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FROM THE EDITOR

CARMEN CAPOCCIA



Senior Managing Editor
Carmen Capoccia

Although it seems to me that New Year's Day was last week, we are now in the second quarter of 2025. So far, we've had a busy news cycle this year, with tariffs, immigration policies and changes to regulatory standards shifting business practices. In early March, Anirban Basu, chief economist for Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), said: "Despite high interest rates and the looming effects of tariffs and heightened economic uncertainty, contractors remain optimistic. Nearly 65% of contractors expect their sales to increase during the first half of 2025, according to the January reading of ABC's Construction Confidence Index."

While nobody knows what the future holds, there are steps leaders can take today to improve their companies. Our special section this month focuses on business management. On page 26, learn why it's more crucial than ever to build a solid reputation online. If you have questions about how to build a user-friendly website for current and potential customers, we've got you covered on page 24.

Transferability should be a focus for forward-thinking business leaders, argues Wipfli's Brad Werner. Learn how to achieve transferability and how that can position a company for long-term success in his article on page 28.

As we enter this phase of 2025, the Construction Business Owner editorial team is planning new content. Are you interested in writing for us? Is there a topic that we need to cover more often? Please let me know at ccapoccia@cahabamedia.com.

Wishing you a productive and profitable Q2,

Carmen Capoccia

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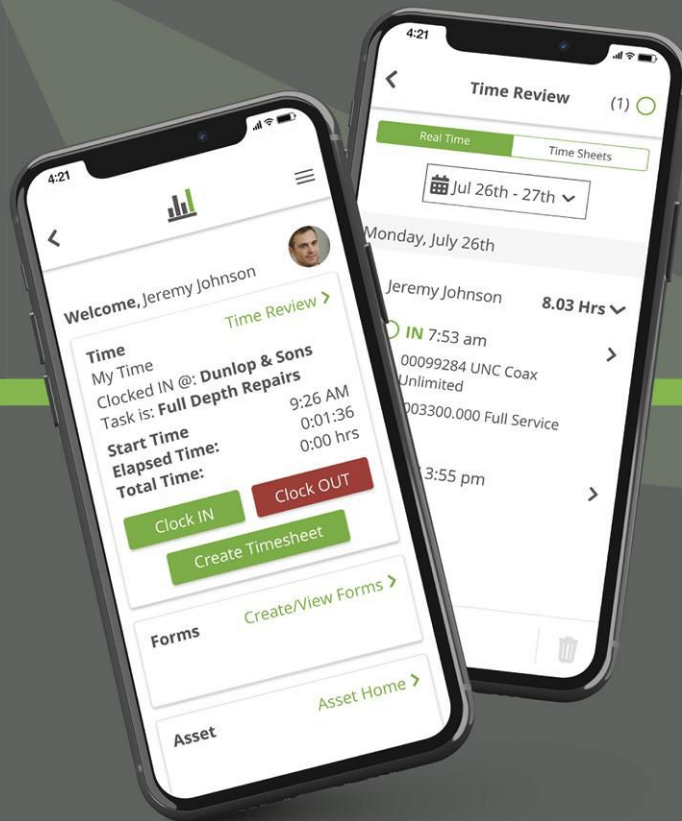
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► Thunder Creek Equipment Names New Territory Sales Manager



Brent Peak

Thunder Creek Equipment has named Brent Peak as the new territory sales manager (TSM) for the Midwest and Southeastern U.S., including Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Michigan and Ohio. Peak

brings more than 15 years of experience in sales and account management across multiple industries, with a track record of achieving significant portfolio growth and building lasting relationships in highly competitive markets. Thunder Creek designs and manufactures fueling and preventive maintenance solutions that are used in a variety of industries including agriculture, construction, roadbuilding, oil and gas, disaster recovery and utility construction. This includes the Fuel and Service Trailer, No-HAZMAT Fuel & Service Trailer, the Multi-Tank Oil Trailer, and the Service and Lube Trailer. Visit thundercreek.com.

► Topcon & FARO Technologies Announce Strategic Agreement

Topcon Corporation and FARO Technologies have announced a strategic agreement to develop and distribute innovative solutions in the laser scanning market. The agreement is expected to expand access to digital reality solutions and result in complementary product developments, such as the seamless integration of Topcon and Sokkia solutions with FARO's solutions. Building on this collaboration will strengthen both companies' offerings and provide added value to users. The collaboration aims to combine the strengths of both organizations in order to advance technological capabilities for professionals across multiple industries. It will focus on leveraging the companies' collective expertise in laser scanning technologies, targeting key sectors including, construction, surveying, mapping, architecture, forensics, building information modeling (BIM), and industrial plant and process applications. Through

this agreement, FARO and Topcon plan to introduce initiatives to further the collaboration, including product offerings and enhanced software integrations. Visit global.topcon.com and faro.com.

► Skanska USA Building Unveils New Business Arm

Skanska USA, a global construction and development firm, has launched Skanska Advanced Technology (SAT), a new specialized operating unit focused on high-tech and semiconductor manufacturing. Part of the company's USA Building business unit, SAT will be led by Executive Vice President and General Manager Katie Coulson. With projects spanning Oregon, Arizona and California, SAT currently employs more than 180 professionals and collaborates closely with Skanska's regional operating units to deliver solutions across Skanska's footprint. Skanska has a record in this space with more than \$23 billion in advanced technology projects completed or under construction. Creating SAT will help Skanska meet the rapidly growing demand for high-tech and semiconductor manufacturing projects. An industry veteran with more than 25 years of experience in high-tech manufacturing and a proven record of operational and account management success, Coulson will oversee all aspects of SAT's operations. Coulson joined Skanska in 1999 and most recently served as senior vice president – account manager, where she managed Skanska's long-standing relationship with its largest high-tech manufacturing customer. In her new role, Coulson will have leadership responsibility for the unit, reporting to Jim Link, regional executive officer, Skanska USA Building. Visit skanska.com.

► Morgan Truck Body Announces Grand Opening of Online Parts Store

Morgan Truck Body, a manufacturer of light- and medium-duty freight and refrigerated van and truck bodies, announced the launch of its new online parts store during NTEA Work Truck

Week 2025. Morgan's online parts store is dedicated to delivering reliable, high-quality parts for box truck owners, operators and fleets across the country. Morgan's online parts store will offer a wide selection of box truck components including Morgan original equipment manufacturer (OEM) parts, cargo doors, roll-up doors, corner caps, lighting and more. The website will allow customers to find the parts they need and make quick, secure purchases. Key features of the new Morgan online parts store include the following: extensive inventory of Morgan OEM parts; access to cost-effective, durable parts to keep trucks on the road longer; nationwide delivery within five business days for in-stock parts; and a dedicated team for product and ordering support. Visit morganparts.com.

► Cemen Tech Partners With McCoy Construction & Forestry

Cemen Tech, a volumetric concrete mixer manufacturer, announced a new partnership with McCoy Construction & Forestry, a construction and forestry equipment dealer, to expand access to Cemen Tech's concrete production solutions across Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois. This collaboration brings Cemen Tech's advanced volumetric technology closer to contractors, offering comprehensive support throughout the region. Cemen Tech's volumetric mixers allow contractors to produce concrete fresh, on-site and precisely tailored to project needs, without requiring return trips to batch plants. This flexibility enables contractors to adjust mix designs on demand, saving time, reducing waste and enhancing overall productivity. McCoy Construction & Forestry will support the partnership with a dedicated team providing field service, preventive maintenance and emergency repairs. McCoy's service technicians and stocked parts inventory ensure customers experience minimal downtime and reliable access to support across all four states. Visit cementech.com and mccoycf.com.

► Bluebeam Appoints Ema Gantcheva as SVP of Global Marketing



Ema Gantcheva

Bluebeam, a developer of solutions and services for architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) professionals worldwide, added Ema Gantcheva to the organization as senior vice president (SVP) of global marketing. In this role, she'll lead a team of global marketers to achieve growth by aligning sales and marketing with a focus on data-driven decision making. Gantcheva will report to Amit Sangal, chief growth officer, Build & Construct division for Nemetschek Group. Gantcheva will lead marketing for both Bluebeam and GoCanvas, focusing on broadening brand reach and delivering measurable impact throughout the entire customer journey. She brings a wealth of experience in leading and transforming marketing strategies for high-growth business-to-business (B2B) software and software-as-a-service (SaaS) companies. During her tenure at GoCanvas, she redefined marketing as a value-driven, revenue-generating function, fostering a data-centric culture and elevating marketing's role as a trusted partner to sales, product and customer success teams. Last year, the Nemetschek Group announced its acquisition of GoCanvas as a part of its Build & Construct division. Visit bluebeam.com.

► Custom Equipment LLC Rebrands to AXCS Equipment

Custom Equipment LLC, the manufacturer of Hy-Brid Lifts, announced a rebranding to AXCS Equipment. Its product line dramatically increased when it merged with ASKO Holding, a Turkish-based entity with holdings in construction, agriculture, energy and technology, in early 2024. This new merger offered resources to expand the product line beyond scissor lifts to include telehandlers, articulated booms and vertical masts. "With our expanded product offering, we are now able to provide everything our customers need for aerial work," said AXCS CEO Eric Liner. "AXCS really seemed like the natural brand

name to encompass not only what we do but how we serve the market. In addition to a full range of products, customers have access to a team of experts that will help them get the right product for the right job and support in both application and service. We take great pride in this customer-centric approach." AXCS' dynamic range of aerial lift equipment and telehandlers is built to combine operator safety with durability and efficiency. With an emphasis on offering support to rental customers, AXCS provides solutions for construction, drywall, electrical, HVAC, painting, facility maintenance and more. Visit axcs.com.

► DICA Announces Key Leadership Appointments

DICA, a provider of engineered outrigger pads, crane pads and ground protection products, announced Matt Sargent as chief financial officer (CFO) and integrator and John "Pinky" Jansen as director of marketing. Sargent has a strong background in financial leadership, strategic planning, operational finance, and business integration. Before joining DICA, he served as CFO for multiple companies, managing large-scale financial operations, securing significant government incentives, and leading mergers and acquisitions. He collaborated with executive teams on strategic direction, resource allocation and analysis of prospective investments. His proficiency in budgeting, forecasting and cash flow management will be essential to DICA's continued growth and customer support. Jansen brings extensive expertise in branding, omnichannel marketing and strategic growth initiatives. He has successfully led marketing teams across the entertainment, B2B and industrial sectors, developing data-driven strategies that enhance brand recognition and drive revenue. Since 2017, Jansen gained experience serving the crane and rigging industry through various roles at Industrial Training International where he helped drive brand growth and market expansion. Jansen's past roles include spearheading digital advertising efforts

that exponentially increased sales and launching innovative, industry-leading campaigns. DICA outrigger pads and crane pads are used in 50-plus countries and on all seven continents around the world in construction, maintenance, electrical utility, oil and gas, and tree care as well as local, state and federal government agencies. Visit dicausa.com.

► Hirohito Imakoji Appointed as New Managing Director of Liebherr USA Co.



Hirohito Imakoji

Liebherr has appointed Hirohito Imakoji as managing director of Liebherr USA Co., a mixed sales organization supporting 10 product segments throughout the U.S. Imakoji joins the Liebherr USA executive management team, working together with Kai Friedrich, the managing director and divisional director of earthmoving and material handling technology. In his role, Imakoji will oversee the strategic planning and execution of growth strategies for all corporate, finance and administrative functions integrated in the shared services at Liebherr USA Co. Imakoji brings over 17 years of experience working within the Liebherr Group. He began his career as an intern with Liebherr-Werk Nenzing GmbH in 2004 and transitioned to a full-time employee in 2007. He later moved to Liebherr-Hong Kong in 2010 and Liebherr-Sunderland Works in 2011. He most recently supported Liebherr-Electronics and Drives GmbH as managing director, finance and administration, from 2017-2024. Liebherr USA Co., based in Newport News, Virginia, provides sales and service on behalf of 10 different Liebherr product segments: earthmoving, material handling, mining, mobile and crawler cranes, tower cranes, concrete technology, deep foundation machines, maritime cranes, components, and refrigeration and freezing. Visit liebherr.com.

