THE LEADING BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR CONTRACTORS JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026 | CONSTRUCTIONBUSINESSOWNER.COM

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STATE OF THE INDUSTRY 2026

A LOOK AT THE YEAR AHEAD IN CONSTRUCTION



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Understanding risks around language barriers on construction jobsites

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Why insulated metal panels are a smart, simple material alternative


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FROM THE EDITOR

MEGAN BEAM



Editor-in-Chief
Megan Beam

As we open our calendars to a brand-new year and look ahead to the work, challenges and opportunities waiting for us in 2026, I've been excited to review the outlooks on where the construction industry is headed. This issue is all about what the coming months may hold — and what business owners like you can expect as the year unfolds.

After a strong surge in 2024, many companies felt the slowdown that settled in throughout 2025. Industry output grew only modestly as investor caution, supply chain strain and shifting policy landscapes made planning harder for everyone. Still, analysts agree that 2026 is poised for a gradual rebound, with steady growth expected through the next several years. Longer-range forecasts continue to show a healthy upward trajectory for the overall U.S. construction market, supported by renewed activity in infrastructure, advanced energy and large-scale commercial development.

More than the numbers, though, it's the *shape* of the work ahead that feels especially important this year. Many leaders are noting a transition toward smarter, more connected building. Digital tools, artificial intelligence (AI)-supported project management and building information modeling aren't just buzzwords anymore; they're becoming critical resources for firms navigating tighter timelines, complex project scopes and persistent labor shortages.

We're also seeing rising pressure from material costs and procurement delays — something every contractor has felt firsthand. Yet even with these hurdles, companies that lean into innovation, strengthen their processes and stay flexible are already finding ways to work smarter rather than simply harder.

Reports across the industry suggest that data centers, energy facilities and modernized public-infrastructure projects will play an especially large role in 2026's growth. Combined with a renewed focus on workforce development and safety, there's a clear message: This year will reward leaders who are willing to adapt, invest in their teams and embrace new tools that help them manage risk with more confidence. For more specific perspectives, read our featured forecasts (beginning on page 24) as well as online at constructionbusinessowner.com.

With this first issue of 2026, I hope you find insights that help you reflect, recalibrate and feel prepared for the year ahead. As always, we're honored to be one of the resources you choose to trust, and we look forward to navigating the coming year alongside you.

Here's to a productive, resilient and forward-thinking 2026.

Thanks for reading,



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VOLUME 23 ISSUE 1

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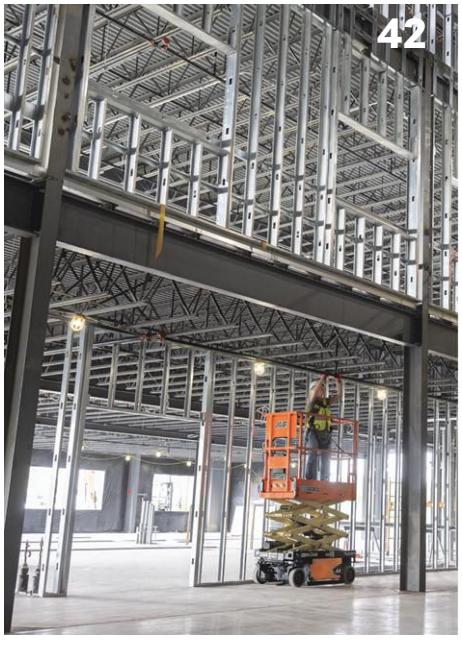


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HINO TRUCKS
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Stellar Announces Acquisition of Elliott Equipment Company

Stellar Industries, a 100% employee-owned and -operated manufacturer of work trucks, trailers and service truck and van accessories, has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Elliott Equipment Company, a U.S. manufacturer of truck-mounted aerial work platforms, digger derricks and cranes serving the utility infrastructure, municipal, construction, and sign and lighting markets. The transaction is expected to close in the first quarter of 2026, subject to customary closing conditions. This acquisition strengthens Stellar's long-term growth strategy by expanding its lifting equipment and work-at-height solutions, widening its presence across core vocational markets and creating additional opportunities for distributors, customers and employee-owners. Following the close of the transaction, Elliott Equipment Company will operate as a distinct business unit of Stellar, maintaining its current employees, facilities, brand identity and dealer relationships in Omaha, Nebraska. Jim Glazer, president of Elliott Equipment Company, will continue to lead the organization. Visit stellarindustries.com.

ACA Board of Directors Elects First Woman To Serve as Chair



Monica Manolas



David Loomes

Monica Manolas, region president, Ash Grove East, is now the first woman in the American Cement Association's (ACA) history to be elected chair of its board of directors. David Loomes, president of Cement Segment, Quikrete Cement, is the new vice chair. The elections took place during ACA's 2025 Fall Meeting in New Orleans. "Becoming the first woman to chair the ACA is a privilege and a responsibility I take with great pride," Manolas said. "The cement industry is at an inflection point, advancing toward more onshore manufacturing, smarter technologies and wider adoption of supplementary cementitious materials. These changes are redefining how we think about performance, resilience and sustainability in every part of our value chain. I look forward to working with our members to strengthen our impact and build a bright future for our industry and the communities we serve." Visit cement.org.

Isuzu & Decisiv Collaborate on Isuzu Connect

Isuzu Commercial Truck of America Inc. announced a stronger relationship with Decisiv Inc., extending and expanding its commitment to deliver faster, smarter and more connected customer experience. The collaboration powers Isuzu Connect, the company's advanced version of the Decisiv service relationship management platform designed to streamline communication between customers and dealers, improve repair outcomes and significantly reduce vehicle downtime — by up to 25%. Deployed at the majority of Isuzu dealerships across the U.S. over the past four years, Isuzu Connect continues to expand nationwide, bringing improved functionality and deeper integration with Isuzu360, Isuzu's proprietary telematics system. The latest updates also include enhanced appointment scheduling and expanded dealer tools. Through integration with dealer management systems, Isuzu Connect ensures dealers can access real-time data to optimize service operations and customer communication. The platform also supports emerging technologies, including electric vehicles, predictive maintenance and vehicle sharing. Isuzu and Decisiv aim to help customers get back on the road faster. Visit isuzucv.com

Manitou Group Appoints Brad Boehler as President of the North America Region



Brad Boehler

Manitou Group, a worldwide provider in the handling, aerial work platforms and earthmoving sectors, announced the appointment of Brad Boehler as president of the North America region and member of the executive committee. Based in West Bend, Wisconsin, Boehler's mission will be to accelerate the market share growth for Manitou Group's product ranges and to enhance the customer experience through faster service. He will also be responsible for operational excellence at the two manufacturing sites located in Yankton and Madison, South Dakota. He will ensure alignment between commercial priorities and industrial performance, and the integration of a strong customer-centric culture throughout North America. An engineer by training, Boehler has of over 25 years of experience in the construction and lifting equipment sector, holding high-level leadership positions. He served as president of the Canadian group Skyjack for over eight years, a role he subsequently held at Morbark and at Makinex USA, where he was responsible for business development and managing a dealer network across the entire U.S. Visit manitou.com.

Power Tool Institute Launches New Website & Publishes Updated Guide for Safe Operation

The Power Tool Institute (PTI), an organization for power tool safety resources, information and education, launched a newly redesigned website and released an updated publication detailing the best practices for safe operation of a wide variety of power tools. The "Safety Is Specific" illustrated publication compiles new information for both general guidelines and specific instructions for almost two dozen categories of power tools and batteries. From band saws to shapers and router tables, the content details useful information for professional tradesmen, do-it-yourselfers and vocational students alike. The publication is part of the PTI's recently launched rebrand that features new creative elements and a refreshed website that aims to provide an enhanced user experience in an easy-to-navigate format. Power tools and power tool batteries have the potential to cause

injury when not used properly. They must be used carefully and kept in safe operating condition. Users should always read and understand the tool's instruction manual, tool markings and packaging instructions before starting any work. The PTI's mission is to educate the public about the usefulness and importance of power tools and to promote high standards of safety and quality control in the manufacture of power tools. It prepares and distributes information about the safe use of power tools. Visit the new powertoolinstitute.com.

Kinsley Construction Names Jason Stouffer CEO



Jason Stouffer

Kinsley Construction, a mid-Atlantic construction and materials company, announced Jason Stouffer has been named the company's new CEO. He succeeds Christopher Kinsley, who retired in 2025. Stouffer has spent his entire career with Kinsley Construction, starting as a summer laborer. In 2003, he was hired as a project engineer, and over the past two decades, he has risen through the ranks — from estimator to vice president of the Pennsylvania Site Division, executive vice president of the Civil Division and most recently as chief operating officer (COO). He brings understanding of the company's roots, its people and its values to the role, positioning the 62-year-old company for its next chapter of growth. Stouffer has played a key operational role in digital integration projects and implementing leadership succession plans to elevate other top performers as the company has grown into new markets. As part of this succession plan, Kinsley Construction has also named third-generation family leaders Andrew Kinsley and James Kinsley as co-COOs. In their new roles, Andrew and James will maintain leadership over their previous divisions: civil and materials, and building and industrial, respectively. Both bring extensive operational experience and a shared dedication to the company's people, clients and mission. Visit kinsleyconstruction.com.

Tarlton Garners Top 2025 Construction Keystone Award From AGC of Missouri

Tarlton Corp. received top honors at the 2025 Construction Keystone Awards Gala from the Associated General Contractors of Missouri for its two-year, $27.2 million renovation of The Old Courthouse in St. Louis. Tarlton was recognized in the General Contractor/Construction Manager/Prime Contractor Building Construction $20 million to $100 million category. The project was jointly funded through a public-private partnership between the National Park Service and Gateway Arch Park Foundation. The renovation marks the final component of the $380 million CityArchRiver project, the largest public-private partnership in the history of the National Park Service. Tarlton's work at the Old Courthouse represents only the second major renovation in the building's history, dating back to its construction from 1839 to 1862. While respecting and maintaining the integrity of the interior spaces, Tarlton created improved safety and public accessibility throughout the Old Courthouse. The building's first elevator was installed, and the heating, air conditioning and fire suppression systems were replaced to revitalize and maintain the building's integrity. The team also created a scaffolding system for the installation of custom sprinkler heads at the top of the building's soaring 192-foot rotunda dome. As part of the renovation, the Tarlton team meticulously restored 150 window frames with new sashes, hardware and pulleys, refinished original wood floors and safely removed asbestos and lead paint. The project team includes Josh Hodges, project manager; Malia Kalahele, senior project engineer; Jeff Damlow, superintendent; Mark Cain Jr., superintendent for concrete work; and Emily Douglas, accountant. Also supporting the project were Tarlton's Roslyn Croft, director of community engagement; Jason Bretz, senior vice president; and COO Sondra Rotty, project executive. Visit tarltoncorp.com.

Curtis Industries Launches 2 New Innovations for Kubota Utility Vehicles

Curtis Industries LLC, a manufacturer of cab enclosures, attachments and accessories for compact vehicles, has announced the release of two major innovations for Kubota full-size diesel utility vehicles: half-door kits and air conditioning systems. Though each product is designed for distinct operating needs, both are engineered to enhance comfort and safety. For operators who want protection from debris while still maintaining accessibility, the Curtis half-door kits are built to perform on the jobsite, campus and farm. Created for the Kubota RTV-X, RTV-X Crew, RTV-X Long Bed, RTV-X1140, RTV-X1130, RTV-X1120 and RTV-X900, this design encourages safe operation by keeping legs inside the vehicle — a requirement for many rental and construction environments. Manufactured with durable, powder-coated aluminum, the doors are both lightweight and resilient, with a corrosion-resistant finish built to withstand daily use. For those seeking year-round climate control, the new Curtis air conditioning kits bring automotive-style comfort to Kubota utility vehicles. Engineered for the RTV-X Crew, RTV-X Crew Huntsman Package, RTV-X Long Bed, RTV-X1140 and RTV-X1130, this system works as a new installation or a retrofit and features an engine-driven compressor. The built-in air filtration system removes dust, pests, pollen and other particles during recirculation, providing cleaner, cooler air. Constructed with lightweight, laser-welded aluminum, this low-profile design is powder coated for durability. Visit curtisindustries.net.

