compaction efficiency of silt and clay material. A single rotary dial allows the operator to quickly select compaction modes and adapt machine output to site conditions. The BW 177 BVO-5 PL delivers efficient performance on the most demanding jobs. Its dual pump system plus self-locking differential allows the machine to achieve up to 60% gradability in forward and reverse, making it perfect for steep terrain projects. Its articulating/oscillating joint provides +/- 12-degree oscillation, ensuring the drum stays in contact with material when working in poor underfoot conditions.




## ▲ DITCH WITCH

### JT21 horizontal directional drill

**Released: 1/6/25**
**Availability: U.S. market**
**What's new?** The JT21 delivers up to 40% more down-hole horsepower than its predecessor (the JT20) and 35% faster carriage speed than any drill in its class, empowering crews to work more effectively, increasing return on investment.
**Specs:** 21,000 pounds of pullback, 20,000 pounds of thrust, allowing crews to complete installations at a faster pace in a variety of soil conditions. A new design and lower center of gravity increases stability. Improved hydraulic efficiencies and a direct-drive rotation motor delivering more down-hole horsepower. Virtually Assisted Make-up (VAM) technology provides software-driven make-up and breakout of pipe to simplify operators' jobs and help prevent pipe-thread damage to extend pipe longevity.

# INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS OWNER

## ADVERTISER INDEX


| Advertiser Name | Page |
|---|---|
| AG Body | 45 |
| AvidXchange, Inc. | 23 |
| Deltek Computer Software | 37 |
| Dewalt | 3 |
| Foundation Software | IBC |
| Freedom Forge Coaching, LLC | 46 |
| Hino Trucks | IFC |
| Insite Software | 43 |
| National Construction Rental | 43 |
| Progressive Commercial Auto Insurance | 1 |
| SAFE Project | 38 |
| Schweiss Doors | 46 |
| Stellar Industries | 17 |
| Taffy Event Strategies | 25 |
| Thieman Tailgates | 33 |
| TVH/MinnPar | 29 |
| Uline | 35 |


## PRODUCT INDEX


| Company Name | Page |
|---|---|
| Bomag | 46 |
| Ditch Witch | 46 |
| Genie | 44 |
| OTR Engineered Solutions | 44 |
| Refrigiwear | 44 |
| Sage | 45 |
| Volvo Construction Equipment | 45 |


**This ad index is furnished as a courtesy, and no responsibility is assumed for incorrect information.*

RS2503

## SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

With your FREE subscription to Construction Business Owner's monthly magazine and weekly CBO Alert e-newsletter, you'll get:

- Practical advice for running a successful company
- Tools for solving common problems
- Expert insights into today's industry trends
- Tips for improving productivity and efficiency
- Management strategies to build your business

CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS OWNER
constructionbusinessowner.com/subscribe

**YOU MUST SIGN AND ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS TO QUALIFY FOR A FREE SUBSCRIPTION**

Qualified subscriptions begin at the publisher's discretion. Incomplete forms cannot be processed or acknowledged.

We will use your email address to send your annual renewal notice and other related products and services.

○ Check here to opt out of email messages from our marketing partners.

○ **YES! I wish to receive or continue to receive a FREE subscription.**
- ○ **PRINT edition** *(U.S. only)*
- ○ **DIGITAL edition** by email
- ○ No. Cancel my FREE subscription.

**REQUIRED for SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Name

Title | Company

Address | City/State/Country/Zip/Post

*Phone | *Email

*Signature | Date:

**1. Your company's primary business is:**
*(Check only one)*
- ❑ 12 General Contractor – Commercial
- ❑ 02 General Contractor – Residential
- ❑ 10 Construction – Special Trade Contractors
- ❑ 03 Highway and Street Construction
- ❑ 04 Water, Sewer and Utility Construction
- ❑ 05 Heavy Construction
- ❑ 06 Concrete Work
- ❑ 07 Excavation Work
- ❑ 08 Wrecking and Demolition Work
- ❑ 13 Architecture, Engineering and Construction Management Services
- ❑ 11 Consulting Contractor
- ❑ 99 Other (please specify)

**2. Your primary job title is:** *(Check only one)*
- ❑ 10 Owner, Partner, President, CEO, CFO, COO, Vice President, Director
- ❑ 11 General Manager, Manager, Foreman, Superintendent, Purchasing Agent, Controller, Accountant
- ❑ 12 Engineer, Architect
- ❑ 06 Consultant
- ❑ 99 Other (please specify)

**3. Approximate annual contract sales volume:**
*(Check only one)*
- ❑ 01 Less than $500,000
- ❑ 02 $500,001 – $1,000,000
- ❑ 03 $1,000,001 – $2,500,000
- ❑ 04 $2,500,001 – $5,000,000
- ❑ 05 $5,000,001 – $10,000,000
- ❑ 06 $10,000,001 – $20,000,000
- ❑ 07 $20,000,001 – $50,000,000
- ❑ 08 More than $50,000,000