► CMAA Expands Spanish-Language Content Library

The Construction Management

Association of America (CMAA) is in the process of publishing Spanish translations for 11 of its publications, continuing an effort to make industry resources accessible to an even larger number of program and construction management professionals. These translations, which will be released in phases through spring 2026, mark the first time CMAA's Construction Management Guidelines have been available in a language other than English. The first of CMAA's Construction Management Guidelines in Spanish — "Pautas de Gestión de Tecnología" ("Technology Management Guidelines") — is now available in the CMAA bookstore as an e-book or print publication. This release will be followed by 10 additional Spanish-language translations. This expansion of CMAA's content library follows the publication of Spanish translations of the association's "Construction Management Standards of Practice" ("Gestión de la Construcción: Estándares de Práctica") and "Capstone: An Introduction to the Construction Management Profession" ("Curso Final: Introducción a la Profesión de Gestión de la Construcción"). These translations will help more program and construction managers, as well as other industry professionals, access the necessary resources to advance their careers. An electronic version of these publications will be available at a discounted rate for CMAA members and are included with Mega Member benefits at no additional cost. Visit cmaanet.org.

► ANA Inc. Announces \$50M Strategic Investment

ANA Inc., a provider of mobile power and air solutions, has secured a \$50 million strategic investment from S2G Investments (S2G), a multistage investment firm focused on sustainable solutions across the energy, food and agriculture, and oceans sectors. This partnership marks a pivotal step in ANA's commitment to innovation, fueling the expansion of its hybrid power generation offerings. Founded in 2017, ANA is the exclusive North American supplier of Airman mobile prime power generators

and air compressors. The company serves major national equipment rental firms and supports key industries, including construction, industrial, utilities and telecom. In 2022, the company launched its EBOSS hybrid energy system. This solution combines the robustness and ease of use of traditional generators with the operational flexibility and fuel efficiency benefits of an integrated battery storage solution. With the support of S2G, ANA is poised to accelerate its impact, drive industrywide innovation and meet the increasing demand for sustainable power solutions. With this contribution, ANA can expand its capabilities and infrastructure, and leverage technologies to deliver innovative and sustainable solutions in support of its Journey to Zero. It will also help the company meet increasing demand and explore emerging opportunities. Visit anacorp.com.

► Ben Winter To Serve as 61st NTEA Board Chair

During Work Truck Week 2025, Ben Winter, vice chairman/business development at Transfer Flow (Chico, California), was installed as 61st Board chair of NTEA – The Work Truck Association. He accepted the position from immediate past board chair Jason Ritchey, president/owner of Curry Supply Co. (Altoona, Pennsylvania). Since 1993, Winter has been driving success at Transfer Flow, an automotive manufacturing company renowned for its cutting-edge production technology and top-tier engineering. Beginning his journey in sales management, he spearheaded significant growth initiatives, leveraging extensive experience to introduce service opportunities and deliver profitable projects. Today, his role is multifaceted, encompassing networking, customer relations management, new business presentations and navigating diverse manufacturing challenges. He has been active as an advisor or board member for many different manufacturing business associations, including Specialty Equipment Market Association, National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association, California Air Resources Board,

Environmental Protection Agency and National Association of Manufacturers. In addition, he served as vice chair at Chico Chamber of Commerce, board member for EveryBody Healthy Body and Chico Legislative Action, and mentor at Chico Chamber's Young Professionals Organization and Chico Striders (youth running club). Visit ntea.com.

► Immel Construction Adds New Employees & Promotes From Within

Immel Construction announced two new hires and two promotions. Megan Fischer joined Immel Construction as human resources with over 20 years of industry experience. Fischer will be an advocate for Immel Construction's culture and people, leading efforts in recruitment, retention, personal and professional development, and much more. Clifford Watson joined Immel Construction as director of risk management with over 24 years of industry experience, specializing in environmental, health and safety. Watson excels in advanced process analysis, hazard identification, risk mitigation, and designing and managing effective safety systems to drive measurable results. Spencer Dohms was promoted to senior estimator. Dohms has proved his expertise, leadership qualities and desire to continue growing and learning since joining Immel's team in 2017 as estimator. Allison Thiry was promoted to creative director. Thiry has been integral to the company's branding efforts for the last six years, previously as marketing specialist. As creative director, she will oversee Immel's marketing vision and lead the presentation effort to expand its customer base. Immel Construction is a 100% employee-owned construction services company providing general construction, project management, estimating and skilled craftsmen to meet the needs of the commercial, health care, industrial and institutional markets. Visit immelconstruction.com.

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Emily Saunoi-Sandgren

Director of Sustainability Trimble

Tech's role in a sustainable future

BY KRISTIN EASTERLING

Emily Saunoi-Sandgren is the director of sustainability for Trimble and chair of the Trimble Foundation. A social scientist by training, sustainability has always been a focus of her work.

"It was always about trying to understand how I can be a part of helping ensure we can meet today's needs without compromising the ability to meet tomorrow's needs," she said.

Since joining Trimble four years ago, in a newly created role, Saunoi-Sandgren has worked to formalize the sustainable practices Trimble already had in place.

"I make sure we're aligned internally on what we're committed to, how we're managing our sustainability commitments, and help us stay accountable," she said.

Trimble offers a large suite of software, hardware and services for construction, including 3D modeling, field service management, surveying and mapping, and others. These tools help increase productivity for construction firms, which in turn, leads to a more resilient construction industry overall, according to Saunoi-Sandgren.

"It's the ability to not just reduce your waste, but it's also about ensuring you're going to have a profitable business going forward," she said.

"It's really about seeking to understand where people are coming from, how they're thinking about this, and developing a shared vision for each customer and each situation," she said. Our technology can provide all sorts of great benefits and outcomes to customers. But sometimes, that initial resistance or

hurdle to fully embrace digital transformation can be a barrier."

She said Trimble has been very supportive of her efforts and has set up a clear road map to building a more sustainable future, which helps shape these conversations.

Saunoi-Sandgren's parents are the reason she landed on helping companies with sustainability efforts.

"They wanted to make sure I was a global citizen, that I understood not just who I was and where I came from, but how that fit into the broader world, and that I had a responsibility to be a good citizen, but they didn't dictate what that meant," she said. "That led me to ask big questions like, 'Why do we have the issues that we have in the world? Why is there poverty? Why are there inequalities?' ... I realized that whatever I did [as a career], I needed to know what I was working on was helping and had the same set of values I had."

Saunoi-Sandgren stays in sustainability because of her children and the desire to ensure they have a future: "Part of building toward a resilient future will be shaped by technology and tech adoption in the construction industry."

"I don't know any company that wouldn't want to be better tomorrow than they are today," Saunoi-Sandgren said. "Sustainability is about continuous improvement to ensure you're around tomorrow. ... Really, at the end of the day, adopting the kind of technology [Trimble provides] makes the doing of sustainability the default. As soon as you make something the default, it just becomes the practice."

She said that technology helps remove the “and” from the business side of sustainability. Often, business owners look at all they need to do to run a successful business, and sustainability becomes one more thing on the pile — the “and.”

“If you can remove that and just say, ‘This is how we do business, and how we do it is going to lead to greater profits and greater outcomes for people and the planet,’ then you’ve made it the default,” she said.

Addressing the cost of entry of new digital tools is something Trimble is prioritizing, making the technology that helps organizations operate better and sustainably more accessible to companies of all sizes.

“One way we have been tackling this is by moving to a more subscription-focused payment model,” she said. “It’s lowering the point of entry from a capital expenditure standpoint and gives you more predictability in your monthly costs. ... I would like to see that continue to evolve. We have a role and responsibility to enable that.”

For students or those new to the construction industry looking to adopt more sustainable practices, Saunoi-Sandgren’s biggest piece of advice was to not let the complexity of it create overwhelm.

“It’s okay to take small, strategic steps,” she said. “The good news is, there are lots of examples of companies that have been doing this for a long time. There’s enough time and enough practice that’s been in place that you certainly aren’t alone, and you don’t have to start from scratch.”

Saunoi-Sandgren is also the chair of the Trimble Foundation, which organizes and donates to corporate philanthropic activities dedicated to improving communities where Trimble does business.

“This work truly reinforces the work I get to do as a sustainability leader for the company,” she said. “It’s a slightly different hat, but I still get to address the broader issues my work is dedicated to.”

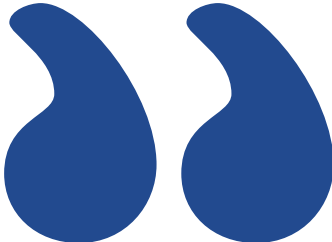
She said her personal motto is to remember that it’s not about the destination, but the journey.

“Having a destination in mind — a sustainable future — helps orient me to the direction I’m heading,” she said. “But what’s most important to me are the steps along the way, the understanding, the learning, the interactions, the successes and the failures. Failure is just about learning and growing. It’s important to understand the destination you’re heading for, but what’s more valuable is understanding the living of the journey toward that.” ▲

Kristin Easterling is a freelance writer for Construction Business Owner.



**It was always
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compromising
the ability
to meet
tomorrow’s
needs.**



Buying the Bike vs. Using the Bike

A comparison of operational tools & operational behaviors



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.

Like many other overweight Americans seeking a weight loss solution, I invested in a Peloton bike. Interesting choice of words: “invested.” While there are certainly differences of opinion, I think Peloton has an amazing product that is well-crafted and sound. Additionally, there is a cavalcade of add-on features (read: more money), to enhance the rider's experience.

Now for the punch line. Like so many who have purchased this product or any other expensive device for the home, it has become a glorified coat rack in my

bedroom. Theoretically, if one looks at the investment alone, my extra pounds should just fall off, as if through some sort of “bike osmosis” or simply intimidation of a price tag.

Jokes aside, there are also many organizations that spend countless hours in consternation about large-scale capital purchases within their organization. Currently, there is no shortage of outstanding technological solutions that help in cost management, estimating, document control, etc. Similarly, these are not inexpensive solutions.



It is not to say that they are not worth the return on their investment (ROI), but for many firms, that ROI is never achieved. Just as I would be better served by throwing on a pair of sneakers and walking around the block, firms could just as easily roll out a firmwide spreadsheet to manage costs and save themselves the agonizing financial gut punch that comes with some new software or application. So in this day and age, are we advocating for a return to being a firm of neophytes? Certainly not. However, ROI is only achieved through process adoption, process vetting and long-term accountability.

Process Adoption

Would I like to be able to cycle like my neighbor who does 50 miles in a pop? Not really. However, it would be nice and probably help with the aforementioned condition. That being said, it proves the point that there is never a single process that should govern every individual. Firms are similar. What works for one firm may not be applicable for another. The more important theme should be

around codifying the process internally and capturing those specific nuances that are exclusive to the firm. For instance, consider the following:

- *Assignment of responsibilities* – Determine who should take out the work order, who should generate the purchase orders, who should handle the site logistics, who should take point on a punch list, who should be the customer's point of contact post construction, etc.
- *Timeliness of responsibilities* – Outline the expectation for a process step (Ex: No later than a week, etc.). Define the expectation around escalation (Ex: If you don't hear from a customer in a week, contact your supervisor, etc.).
- *Predecessors* – This is normally discussed when referring to a project schedule, but a firm's process should identify all the relevant items that precede a critical milestone. For instance, what should happen before a kickoff meeting to ensure it is successful? What should happen before a look-ahead plan is turned in?

Process Vetting

Everyone should exercise, but running a marathon probably isn't happening for me. I recall a line from the "Lord of the Rings" series where Gimli said that dwarves are good over short distances. While I am neither a dwarf nor a runner, the right exercise for me is out there. What better way to investigate if a process works than by vetting it?

Put another way, before a process is rolled out and made part of the firm's dogma, it should be run through a series of beta testing. Use the feedback garnered in the beta testing to make subtle changes and refinements. Chances are the elements created in the process's development will be correct, but allowing for feedback has two desired outcomes. First, there are always things missed. While these are unlikely to be egregious

misses, this process will ensure changes are captured. Second, there will be the added benefit of creating a sense of evangelism. Change management is difficult, but having participants who test-drove the process validate the benefits to peers is priceless.

Long-Term Accountability

I am about to expose the biggest secret of the fitness community: accountability. Whether it is an application that tracks your movement or you simply checking the box and acknowledging that exercise occurred, accountability is essential. Without some mechanism to ensure the ride, the Peloton will become a bedroom paperweight. Whatever application or software or firm uses — whether it is a simple firmwide spreadsheet or global enterprise resource planning (ERP) system — there needs to be a step where the users are "checked." This is not meant to be big brother hovering over a project manager. Rather, it ensures the firmwide tools are leveraged.