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ASK THE

Insight from industry aces & answers to construction's biggest questions

Which issues will have the biggest impact on the construction industry in 2026?



Uncertainty will continue to impact the construction industry in 2026. In 2025, Dodge's research suggested that contractors felt increasingly uncertain about the construction market in general. We saw their confidence in the market drop and concerns about workforce, supply chain and other factors rise, even as other Dodge data suggested that most companies were not experiencing major downturns or worsening workforce or supply chain issues. The two items of greatest concern — tariffs and inflation — are more focused on what they think will happen to the industry as a whole than specific negative impacts experienced at their companies and on their projects.

In 2026, I think the focus will shift to learning to live with that uncertainty. That sense of uncertainty is likely to be exacerbated in the short term by rise of artificial intelligence (AI). A recent Dodge study reveals AI use by contractors is still limited, but that most think it will be a major force in the industry in the next few years. The rapid pace of adoption, though, means that contractors will need to figure out where they stand on a technology that is itself changing rapidly in order to avoid being left behind. The introduction of AI may have major impacts on the industry down the line, but in 2026, it will add questions about what contractors should invest in and how they should prepare to the uncertainty they already feel about the market.

- Donna Laquidara-Carr, Ph.D., LEED AP
Industry Insights Research Director
(Dodge Construction Network)



The defining issue in 2026 will be the widening productivity gap. With limited labor availability and tighter margins, teams can no longer afford reactive decision making. AI-driven field intelligence such as automated progress tracking, issue detection and schedule insights will shift from being an innovation to becoming essential project infrastructure.

This shift will separate teams that operate with guesswork from teams that operate with clarity. With a clearer view of what is actually happening in the field, teams can align earlier, address issues sooner and avoid the slow drift that turns into major schedule and cost impacts later. It also reduces the reliance on manual reporting and inconsistent updates, which is where a lot of avoidable rework and delay starts.

In practice, AI will become the bridge between what is happening on-site and the decisions being made in the office, helping projects move faster, safer and more predictably.

- Chaitanya NK, CEO & Co-Founder
(Track3D)



We can expect a surge of activity in Q1 and Q2 of 2026 as jurisdictions, owners, developers and contractors push to get wind and solar projects underway before the July 4, 2026, federal deadline under the Inflation Reduction Act's Section 48E rules. States are already expediting large-scale renewable and storage projects, and we will likely see a rush in permitting, engineering, procurement, and early site mobilization and construction activity to show significant physical work before the cutoff and avoid the tight placed in service deadline of Dec. 31, 2027. This push should increase demand for skilled labor and experienced crews, followed by a potential slowdown after the deadline passes. Many owners, developers and contractors will also be scrambling to understand prevailing wage requirements, apprenticeship programs and ratios, and bonus credit qualifications to ensure their projects remain eligible.

- Joseph Leiva, P.E., Co-Founder & CEO
(Kaster)



The biggest issue shaping construction in 2026 is the growing misunderstanding of what AI can actually do — and what it can't. There's enormous promise, but many companies overlook the foundation required to use AI effectively. You can't just throw raw project data into a model and expect meaningful insights. If the data isn't clean, structured and understood, AI will misinterpret it and create a false sense of confidence.

The real momentum we're seeing in the industry comes from something far simpler: more contractors taking scheduling seriously and unlocking the rich data behind it. When firms build disciplined processes, clear standard operating procedures (SOPs) and a repeatable data strategy, the analytics become far more powerful — AI included.

The companies that will pull ahead in 2026 won't be the ones chasing headlines. They'll be the ones who treat data like a craft, train their systems deliberately and use analytics to drive smarter planning, better controls and more predictable outcomes.

- Michael Pink, CEO & Founder
(SmartPM Technologies)

EXPERTS



A major concern heading into 2026 is the continued disruption to project timelines and build schedules due to the trifecta of material costs and procurement challenges, rising interest rates and general economic uncertainty. We continue to see unprecedented backlogs across many sectors of the construction industry here in the Midwest. However, those backlogs still carry the frustrating uncertainty of when project owners will give the green light for projects to commence.

One response to these timeline disruptions is increased competition within the competitive bid market. Historically, you might see five to 10 firms competing on a project, but now those numbers have grown to 10 to 15 firms, with more competitors coming from larger upstream firms, as well as many out-of-market companies looking to expand their footprint and maintain production rates. This is shaping up to make 2026 a very interesting year for the industry.

- Ryan Staub, CPA, CCIFP**,** Managing Director & Central Region Construction Co-Leader
(CBIZ)



In 2026, the construction industry will be defined by pressure and innovation. High interest rates, uncertainty around tariffs and immigration, and continued talk of a market bubble are forcing builders to rethink how they work. This volatility is accelerating the shift Deloitte highlighted in its latest outlook: Firms are moving from incremental improvement to transformational change.

AI will play a central role. We're entering an era where AI is no longer just a tool but an outcome. With agentic AI, construction professionals will simply state the result they want — a completed bid, revised specs or approvals routed to the right contractors — and the system will take the steps, learn and iterate autonomously. That level of automation is becoming essential as the labor gap widens.

At the same time, companies will experiment with new ways to build faster and with less skilled labor. One promising solution is composite systems like RENCO, where blocks stack together like Lego bricks to reduce complexity and speed up schedules.

All these forces point to the same future: a more resilient, tech-driven industry evolving because it has no choice.

- Patrick E. Murphy, Founder & CEO
(Togal.AI)



One of the most pressing challenges for the construction industry in 2026 is a shrinking workforce amid rising demand for skilled labor. Accelerating retirements are leaving critical gaps in specialty trades: The National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) and RAND research shows that roughly 40% of skilled workers will retire by 2031, and nearly 1 in 10 current workers are already 62 or older.

This demographic shift is compounded by fewer qualified workers entering the trades, low apprenticeship completion rates, complicating immigration policies and persistently low unemployment. At the same time, demand for housing, infrastructure and data centers continues to surge. The U.S. needed an estimated 439,000 additional construction workers in 2025 just to keep pace — pressure that will continue in 2026.

The consequences are clear: longer timelines, compressed schedules, reduced supervision and elevated safety risks as less-experienced crews take on complex tasks. First-year employees already account for nearly half of all construction injuries.

To address this, contractors must broaden recruitment, invest in upskilling and leverage technology — such as wearables, exoskeletons and automation — to reduce physical strain. But long-term resilience requires a true safety culture, one that lowers injuries, boosts morale and retention, improves productivity and demonstrates an employer's commitment to protecting its people.

- Grant Hilton, Technical Director, Construction Risk Management
(Nationwide)



The Southeast industrial market is entering 2026 in a more balanced phase after several years of extreme swings. For construction firms, this means stability. Interest rate cuts and steadier pricing are giving owners and developers the confidence to move forward with projects that stalled during the peak of cost volatility.

Population growth is setting the pace for construction, especially across the Carolinas, Florida, Texas and Tennessee. Areas with rising populations are driving demand for industrial facilities, from small-bay infill projects near population centers to larger bulk distribution buildings on metro outskirts. National retailers are also reshaping the landscape, adopting dual-structure networks that combine smaller, fast-moving nodes with larger buffer facilities.

We also expect to see redevelopment and build-to-suit manufacturing projects gain momentum to address land constraints in key labor and transportation corridors, while reshoring and manufacturing investments are creating demand for specialized, purpose-built facilities.

Overall, 2026 is less about boom-and-bust cycles and more about steady, sustainable growth. Contractors and developers who can plan with intention and respond to population- and logistics-driven trends will find the most opportunity.

- Kirk Matthews, Vice President
(Frampton Construction)

Who Has the Fire?

A conversation about what you are looking for in the search for top talent



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.

We've all seen mountains of resumes that detail accomplishments that mere mortals could never fathom. Software skills of a Bill Gates, building skills of a da Vinci and GPAs measured in double digits to the left of the decimal point. With so many talented candidates, why do companies still lament the "labor deficit" and bemoan the overall lack of finding great people?

Resumes do an amazing job of summarizing skills well, which is essential to aligning with positions that are in an organization. However, where there is often misalignment is within the realm of competencies and culture. A wise man once said, "All these resumes are supposedly telling us these managers and superintendents can cure the world's diseases, but show me one with person who has the fire." If only there were a button on your website that had the candidates self-identify, "Do you have fire in your heart? Check YES or NO." (Well, there is also a hope that someone wouldn't reflect on this and say, "You know, I do have a lot of quit in me.")

The reality is this: Too many organizations are presented with a personnel deficit that is married to a weak talent acquisition strategy. This is a recipe for disaster. Firms are already running projects with a depleted bench, and then when a new project is acquired — maybe a complicated project with a great client — they scramble to find a suitable project leader. It might be an understatement, but the screening process may include questions like the following:

- "So, I see you have a pulse."
- "You've seen a computer, right? Can you turn it on?"
- "Built much? Anything? Good, good."
- "After you fog that mirror, can you start?"

A hire who doesn't fit culturally also has the capability to do irreparable harm. A similar wise man once said: "Let's slow the hiring down but amp up the firing machine." Often, the complete opposite occurs — a cultural cancer is bought in on a whim and allowed to fester, deteriorating a firm's unity, teamwork, collaborative spirit and culture.

The best organizations commit to a hiring playbook that balancing an organization's talent strategy with proactive tactics for competency and skill identification.

Strategic Timing

As always, there is both an art and science to not only finding quality team members but also timing backlog, project starts and hiring like you're orchestrating a human capital Rube Goldberg machine. It is possible a contrarian view of a firm's talent strategy is in order. Consider a championship contending football team. Each position most likely has a backup player providing some insurance in the form of one or two additional players on the bench.

Now consider your team. If you either get another project or if you lose a star

manager to a competitor, what happens with your team? What if both happened simultaneously? Is your team effectively running an offensive team with zero or negative bench strength?

Once again, there has to be a balance in a firm's talent acquisition strategy. One of the first misunderstandings is that a firm has to keep everyone busy all the time. Realistically speaking, this does not mean managers or supers are sitting on a bench, literally waiting for their number to be called. However, when leaders look at their total overhead expenditures, they naturally think that optimization means everyone running a multitude of projects with no downtime.

On the other hand, a strategic leader understands a balanced approach, where associates are operating a manageable workload that also includes time for personal/professional development. Put another way, an engine running at 10,000 revolutions per minute all the time may be running hard and fast — but it also runs the risk of blowing up in a fiery wreck.

Tactical Cultural Analysis

On to the fun part. Hiring with an immediate need in mind can often lead to bad decisions. However, sticking to the talent playbook and asking the right questions does not mean you have to risk losing a top candidate. For instance, consider the following process:

1. Resume Screening

Aligning skills in this phase will help eliminate redundant questions later. If the desire is to have a field superintendent with five to 10 years of experience who is familiar with <INSERT FINANCIAL SYSTEM HERE> and <INSERT PROJECT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE HERE>, a screener could quickly cull through candidates. This is the easy part.

2. Interview Panels

One easy way to avoid a bad hire is to have a candidate interviewed by a minimum number of team members. This ensures several objectives are met:

- ***"Love at first sight"*** — One person can easily become enamored with a candidate. Two or three people can provide alternate perspectives on a candidate and potentially break a tie.
- ***Cultural fit*** — A CEO or president has one perspective about life in the firm. Two or three people who will become collaborative partners of this individual will provide different observations.

3. Competency Screening

An organization first has to know what it is looking for in a candidate. Every firm should have five to seven competencies that would make up the ideal manager for the firm.