**4. Which of the following products/services are you planning to buy during the next 12 months?**
*(Check all that apply)*
- ❑ 01 Earthmoving Equipment
- ❑ 02 Trucks, Trailers and Accessories
- ❑ 03 Compact Equipment
- ❑ 04 Lifting and Hoisting Equipment
- ❑ 05 Safety Equipment and Apparel
- ❑ 06 Attachments
- ❑ 07 Concrete and Paving Equipment
- ❑ 08 Survey and Site Prep
- ❑ 09 Compressors, Generators and Pumps
- ❑ 10 Financing and Accounting Services
- ❑ 11 Software and Technology
- ❑ 12 Insurance and Bonding
- ❑ 13 Training and Education
- ❑ 14 Telecommunications
- ❑ 16 Greases, Lubricants and Filters
- ❑ 17 Jobsite Lighting
- ❑ 18 Building Supplies
- ❑ 19 Rental Equipment
- ❑ 21 GPS Equipment and Security

**ONLINE**
*For fastest service,* complete this form online constructionbusinessowner.com/subscribe.

**EMAIL**
Complete this form and email to: constructionbusinessowner@omeda.com

**MAIL**
Complete this form, tear out, place in an envelope and mail to: Construction Business Owner P.O. Box 271, Lincolnshire, IL 60069

## Annual Value of Construction Put in Place

**December** 2022/2023/2024 Annual Rate Comparison

*This chart compares the two previous years' total value of construction put in place to an annual forecast based on December 2024 figures. (Millions of dollars. Totals may not add up perfectly due to rounding.)*

| | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Private Construction** | **1,427,128** | **1,619,686** | **1,688,531** |
| Residential | 857,150 | 911,713 | 939,486 |
| Nonresidential | 569,978 | 707,972 | 749,046 |
| **Total Public Construction** | **382,658** | **476,326** | **503,642** |
| Residential | 9,150 | 10,447 | 12,040 |
| Nonresidential | 373,508 | 465,879 | 491,602 |
| **TOTAL Construction** | **1,809,785** | **2,096,012** | **2,192,173** |

**Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rates. Source: U.S. Census Bureau*

**$2,192,173**

DECEMBER 2024 TOTAL ANNUAL VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION PUT IN PLACE

"While there were signs that the design cycle was bottoming out in the fourth quarter, the December reading indicated a step back," said Kermit Baker, Ph.D., AIA chief economist. "There remains considerable uncertainty as to the feasibility of many planned construction projects, so the wait-and-see period is extending into 2025."

## AIA Architectural Billings Index (ABI)

| National | | | *Regional - Billings | | | | *Sectors - Billings | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Month | Billings | Inquiries | Northeast | Midwest | South | West | Multifamily Residential | Commercial/ Industrial | Institutional | Mixed |
| Jul-24 | 48.2 | 52.4 | 50.0 | 47.6 | 46.3 | 46.0 | 45.4 | 45.0 | 49.1 | 47.7 |
| Aug-24 | 45.7 | 52.4 | 48.2 | 46.6 | 46.8 | 45.7 | 44.0 | 46.6 | 47.4 | 48.6 |
| Sep-24 | 45.7 | 51.6 | 46.4 | 45.0 | 49.5 | 42.6 | 41.7 | 44.2 | 48.5 | 47.8 |
| Oct-24 | 50.3 | 54.1 | 45.6 | 46.9 | 52.1 | 47.6 | 45.6 | 47.0 | 50.5 | 48.0 |
| Nov-24 | 49.6 | 54.1 | 46.9 | 48.1 | 50.0 | 54.3 | 50.8 | 49.4 | 50.6 | 48.5 |
| Dec-24 | 44.1 | 51.6 | 41.7 | 46.4 | 47.2 | 52.2 | 46.5 | 44.1 | 49.8 | 46.0 |

For more information on the index or to subscribe to the complete historical data going back to 1995 for your internal analysis, **please contact economics@aia.org.** The ABI presents monthly construction billings data, using a base score of 50. A score of more than 50 indicates a growth from the previous month, and a score of less than 50 indicates a contraction from the previous month. A score of 50 indicates no change. Source: The American Institute of Architects (AIA), Architecture Billings Index (ABI).

*Regional and Sectoral indexes are three-month moving averages, due to small sample size. All data is seasonally adjusted.
**Every January, the AIA research department updates the seasonal factors used to calculate the ABI, resulting in a revision of recent ABI values.

# America's #1 Construction Accounting Software

FOUNDATION®

Job Costing | Project Management | Payroll




## Join the thousands of contractors who use FOUNDATION!

**foundationsoft.com/cbo** | (866) 562-0195

FOUNDATION® is a member of the Foundation Software product family along with: Payroll4Construction, HQSuite, McCormick, The EDGE and WorkMax.




**Maximize Efficiency with Smarter Fleet Fuel Solutions**

Valley Wide Beverage is spending $20,000 less a month on average after switching to Thunder Creek No HAZMAT Fuel Trailers. Not only has it been a game-changer for them, but they've achieved full ROI in just two and a half months. Scan the code to hear their story.

Scan to learn more at **ThunderCreek.com**

THUNDER CREEK
Fuel & Service Equipment