In the end, if failure occurs, it allows the team to identify the root cause: "Wait, this project lost four points in margin. We also show we didn't do preconstruction planning." Chances are there is correlation between the failure to adopt the process and the loss.

While this is a tongue-in-cheek examination of how processes, tools and behavior are interrelated, there is truth to having a strong interplay between the Brand X Operational Model, the tools it uses, and the way firmwide behaviors are adopted and monitored. Everyone more than likely has the best of intentions, but with these three guardrails, so many tools simply become lost leaders, and operations manuals become mere suggestions.

Finally, if anyone has a need for a "never-used," high-end, exer-cycle, drop me an email. ▲



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Constructing a Culture of Care

How Faith Technologies Incorporated is transforming employee wellness



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. Contact Beyer at cal@safeproject.us or 651-307-7883. Visit safeproject.us.

In today's fast-paced construction industry, where efficiency and safety reign supreme, the well-being of employees often gets the spotlight. Faith Technologies Incorporated (FTI) — a national provider in the engineering, construction, manufacturing and clean energy space — has built a culture that prioritizes the health of its team members. Since its founding in 1972, this Menasha, Wisconsin-based company has grown into an industry innovator, with a robust wellness program known as EmpowerYou.

FTI's Wellness Program Director, Alyssa Kwasny, CCWS, who began her tenure with the company in 2008, emphasizes that wellness is not just a program, but a cornerstone of the company's culture. With over 3,700 employees — split between 1,179 office team members and 2,555 field and manufacturing team members — FTI's commitment to mental, physical and emotional health is reshaping what it means to work in construction.

"We have always believed that taking care of our people isn't just about their physical health, but their mental and emotional well-being as well," Kwasny said. "That holistic approach is crucial to the success of our company and to the individuals who make it what it is."

A Multifaceted Approach to Wellness

FTI's EmpowerYou program is built on partnerships, innovation and feedback, offering employees and their families tools to improve their well-being. This

article describes the hallmarks of FTI's groundbreaking program.

Culture of Care

This initiative fosters an inclusive environment where employees can bring their whole selves to work — mind, body and soul. The program includes the following:

- A pledge for employees to commit to creating a safe and respectful workplace
- "Check-ins" for employees to share concerns or seek support from peers
- A "Time to Recharge" benefit, offering two hours of paid time off monthly for self-care or professional health services

Personify Health Partnership

Employees and spouses can use the Personify Health platform and mobile app to build healthy habits, schedule no-cost biometric screenings and earn up to \$200 in rewards cash. With an impressive 94% enrollment rate among insured employees and spouses, engagement is significantly higher than industry averages.

"The Personify platform is not just a wellness tool; it's an integral part of our employees' daily lives," Kwasny explained. "It encourages them to track their habits and helps them see how small changes can add up to a big impact."

Lifestyle Spending Account

In 2025, the company expanded its Healthy Lifestyle Reimbursement Program into a Lifestyle Spending Account (LSA), increasing reimbursement amounts to

\$400 per year and broadening eligible categories to include emotional and financial well-being expenses.

Mental Health Resources

FTI's enhanced employee assistance program (EAP) through Lyra Health offers up to eight free therapy sessions per year for employees and household members, along with substance abuse support and medication management. "We've worked hard to make mental health a priority here," Kwasny remarked. "Our EAP program gives employees a safe, private avenue for support. Whether it's therapy, financial counseling or substance abuse help, it's all part of the bigger picture of taking care of each other."

Zero-Dollar Copays

Recognizing the link between health and productivity, FTI eliminated copays for primary care and mental health visits, as well as for generic prescriptions, ensuring financial barriers don't hinder access to care.

Measurable Impact

FTI's robust data-driven approach ensures the EmpowerYou program evolves to meet employee needs. Feedback is regularly collected through annual wellness surveys, where employees highlight successes and suggest improvements. Some of the program's outcomes include:

- 95% of survey respondents agree that FTI's culture supports overall health and well-being
- 92% of 2024 wellness survey respondents agree that they have the support tools (i.e., social network, employer-provided services, manager support, etc.) to aid in getting the help needed regarding their mental health (an increase from 76% in 2020)
- 85% feel comfortable discussing mental health concerns at work, up from 76% in 2019



- 78% of 2024 wellness survey respondents agree that their leader prioritizes the mental health of their team

"We're proud of these outcomes," Kwasny noted. "The feedback we receive shows that our efforts are truly making a difference. But it's important to recognize that it's not just about the numbers. It's about creating a culture where employees feel seen and supported."

Empowering Wellness Through Innovation

FTI's innovative wellness strategies are complemented by its broader mission as a national contractor. The company operates across the U.S., with major hubs in Kansas, Missouri, Tennessee, Georgia and Oklahoma. Through its three divisions — Faith Technologies (electrical planning and engineering), EnTech Solutions (clean energy and electric vehicle charging) and Excellerate (manufacturing) — FTI integrates wellness into every level of its operations.

The company's focus on mental health is particularly relevant in the construction industry, where workers face higher rates of stress and substance use. To combat these challenges, FTI has introduced Mental Health Monday messages, accessible training on mental

well-being, and an Emergency Hardship Program to support employees in times of financial instability.

"Construction is a tough industry," Kwasny explained. "We see a lot of stress, and sometimes that can manifest in substance use or burnout. It's important to us that our team members know they're not alone and that support is available when they need it."

Looking Ahead

As FTI continues to lead the industry in wellness innovation, its efforts set a benchmark for other companies to follow. By prioritizing employee well-being, the company is not just enhancing productivity — it's building a legacy of care and compassion.

"For companies looking to emulate our success, the formula is clear: Listen to employees, adapt to their needs, and invest in comprehensive wellness initiatives," Kwasny advised. "It's about creating a space where employees can thrive — both at work and in their personal lives."

The result? A resilient workforce ready to tackle the challenges of tomorrow with strength and purpose. FTI's commitment to holistic well-being is an example of how the construction industry can lead the way in building a culture of care that benefits everyone. ▲

Facing the Crisis in Construction

Join CIASP to eliminate suicide in our industry



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STUART BINSTOCK served as president and CEO of Construction Financial Management Association (CFMA) for over 12 years, retiring in August 2023. He has more than 25 years of experience in the construction industry, having served in key leadership positions in organizations such as AGC, AIA and NECA.

America's construction industry is in crisis, and far too few people are aware of the problem. Mental health has become a huge issue in our society at large, but it is even more prevalent in the construction industry. Why? There is a real stigma in talking about suicide. Failure to address the issue is particularly a problem in the construction industry, given the acute circumstances in construction. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), construction is the occupation that sees the most deaths by suicide. As industry leaders, it's our responsibility to do something about it.

The Problem

Here's a shocking statistic to put the issue in context: Construction workers die by suicide at a rate five times higher than deaths caused by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's "fatal four" most common causes of construction fatalities (falls, electrocution, struck-bys and caught-ins).

First things first: We need to acknowledge the problem. If we don't talk about suicide, we can't get those at risk the help they need. Part of doing right by our people is getting the word out. Spreading awareness means more people have tools to recognize and support their peers, and, perhaps most importantly, it means those suffering know they aren't alone.

The nonprofit Construction Industry

Alliance for Suicide Prevention (CIASP) is an organization championing practices and policies to better support the construction industry's at-risk workforce. CIASP's goal is to eliminate suicide in the construction industry. This group was formed eight years ago by industry leaders.

We encourage everyone reading this to use of the training and assistance resources CIASP makes available. For more information on CIASP's offerings, visit preventconstructionsuicide.com and check out the other links in this article.

Why Construction?

Here are a few things we think everyone in our industry should keep in mind when it comes to mental health and suicide prevention.

As mentioned, no industry loses more to suicide than construction. In the U.S., male workers are at a higher risk of dying by suicide than female workers, and the suicide rate of construction workers is a shocking 65% higher than male workers in other industries.

Construction workers put their bodies on the line. Injury and chronic pain are contributing factors — as is substance abuse, with drug dependence often stemming from the toll this work takes on the body. The stereotypical attitude of the stoic or "tough guy," an attitude prevalent among construction workers, further compounds the social stigma that prevents emotional issues from being raised and addressed. Finally, it's partly

a demographic issue. As an industry, we proudly welcome military veterans to the workforce. Unfortunately, veterans can experience mental health challenges resulting from the incredibly difficult demands of their service.

Resolving this mental health crisis isn't just good for the workforce; it's good for business. Depression is the leading cause of disability and increases the risks associated with other chronic medical conditions. Depressed employees miss an average of 31.4 days per year and lose another 27.9 to unproductivity, based on 2022 data. Due in part to this impact on productivity, research suggests that investments in the mental health of your employees could generate returns of 400%.

Eliminating Suicide in Construction

The first and most important hurdle we need to clear involves normalizing conversations about mental health struggles. By creating the time and space for meaningful reactions, we can build relationships that help prevent feelings of isolation. When peers are struggling, open channels of communication help us hear the warning signs. Here are a few things to look out for in conversations:

- Feelings of being trapped or a burden to others
- Confrontation and conflicts with co-workers
- Expressions of wanting to die

Major life changes can also be causal factors, including the loss of loved ones, relationship issues, illness or injury, financial difficulties and other sources of stress. Observed behavior may also suggest a mental health struggle, including increased lateness, a decline in productivity, near misses and safety incidents, signs of substance abuse, agitation, mood swings and social withdrawal.



Of course, this isn't an exhaustive list, and very often, there are no warning signs — that's one reason CIASP emphasizes the importance of training everyone. Those suffering in silence are not beyond reach. For that reason, regular trainings are recommended.

Impact of Opioids

Substance abuse, like suicide, is known as a disease of despair. In an industry that takes a toll on bodies, the abuse of drugs and alcohol is a coping mechanism that's all too common. Statistically, anyone starting opioids for legitimate use, like the treatment of pain, has a 6% chance of remaining on the drug a year later, and the longer opioids are used, the higher the likelihood of long-term dependence.

The Alliance for Naloxone Safety in the Workplace provides tools to educate employees on the danger of opioids and site safety practices, including the use of overdose-reversing medicines. Furthermore, substance use is not the

only source of impairment. Long hours, stress and other factors can contribute to unsafe work environments. That means that drug education, random screens and zero-tolerance policies need to be augmented by more foundational health and safety protections like ensuring a reasonable workload and that stress levels are manageable.

In closing, here are a few CIASP resources that everyone within our industry should be aware of:

- preventconstructionsuicide.com
- preventconstructionsuicide.com/training

It goes without saying, but we hope everyone reading this takes these principles and puts them into action. A construction company's greatest resource is its people; taking care of that resource is not only the right thing to do, but it is also a wise business decision. There's no greater cause than supporting colleagues in need. ▲

Building Back Stronger

How wildfire-resilient construction can shape Los Angeles' future



DON JACOB is the chief innovation officer at Bluebeam, overseeing the development of digital solutions that enhance efficiency, collaboration and innovation in the construction industry. With extensive experience in software engineering and product development, he plays a key role in shaping technology that streamlines project workflows and improves productivity for builders worldwide. Visit bluebeam.com.

I've lived in Los Angeles for most of my life, and like many Angelenos, I've seen firsthand the devastation wildfires can bring to our communities. But nothing prepared me for the impact of the recent Eaton Fire in Altadena and the Palisades Fire along the coast, two destructive blazes in the 2025 wildfire season.

Both fires displaced thousands of residents and left behind an unimaginable toll, burning homes, businesses and critical infrastructure. The Eaton Fire struck close to home. Bluebeam's global headquarters is in Pasadena, just south of Altadena, and several of my colleagues lost their homes or were forced to evacuate.

Seeing the destruction firsthand reinforced what many in the construction industry already knew: Rebuilding after wildfires isn't just about replacing what was lost. It's about rethinking how we build, ensuring that homes, businesses and infrastructure are better prepared for future disasters.

As a software company providing solutions for customers in architecture, engineering and construction (AEC), we have a responsibility to create fire-resilient structures and communities that can withstand the next inevitable wildfire.

The Growing Threat: Wildfires & Construction Risks

California's wildfire crisis is no longer confined to a specific season. With climate change accelerating extreme weather patterns, prolonged droughts and hotter temperatures have created ideal conditions for wildfires year-round.