It is natural to look at the textbook list of competencies — takes initiative, conflict resolution, client intimacy, collaborative, etc. — and think, "I want all of them in my people." Good luck with that! Welcome to the world of unicorn hunting!

Ideally, those competencies are absolutely required to live in your firm's ecosystem and make up the foundation. In order to screen, there are a number of ways to implement a checks/balance:

Interview questions

Leveraged with the panels, each interviewer focuses their line of questions on a specific competency. For instance, consider the following question and "ideal answer":

- ***Takes initiative (fire in their heart)*** — "On aspects of the project that can be draining, how do you refocus or trudge on through to the finish line?" Or "What gets you up in the morning? Why did you choose <INSERT YOUR VERSION OF CONTRACTING>?"
- ***Ideal answer*** — We want to see passion in their answer, potentially something about how they channel passion for the industry in every aspect of their work — and not just the fun stuff!
- ***Deals with conflict*** — "Talk to me about a recent project where things went badly. Two questions: How did you manage the client to a win/win scenario, and how did you manage the trade partners to a win/win?"
- ***Ideal answer*** — We know that there are bad players on both sides, but we don't want to hear about them complaining about a bad customer or bad sub, as if the fault lies with everyone else.

Case studies/scenarios

Whether done in concert with the interviews, an excellent evaluation tool could be a simple case study or role-playing exercise. For instance, provide the candidate with a small project summary (usually loaded with curveballs and sticky wickets) and ask them to spend 15-20 minutes to formulate a project reconciliation plan.

Furthermore, this same case study can be used over and over, allowing the team benchmark the various responses over time.

With the risk of heading down a nerdy pathway, competency alignment can also be called the "Kobayashi Maru." No, not the Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest champion, but rather the unwinnable test that "Star Trek's" Captain Kirk solved. His solution was actually cheating, so this might not be a great analogy, but it demonstrated the prowess and mettle that a starship captain in Starfleet should have even under great duress.

Now imagine a series of true talent vetting that will provide a more discernible lens by which talent could be graded. We also can hope that the Kobayashi Maru determined if Captain Kirk really had that fire. ▲

How Design Electric Helps Construction Workers Thrive

This Virginia-based firm commits to prevention & 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. SAFE Project is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to overcoming the addiction epidemic in the U.S. Established in 2017 by Admiral James and Mary Winnefeld after the tragic loss of their 19-year-old son Jonathan due to an opioid overdose, SAFE Project aims to save lives impacted by substance use and mental health challenges through overdose prevention and response, education on stigma, and development of prevention and recovery programs. SAFE Project also provides tailored guidance and programming for workplaces and organizations; within college and university campuses; for veterans, service members and their families; and within communities. Since 2016, Beyer has served as a member of the editorial advisory board for Construction Business Owner. Reach Beyer at cal@safeproject.us or 651-307-7883. Visit safeproject.us.

When it comes to changing how construction companies approach safety and well-being, progress often starts with one person willing to raise their hand. For Tori Terrell, Design Electric vice president of finance and treasurer, that moment came when she learned about the growing crisis of suicide and mental health challenges in construction.

"We've been personally affected by the loss of employees and family members to suicide," she said. "As data became available, it was clear this was an issue that needed to be addressed. I've cried, lost sleep and desperately wanted to take the pain away. The unknowns are what's so hard, and we can tackle that by opening up the conversation, being mindful with our speech, cutting the stigma and being vulnerable so others know they aren't alone."

Terrell's drive to take action led her to connect with SAFE Project, a national nonprofit working to end the addiction fatality epidemic through education, prevention and community collaboration. Through SAFE Project's SAFE Workplaces initiative, Terrell found the tools and support to help her company strengthen its culture of care, wellness and recovery.

Terrell is a founding member of the Blue Ridge Chapter of the Construction Financial Management Association (CFMA), and she is its current chapter president. Chapter leadership was concerned by rising rates of overdoses regionally and nationally, and they reached out to SAFE Project.

SAFE Project organized a presentation and invited Kerri Rhodes to copresent at a chapter meeting in October of 2023. Rhodes is a mother and the survivor of the loss of her oldest child, Taylor, to a fatal overdose. Terrell said the biggest takeaway from the presentation was to not let this surprise her, but to be proactively prepared to assist employees and their families in need.

"Educating our employees on the dangers of prescription medications and the correct way to dispose of unused opioids was extremely important so we can be a force for good in our community," she said.

That same principle of proactive care has long been part of Design Electric's DNA. Founded in 1982 in Charlottesville, Virginia, the company became 100% employee-owned in 2020 and today employs 135 people serving commercial and industrial clients throughout the region.

Empowered by Ownership

Design Electric's teams have worked on some of the most important facilities in Virginia, including the University of Virginia hospital, James Madison University and Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital.

Terrell began her career at Design Electric as a high school summer helper, later becoming a receptionist, accounting manager and controller before earning her Certified Construction Industry Financial Professional credential and joining the board of directors as its first female member.

"We are empowered by 100% employee

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ownership and innovation," she said. "Our collaborative and innovative environment values team input, fostering a culture where employees' insights drive continuous improvement and excellence."

The company's culture of ownership is directly tied to how it develops and supports people. Through mentorship, apprenticeship and leadership development programs, Design Electric focuses on helping employees grow into the next version of themselves, both professionally and personally.

HR Manager Cassandra Roop has seen how this focus on development drives engagement. "When people know there's a clear path forward and leaders who care about their growth, they show up differently," she said. "Promotions are happening from within, and the energy across our teams is contagious."

Beyond the Jobsite

Design Electric supports a range of community organizations, including the Building Goodness Foundation, the Blue Ridge food bank, Isaiah 117 House and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. The company donates electrical materials, sponsors fundraisers, and supports scholarships and trade programs at local career centers. These outreach efforts reinforce the idea that recovery, mental health and safety are communitywide efforts that begin with care and connection.

For Terrell, that message carries personal meaning. As president of the CFMA Blue Ridge Chapter, she continues to use her platform to educate others and build a network of champions for mental health, substance use, suicide prevention and recovery.

"When I see programs geared toward women or professional empowerment, I make sure my co-workers know about them and invite them to attend with me," she said. "It's important to show that you're there to lift others up and help them grow."

Her advice to anyone entering the industry mirrors the culture she's helped shape at Design Electric. "Don't ever feel you don't deserve a seat at the table or that you don't deserve an opportunity that's given to you. Take that opportunity, because you never know what it's going to lead to."

Leading With Care

SAFE Project's mission to normalize conversations about mental health and substance use fits naturally with Design Electric's long-standing approach to well-being. The company offers access to a nurse, doctor and financial wellness advisors and frequently holds companywide huddles to share mental health resources.

Training programs now include Mental Health First Aid and leadership development modules that address how to recognize and respond when someone is struggling. The company's safety team carries naloxone and uses toolbox talks to discuss topics like stress management, recovery and communication.

"Our safety staff are extremely approachable and empathetic, which is important," Terrell said. "Our employees know they have their best interests at heart, so when they have to point out a safety concern, it's understood that it comes from a place of care."

Prevention & Preparedness

Design Electric's caring culture extends beyond mental health to holistic well-being. Through participation in a local health care consortium, employees receive comprehensive medical, mental health and financial wellness benefits, often at little or no cost.

That network recently made all the difference for one employee who experienced hearing loss caused by a tumor. The company's benefits partners coordinated his appointments at Johns Hopkins University Hospital, arranged travel and lodging, and covered all associated costs, allowing him to focus entirely on recovery.

"It's a perfect example of what happens when a company truly puts people first," Terrell said. "When employees are cared for, they can focus on doing great work and caring for others."

Design Electric's safety and human resources teams encourage employees to become advocates for wellness and education by integrating well-being into their safety culture. They also equip leaders with practical steps to reduce stigma, encourage openness and connect employees to help when it's needed most. ▲

Making Sense of Dollars & Cents

Unpacking financial statements in construction



ROBERT MERCADO is a managing director within CBIZ's Assurance services division and serves as the construction assurance group leader and New England regional construction leader. He has more than 30 years of experience conducting, reviewing and analyzing financial information for contractors, manufacturers and service corporations. Mercado is the co-author of the American Institute of CPAs' (AICPA) Construction Contractors: Accounting and Auditing and Construction Contractors Advanced Issues training manuals. Visit cbiz.com.

Even sophisticated construction businesses can struggle to interpret their financial statements. In this industry, construction business owners, chief financial officers and controllers need to be on top of compliance, project progress, labor management and so much more.

It's no surprise that financial data and analysis are sometimes lower on the priority list — particularly when business is plugging along, contracts are being signed and contracts in progress are on schedule.

However, the information within financial statements can shed light on performance levels, highlight opportunities and suggest areas for improvement. This article will cover a few of the ratios you can use to gain actionable insights from your financial information.

What To Expect From Financial Statement Analysis

Your business can make tangible improvements based on its analysis of financial statements. It takes some investment in training to know what to look for, but the results speak for themselves. By improving financial literacy and reviewing statements with an analytic approach, your business can:

- Provide investors, bonding agents and others with accurate performance metrics
- Identify when and if something may be going wrong systematically within the business
- Identify areas of strength
- Identify areas of weakness
- Benchmark your performance against competitors
- Determine bonding and banking capacities

Key Ratios

Each line item on your financial statement represents an important aspect of your business's financial performance. However, the true extent of the utility of financial statements becomes clear when you measure the relationship between line items. For example:



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- **Working capital** equals your current assets minus current liabilities. Banks and bonding companies may allow for certain items like related party balance and some prepaid amounts, among others, to be excluded or discounted when calculating working capital.
- **Stockholders' equity** equals total assets minus total liabilities. Again, some amounts may be discounted against the equity balance when calculating stockholders' equity, including related party receivable balances.
- **Total backlog** is the total contract value on all open contracts, minus the revenue earned to date on all open contracts.
- **Backlog gross profit** is the total estimated gross profit on open contracts minus gross profit earned to date on open contracts. Industry norms suggest that backlog gross profit should amount to at least 50% of your total general and administrative costs for the year.
- **Months in backlog** is the total backlog divided by revenue earned for the year and reveals the number of months to complete all open work. This ratio is often used to encourage businesses to seek more opportunities when backlogs will be exhausted in fewer than 12 months.
- **Total job borrow** is the total overbilling minus total underbilling and results in the net percentage of completion adjustment. Positive total job borrow may suggest overbilling, while negative numbers may suggest poor billing practices or inaccurate forecasting.
- **Estimated permanent job borrow** is the portion of overbilling in excess of total estimated gross profit and represents the portion of job borrow or overbilling made up of estimated gross profit. Calculating this on a job-by-job basis represents the amount of a contract already billed, which will become equity if the contract is completed at or above the amount of estimated gross profits.
- **Underbillings to equity** can reveal excess underbilling that might appear to bonding agents as a red flag. Ratios of underbillings to equity should not exceed 20%.
- **Underbillings to working** may similarly invite further scrutiny by bonding agents when exceeding 25%.
- **Cash to overbillings** ratio of 100% or more means all overbillings are covered by cash in the bank or in accounts receivable. Anything less than 100% could indicate a serious issue.
- **Gains and fades** refer to the net change in contract profitability from year to year. They can reveal the overall impact of a contract on the bottom line. If a contract fades, it could suggest a poor profit estimate or unforeseen conditions on the jobsite. If a fade is identified, establish if it is a result of recent events or a bad estimate. Contractors' financial statements depend on accurate estimates, and a trend of bad or missed estimates can be a cause for concern. Contract fades can also result from pending or unapproved change orders that are not yet reflected in contract value. For this reason, understanding the practices relating to change order recognition is essential. Any material impact of gains and fades on the overall profit margin may require a change in the financial statement's estimate disclosures.