At the same time, urban expansion continues to push development into fire-prone areas, putting more properties and lives at risk.

For mid-sized general contractors, these changes present serious challenges. The rising cost of materials, evolving fire codes and the increasing complexity of wildfire-resistant construction require a new approach to rebuilding.

Fire-resistant materials, while critical for long-term resilience, tend to be more expensive than traditional alternatives. Stricter regulations demand additional expertise and compliance measures, adding layers of complexity to the construction process. Labor shortages and supply chain disruptions further complicate efforts to quickly and efficiently rebuild after disasters.

Despite these obstacles, wildfire recovery also presents an opportunity for contractors to lead the way in resilient construction. By embracing new materials, fire-conscious design and emerging technology, construction firms can play a pivotal role in shaping a safer, more sustainable Los Angeles.

Key Strategies for Wildfire-Resilient Construction

Fire-Resistant Materials

The materials used in construction significantly impact a structure's ability to withstand wildfires. In fire-prone areas, choosing noncombustible roofing and siding is essential. Metal roofing and fiber cement siding offer far greater fire resistance than traditional asphalt shingles.

or untreated wood. Fire-rated windows and doors, particularly those with double-glazed, tempered glass, help prevent heat-induced breakage and interior ignition.

Beyond individual materials, flame-retardant treatments can enhance the fire resistance of wood and steel structures. These coatings provide an extra layer of protection by slowing the spread of flames and reducing the likelihood of structural failure.

Landscaping decisions also matter. Homeowners and builders should prioritize defensible space by clearing flammable vegetation at least 30 feet from structures and planting drought-resistant, low-flammability plants to minimize fuel for fires.

Designing for Fire Defensibility

In addition to fire-resistant materials, contractors must consider how buildings are designed and positioned within the landscape. Creating defensible spaces — buffer zones that help slow the spread of wildfires — has become a critical component of fire-conscious site planning. Roofs made from tile or metal, coupled with sealed eaves and fire-resistant vent covers, can prevent embers from igniting a structure.

Modular construction is emerging as an effective strategy for wildfire rebuilding. Prefabricated fire-resistant modules allow for faster, more controlled construction while incorporating the latest in fire-resistant technology.

Additionally, site orientation plays a key role in fire safety. Strategic placement of buildings — considering wind patterns, access to emergency routes and surrounding vegetation — can greatly improve a property's resilience.

For large-scale developments, integrating greenbelts and firebreaks into urban planning can serve as a natural defense against fast-moving fires. In high-risk areas, new zoning regulations are discouraging development in fire-prone

regions while encouraging compact, well-defended community layouts.

Leveraging Construction Technology

Technology is transforming wildfire recovery efforts, providing faster, more efficient ways to assess damage and rebuild resilient communities. Advanced simulation tools help architects and engineers evaluate fire-resistant materials and structural designs, ensuring that new construction is optimized for safety and durability in fire-prone areas.

Drones have become essential in post-disaster recovery, rapidly surveying affected areas and delivering high-resolution imagery that aids in damage assessments. These insights allow contractors to make informed decisions quickly, accelerating rebuilding timelines while improving accuracy.

Digital collaboration platforms like Bluebeam are also streamlining recovery efforts by enabling real-time coordination between contractors, engineers and project managers. In disaster zones, where time is critical, seamless communication and document sharing help mitigate delays and keep large-scale projects on track.

Navigating Economic & Regulatory Challenges

The financial and regulatory landscape for post-wildfire construction is evolving quickly. California has introduced new incentives and funding programs aimed at encouraging fire-resistant construction. State and federal grants are available to homeowners and builders who incorporate fire-resistant materials and designs, helping offset some of the added costs.

Insurance companies are also shifting their approach. Properties built to higher wildfire resilience standards are increasingly eligible for lower insurance premiums. For contractors, staying ahead of evolving fire codes is critical. Many jurisdictions are adopting stricter building

codes, requiring enhanced fire protection measures in new construction and major renovations.

Sustainability is another key consideration. Many rebuilding projects now integrate Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification or net-zero design principles, ensuring that fire-resistant construction aligns with broader environmental goals. Contractors who adopt these forward-thinking strategies will be well-positioned to meet both regulatory requirements and market demands.

Looking Ahead: A More Resilient Future for Los Angeles

As Los Angeles begins the long process of rebuilding after the Eaton and Palisades fires, the construction industry must recognize that this is not just about restoration. It is an opportunity to build stronger, safer and more resilient communities.

Fire-resistant materials and innovative design strategies will need to become the standard, not the exception. Contractors must embrace new technologies and sustainable construction practices to ensure that future buildings are not only compliant with updated fire codes but also truly resilient against the growing threat of wildfires.

Wildfires are a challenge that will continue to shape the construction industry in California and beyond. But through smarter design, better materials and the integration of advanced technology, the industry can help ensure that the next time a fire sweeps through Los Angeles, the devastation will be far less severe.

Rebuilding after wildfires is not just about recovery — it is about preparing for the future. And for midsized contractors, that future presents both challenges and significant opportunities to lead the way in resilient, forward-thinking construction. ▲

Breaking Down Barriers

Addressing the language gap in the construction industry for safety, inclusion & productivity

BY NEIL BERRY

Language barriers in the construction industry are a pervasive problem which are not being adequately addressed. These obstacles present severe consequences in terms of safety, work efficiency and workforce morale. Effective communication — facilitated by language training and technology — is essential for creating a safer and more productive environment on construction sites.

Let us imagine Employee X, a skilled construction worker whose first language is not English. Due to limited English proficiency, Employee X struggles to communicate effectively with colleagues, posing risks to themselves and others. Their strong work ethic and dedication often go unnoticed due to a lack of integration with their peers. Now

consider a scenario where Employee X encounters a significant safety hazard on-site. Without adequate language training, Employee X may be unable to convey the scope or urgency of the danger, potentially leading to serious consequences.

Research from the University of Reading reveals that up to 50% of construction workers are migrants, the majority of whom are non-native English speakers. It is important to consider here that non-native English speakers face disproportionately higher risks of workplace accidents due to communication breakdowns. This distinction is exacerbated by ad hoc translation practices, which include relying on bilingual employees. This reliance breeds inaccuracies — especially

when expressing highly technical jargon — which are further accentuated by unavoidable hindrances such as noise, team rotations and slang. These makeshift solutions are insufficient in high-stake situations where precise and timely communication is crucial.

Inadequate communication can have a negative impact on measurable outcomes such as productivity and additional costs, as well as intangible elements like morale, teamwork and trust. Simple misunderstandings can have knock-on effects which cause delays, reworks and added expenses, straining both budgets and timelines.

Insights from LetsBuild reported that recent worksite studies in Europe reveal the consequences of communication breakdowns: 1 in 3 projects fail, a



Photo Credit: Hanna Syvak - stock.adobe.com

mere 37% finish on time, and only 52% achieve the goals. This can be compared to worksites with robust communication practices which see 71% of projects completed on time and 80% achieving their objectives. Simple mistakes stemming from poor communication can also lead to financial burdens such as the purchase of incorrect apparatus or incurring legal fees from unmet commitments.

Teamwork, strong morale and shared trust are imperative to successful projects. Unfortunately, unaddressed language barriers hamper collaboration and often result in discontent and frustration among team members. Perceived inequalities, especially when non-native speakers are in the minority, can lead to feelings of exclusion and resentment. This dissatisfaction often results in high staff turnover, further delaying projects and increasing costs.

For non-native speakers, marginalization can foster a destructive work environment, compromising both safety and productivity. Construction companies with poor communication practices risk not only the well-being of their workers but also their professional reputation, as high accident rates and inefficient projects tarnish their records and reduce future opportunities.

The construction industry is a leading contributor to the European economy and continues to grow in scale. According to the European Builders Confederation, the construction sector generates about 9% of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the European Union and employs around 18 million people. Despite its forward momentum, it remains traditional in its practices. Harnessing the power of technology

and digital tools offers significant potential for addressing language barriers.

You could easily ask why language is specifically important to the construction industry. By its very nature, it is jargon-heavy and relies on clear messaging and precise instructions being passed down the chain of command. The industry is uniquely diverse, which breeds an extremely dissonant common language, therefore heightening workplace misunderstandings and risks while highlighting the necessity of companywide language training.

Employee X from the prior example would have benefited from targeted language proficiency tests, followed by tailored training programs. Workers must be equipped with industry-specific vocabulary with a focus on safety-related terminology, as these are as essential as everything else in their toolbox. Flexible online training ensures accessibility and allows progress to be monitored, preventing individuals from falling behind.

Providing health and safety guidelines, safety cases, toolbox talks and project briefings in multiple languages would foster a sense of equality and reduce time wasted on reiterating instructions. In a similar vein, outlining concise protocols for the management of multilingual teams can help preempt and mitigate communication challenges. Furthermore, appointing individuals to facilitate intercultural expression can create a more cohesive and considerate work environment.

Leadership plays a crucial role in driving these changes. It is vital that senior team members lead by example, emphasizing the importance of open communication and active participation in multilingual training

practices. Leadership should also prioritize regularly assessing the effectiveness of communication practices, and adapt strategies as needed to ensure continuous improvement.

I urge construction companies to acknowledge the diversity of their workforce and the absence of a common language as critical challenges. Language proficiency is not only a supplementary skill but an essential tool for upholding safety standards and productivity. Industry leaders should prioritize investing time and resources in digital language training to reduce communication barriers.

Returning to Employee X, let us now imagine the benefits they would have reaped from comprehensive language training.

Armed with a strong vocabulary, Employee X has the confidence to communicate competently — especially in regards to hazards — and to contribute ideas which add value to the project.

They are no longer underutilized, their work does not go unrecognized and they become an irreplaceable asset to the team.

Ultimately, by making multilingual training and resources a standard practice, companies can create a much safer, more inclusive and more efficient workplace. ▲

Neil Berry, worldwide senior vice president of Babbel for Business, leads Babbel's global business-to-business (B2B) organization, expanding Babbel's reach across diverse markets and industries. With 30-plus years in software as a service (SaaS), Berry brings extensive expertise in scaling businesses. Babbel for Business serves more than 2,000 clients across 30-plus countries with its innovative language learning platform. Visit babbelforbusiness.com.

The Importance of Choosing Counsel in Lawsuits Covered by Insurance

Secure trusted legal representation while still meeting your insurance carrier requirements

BY DARIN BROOKS & JULIA BOBBITT

After a company has been sued, its immediate next steps should be twofold: Consult its lawyer and notify its insurance carrier. For a claim covered by an applicable insurance policy, the carrier should pick up defense of the lawsuit and provide an attorney to represent the company in the lawsuit. If so, then the initial lawyer's (the one who knows the business and may already know the facts underlying the claims)

involvement for the company in defense of that covered claim becomes unclear. This article discusses the pros and cons of pre-negotiating the selection of the company's choice of defense counsel with the insurance carrier.

Choice of Counsel

Once a company submits a claim to insurance, the insurance carrier will respond by providing a coverage position

letter. This letter typically will indicate whether the carrier will provide the company a legal defense (that is, a lawyer) of the lawsuit and, if so, any reservations as to whether ultimately there may be claims or damages that the policy will not cover once proven. As a reminder, a carrier's duty to defend a lawsuit is a separate duty from its duty to ultimately pay out the claim on behalf of the company (that is, duty to indemnify the insured). The carrier's duty to defend its insured is, in general, based only on the claimant's allegations against the company, regardless of their truth.

If the carrier agrees that the facts of a lawsuit, taken as true for defense purposes, entitle the company to a legal defense under the terms of the applicable insurance policy, then the policy will typically give the carrier "the right and the duty to defend the insured against the claim." This means the carrier — not the company — will choose and engage a lawyer or law firm to defend the company against the claim. So, when a claim is submitted to the carrier and the carrier agrees to provide a defense, the company will not have a right to choose its own counsel (and merely then pass on the attorney's fees for reimbursement by the carrier).

And, the odds are that the company's go-to lawyer is not on the carrier's preapproved slate of defense counsel hired to defend policyholders and will not be appointed to represent the company in the lawsuit. At that point,



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the company has a choice. One option is to continue with the carrier's appointed counsel — after all, the carrier will cover that lawyer's fees. The newly appointed law firm, however, does not know the company's business values or strategy, and has no experience or reputation with the company team.

Another option is to have the company's go-to lawyer continue representing the company against the lawsuit. This means the company will either pay fully out of pocket for its chosen lawyer (for example, if using the carrier's appointed counsel while also using the company's outside counsel for consultation and oversight purposes), or have to negotiate the company lawyer's rates with the insurance carrier (which likely means paying out of pocket for amounts above the carrier's rates). The desire to have the lawyer of the company's choosing is obvious. She or he is reputable, experienced and trusted. So, who does the company use?

A Potential Dilemma

If the company decides to agree with the most cost-effective option and utilize the insurance carrier's appointed counsel), then a company may still end up in a situation where it needs its own independent counsel. Although unlikely, a conflict between a carrier and the company may unexpectedly arise and lead to complications in the carrier/appointed counsel/insured relationship. Under Texas law, an insured is entitled to independent counsel when the facts at issue in the liability lawsuit against the insured are the same facts that determine whether there is coverage under the policy. In other words, a carrier cannot use the lawyer it hires to establish facts that may be helpful in defending the underlying claim, but simultaneously defeat coverage. The purpose of this rule is so a carrier cannot advance its interest at the expense of its insureds. Although

the carrier is paying for a lawyer for its insured (the company), the appointed lawyer's client is still the company and the lawyer cannot be forced into an ethical conflict.

If such a scenario arises, both the company and the carrier will want clarity on how to remedy the situation. However, many policies do not address the details of what happens when there is a conflict with appointed counsel.

The Solution: Choice of Counsel Endorsement

Companies can avoid having to choose between its trusted lawyer and appointed counsel, and avoid a potential conflict scenario at the outset, by negotiating choice of counsel in their insurance policy. A "choice of counsel endorsement," "selection of defense counsel endorsement," or a "designated law firm endorsement," is an endorsement (that is, amendment to the policy) that allows the company to choose its counsel when faced with a lawsuit.

This type of endorsement comes in differing forms. It may either provide that the company "may select counsel to investigate and defend with [the carrier's] prior written approval, which shall not be unreasonably withheld" or it may designate a particular law firm and provide that the company "shall have the option to select the below designated law firm as defense counsel." The former type of the endorsement gives the company flexibility to choose the law firm that is most fitting to the case, while the latter provides more certainty and takes away the necessity of any negotiating with the carrier in the face of a lawsuit.

While allowing the company to choose the lawyer, the carrier will still maintain oversight of the litigation. In particular, the carrier will require the law firm to

have or provide certain qualifications and billing rates. The endorsement will also likely require the lawyer to cooperate with the carrier as to billing and reporting procedures and give the carrier the option to terminate the lawyer if they do not comply. And, like many endorsements, it could increase policy premiums.

Regardless, whether it's a high-profile case or a case close to the heart of the company, having counsel who understands the businesses values and goals in defending a claim may be the company's ultimate goal. By including this endorsement, companies gain key control over managing the risk and defending the company in the lawsuit.

Business leaders should consult an insurance broker and experienced insurance attorneys about this endorsement during the next policy renewal and whether it fits within the company's business needs. ▲

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Crafting a User-Friendly Website for AEC Success

Learn how the best sites engage their visitors & solve problems for potential clients

BY CHEMENE PHILLIPS

It's not enough to have a website for your construction company. Your website needs to be polished and convey professionalism to build credibility and trust in your expertise. It also needs to look attractive, with a portfolio that displays your successful projects in the construction industry and showcases how you help your prospects achieve their goals.

And above all, your construction business website needs to be user friendly. Your website isn't for you — it's for your potential clients. It should cater to their needs and solve their problems, selling your construction services as the ideal answer to their pain points.

Let's explore how the best websites speak to their visitors and sell their services by making it all about the client, not the company.

Construction Websites Should Include User-Friendly Language

Before you can build a user-friendly construction website, you must know how to speak to your ideal audience.

If you haven't done so, create a detailed description of your ideal customer. This branding exercise helps you define your target audience and describe their professional life, including the problems they need your help to solve.

As a commercial contractor, you'd define the target audience as project or facilities managers, government representatives, developers, engineers, or business and property owners. Next,

you would outline your ideal clients' demographics, goals, challenges, personal identifiers and common objections, among other things.

Next, it's time to write. Keep your defined audience at the heart of every word on the page and create text that speaks to that audience. Clear, concise copy that gets to the heart of your expertise and service offerings will keep your audience hooked and encourage them to call.

Tell a Story the User Understands

The best business websites don't just list the company's services and hope clients want to hire them — they tell a story the reader can relate to.

Every part of your website, from your portfolio of past projects to your contact page, should tell a story that makes sense to your ideal client. Every word, call-to-action (CTA) button and image should be a reminder that you understand their needs and can handle the demands and complexity of their projects better than any other construction company.

Pinpoint Their Problems

Think about the precise problems your client faces. These will differ depending on whether you work on residential or commercial projects, and if you focus on small- or large-scale construction. Here are some examples of what they might look like:

- Frustration with companies that don't take initiative to problem-solve on-site

- Annoyance with local regulation or processes that are slowing down their project
- Difficulty finding a reliable partner that follows through on consistent communication, risk mitigation and budget and timeline management
- Dissatisfaction with the quality of work they've experienced with other trade partners

Think of two or three pain points for each of your client personas, and ensure that the words on your website reflect them. You can even use language such as, "It's difficult to find a construction company that achieves (X)" throughout your text. Calling out the user's specific problems will show them you understand their concerns.

Show How You're the Solution

Next, you'll want to showcase how your company is the best possible solution to their problems. Your clients care about meeting their budget and timeline, maximizing their profitability, and finding a reliable, experienced firm that can help them achieve their goals. They'll want to know that your pricing is competitive, your experience addresses their needs and you're able to handle any challenges that might arise.

If your clients are frustrated with poor construction management processes, show them your completed projects and the ways you've delivered value and profitability. Or maybe they're tired of

navigating the city's maze of restrictions and permits — so, tell them about your years of expertise easing administrative headaches and streamlining paperwork.

Remember that the purpose of your website is to prove that your building services are uniquely capable of solving clients' problems and delivering construction projects they'll be proud of.

Create a User-Friendly Experience

Construction websites are more than just the words on the screen. Your potential clients will judge your website based on how they experience it as well. That means every page needs to load quickly and correctly. Every image needs to appear crystal clear and proportional, and every button needs to take them to the correct page.

Think of your website as a 24/7 billboard that represents your company and helps clients decide whether you're the right fit for their project before they ever call you. To ensure they get the right impression, your website needs to be a strong representation of your brand, culture, leadership, values and services.

Is It Functional?

Form and function are equally important on your website, so it should look great — with relevant, high-quality images and a crisp, pleasing layout — but it also needs to work.

Your website should fully load within three seconds. Any slower, and your website visitors might bounce off the page and go check out a competitor's website instead. Once it's loaded, you should be sure that every button and link goes to the correct page when clicked, and that any forms (such as contact forms) on the website display a thank-you page after submission.

These might seem like minor details, but if a visitor can't get your website to work, they'll start to wonder whether you're a professional construction

company that can handle their project.

Can They Navigate It?

Hard-to-navigate websites are frustrating for visitors. If they can't find the information they want within three clicks, they'll give up and go elsewhere.

Start with a top navigation menu that points visitors to your main service offerings, a portfolio page and a contact page. You'll want to add a careers page, as showcasing your fantastic hiring program will show clients that you recruit the brightest minds for their projects.

Include headings and subheadings throughout your text, and break up long paragraphs with quotes or images so that it reads easier and is more engaging.

Your CTA buttons should be easy to understand, making it clear to the reader what will happen when they click. These should be placed strategically throughout every page to ensure readers can take action when they're ready.

Include your contact details and a contact button on every page (and in the header and footer) so visitors can easily connect with you.

Is It Responsive?

Try using your website from your desktop, mobile device and tablet. Is it easy to use? Does it load quickly? Is everything in alignment across devices?

Many visitors — especially in the construction industry — will access your website on their mobile device or tablet. It's vital that they reach a responsive site that functions beautifully.

Does It Offer More?

Interactive tools (like project calculators or building-information-modeling integrations) give visitors a little extra value and showcase your innovative knowledge. Downloadable resources (like computer-aided-design files and technical specs) that need to be accessed via a client login keep your clients

coming back to your site — and keep your company top-of-mind on a regular basis.

When potential clients see that you offer a bit more than the competition, they'll know that you're prepared to go the extra mile on their job.

Improving Your Website

If you're not sure whether your website hits the mark for customers, try these tactics to help you gauge how it's landing.

- *Test the load time* — You can use a website speed checker like Pingdom to check load speed and get insights for speed improvement.
- *Check your bounce rates* — Your bounce rate shows you how quickly users leave your site after they've landed. The longer they stay, the better. A website builder like WordPress or tools like Google Analytics can track these metrics.
- *Ask for feedback* — Improving your website could be as simple as asking your loyal customers through a Google survey to tell you what they like (and dislike) about your site. Additionally, solicit critiques from users who have never seen your site before with a simple ask: "We are updating our website, and would love your feedback."

When you're ready to up the ante with a stellar website that turns browsing website visitors into buying clients, talk to a focused branding and marketing company that's well-versed in catering to the architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) industry. ▲

Chemene Phillips is president of BRIXbranding, a full-service branding firm. The BRIX team works closely with their clients nationwide to deliver effective solutions that position them to win in the marketplace. The company has successfully helped professional service firms and AEC companies grow their brand, double their profits, attract the right prospects and stay top of mind with their audience. Visit brixbranding.com.





Shifting Priorities From Relationships to Reputation

The new rules of commercial trades

BY MICHAEL CAREY

Photo Credit: Yuttana Studio - stock.adobe.com

When I started in commercial trades, no one talked about customer notifications or reviews. Most contractors didn't think their customers cared about getting updates or having a direct line of communication. Commercial was all about big jobs and long timelines — efficiency was measured in projects delivered, not customer satisfaction.

But that's changed.

Today, commercial trades are under pressure to deliver the kind of transparency and responsiveness that customers have come to expect from residential contractors. Residential businesses have spent over a decade perfecting practices like booking confirmations, real-time dispatch updates and reputation management. These practices aren't optional anymore — they are how trust is built, and trust wins contracts.

In residential services, customers get text messages when a tech is on the way. They get follow-ups asking about their satisfaction. Many homeowners book services entirely online, without ever picking up the phone. These expectations are bleeding over into commercial, where building owners, facility managers and general contractors are no longer willing to tolerate vague scheduling or unclear timelines.

In the past, some commercial contractors may have overlooked these trends. After all, their work is different — big projects, sophisticated clients and long-term relationships have always been the foundation of success. But commercial clients are still consumers at the end of the day. They're used to real-time

tracking, seamless digital interactions and easy-to-access information. The expectations are the same for contractors.

Why Reputation Matters More Than Ever

Online reputation is now a major factor in contractor selection. Decision-makers are turning to Google reviews and industry-specific platforms when vetting vendors. Contractors with a strong digital reputation are winning more business.

Think about how many customers research businesses online before making a decision. If a facility manager is looking for a mechanical contractor, they're going to search online. If one company has 50 five-star reviews and another has none, which one do you think gets the call? A contractor's reputation is no longer just about word of mouth — it's about what can be found online. It is important not to underestimate the impact of a digital reputation. It may be easy for some commercial contractors to think their work speaks for itself; others believe their long-term relationships will keep business coming in. But as new decision-makers enter the workforce, those old dynamics are changing. Younger property managers, procurement officers and investors are relying heavily on online research. If your company isn't visible — or worse, has no digital presence — it may not even be considered.

Technology Is Changing Customer Expectations

A big part of this shift is being driven by technology. Automated



notifications, online scheduling and instant invoicing are no longer “extras.” They’re becoming baseline expectations.

For example, real-time scheduling software helps eliminate guesswork for customers. Instead of waiting around for updates, they can get automatic alerts when technicians are en route or when a job is complete. Digital invoicing also speeds up payment cycles, reduces disputes and improves cash flow for contractors.

And it’s not just about communication — technology is also making service agreements more seamless. Contractors who offer customer portals where clients can track maintenance schedules and service histories are getting ahead. These digital tools don’t just make life easier for customers: They also streamline internal operations and create efficiencies that improve profitability.