Final Thoughts

Financial statements aren't just for outsiders like investors and bonding agents. They can reveal areas for improvement, competitive advantages and systemic issues. If your business isn't using its financial statements to design and refine its strategy, you may be missing out on opportunities that even basic analysis can reveal.

Most importantly, increasing your financial literacy can be straightforward, simple and relatively quick. None of the ratios outlined in this article require in-depth financial training (although that may help), and the financial data they rely on should already be within reach for virtually all contractors and construction business owners.

Finally, with these ratios, you'll be able to get a sense for the actionable insights that can be derived from financial statements at a glance. Hopefully, that will prove useful in and of itself and serve as an indicator of the value that more comprehensive analysis can unlock, encouraging your business to make financial analysis a cornerstone of its growth strategy. ▲



Photo Credit: CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2023

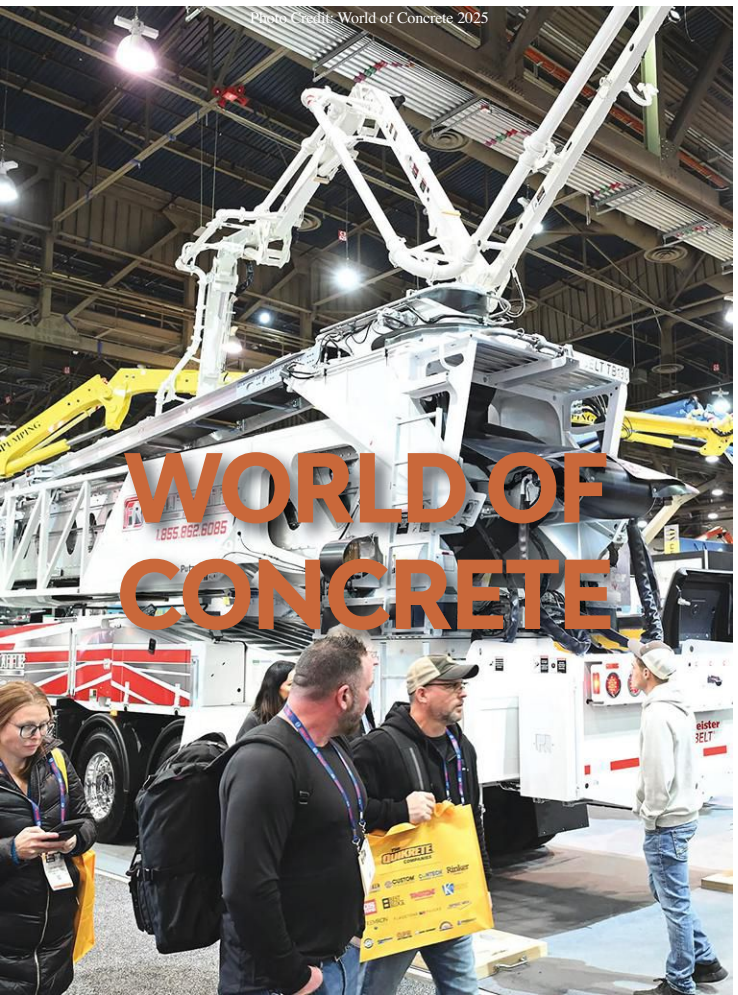


Photo Credit: World of Concrete 2025

2026 PRESHOW COVERAGE

World of Concrete

This year will be a busy year for construction professionals, with big trade shows on the horizon this quarter. First up is World of Concrete (WOC), held Jan. 19-22 at the Las Vegas Convention Center (LVCC) in Las Vegas. Education sessions begin Jan. 19, and the exhibit hall opens Jan. 20. WOC is an annual event for concrete and masonry pros in the commercial construction space. This year's show will feature 150-plus educational sessions, 200 first-time WOC exhibitors and almost 100 product categories to explore.

Educational sessions include the following:

- **9 Building Blocks of Company Culture to Increase Profits & Productivity —** Learn nine key actions to increase retention, improve morale and boost productivity.
- **Maintaining Structural Safety: Avoiding Collapse, Structural Deficiencies & Construction Defects —** This session covers proper shoring and reshoring techniques, signs of structural distress and debris loading tips.
- **Bridging the Gap Between General Contractor & Engineer —** This workshop addresses collaboration challenges and improving construction productivity through enhanced communication.

In addition to education, WOC offers an array of events or demonstrations, including an artificial rock sculpting showcase, Scaffold & Access Industry Association's 2026 Scaffold Builders Competition, Concrete Industry Management's live and silent auctions to support university programs, and Spec Mix's Bricklayer 500 World Championship.

CONEXPO-CON/AGG

Just six weeks after WOC, construction industry folks will head back to Vegas for CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2026, which takes place March 3-7 at the LVCC. Held every three years, CONEXPO is the largest construction trade show in North America. The 2023 edition had a record-breaking 139,000 registered attendees. This year's showing promises to be another stunner with more than 2,000 exhibitors, 2.9 million square feet of exhibits and 150 education sessions.

CONEXPO will show off its first-ever Ground Breakers Stage, which will feature presentations on the latest autonomous technology, workforce innovations and sustainability solutions. Show Director Dana Wuesthoff said: "The Ground Breakers Stage gives attendees a front-row seat to the ideas and investments shaping construction's global future."

With original equipment manufacturers, tech experts and construction firms from all over the world planning to showcase their latest and greatest, you won't want to miss this one.

Visit constructionbusinessowner.com/tradeshows for more information.

Sneak Peek: DEVELON Returns to CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2026

DEVELON will return to CONEXPO-CON/AGG from March 3–7, exhibiting a comprehensive lineup of construction equipment at outdoor booth F32054.

The exhibit will highlight new heavy and compact DEVELON machines, all equipped with multiple features for productivity, safety and uptime protection. A major introduction will be the next-generation DEVELON excavator lineup, offering advancements in smart technology. The booth will also showcase current innovative products, including articulated dump trucks, dozers, wheel loaders, mini excavators and compact track loaders.

Attendees can see the power of the equipment with live demos featuring a DEVELON excavator, dozer and wheel loader. A major attraction will be the compact equipment operator challenge, offering hands-on experience with a mini excavator and a compact track loader to test operating skills.

The exhibit will feature areas detailing the history of DEVELON, current innovations like the Transparent Bucket and Smart X-Care service, and future concepts such as Concept-X2. Attendees will also have the opportunity to explore these advanced features and future machine concepts through immersive experiences, including mixed reality and virtual reality demonstrations.

For the first time, DEVELON merchandise will be available for purchase on-site. ▲

Carmen Capoccia is senior managing editor for Construction Business Owner Magazine & Digital Media.



Photo Credit: DEVELON

Your Trade Show Checklist

Download the apps. Both WOC and CONEXPO offer mobile apps for attendees. You can see a map of the show floor, search for exhibitors, create your own planner and more. The maps are a must — it's easy to get disoriented, and these tools can help you navigate the halls like a pro. Jef White, editor-in-chief of THE SHOP magazine (and seasoned trade show attendee), advises: "Don't underestimate the size of the LVCC and/or the crowds. The LVCC is a big place, and with constant upgrades and improvements, it only seems to be getting bigger." Visit worldofconcrete.com and conexpoconagg.com for more information.

Bring business cards. Make sure to pack plenty of your current business cards to share as you network at the show. Keep any contact information you collect, and follow up with your connections when you return.

Make a plan. Before arriving, outline the educational sessions, events and exhibitors you want to see. Make note of the booth/room numbers, times and locations of each appointment. "The various halls, for the most part, are far apart, and the crowds make traveling in a straight line nearly impossible," says White. You'll want to give yourself enough time to get from one booth to another, so be strategic. You won't be able to see and do everything at these massive events, so identify the opportunities you don't want to miss!

Pack comfortable shoes. Dress professionally, but don't underestimate the importance of comfortable footwear. These shows are jam-packed with opportunities spread throughout the LVCC halls and lots. WOC encompasses more than 750,000 square feet and CONEXPO is more than 2 million, so you'll be covering a lot of ground!

The Power of Fractional Executives in Construction

Seasoned part-time leaders could cut costs, streamline operations & navigate rapid growth

BY PAUL THEISEN

Construction firms are under constant pressure to complete projects on time, control rising costs and adopt new technologies — all while grappling with leadership shortages. Whether from attrition or a slow pipeline for developing new leaders, these shortages create significant bottlenecks and profit-loss challenges across sectors such as commercial contracting, road and highway construction, concrete work, heavy construction, water/sewer and pipeline projects, excavation and demolition.

Closing the Leadership Gap Without Full-Time Overhead

An increasing number of companies are turning to fractional C-suite executives to solve leadership gaps. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, fractional roles grew 18% between 2021 and 2022 and are up 57% since 2020. What began as a short-term solution has become a game changer in how businesses, construction included, secure top-tier leadership.

Fractional executives are seasoned leaders who bring decades of expertise to a company without the cost or commitment of a full-time hire. They help firms optimize operations, boost profitability and navigate economic uncertainty. These leaders deliver executive-level impact without executive-level overhead. They are



Photo Credit: Me studio - stock.adobe.com

Unlike traditional consultants, fractional executives don't just advise; they take real ownership. They occupy a defined role on the organizational chart, focusing fully on shaping strategy, driving accountability and delivering measurable results aligned with business objectives.

precision executives with more than 20 years of experience who embed themselves in organizations, own outcomes, execute strategy and deliver transformative impact that propels the business forward.

Unlike traditional consultants, fractional executives don't just advise; they take real ownership. They occupy a defined role on the organizational chart, focusing fully on shaping strategy, driving accountability and delivering measurable results aligned with business objectives.

This distinction is crucial: Misusing the term "fractional executive" risks creating a credibility gap, undermining the value of true executive talent and underserving the organizations that need it most.

High-Impact Leadership Where You Need It Most

Fractional leaders operate at a level that advances the entire business, not just isolated projects. In the construction industry, for example, they can fill critical roles across technology, operations, safety and human resources — bringing high-level expertise exactly where it's needed.

A fractional executive brings energy, focus and the foresight to make an immediate impact. Their first steps typically include a comprehensive 360-degree assessment of the business — covering objectives, operations, teams, processes and systems — followed by strategic planning and multiyear IT road maps where applicable. They establish governance and steering functions, oversee project portfolios, manage vendor relationships, and develop and manage budgets.

Equally important, they strengthen the organization through team-building, hiring, mentoring and coaching, ensuring the company is equipped to execute strategy and sustain long-term growth.

How do you know a company is ready for a fractional executive? Look for key signals, including:

- Your firm is scaling quickly but faces limited resources and unclear C-suite responsibilities.
- Operational complexity is rising, and key decisions are getting bottlenecked.
- Your team needs executive-level support, but a full-time hire isn't financially feasible.
- Past decisions are weighing on operating budgets, limiting flexibility.
- Adding responsibilities to the already full plates of other leaders creates temporary relief at best but ultimately leads to exhaustion and unsustainable workloads.

The Immediate Lift of Seasoned Expertise

When seasoned, enterprise-level fractional leaders step in, the difference is immediate. They provide clarity and strategic direction, applying their experience where it matters most and uncovering solutions you might never have seen. Their deep operational expertise — honed over decades navigating challenges like yours — helps build scalable, innovative systems designed for growth, not just survival.

This impact extends beyond operations: your C-suite feels it too. You experience the relief of sharing the weight of a growing firm's demands, giving you space to make smarter decisions, avoid costly mistakes and lead with greater confidence.

Best of all, these leaders become trusted partners whose goals align with yours, without the cost of a full-time hire.

For generations, value has been tied to time — hours for dollars, days for pay. The future is different: It's about performance and outcomes. Fractional executive partnerships give midsize companies access to seasoned leaders who move the needle clearly, measurably and intentionally.

This is the future of leadership, and that future is already here. ▲

Paul Theisen brings three decades of executive experience helping organizations navigate strategy, technology and operations across industrial markets, serving asset-heavy enterprises in construction, manufacturing, energy and utilities. As founder and CEO of TAG CXO, he connects companies with proven fractional executives who deliver clarity, bridge leadership gaps and drive meaningful, accelerated results. Visit tagcxo.com.



Why Merchant Cash Advances Are a Hidden Trap for Construction Businesses

Exploring contractor financing options

BY SCOTT PEPER

Imagine this: Your firm is halfway through a $15 million office build. Crews are mobilized, materials are on-site and suppliers are lined up. Cash is tight, as it often is between billing cycles, so you take what looks like an easy fix — an online merchant cash advance (MCA) offering immediate funds with minimal paperwork.

Weeks later, your business checking account is frozen. Equipment leases are threatened, employees' paychecks bounce and work stops overnight. Why? Because of a confession-of-judgment clause buried deep in the MCA contract that gives the lender the legal power to seize assets and enforce payment without a court hearing.

For many contractors, the financing conversation begins with bank loans and lines of credit. But for those who don't qualify, or who need funds fast, MCAs can appear as an attractive alternative. Unfortunately, what looks like fast relief can trigger catastrophic collapse. The risk is especially high in construction, where cash flow timing rarely aligns with rigid MCA repayment schedules.

The Construction Cash Flow Reality

To understand why MCAs are such a dangerous fit, it's important to examine the financial dynamics unique to construction. Nonresidential contractors operate in long, uneven cycles of investment and reimbursement.

- *Up-front spending* — Contractors typically front significant costs, including labor, equipment rentals, permits, insurance and materials, well before they can submit the first invoice.
- *Extended payment timelines* — Owners and developers often take 30, 60 or even 90 days to remit payment. In some cases, retainage further delays cash inflows.
- *Project-based fluctuations* — Unlike recurring-revenue businesses, contractors face peaks and valleys tied to project milestones. A large up-front mobilization followed by a slow payment cycle creates natural cash squeezes.

Traditional bank financing has its own barriers. Many contractors find banks either unwilling to extend credit quickly enough or skeptical about project-based revenue. Even when approved, loan terms may be rigid and not fully aligned with how construction cash ebbs and flows.

That gap between immediate outflows and delayed inflows is exactly what pushes some contractors toward MCA providers. But instead of filling the gap, MCAs widen it, draining cash at the very moment contractors need it most.

MCA Mechanics & Hidden Dangers

At first glance, an MCA can look deceptively simple. Instead of a traditional loan with set interest, the MCA provider advances cash in exchange for a portion of the company's future receivables. Repayment typically happens through daily or weekly automatic withdrawals directly from the contractor's bank account.

Here's where the model clashes with construction realities. A contractor may feel relief the day funds hit their account, but within weeks they are scrambling again because the MCA continues pulling money whether or not receivables have arrived. Even though construction companies have to front costs and wait up to three months to collect payment after billing, MCA providers demand repayment on a daily or weekly schedule, creating a cash-flow mismatch that can cripple operations.

This cycle is why contractors frequently find themselves taking out additional MCAs just to keep up with existing ones. Instead of solving liquidity challenges, the arrangement traps them in a dangerous debt spiral. And unlike bank loans, the costs are rarely transparent. Once fees and repayment structures are factored in, the effective annual percentage rate can climb into triple digits.

The real hidden weapon is the confession-of-judgment clause. This little-known legal tool, embedded in many MCA contracts, allows the lender to bypass traditional court proceedings. By signing, the borrower pre-authorizes the

lender to obtain a judgment against them in the event of default, or even perceived risk of default.

That means lenders can freeze accounts, seize assets or place liens with almost no warning. The mismatch between how construction businesses get paid and how MCA repayment is enforced can ignite a full-blown crisis that takes contractors off the jobsite and puts their entire business at risk.

Real-World Consequences & Tactics

The consequences of MCA entanglement go beyond tough balance sheets. Contractors who fall behind often face a barrage of aggressive tactics:

- *Frozen accounts* — Daily withdrawals drain liquidity, and missed payments can trigger account freezes. Overnight, a firm can lose access to payroll funds.
- *Equipment seizures* — Lenders have been known to use judgments to repossess equipment or place liens on heavy machinery, the tools essential for ongoing projects.
- *Intimidation and harassment* — Some contractors report harassing calls, threats or even visits from collectors resembling organized-crime shakedowns.

These practices create ripple effects. When accounts are frozen or equipment is seized, it doesn't just affect the owner. Crews may suddenly lose work, subcontractors may go unpaid and active projects may stall midstream. For public works or commercial builds, this can jeopardize schedules, penalties and reputations.

The irony is stark: Contractors often seek MCAs to avoid disrupting business, but MCA collections can cause the very collapse they were meant to prevent.

Better Funding Alternatives

The good news is that better financing options are available, and they're increasingly tailored to the unique rhythms of construction.

- *Flexible "pay-when-paid" programs* — Some modern funding models tie repayment schedules to the contractor's receivables, not arbitrary daily withdrawals. This alignment helps businesses manage cash without creating artificial shortfalls.
- *Performance-based funding* — Some programs provide capital based on project schedules, business plans and milestone completion. This turns financing into a growth tool, not a debt trap.
- *Bank partnerships with construction expertise* — While traditional banks can be slow, some lenders now offer lines of credit specifically designed for contractors, including longer grace periods and draw-down options.

The key difference is philosophical. While MCAs profit most when contractors struggle, modern funding programs are structured to succeed when the business succeeds.

Contractors should evaluate financing partners not just on speed, but on whether repayment terms realistically fit how cash moves in construction.

Protection Strategies

So how can contractors protect themselves? A few key strategies stand out:

- *Recognize red flags* — Beware of financing marketed as "instant approval," or requiring only minimal paperwork. These are hallmarks of MCA providers.
- *Scrutinize contract terms* — Look for confessions-of-judgment clauses, mandatory daily withdrawals and vague repayment structures. These are danger signs.
- *Ask hard questions* — How will repayment align with your billing cycle? What happens if payment from the project owner is delayed? Can terms be adjusted if projects are paused?
- *Seek legal review* — Even under pressure, it's worth having an attorney review financing agreements. The cost of review is small compared to the potential cost of signing away legal rights.
- *Prioritize stability over speed* — The fastest money is often the most expensive and most dangerous. Contractors should weigh the long-term cost of instability against the short-term relief of fast cash.

With tight margins, labor shortages and supply chain challenges, the construction industry already faces enough risks. Falling into an MCA trap shouldn't be one of them.

By understanding how these agreements work, recognizing their dangers and exploring better alternatives, contractors can safeguard their businesses, their employees and their projects.

In construction, stability is everything. And when it comes to financing, the true foundation of growth is capital that aligns with how the business actually operates, not a quick fix that threatens to bring it all down. ▲

Scott Peper is the CEO and founder of Mobilization. He is the host of the business and entrepreneurial podcast "The Mobilization Mindset" and author of "The Big Book of Cash Flow." Peper is known for the content and education he offers to the community and his expertise in helping businesses successfully cash flow their projects and customers. Visit mobilizationfunding.com.



Keep Communication & Safety From Getting Lost in Translation

Analyzing risks around language barriers on construction jobsites

BY CLARE EPSTEIN

On a construction site, communication is the backbone of safety. It's critical that every instruction, warning and check-in is clearly understood. Yet for many crews, that's not a guarantee.

With the nation's workforce long made up of multilingual teams, language barriers have become one of the industry's most persistent and overlooked challenges. It's not enough to say the right words: They need to resonate and mean the same thing to everyone hearing them. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires training to be delivered in a language employees understand, but in practice, "understand" doesn't always mean "fluent." If comprehension falters, even the most well-designed safety systems can fail in ways no checklist can catch.

Safety culture thrives on shared understanding. When that understanding breaks down — when words don't connect, instructions get blurred or assumptions take their place — both people and progress are put at risk.

The Cost of Misunderstanding

Today, nearly 1 in 3 construction leaders oversee crews that speak multiple languages, introducing a new kind of risk that too often goes unaddressed until an incident occurs. Among those leaders, more than three-quarters report difficulty giving clear instructions, confirming task understanding or discussing safety concerns in the moment. These are the basics of jobsite safety, and the ripple effects of poor communication can be costly.

A single missed word can change



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the meaning of a task. If a worker misunderstands the sequence of a lift, skips a step in lockout/tagout or misreads an instruction meant to prevent a fall, the outcome can be severe. Supervisors often rely on quick verbal exchanges to keep crews moving, but when confidence in comprehension is low, leaders hesitate or worse — assume understanding where there is none.

Building Safer Systems for Multilingual Crews

Contractors can take practical steps to improve these communication barriers before they become safety risks. The goal: Make safety universal, regardless of language.

1. **Use visuals wherever possible.** Diagrams and color-coded tags can communicate information at a glance. They're faster, clearer and more universal than long paragraphs or dense text.
2. **Translate the essentials.** 78% of construction supervisors wish they had real-time translation apps to better engage their teams who speak English as a second language (ESL), while 50% want toolbox talk material in multiple languages. With many U.S.-based companies relying on English-only materials, translating core content like safety rules and emergency procedures signals to crews that every worker's understanding matters.
3. **Train supervisors to connect, not just instruct.** Nearly half of supervisors say they'd benefit from training on how to engage multilingual teams. Small adjustments, such as speaking at a steady pace, confirming understanding visually or pairing new ESL workers with bilingual mentors, can dramatically improve safety communication.
4. **Create feedback loops that work both ways**. Workers should feel comfortable flagging unclear instructions or safety concerns in the language they know best. An open-door feedback system, supported by bilingual leads or interpreters, helps identify risks before miscommunication becomes an incident.

Why Communication Isn't Just a Safety Issue

Communication challenges do more than put workers at risk. They influence how confidently a team can perform and how effectively a project can run. If directions aren't clear, tasks take longer, supervisors lose time clarifying instructions and crews hesitate instead of acting. Over time, that uncertainty chips away at productivity and consistency.

It's not that workers don't want to get it right; they're just not always equipped with the clarity to do so. When every worker's operational readiness is a priority and they're set up to understand expectations the first time around, they make faster and safer decisions on the job. And if every supervisor has the tools and training to communicate effectively to every worker, they can lead with confidence instead of hesitation.

Together, these factors create a jobsite that runs predictably, where safety becomes a built-in part of the workflow. Investing in improving multilingual communication is a performance decision that goes above and beyond compliance. Clear communication reduces downtime, prevents costly rework and strengthens team accountability. This clarity is as valuable as any piece of equipment.

A Safer, Stronger Industry Starts With Understanding

Contractors invest heavily in safety programs, equipment and technology. Yet the most effective safety tool remains the simplest: communication that everyone can understand.

As the construction workforce continues to grow more multilingual, companies that plan for that reality will be the ones best positioned for success and retention. Once communication becomes part of the safety infrastructure, every worker is empowered to perform safely and consistently — and to return home the same way.

In order for safety to stop being a standalone initiative and become part of how the work gets done, every worker needs the same access to information, and every leader needs the same confidence to deliver it. That's what strong, connected sites look like — and what a modern industry demands. ▲

Clare Epstein is general manager, commercial, at Vector Solutions, bringing more than 20 years of leadership experience working with safety training and tech solutions. Epstein drives strategy, execution and growth for Vector's commercial market segment, which serves customers across manufacturing, oil and gas, property management, engineering and construction. Visit vectorsolutions.com.



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From Automation to Visualization: Tech & Construction in 2026

Trimble executives share the biggest trends to watch

BY STAFF WRITERS, TRIMBLE

As 2025 drew to a close, Trimble's subject matter experts offered their predictions for the coming year. Read on for their outlook on the construction industry in 2026.