Lessons From Residential Trades

Much of this momentum is coming from residential trades, which have been the testing ground for customer-centric workflows. Residential contractors had to master customer engagement because their market is so competitive. Customers demand updates, quick responses and transparent communication. In many ways, these are lessons born out of necessity.

In my experience, commercial trades haven’t faced the same pressure — until now.

Take, for example, the way residential HVAC companies sell service agreements. They’ve turned preventive maintenance into a predictable revenue stream by offering customers scheduled inspections, priority service and discounts on repairs. Commercial contractors are now adopting similar models, recognizing that long-term service agreements provide stability, improve cash flow and strengthen customer relationships.

The Role of Private Equity in Driving Change

Private equity (PE) firms are accelerating this transformation. Many firms are buying commercial contracting businesses and restructuring them to operate more like service-driven organizations. They’re investing in technology, streamlining processes and prioritizing customer engagement.

For PE-backed contractors, operational efficiency and scalable systems are no longer a competitive advantage — they’re the expectation. And customer satisfaction metrics, such as retention rates and online reviews, are becoming just as

important as revenue growth. For contractors, this presents an opportunity and a challenge. Those who can adopt a service-first mindset, invest in technology and focus on customer experience will thrive. Those who resist will struggle to keep up in an industry that’s becoming data-driven and customer-focused.

Overcoming Objections & Barriers

Despite the obvious benefits, some contractors are hesitant to make these changes. Here are the most common objections:

- **“We’ve always done it this way.”** Long-term relationships and word-of-mouth referrals have worked for decades. But customer expectations have changed, and past success doesn’t guarantee future competitiveness.
- **“Technology is expensive.”** Yes, there’s an up-front cost to implementing new systems, but the long-term return on investment — faster payments, fewer disputes and higher customer retention — far outweighs the investment.
- **“Our customers don’t care about this stuff.”** They might not have cared five years ago, but today’s decision-makers are younger, more tech-savvy and used to digital-first experiences.

What’s often overlooked is that these changes don’t just benefit customers — they also make life easier for contractors. Companies that use real-time communication tools spend less time fielding unnecessary status calls. Teams that use automated invoicing spend less time chasing payments. And contractors with a strong online presence don’t have to rely solely on cold calls and networking to find new business.

The Competitive Advantage of Customer Engagement

For commercial contractors, the writing is on the wall. The days of relying solely on relationships and reputation are over. Customers expect transparency, responsiveness and accountability, and the tools to meet these demands are already available.

But here’s the good news: This shift isn’t just about meeting customer demands. It’s about making life easier for contractors, too. Companies that invest in customer engagement see fewer disputes, higher retention rates and more repeat work. Contractors with strong digital reputations don’t have to fight as hard for new business — it comes to them. ▲

Michael Carey is vice president of strategy at BuildOps, helping contractors grow through smart technology. He previously led teams at ServiceTitan and Bluebeam Software, driving millions in growth. With a background in innovation and industry expertise, Carey focuses on equipping contractors with the tools to stay competitive in a changing market. Visit buildops.com.





5 Steps to Securing a Bright Future

How to ensure your construction business is transferable

BY BRAD WERNER

Photo Credit: VectorMine - stock.adobe.com

In today's dynamic construction market, building a transferable business is essential for long-term success. By focusing on areas like strategy design, leadership structure, operational processes, financial health and technology optimization, best-in-class construction firms can create a strong foundation that sets the business up for sustained growth and attracts outside growth capital. Incorporating strategies in these key areas will help ensure success and maintain competitiveness in the ever-evolving construction industry.

Why Transferability Matters

In the world of mergers and acquisitions (M&A), transferability is key to business value. Buyers look for companies that are built to scale, with infrastructure that isn't heavily dependent on the current leadership team. It's also important that firms are fit for growth. Transforming cost structures allow organizations to build differentiating capabilities, which enables change and evolution of their operational model to unlock growth. By prioritizing these aspects, those in the construction industry can stay competitive and appealing in the M&A market.

Steps to Build a Transferable Construction Business

In the construction industry, building an entity that can easily transfer ownership is crucial. The following steps offer a practical guide for construction firms to enhance their appeal and stay competitive in the M&A landscape.

1. Establish a Compelling Vision

A clear and actionable vision is essential for driving every aspect of operations. Engaging leadership, employees and external advisors in crafting this vision ensures diverse perspectives are considered, closing gaps and aligning everyone toward common goals. This collaborative approach not only supports longevity but also reassures potential acquirers that the firm is well-positioned for future success. A compelling vision demonstrates readiness for long-term growth and stability, showcasing the potential to thrive.

2. Strengthen Leadership & Culture

Leadership plays a pivotal role in inspiring teams and executing strategies. Transformational leaders act as role models for innovation and accountability, empowering teams to make decisions and foster creativity. They also prioritize the development of future leaders. Acquirers highly value sustainable organizations with strong leadership pipelines and a culture of engagement. High employee satisfaction reduces turnover, stabilizing operations during ownership transitions. When incorporating these leadership qualities, businesses can enhance their appeal and help ensure smooth transitions in the M&A landscape.

3. Optimize Operations & Technology

Operational excellence is the foundation of scalability and

The journey to transferability doesn't happen overnight. It requires a steadfast commitment to improvement across critical areas such as vision, leadership, culture, operations, financials and technology. Focusing on these elements can achieve long-term viability, stability and profitability.

profitability. Construction firms should evaluate workflows, client management processes and capturing performance metrics that matter. Integrating technology, such as customer relationship management (CRM) systems, enterprise resource planning (ERP) software and cloud-based document management, is also crucial. Aligning technology with processes and strategy enhances productivity and creates a data-driven organization, positioning the business for long-term success.

4. Maintain Financial Health

Acquirers closely examine financial performance and stability. To address this, construction firms should ensure their key performance metrics are optimized to be best in class. Datasets such as the Construction

Financial Management Association's Financial Benchmarker should be used to assess where yours stacks up against similar-sized firms. Additionally, stress-testing finances and building actionable scorecards are effective strategies for planning future growth or acquisition scenarios. By focusing on these financial aspects, businesses can enhance their attractiveness and readiness for potential acquisitions.

5. Embrace Innovation for Long-Term Growth

In a competitive landscape, staying ahead requires a commitment to innovation. This includes adopting sustainable construction practices, exploring new revenue streams to expand offerings, leveraging digital tools for project visualization and planning, and implementing vertical integration to streamline operations. By focusing on these innovative strategies, firms can help ensure they remain relevant and adaptable in a dynamic industry. Embracing innovation not only enhances competitiveness but also positions the business for sustainable growth.

The Role of M&A in Construction

Consolidation in the construction industry is accelerating as firms seek to scale, diversify offerings and meet increasing market demands. M&A plays a pivotal role in this transformation, enabling companies to achieve greater efficiency, expand their market reach and leverage new technologies. In this competitive environment, transferable entities stand out by offering buyers

confidence in continued profitability, a foundation for seamless integration and operational efficiencies that reduce acquisition risks.

By focusing on the right attributes, firms can enhance their appeal and help ensure they remain competitive and attractive to prospective stakeholders. This comprehensive approach not only improves operational efficiency and profitability but also positions them for long-term success. In the context of M&A, being transferable can unlock new opportunities and secure a prosperous future in the construction industry.

Preparing for a Transferable Future

The journey to transferability doesn't happen overnight. It requires a steadfast commitment to improvement across critical areas such as vision, leadership, culture, operations, financials and technology. Focusing on these elements can achieve long-term viability, stability and profitability.

Creating a clear and actionable vision is the first step, ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned and working toward common objectives. Strong leadership and a positive culture foster an environment of innovation and accountability, which is highly valued by prospective buyers. Optimizing operations and integrating advanced technology enhances efficiency and scalability, making the entity more attractive. Maintaining solid financial health through transparent and accurate records instills confidence in potential investors. Embracing innovation keeps the organization relevant and adaptable in a competitive market.

By taking these steps to optimize operations, align teams and embrace innovation, construction firms can position themselves for success — not just for today, but for the future. Ensuring transferability secures a legacy and unlocks opportunities in a rapidly changing industry. This comprehensive approach not only improves operational efficiency and profitability but also makes the entity more attractive to potential buyers, ensuring a smooth transition during ownership changes. With these insights, construction firms can navigate industry challenges and secure a bright future. ▲

Brad Werner is the leader of Wipfli's construction and real estate practice and an audit partner whose primary focus is on attest and accounting services. Working closely with members of management to improve their overall operations, he provides value to clients by offering broad experience in many industries and aspects of accounting and financial reporting. Visit wipfli.com.





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How to Play the Matching Game

Correctly pair your compact track loader hydraulics with the right attachments

BY KYLE EMANUEL

When purchasing a compact track loader or skid-steer loader, one of the most important factors to consider is the type of work you plan to do every day. Buying the right loader — and the right attachments for it — is key to boosting efficiency and tackling jobs. To get the most out of your investment, understanding your hydraulic flow options is key. It ensures optimal performance for both the loader and the attachments. Matching these options to your specific tasks can optimize work efficiency and performance.

It's important to note that hydraulic flow definitions vary by each equipment manufacturer and product. While some of these flows are comparable, they are not

identical. Customers should pay close attention to the varying gallons per minute (GPM) and liters per minute (L/min) statistics on equipment spec guides as they pertain to standard, high, and (for select Bobcat loaders) super-flow hydraulics. Customers should also pay attention to hydraulic system pressure, as this will factor into their machine's hydraulic horsepower.

Standard Flow

Standard flow, which comes standard on compact track loaders and skid-steer loaders, is appropriate for attachments that require lower hydraulic horsepower. Examples of attachments that are best paired with standard hydraulic flow

include angle brooms, hydraulic breakers, grapples, combination buckets and soil conditioners. This flow will provide necessary performance capabilities for general jobsite clearing, landscaping and grounds maintenance.

High Flow

The high-flow option provides the operator with additional hydraulic power to increase production with attachments. Optional high-flow hydraulics can still give you the choice of using standard-flow range, so you always have the option of using lower-flow attachments. Examples of attachments that are best paired with high-hydraulic flow include trenchers, stump grinders,



snowblowers, flail cutters and planers.

Super Flow

Super-flow option tackles the most demanding applications like milling pavement, blowing snow, and clearing land of trees and heavy brush. Examples of attachments that are best paired with super-flow hydraulics include cold planers, drum mulchers, disc mulchers and snowblowers.

The wide range of available attachments makes your skid steer or compact track loader a true workhorse,

often replacing several specialized machines. Standard flow options allow for a lower initial investment, whereas high- and super-flow options can deliver more productivity to help you get the job done. Matching the right hydraulic flow option to your specific job needs will provide you with the best efficiency and performance year-round. Reach out to your local dealer for additional guidance when it comes to properly aligning hydraulic flow with your attachments. ▲

Kyle Emanuel is a product information specialist at Bobcat Company. Using his expertise in the compact equipment and construction management industries, Emanuel helps customers accomplish more on their jobsites. Visit bobcat.com.



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Beyond Equipment: 6 Rental Assets That Set Up a Project for Success

The right temporary infrastructure can boost safety & productivity

BY CRAIG SCHMIDT

Construction business owners know that renting heavy equipment for projects can pay off in multiple ways. It can fill fleet gaps, sidestep capital expenditures and provide access to the best machine for the job. In addition to equipment, projects require temporary infrastructure. A well-organized site that is set up for success leverages temporary infrastructure in ways that streamline day-to-day operations and make the jobsite safer and more productive.

A large, full-service rental equipment partner can help project managers identify the best rental assets for the project, jobsite and budget, and guide them to opportunities to optimize site efficiency in

ways they may not have considered.

Ground Protection Mats

One prudent move contractors can make during project mobilization is to plan for and install ground protection mats around the site. These mats, made of wood or composite materials, “bake in” increased efficiency by facilitating the safe, smooth movement of people and equipment.

When used to create temporary roads, bridges and parking lots, ground protection mats reduce or eliminate delays caused by mud. Muddy conditions can set a project back by days or weeks, eating away at profits. Mats also minimize wear and tear on equipment,

reduce restoration costs by reducing soil compaction, provide clean staging areas for materials and support heavy equipment such as cranes during operation to help prevent tip-overs.

A vendor that rents and leases a wide variety of mats can advise on the best type of mats for the application, and they can also perform installation and removal.