The Data Center Construction Boom Will Continue

Data center development will continue to outpace traditional construction, demanding a new level of speed and precision. This pace creates two distinct challenges for builders: coordination and confidence. A common data environment provides real-time information sharing, ensuring every team member is working from the same, most current plan. Advanced tools like 3D laser scanners and 3D modeling allow for preplanning and conflict detection before anyone even steps on-site, providing the confidence that the project will be executed flawlessly. By embracing and integrating technology solutions like these, builders can maintain control, mitigate risk and meet the relentless pace of data center development.
— *Duane Gleason, Industry Workflow Principal*

Artificial Intelligence Usage Deepens

As the architecture, engineering, construction and operations (AECO) industry deepens its use of artificial intelligence (AI), we'll see a significant rise in the adoption of agentic AI systems — systems that can utilize generative AI and automate end-to-end processes. These systems will observe their surroundings, plan actions, reason, make decisions and refine their strategies over time.

In 2026, isolated pilots will move beyond experimentation to impact real-world workflows. Networks of AI agents will operate across design, engineering and construction in connected ecosystems — streamlining design processes, orchestrating schedules, resolving conflicts, tracking progress, managing resources and more.

`This evolution underscores the critical role of data interoperability, enabling seamless connection and data sharing across systems. At scale, interoperability will empower AI agents to work collectively and deliver measurable value throughout the project life cycle — extending beyond construction into operations and maintenance.

Ultimately, this transformation will help the industry address labor shortages by freeing professionals to focus on strategy, creativity and decision-making, while AI agents accelerate

workflows, reduce waste and unlock efficiencies that were previously impossible.

— Aviad Almagor, Vice President of Technology Innovation

Technology & Training Will Be Key to Attracting the Next Generation Workforce

According to numerous estimates, the construction industry will need to attract nearly half a million new workers in 2026 alone just to keep up with anticipated demand. The growing workforce shortage threatens project timelines, costs, quality and overall industry growth. With nearly a quarter of the construction workforce set to retire in the next decade, the need to bring in younger workers has never been more urgent. Contractors that invest and deploy the latest technology will have a competitive advantage, by optimizing employee productivity and being able to do more with less. In addition, training programs that combine hands-on experience with cutting-edge digital tools, will upskill today's workforce and attract tomorrow's builders. The future of the industry depends on the ability to embrace technology and modernize our approach to talent development.

— Ian Warner, Director of Industry Workforce Development & Innovations

Adoption of Subscription Models Will Continue to Grow

In 2026, the construction hardware and software subscription model is expected to see significant maturation, with a focus on more refined and comprehensive programs. These subscription services will offer increased flexibility and scalability, allowing contractors to customize offerings to their specific needs while benefiting from lower up-front costs and more predictable ongoing expenses. Providers will continue to enhance cloud-based solutions, offering more robust cybersecurity and ensuring automatic access to the latest technological advancements. This evolution will transform the relationship between providers and contractors into a more collaborative partnership, offering personalized support and strategic alliances to maximize efficiency and productivity. Ultimately, the model will help standardize operations and technology across organizations, ensuring all employees are working with the most current tools.

— Toni Piwonka, Associate Vice President of Strategic Transformation

Reality Capture Technology Will Become More Democratized

Reality capture technology is already invaluable for precision, safety and speed but will become even more democratized in 2026. New user-friendly tools will enable even more comprehensive data collection and in-field treatment for faster and improved decision-making, as well as capture from mobile phones and robust mobile mapping systems. Reality capture is also becoming an integral part of project management workflows, enabling contractors to visually track progress, quickly identify issues and collaborate on solutions in real time. Enhanced by AI, machine learning and cloud-based platforms for sharing and collaboration, this rich spatial data will not only improve contextual information but also serve as a common visual language for all stakeholders to align efforts across projects and reduce misunderstandings.

— Arnaud Lezennec, Senior Applications Engineer

Evolution of Task Automation & Autonomous Machines Continues

The path to autonomy in construction is an evolution more than a revolution, and that evolution will continue in 2026. We expect to see continued advancements across the industry in what will be the foundation to a future in which tasks and machines are more automated. Part of that foundation includes greater interoperability between machine types and technology providers, both of which should see forward movement in the coming year. Data is another key to unlocking true autonomy, and we expect to see the industry increasingly leverage vast datasets to create a more comprehensive understanding of construction jobsites. Connected, cloud-based ecosystems remain important for sharing and leveraging data for increasingly automated tasks, workflows and machines.

AI will also continue to mature and provide further productivity gains, improving the efficiency of both operators on machines as well as site foremen responsible for the overall delivery of the project. Current generation machine control systems will continue to penetrate the market and become table stakes for any modern earthmoving project.

Research and development, including from third-party developers and integration partners, will focus on automating individual tasks that deliver immediate value, including around site safety and operator productivity.

— Ian Welch, Director of Engineering, Civil Construction Field Systems

Rapid Adoption of Common Data Environments

Every construction company today is a data company, and this reality is fueling the rapid adoption of common data environments (CDEs). CDEs are critical because they minimize time contractors waste trying to search for information, a vast majority of which goes unanalyzed and unused. CDEs eliminate this inefficiency by consolidating critical data from design, engineering, fabrication, construction and maintenance into a secure, accessible hub. With a single source of truth, teams

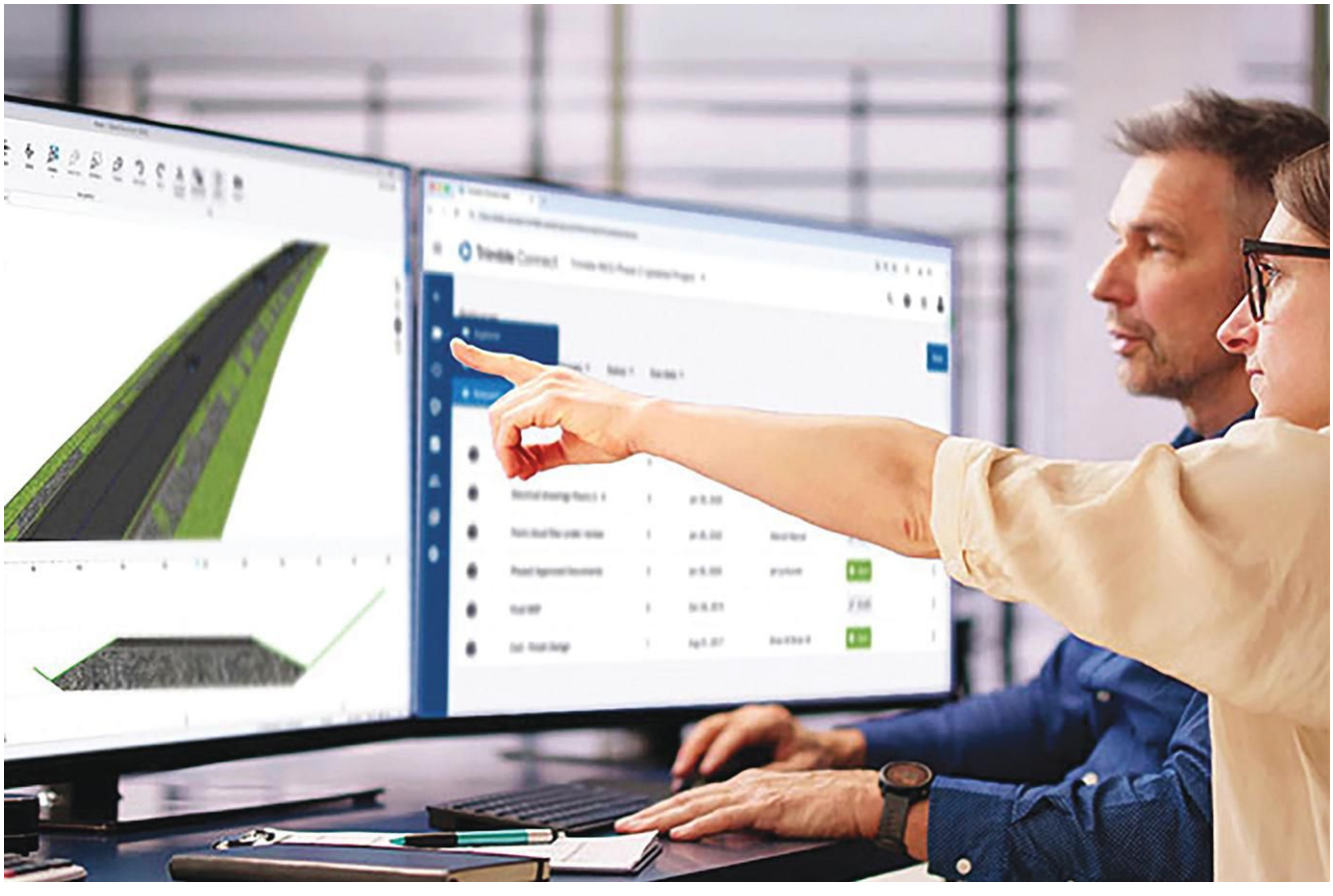
can collaborate in real time, improving visibility, accelerating decisions and driving project success. Beyond efficiency, CDEs also bridge the gap between physical and digital construction data, enabling the development of digital twins that enhance planning, design, construction and ongoing operations. By replacing silos and fragmented workflows with a unified, reliable flow of information, CDEs transform data into actionable intelligence across the entire project life cycle.
— Chris Peppler, Vice President of Platform & Product

Data Integration/Interoperability Efforts Will Accelerate

The complexity of modern construction projects makes it challenging to share data across diverse projects and teams, as stakeholders often rely on different technology stacks. Interoperability — the ability for data to flow seamlessly between software systems — ensures that every stakeholder can access the same information within their preferred tools. In the year ahead, construction technology vendors, including Trimble, are expected to accelerate efforts to enhance interoperability, delivering greater value to contractors. This includes building workflows and integrations between construction technology ecosystems, providing more opportunities for construction teams to share project data regardless of the various software deployed for a given project. Similar progress is underway in fleet interoperability on the jobsite, and in 2026 we expect that it will continue to become easier for contractors with mixed fleets to purchase, integrate and utilize technology more seamlessly.
— Chris Peppler, Vice President of Platform & Product

Smarter, GIS-Centric Infrastructure & Asset Life Cycle Management

Municipalities, state agencies and private asset owners are facing a growing challenge of managing and maintaining vast, aging infrastructure as well as increasingly large and complex new construction projects with increasingly limited resources. Fortunately, innovations in 3D geographic information systems (GIS) and modeling technology are creating richer, more precise models of public assets. Concurrently, GIS-centric asset life cycle management (ALM) is being redefined by AI, real-time spatial insights and secure data sharing. The result is easier real-time collaboration, smarter decision-making, reduced risk and enhanced efficiency throughout every stage of a life cycle.



Asset owners are recognizing that data gathered during the planning and construction phases is hypervaluable for decades. As much as 75% of an asset's total cost of ownership is accrued during the operations and maintenance phase. Also, GIS data helps assess performance degradation over time and pinpoint where maintenance is required. These capabilities are driving a shift from reactive to predictive maintenance, which can reduce costs by as much as 40%.

The advancement of digital technology is creating greater operational resilience, improved sustainability and, ultimately, better stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

— Chris Bell, Vice President, AECO Industry Strategy & Product Marketing

Purchasing & Operability Advances Will Extend Cutting-Edge Technology to Smaller Contractors

While advanced, integrated technology is becoming more vital to competitiveness, barriers to entry are falling, and adoption by small and midsize contractors will accelerate. The proliferation of subscription and software-as-a-service (SaaS) options for both hardware and software will reduce up-front costs. Ongoing improvements in operability and user interfaces will further minimize the in-house IT expertise and support required for implementation, training and optimization of technology. For many software applications, e-commerce purchasing and versions with tiered capabilities and pricing will create opportunities for smaller companies to get started and then scale as they succeed and grow. Also, expanding opportunities to add solutions for multiple workflows from a single supplier will provide built-in integration and make it easier to manage technology stacks.

— Doug Seyler, Vice President of Implementation & Customer Success

In 2025, Trimble introduced authorized resellers representing a wide variety of manufacturers to its distribution channel, making it easier for mixed fleet customers to purchase, install and utilize the company's grade control and site positioning technology. This expanded dealer channel means customers have access to Trimble technology, installation and support for equipment brands including John Deere, Komatsu, BOMAG, Wacker Neuson and more, all from their local dealer. As this accessibility continues to grow, look for it to also fuel a new level of data integration and interoperability between different equipment brands in 2026 and beyond.

— Ron Bisio, Senior Vice President, Trimble Field Systems

Visualization & 3D Models/BIM for Improved Collaboration

Advances in collaboration tools and CDEs are transforming how projects are designed, built and operated. Increasingly, design conversations will take place directly within 3D models, enabling quicker iterations, faster workflows and stronger alignment throughout design and construction. As discussions are centralized, designers and other stakeholders can provide context, resolve questions and make decisions in real time. This collaboration-first approach extends into construction and operations where CDEs provide consistent access to documentation, context and visualization. With data easily shared, managed and updated, owners benefit from seamless digital handoffs at project completion, receiving rich datasets that inform long term asset management. Collectively, these advancements are streamlining critical workflows and helping stakeholders move from concept to reality with greater speed, clarity and confidence.

— Sandra Winstead, Senior Director of Product, Architecture & Design

More Focus on Comprehensive, Integrated Financial Management Capabilities

Financial management is critical in construction due to the complexity, resource intensity and time-sensitive nature of projects. Process inefficiencies, lack of access to information and lag times or inconsistencies in the transfer of data across applications can lead to cost overruns, delays, misallocated resources and even project failure.

To address this, contractors are increasingly adopting comprehensive enterprise resource planning solutions. These systems offer construction-specific accounting functions integrated with vendor and subcontractor payment management, performance and compliance tracking, timekeeping and HR capabilities — enabling contractors to better manage job costing, budgets, cash flow and personnel, while enhancing overall profitability.

As these solutions evolve, they are increasingly integrating with project management and material procurement tools, a development made even more crucial by uncertainties in tariffs and materials pricing.

— Jon Fingland, Vice President & Category Manager of Finance, HR, Project & Operations Management ▲

Trimble is a global technology company. With innovation in precise positioning, modeling and data analytics, the company enables essential industries including construction, geospatial and transportation. Trimble helps customers build and maintain infrastructure, design and construct buildings, optimize global supply chains and map the world. Visit trimble.com.



Rising Costs, Sluggish Consumers

High costs, hesitant buyers & shifting policies set the stage for the year ahead

BY PHILLIP M. PERRY

As the economy enters a new year, the construction industry can expect a bracing but generally supportive operating environment. "The U.S. economy is holding up admirably well despite a major trade shock caused by tariffs," said Bernard Yaros Jr., lead U.S. economist at Oxford Economics (oxfordeconomics.com). "We look for an acceleration in growth in 2026 as stimulus from the One Big Beautiful Bill gets underway."

Oxford Economics expects real GDP (gross domestic product) to grow by 2% in 2026, up a bit from the 1.7% expected when 2025 numbers are finally tallied. Both years, among the most sluggish growth environments of the past decade, are underperforming the 2.8% increase of 2024. (GDP, the total value of the nation's goods and services, is the most commonly utilized measure of economic growth. "Real" GDP subtracts the effects of inflation.)

Higher Profits

The nation's economic growth depends largely on the launch of new business initiatives. Unfortunately, companies are holding back for a number of reasons. Interest rates, while declining, are still at the highest levels since 2022. Costs for materials and supplies are increasing. There is uncertainty about the nation's future trade policy. Lower- and middle-income consumers, nervous about inflation, are tapped out and closing their wallets. Against such headwinds, a host of otherwise attractive projects can look less promising.

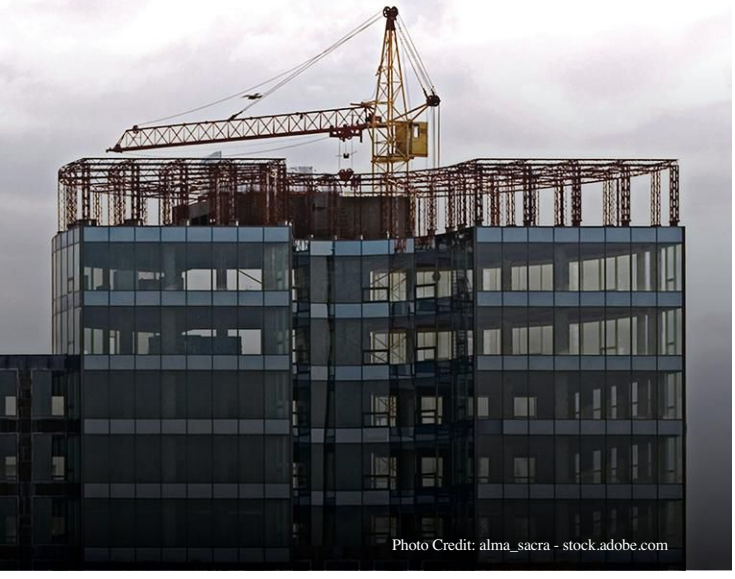
One might also expect business profitability to suffer. Yet Oxford Economics expects it to follow the same general pattern as the GDP. "We look for corporate profits to rise by 4.9% in 2026," said Yaros. "That's up substantially from the 0.5% expected when 2025 numbers are finalized." Even so, the 2026 pace remains slower than the 7.9% clocked in 2024.

The expected 2026 rebound in profitability stems from a belief that stimulus from Washington will lift all boats. "We believe the passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill, with its tax cuts for businesses and households, should help the economy regather some steam in early 2026," said Anirban Basu, chairman and CEO of Sage Policy Group (sagepolicy.com). The legislation's 100% bonus depreciation should help fuel business investment, while large tax refunds should invigorate consumer spending. Both activities are important drivers of the nation's economy.

This stimulus from Washington is arriving at the same time companies are getting a more solid footing on the nation's shifting trade policy. "There has been a bit of a shock to the system in and around tariffs over the past year, and it is taking some time for many operators to understand their impact," noted Andrew Petryk, head of industrials at Brown, Gibbons Lang & Company, an investment banker (bglco.com).

Specifically, companies have responded to China tariffs by sourcing imports from other countries — a move which has also lent succor to the nation's recent supply chain ills. "Lead times have diminished as companies have found alternative or additional suppliers," said Petryk. "Those that relied on one or two vendors now have three, four or five."

Businesses should also benefit from a decline in the cost of money over the coming months, as the Federal Reserve shifts its focus from fighting inflation to bolstering employment. "We look for inflation to peak at just above 3% when 2025 numbers are finalized, and for the Fed to cut interest rates into 2026 until the federal funds


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rate falls to about 3%," said Yaros. That rate, while much higher than the rates of early 2022, is a considerable improvement over the 4.3% of mid-2025.

Declining interest rates, which encourage the launch of new projects, are also a reflection of looser pockets on the part of the nation's lenders. "Credit conditions have improved significantly for businesses," said Basu. "Companies with strong balance sheets will find bankers very willing to supply debt. We also know that equity investors, including private equity, remain quite aggressive in supplying capital."

Housing Doldrums

Speaking of lower interest rates, they can't come soon enough for a major driver of construction activity and the nation's economy: the housing sector. "Housing is in a funk," said Yaros. "Single-family homebuilders are contending with a growing supply of unsold, completed new homes, as well as greater competition from the resale market and falling home prices in a rising number of regions."

The high cost of money is not helping matters. "A significant increase in interest rates since the summer of 2022 has increased the monthly payments required from buyers of new or existing homes," said Petryk. "They have also led to a significant market shortage because families who bought homes three- to five-plus years ago are loath to surrender their sub-3% mortgages."

Mortgage rates have an important impact on the consumer attitudes that are vital drivers of the economy. While lower short-term rates may be coming from the Fed, it's unclear how much effect they will have on the longer-term ones that apply to the funding of new homes. "I do not forecast mortgage rates coming down enough to make a big difference in single-family construction," said Bill Conerly, principal of his own consulting firm in Lake Oswego, Oregon (conerlyconsulting.com).

Wary builders. Reluctant sellers. Sluggish buyers. It's all having an effect on the housing market. Oxford Economics expects starts to fall by 4.3% in 2025 and decline by another 2.3% in 2026 after dropping by 3.5% in 2024. Prices for existing homes are expected to increase 1.5% in 2025 and 2.3% in 2026 after rising by 4.4% in 2024.

Concerned about the rising cost of living, consumers are cutting back on spending of all kinds. Their hesitancy affects the retail sector, which is an important driver and bellwether of the economy. "Our forecast for year-over-year retail sales growth is 3.8% for 2026, down from the 4.5% of 2025," said Scott Hoyt, senior director of consumer economics for Moody's Analytics (economy.com). Much of the increase in both years is due to inflation. "High prices are a bit of a mixed bag," said Hoyt. "They undermine consumer purchasing power and confidence, but they also support nominal sales by lifting the prices of the goods retailers are selling."

Construction Woes

Outside of the single-family home market, contractors are having problems of their own. Multifamily builders, working through a backlog of units under construction, are hesitant to break ground on new ones. "I think we'll see less multifamily construction in 2026," said Conerly. "Vacancy rates are going up, and rents have been coming down at the rate of about 1% a year."

Meanwhile, contractors attached to the commercial, office and hotel markets are feeling the sting of a slowing economy, high interest rates and an environment rife with uncertainty. "Many areas of nonresidential are trending flat or edging down," said Conerly. "Even the chip fabs, while still strong, are tapering down."

The one bright construction sector: data centers. They show no signs of diminishing and are big customers for electricians, plumbers and suppliers of scaffolding and manufactured products of all kinds. "When I look at the detail and the economic statistics of what kind of capital equipment is being bought, I am seeing a lot of data center-related equipment in there," said Conerly. "Data centers also require a lot of garden variety wiring, connectors and plumbing for cooling."

Every sector of the construction industry shares a common challenge: labor availability. Oxford Economics forecasts an unemployment rate of 4.4% and 4.3% at the end of 2025 and 2026, respectively. That's not much higher than the 4.1% clocked at the end of 2024. Low unemployment, largely due to slowing growth in the nation's working age population and aggressive immigration policies, can result in rising labor costs.

Business Confidence

For all business sectors, money and labor are not the only

production factors on the rise. "The real problem is the world has become much more expensive in the last few years," noted Basu. "Construction materials are more expensive. And of course there are tariffs on items like steel, aluminum and copper."

Little wonder the high cost of doing business is top of mind for many operators. "As we head into 2026, the area of most concern for the construction industry is profit margin," said Basu. "Many operators are simultaneously experiencing an increase in costs of delivering services while demand fades."

Given the variety of business concerns, it is little wonder many projects are being put on hold. "It's hard to engage in cost savings when both materials and labor are becoming more expensive," said Basu. "Too often, the pro formas don't pencil out. Many companies are responding by not expanding their operations and trying to trim expenditures at the margins. They are focusing more on cash flow preservation by slowing hiring and being less aggressive in leasing and purchasing equipment, particularly equipment impacted by tariff pricing."

This generalized business hesitation is evidenced in the numbers. "We look for business investment to increase by only 1.6% in 2026, after rising by 3% in 2025 3.6% in 2024," said Yaros.

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Looking Ahead

As we enter the early months of 2026, economists suggest that companies in the construction industry watch these key economic indicators for an idea of how the year will turn out:

1. Employment

"I would pay close attention to the unemployment rate," said Yaros. An unexpected decline in employment would spur faster interest rate cuts as the Fed seeks to reinforce economic expansion.