Modular Turnstiles

Modular turnstiles are making their way onto larger jobsites. They integrate with perimeter fencing and feature anywhere from one to 10 lanes. With the tap of a worker ID badge enabled with radio-frequency identification (RFID) or another

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wireless communication technology, a worker moves through quickly and efficiently. During the badge tap, the worker is authenticated by the user profile associated with their badge. With each badge scan, a cloud-based jobsite management platform creates a digital log of entrants that can be searched to verify attendance or respond to an emergency.

Smart turnstiles relieve the burden of manual check-ins and free security guards to perform other important tasks. They also help prevent long lines at the gate. Some one-stop vendors offer turnstiles and will install them, along with security cameras, on request.

Locking Storage Containers

A well-organized jobsite is a more efficient and productive jobsite. Storing tools, materials and small equipment near the work taking place is a simple way to save crews time.

Storage containers provide the ideal solution. Because not all containers are equal, choosing the right one is important. Contractors can ask their rental provider for a container that is durable, easy to open, and includes an internal locking system for extra security. Some containers have an emergency exit feature to prevent a worker from being trapped inside.

The rental provider can customize a storage container with shelves and racks to organize items and make them more accessible. They can even add cargo doors to allow small equipment to be driven in.

Fully-Stocked Mobile Offices

On remote sites, a container office or jobsite trailer is a must-have. While container offices work better for some jobsites, trailers work better for others.

Containers are often better suited for heavy industrial sites. To create more space, some vendors will piece together two containers by removing a wall, or stack two or three containers and add external stairs.

When renting a jobsite trailer, choosing a larger one can yield unexpected benefits. Large trailers provide extra storage room to minimize trips back to the office. Trailers that include a conference room can double as a breakroom for workers. During severe weather, having a place to warm up or cool down for a few minutes boosts morale as well as worker wellness. Trailers with a restroom add convenience if the site has water and sewage.

Project managers can save time and headaches by having the rental company outfit the trailer so it's fully functional on Day 1. The company can customize the interior, provide stairs and skirting if needed, and add office furniture and other office essentials such as coffee makers and minifridges.

Portable Restrooms & Restroom Trailers

A safe and comfortable work environment includes convenient restroom facilities. Planning for the ideal type and number of portable restrooms and placing them strategically around the site helps boost productivity and ensure Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliance.

For small jobsites, portable toilets are adequate. Adding handwashing stations helps keep crews healthy. For larger jobsites, restroom trailers with sinks and flushable toilets are often the better choice. They are more comfortable, better ventilated and easier to keep clean. The vendor can identify the best location for a trailer and provide a generator or standalone battery to power it if needed. Installing ground protection matting underneath the trailer helps prevent turned ankles.

Tool Management Solutions

Not having the right tool when it's needed slows progress. Rental tool solutions and services save time and therefore money. For example, custom-stocked

storage boxes placed near work areas ensure that crews have the tools for the task at hand.

New to the market are badge-accessed smart storage boxes that automatically record who removed which tool. Certain vendors that offer connected jobsite solutions can provide these units and stock them with tools equipped with Bluetooth tags. Telematics devices and gateways installed throughout the jobsite can read the tags and track a tool's location.

On larger projects, managed tool trailers are another effective method of tool management. Some rental providers will custom stock a trailer, provide a tool coordinator to check out tools to individuals and manage the tool inventory.

Small Decisions, Large Impacts

Seemingly small choices during project mobilization can have an outsized effect on a project's outcome. Carefully evaluating temporary infrastructure options with an eye toward creating a more efficient jobsite can result in productivity gains that benefit the bottom line.

Partnering with a temporary equipment vendor that offers a wide range of specialty products and services in addition to standard equipment can put construction businesses on a path to increased safety and faster project completion. Collaborating early on helps managers move from project planning to project execution with greater confidence. ▲

Craig Schmidt is senior vice president of national accounts at United Rentals. At United Rentals for more than 25 years, he has a strong track record as a proven, results-oriented driven leader in addressing customer needs and driving business growth. Schmidt has a Bachelor of Business Administration from Johnson & Wales University. Visit unitedrentals.com.

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Navigating the Supply Chain Maze

Strategies for last-mile delivery excellence

BY AARON GEIGER

Supply chain optimization has become a critical factor in maintaining a competitive edge. However, many construction companies still struggle to effectively implement artificial intelligence (AI)-powered solutions.

The disconnect often stems from a misalignment between C-level decision-makers and operational teams, leading to suboptimal results and missed opportunities for true optimization.

These are important decisions because a growing number of logistics professionals admit they aren't optimized enough in their operations. Over half of the respondents (52%) in a recent survey rated their organization's current last-mile delivery planning effectiveness as below "excellent" or "good." Additionally, the survey found that nearly 40% of respondents need to adjust delivery routes multiple times per day due to unexpected delays, emphasizing the pressing need for innovative solutions.

Understanding the Role of Software Optimization

One of the primary challenges in implementing AI and software solutions is the lack of a holistic view of the supply

chain. Many construction companies focus solely on individual components, such as warehouse management or transportation logistics, without considering how these elements interact within the broader ecosystem. This siloed approach often leads to inefficiencies and missed opportunities across the entire supply chain.

Data quality and integration pose additional challenges. AI and machine learning algorithms rely heavily on accurate, comprehensive data to generate meaningful insights and recommendations. However, many construction companies struggle with data silos, inconsistent data formats and outdated information, which undermine the effectiveness of even the most sophisticated software solutions.

Smarter Load Optimization

Let's examine the critical area of load optimization in warehouses and distribution centers. Many construction companies use optimization software that focuses solely on downstream processes at the warehouse level. Even though the approach yields some benefits, it significantly limits flexibility and responsiveness to changing market conditions.

Forward-thinking construction companies are recognizing the need for more sophisticated software solutions that allow for upstream optimization. This strategy enables construction companies to make last-minute changes to orders, responding dynamically to shifts in demand or supply chain disruptions. By optimizing loading upstream, construction companies can better align their operations with real-time market conditions, improving efficiency and customer satisfaction while minimizing waste.

A key component is the ability to perform dynamic builds, reconfiguring truck loads with proper "stackability" to ensure each axle is weight-optimized while also considering the unique temperature control requirements of different products. These capabilities allow construction companies to maximize the number of pallets loaded onto trucks without risking fines during road checks or compromising product quality.

Many industries, including construction, face unique challenges in load optimization due to the diverse weight distributions and material handling requirements in a truck. Traditional loading strategies based on the order of customer drops often result in

inefficiencies, requiring the removal of several pallets at each stop to reach the necessary materials or equipment. These strategies not only increase delivery times but can also damage sensitive construction materials, such as prefabricated components or temperature-sensitive adhesives.

Today's more advanced load optimization software strategically orchestrates the loading of the trailer to address these challenges. These solutions consider product compatibility, determining which items should be safely stacked on top of each other in a pallet and within the truck. They also optimize the placement of construction supplies, minimizing the need to remove non-customer-specific pallets at each stop.

By implementing these advanced optimization techniques, construction companies reduce the number of pallets that need to be moved at each delivery point. Industry observers believe this not only improves efficiency but also reduces the risk of temperature fluctuations for sensitive products. The result is a more streamlined delivery process that maintains product quality while reducing operational costs.

Is Your Routing Truly Dynamic?

The final piece of the puzzle in supply chain optimization is dynamic routing. Many companies still rely on static routing methods, which lack the flexibility and agility required in today's fast-paced business environment. The limitations of static routing become apparent in the face of unexpected events, such as traffic disruptions, weather conditions or last-minute order changes, all of which significantly impact the delivery of building materials, tools or equipment.

Dynamic routing offers a solution to these challenges by continuously optimizing delivery routes based on real-time data and changing conditions. Dynamic route optimization leverages advanced algorithms

and real-time data to create the most efficient delivery routes, considering factors such as traffic patterns, delivery time windows, vehicle capacities, road conditions and the specific temperature requirements of different product categories.

However, simply investing in dynamic routing software is not enough. Companies need to build the right strategy to adopt and implement the technology effectively, which is where the disconnect between C-level executives and operational teams often becomes most apparent. While C-suite leaders may be eager to invest in cutting-edge routing software, operational teams need support in refining their processes before the software is truly effective.

By combining AI-driven insights with human expertise, construction companies will be positioned to make more informed decisions about customer service levels. Sometimes, this might mean adjusting delivery frequencies based on

a comprehensive analysis of costs and benefits.

For example, a company might decide to reduce deliveries to certain customers from four or five times a week to three, based on factors such as order volume, product mix and delivery costs. The strategic approach to routing optimization leads to greater cost savings and improved overall efficiency without compromising product quality or customer satisfaction.

As the logistics industry continues to evolve, construction companies that successfully implement these advanced optimization strategies will be best positioned to thrive in an increasingly competitive and complex marketplace. ▲

Aaron Geiger is the managing director of Manufacturing and CPG/Retail for ORTEC, a leading provider of advanced analytics and optimization solutions. Visit ortec.com/en-us.



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The Role of ESG in Achieving Sustainability Goals

Understanding why & how to embrace environmental, social & governance standards

BY DOUG ARIS

As the construction industry in the U.S. evolves, environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles are taking center stage in shaping how businesses operate. With sustainability no longer just a buzzword but a business imperative, construction firms must integrate ESG into their strategies to achieve long-term sustainability goals. From regulatory compliance to stakeholder expectations, ESG drives decision-making, fosters innovation and builds resilience for companies navigating an increasingly complex landscape.

For the construction sector — spanning commercial projects, heavy infrastructure, road construction and water/sewer systems — embracing ESG practices is critical not only for reducing environmental impact but also for ensuring social equity

and strong governance within the supply chain.

Why ESG Matters in Construction

Construction companies are uniquely positioned to influence sustainability on a broad scale. Their operations directly impact local communities, ecosystems and economies. ESG principles provide a framework for firms to address these impacts holistically while delivering value to stakeholders.

- **Environmental** — The construction sector is a major contributor to carbon emissions, waste generation, and resource consumption. ESG-driven strategies can mitigate these impacts by focusing on energy efficiency, material sourcing and innovative waste management practices.

- **Social** — Workforce safety, community engagement and equitable treatment of labor are fundamental to construction operations. Adhering to ESG standards ensures compliance with U.S. regulations such as the Occupational Safety and Health Act, which safeguards worker health and safety.
- **Governance** — Effective governance fosters transparency, accountability and ethical decision-making across construction projects and supply chains. This includes aligning with federal and state regulations and ensuring robust oversight to prevent fraud, corruption or regulatory noncompliance.

Integrating ESG to Achieve Goals

To achieve meaningful sustainability goals, construction companies must embed ESG

principles into their operations and supply chain strategies. Below are three actionable ways ESG can drive sustainability in the construction industry:

1. Compliance With Regulatory Standards

The U.S. regulatory environment for ESG and sustainability is expanding, requiring construction firms to adopt proactive measures. Key regulations include:

- *Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)* – The EPA regulates emissions, waste management and water use, and provides guidelines for companies to meet sustainability targets. Compliance ensures reduced environmental harm and fosters long-term resource efficiency.
- *Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)* – For publicly traded construction firms, the SEC’s climate-related disclosure requirements mandate

transparency in reporting greenhouse gas emissions and climate risks.

- *Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)* – Ensuring worker safety is a core component of ESG. OSHA provides standards for construction site safety, reducing injuries and improving working conditions.

By aligning operations with these regulations, companies demonstrate their commitment to sustainability while mitigating legal and financial risks.

2. Sustainable Supply Chain Management

Supply chain sustainability is a cornerstone of ESG in construction. Collaborating with vendors, contractors and suppliers who share your commitment to ESG values ensures that sustainability efforts extend beyond the jobsite.

Construction businesses can take the

following actions:

- Prioritize local sourcing of materials to reduce transportation emissions and support regional economies.
- Partner with suppliers who demonstrate environmental certifications such as LEED or ENERGY STAR standards.
- Establish clear ESG criteria for contractor and subcontractor selection.
- Periodically assess supply chain compliance with ESG values and build ESG into performance management and development.

For practical support, construction companies can utilize tools and resources designed to monitor compliance and ensure progress throughout their supply chains. These tools provide end-to-end visibility, allowing businesses to track environmental metrics, labor standards and governance protocols. By offering real-time data insights and automated reporting



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capabilities, such resources simplify the often complex ESG reporting processes.

They also help strengthen accountability by flagging noncompliance risks and ensuring that all stakeholders, from contractors to suppliers, align with the company's ESG goals. This approach enables construction firms to build a resilient and sustainable supply chain, setting a benchmark for industry best practices.

3. Innovation for a Sustainable Future

The construction sector's reliance on traditional methods and materials is shifting as ESG drives innovation. Companies are increasingly adopting advanced technologies and sustainable practices to meet their goals.

Examples include the following:

- *Green building materials* – Using low-carbon concrete, recycled steel and sustainable timber minimizes

environmental impact while maintaining structural integrity.

- *Energy efficiency* – Incorporating renewable energy systems like solar panels or wind turbines into projects reduces operational carbon footprints.
- *Smart construction technologies* – Leveraging digital tools such as building information modeling (BIM) optimizes resource use, improves project efficiency and reduces waste.

These innovations not only align with ESG objectives but also position companies as leaders in sustainable construction, attracting clients and investors who prioritize environmental stewardship.

Measuring Success in ESG

Transparent reporting is critical for measuring the success of ESG initiatives. Construction firms can leverage frameworks like the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) or

the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) to communicate progress effectively. For publicly traded companies, adherence to SEC reporting standards ensures compliance and builds investor confidence.

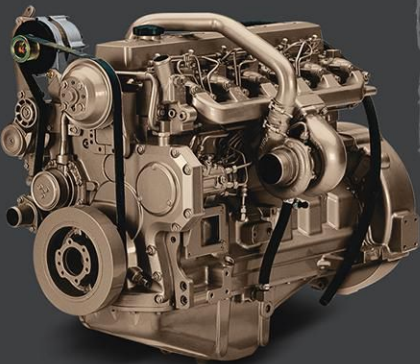
To track performance, companies should follow these steps:

- Conduct regular audits of ESG practices across projects and supply chains.
- Set measurable benchmarks, such as reducing carbon emissions by a specific percentage within a defined time frame.
- Engage stakeholders through clear and accessible reporting on ESG goals and outcomes.

The Benefits of ESG Integration

Embracing ESG offers construction firms numerous benefits, including:

- *Risk mitigation* – Proactively addressing regulatory compliance and sustainability challenges reduces legal, financial and



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reputational risks.

- **Competitive advantage** – Companies with strong ESG practices attract environmentally conscious clients and investors, driving business growth.
- **Resiliency** – A focus on ESG enhances long-term business resilience by preparing for future challenges, from climate change to evolving market demands.

Addressing the Challenges of ESG Implementation

While ESG integration offers substantial benefits, it is not without challenges. Construction firms often face barriers such as high up-front costs, lack of standardization in ESG metrics and resistance to change within supply chains.

- **Cost concerns** – Implementing sustainable technologies and materials can be expensive initially. However, these investments often lead to long-term

savings through increased efficiency and reduced waste.

- **Complexity of reporting** – Navigating diverse ESG frameworks and standards can be overwhelming. Companies must allocate resources to stay updated on regulatory changes and reporting best practices.
- **Stakeholder alignment** – Achieving buy-in from suppliers, contractors and employees requires consistent communication and a shared vision for sustainability goals.

By addressing these challenges with strategic planning and collaboration, firms can overcome obstacles and fully realize the potential of ESG integration. The role of ESG in achieving sustainability goals cannot be overstated. For the construction industry, it offers a road map to reduce environmental impact, promote social equity and uphold robust governance

practices. By aligning with U.S. regulations, adopting sustainable supply chain strategies and fostering innovation, construction firms can position themselves as leaders in the transition to a more sustainable future.

Through ESG integration, construction businesses not only meet regulatory and stakeholder expectations but also contribute meaningfully to a healthier planet and a more equitable society. The journey begins with intentional steps and a commitment to embedding ESG principles across every aspect of the organization. ▲

Doug Aris is ESG Sector Lead for Veriforce CHAS, a health and safety assessment scheme and provider of risk mitigation, compliance and supply chain management services in the U.K. Aris has extensive experience developing and implementing strategic programs for businesses to improve the sustainability of the built environment. Visit veriforce.com.



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webinar

The construction industry has faced a major shift in market conditions in recent years. But financial operations automation can help contractors navigate these changes — and thrive.

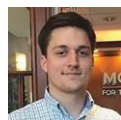
This webinar will help to ease a construction business's transition to automation with in-depth answers to questions such as:

- What challenges do construction companies face in the new economic landscape?
- How do these challenges show up in day-to-day financial operations?
- How do you know if you need financial operations automation?
- What are the key components construction businesses should look for in a financial operations automation solution?

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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.



◀ DEWALT

60V MAX Side Handle Detect Small Angle Grinder

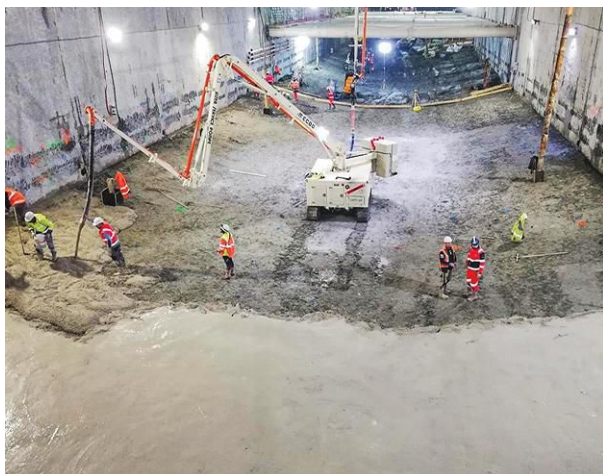
Released: 3/1/25

Availability: North American market

What's new? As part of the PERFORM & PROTECT lineup, this tool is equipped with a variety of control features including a built-in trigger timer and integrated side-handle detect system requiring both hands to operate. It also features an anti-rotation system that senses rotational motion of the tool and shuts down if the motion is excessive.

Specs: Equipped with a 13-amp brushless motor, the grinder delivers a maximum no-load speed of 9,000 revolutions per minute (rpm), and 2,400 max watts out (MWO) provides up to 30% more power than the corded DWE43114N grinder*.

*Using DCB609 battery — sold separately.



◀ MECBO AMERICA

Scorpion Concrete Crawler Boom

Released: 2/5/25

Availability: North American market

What's new? The Scorpion provides contractors working in piling, drilling, tunneling or commercial construction with a flexible arm for placing concrete where needed without disrupting the jobsite. It is an economical enhancement for contractors who have a concrete pump but need an effective way to deftly move material to spots that are difficult or unsafe to reach using other methods.

Specs: The 10-ton Scorpion has a reach of 52 feet vertically and 46 feet horizontally, with a rotational span of 370 degrees — allowing operators to make just over a full turn while extending over structures, landscaping and other difficult-to-reach or potentially dangerous areas. Because it has no stabilizers, the operator can keep pumping concrete while the machine is still moving, advancing speed and operational efficiency. Additionally, customizations are available for customers who want to reach higher than 52 feet.

BOLLÉ SAFETY ▶

Fusion+ Welding Helmet

Released: 11/19/24

Availability: North American market

What's new? This high-performance helmet offers a combination of performance, safety and style. It features a variable welding shade [4/5-8/9-13], wide 100-millimeter-by-53-millimeter field of vision and includes spare lenses.

Specs: Includes ergonomic shape-memory headband. Provides ultraviolet and infrared protection. Weighs 18.52 ounces.





◀ HD HYUNDAI CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT NORTH AMERICA

HX90A Compact Excavator

Released: 1/28/25

Availability: North American market

What's new? Designed to deliver robust performance, the Hyundai HX90A offers exceptional power and fuel efficiency, making it ideal for digging and trenching and a wide range of jobsite applications. This is Hyundai's first 9-ton compact excavator. This machine includes all-weather steel cab with 360-degree visibility and a heated suspension seat.

Specs: Weighing 20,040 pounds and powered by a reliable Yanmar engine that provides 65 net horsepower at 2,400 rpm, the HX90A balances strength with fuel economy, ensuring maximum productivity and efficiency. Includes a dozer blade, optional angle blade and a hydraulic quick coupler with integrated lifting hook.

MANITOU ▶

MTA 1242 MAX telehandler

Released: 1/30/25

Availability: North American market

What's new? This new model extends the versatility of the Manitou construction telehandler lineup to better meet the needs of specific rental businesses and construction fleet managers. It allows for additional efficiency and reduced lifetime maintenance related to emissions systems designed with a 74-horsepower engine. Features innovations such as a new "SuperView" cab, redesigned engine accessibility, automatic transmission, operator aided pop-ups, EasyStep (cutout in the cab floor that allows entrance with reduced risk of slipping), five-speed transmission and automatic parking brake.

Specs: The all-new MTA models also include an intelligent dashboard with an integrated pop-up information system, providing guided operation assistance. All units are also connected with the EasyManager telematics system to view real-time machine data, location and service/warning codes to stay on top of performance.



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▲ KEEN UTILITY

Gibson boot

Released: 3/1/25

Availability: North American market

What's new? New for spring, the men's Gibson offers a low-profile that fits in well on the jobsite. A sportier interpretation of the classic moc-toe work boot design, the Gibson features a lightweight, asymmetrical carbon safety-toe, providing a less obtrusive fit, enabling the toes to bend and flex more naturally. Crafted from carbon fiber, the safety toe cap is metal free, making the Gibson a smart choice for workers who pass through metal-detection regularly. It is 15% lighter than steel counterparts.

Specs: Built with comfort in mind, the Gibson also features a KEEN.ReGEN, compression-resisting midsole that provides up to 50% more energy return than standard EVA foam, helping to reduce foot fatigue. Other safety and performance enhancements include a water-resistant, full-grain, nonmarring leather upper, and a heat-, oil- and slip-resistant nonmarking rubber outsole. The new Gibson is also available in soft-toe and ESD Carbon Toe options in several colorways.



▲ BLUE DIAMOND ATTACHMENTS

Extreme Duty Series 2 Cold Planers

Released: 2/11/25

Availability: U.S. market

What's new? This new line of self-leveling Extreme Duty Series 2 Cold Planers is designed for road surface milling, concrete scarification and asphalt removal applications. The comprehensive line includes eight models ranging from 14 inches to 48 inches in milling width, compatible with skid steer and compact track loaders, and the attachments are available in both low and high flow.

Specs: The cold planers feature milling depths from 4.3 inches to 6.7 inches, depending on model, and working speeds of up to 16.4 feet per minute. All models have an optional dust suppression spray system and clear depth indicators for precise control. A patented self-leveling system ensures constant milling depth regardless of ground contour or machine position. Multiple drum options with different widths and teeth layouts accommodate various applications from asphalt to concrete milling.

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- ☐ 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
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Annual Value of Construction Put in Place

January 2023/2024/2025 Annual Rate Comparison

This chart compares the two previous years' total value of construction put in place to an annual forecast based on January 2025 figures. (Millions of dollars. Totals may not add up perfectly due to rounding.)

	2023	2024	2025
Total Private Construction	1,442,566	1,623,448	1,685,979
Residential	847,353	900,846	932,712
Nonresidential	595,213	722,602	753,267
Total Public Construction	383,088	478,986	506,561
Residential	9,560	11,360	11,769
Nonresidential	373,528	467,626	494,792
TOTAL Construction	1,825,653	2,102,434	2,192,540

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

\$2,192,540

JANUARY 2025 TOTAL ANNUAL VALUE OF
CONSTRUCTION PUT IN PLACE

“Stubborn inflation, persistently high interest rates and labor concerns continue to weigh on the willingness of owners and developers to move ahead with construction projects,” said AIA Chief Economist Kermit Baker, Hon. AIA, Ph.D. “Architecture firms have been moving to right-size their operations in response to softer market conditions. There was a net loss of 1,400 positions at architecture firms nationally in 2024, and firm employment has declined by a total of 4,100 positions since the post-pandemic peak in June 2023.”

AIA Architectural Billings Index (ABI)

National			*Regional - Billings				*Sectors - Billings			
Month	Billings	Inquiries	Northeast	Midwest	South	West	Multifamily Residential	Commercial/Industrial	Institutional	Mixed
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	44.6	51.6	41.7	46.4	47.2	52.2	46.5	44.1	49.8	46.0
Jan-25	45.6	51.4	41.1	45.6	46.0	48.8	45.0	43.1	47.4	44.3

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.

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