2. Consumer spending

"How is the consumer faring?" poses Basu. "Bear in mind that many low- and middle-income people are exhausted financially. Indebtedness and delinquencies are up for credit cards, mortgages and loans."

3. Inflation

"If we get stubbornly high inflation, that will prevent further progress on interest rate," said Basu.

Oxford Economics still expects the nation to avoid a recession, and the expected 2% GDP growth is right around the level economists peg as the nation's "natural growth rate" — one that supports business activity, maintains full employment and avoids triggering inflation.

Perhaps of even greater importance, though, is a little heralded threat to productivity. "One thing that sort of permeates the whole economic picture right now is the nation's low population growth rate," said Conerly. "Immigration is down, due to Trump administration policy. The next generation entering their working years is about the same size as the retiring boomers, so there will be no net growth in the labor force."

Responding to this trend, companies in the construction industry will look for ways to maximize their return on labor by increasing output per worker, noted Conerly. "The focus of businesses in 2026 will be increasing productivity — not by pushing people harder, but by providing them with better tools, better training and better first-level managers." ▲

Poised for a Modest Rebound

U.S. GDP

(Annual % Change)

- 2015: **2.9%**
- 2016: **1.8%**
- 2017: **2.5%**
- 2018: **3.0%**
- 2019: **2.5%**
- 2020: **-2.2%**
- 2021: **6.6%**
- 2022: **2.5%**
- 2023: **2.9%**
- 2024: **2.8%**
- * 2025: **1.7%**
- * 2026: **2.0%**

A subdued economy will challenge business operations in 2026.

*Source: World Bank; * = projections by Oxford Economics.*

Award-winning journalist Phillip M. Perry has published widely in the fields of business management, workplace psychology and employment law. Perry is a two-time winner of the American Bar Association's annual Edge Award for the best article of the year, as well as of that organization's "Value to the Reader Award." Visit editorialcalendar.net.



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Do More With Less: Boost Jobsite Efficiency Without Adding Machines

How business owners can maximize compact equipment through attachments

BY DAN STEINLICHT

In today's construction industry, every dollar and every hour counts. Contractors and business owners face constant pressure to stay efficient and profitable while meeting tight deadlines and managing limited resources. The challenge is clear: How do you get more work done without adding more machines to your fleet?

The answer is maximizing your compact equipment's return on investment (ROI) by putting versatile attachments to work. Attachments transform a single machine into a multitasking workhorse, giving you the ability to do more with less, reduce downtime and improve overall utilization.

Why Attachments Are Key to ROI

Compact equipment such as skid-steer loaders, compact track loaders and compact excavators are valued for their agility and performance on tight jobsites. But their true potential is unlocked when paired with the right attachments. Instead of purchasing multiple dedicated machines for trenching, grading, sweeping or demolition, contractors can invest in a core fleet and a range of attachments that dramatically expand capabilities.

This approach delivers measurable benefits. Attachments can cost significantly less than buying additional machines, which lowers capital expenses. A single machine can perform multiple tasks, improving utilization and reducing idle time. Quick-connect and intuitive controls also mean faster job completion, minimizing downtime between tasks and keeping projects on schedule.

Versatility on the Jobsite

With the right attachments, compact

equipment becomes a versatile, do-it-all force on your jobsite. Imagine a skid-steer loader equipped with a trencher for utility installation, eliminating the need for a dedicated trencher. Pallet forks and grapple buckets make material handling more efficient, while angle brooms and sweepers keep jobsites clean without requiring separate machines. Hydraulic breakers allow compact loaders to tackle concrete removal, and graders, augers, soil conditioners and rakes expand capabilities for landscaping and other dirt work.

By matching attachments to your core applications, you can handle a wide range of tasks with fewer machines — a critical advantage for small crews and projects with constrained timelines.



Technology Enhancements That Drive Efficiency

Many modern attachment systems are designed for speed and simplicity. Universal couplers and common industry interfaces allow operators to swap tools quickly, often without leaving the cab. High-flow auxiliary hydraulics enable compact machines to power demanding attachments like planers or drum mulchers, once reserved for larger equipment. Smart attachment technology is also emerging, where the machine recognizes the attachment and automatically adjusts hydraulic

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flow and control patterns for optimal performance.

Profitability Beyond the Purchase

Attachments enable contractors to deliver more services with the equipment they already own, boosting competitiveness without added cost.

For example, a compact excavator equipped with a trencher and breaker can handle excavation and demolition on residential projects. Municipal crews can maintain streets year-round with a compact loader equipped with an angle broom and snow blade. Landscape contractors can diversify offerings by adding augers and soil conditioners without buying new machines.

Maximizing ROI

To fully realize the benefits of attachments, start by analyzing your core applications and invest in attachments that complement those jobs. Choose quality attachments compatible with your machine's hydraulic capacity and weight limits, and confirm specifications for universal couplers.

Train operators to transition between attachments efficiently and adjust machine settings for optimal performance. Regular maintenance, such as inspecting hydraulic hoses and keeping coupler systems clean, prevents downtime.

Finally, leverage telematics to track usage and identify underutilized attachments. With this data, business owners and operators can adjust fleet strategy accordingly.

The Bottom Line

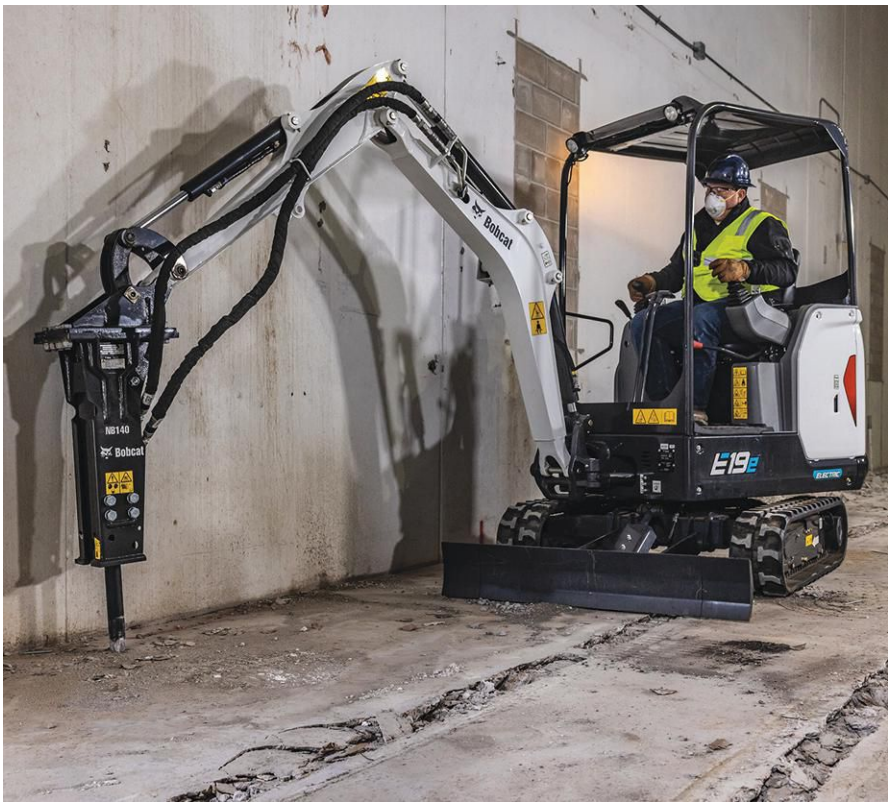
Attachments are more than accessories — they are strategic investments that boost



the value of compact equipment.

By adopting a "do more with less" mindset, contractors can reduce capital expenses, improve jobsite efficiency and increase profitability.

Whether you're a business owner managing a fleet or an operator looking to grow your share of the market, versatile attachments offer an effective path to maximizing ROI without adding more machines. ▲



Dan Steinlicht, general manager of attachments at Bobcat Company, brings 14 years of expertise in driving innovation and growth. Starting as a product trainer, he advanced through key roles in sales and product management, including leading national accounts and government sales. Since early 2024, he has spearheaded Bobcat's attachments strategy, shaping solutions that empower customers worldwide. Visit bobcat.com.



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Tracking & monitoring your assets to increase ROI

BY RACHAEL PLANT

Fleet solutions like management software and optimization platforms are powerful tools for tracking and monitoring your assets — from vehicles and heavy equipment down to hand tools and parts inventory. Fleet solutions provide detailed reporting on key metrics, so you can track your fleet's performance and make adjustments for improvement where necessary.

Benefits of Fleet Solutions

Managing construction and heavy fleet assets is a time-consuming job. While many fleets are still tracking data with pen and paper or on spreadsheets, more and more are turning to digital solutions to help control costs and improve operational efficiencies.

Fleet solutions help ease the fleet manager's burden through workflow automation, real-time issue alerts, streamlined communication and filterable reports.

More robust solutions, like a fleet optimization platform, offer the added benefit of integrating with other technologies, such as telematics, fuel cards and business solutions, to provide data consolidation across your entire operation.

It also aggregates collected data into easy-to-read reports you can send to stakeholders so everyone can quickly see the metrics they need to influence decisions.

Fleet managers have turned to fleet solutions to surface such key fleet metrics as vehicle and equipment downtime, return on investment (ROI), fleet utilization and total fleet cost.

Remote Equipment Management

Asset management is a significant component of fleet management. Fleet solutions allow users to remotely track and monitor vehicles, equipment and tools in real-time — whether they're on the road, at the jobsite or sitting in the yard — so managers can quickly take action on issues as they arise. Monitor asset assignments for increased accountability, and easily access asset statuses to determine what's active, what's in the shop and what's waiting on service.

Fleet solutions with mobile capabilities provide employees with an efficient way to communicate asset-related issues to management anytime, anywhere. Additionally, drivers, operators and field teams can use the mobile app to complete and submit asset inspections. Inspections

are customizable, and parameters can be set for requiring photos or comments on specific items, or when an item fails. Failed inspection items automatically alert managers in real time so the service workflow can begin quickly, ultimately leading to reduced downtime and risks on the jobsite. In a recent survey, 77% of fleets reported their solution helped them resolve asset issues faster, with 62% reporting less unplanned downtime.

Fleet solutions also allow fleets to track asset usage data remotely. Having current and historical asset usage data provides fleets insights that can strengthen preventive maintenance (PM), help with billing and scheduling for specific job types and improve overall fleet utilization. When integrated with telematics, fleet solutions also offer real-time diagnostic trouble code (DTC) fault alerts, allowing you to quickly tackle issues.

Maintenance, Safety & Compliance

Procuring vehicles and heavy equipment is an expensive endeavor. Taking a proactive stance on maintenance can extend asset life cycles and ensure fleets get the maximum ROI for assets. Properly filled-out inspections and real-time communication ease a lot of the maintenance burdens around scheduling service, procuring parts and planning for downtime. Fleet solutions provide an efficient way for fleets to create comprehensive PM schedules based on original equipment manufacturer specifications and usage intervals, or they can be tailored to specific equipment based on insights uncovered through service histories. Fleet solutions also automate the service workflow to ensure maintenance compliance. Managers can set service reminders to alert technicians and asset operators of service so nothing gets missed.

Digital work orders expedite service for fleets with in-house shops. Managers and technicians — depending on user permissions — can create detailed work orders documenting labor and parts cost, as well as estimated versus actual service duration. Technicians can clock on and off a job right in the work order on the mobile app and communicate within the work order to ensure all issues are tackled. In-house inventory counts are automatically updated whenever a part is added to a work order, and users can set low-stock thresholds to initiate reorder reminders. For fleets that outsource maintenance and repairs, some fleet solutions provide a third-party shop automation feature that automatically collects service data and improves the approval process.

Proper vehicle and equipment maintenance doesn't just improve ROI, it



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improves asset safety on the road and in the field. Poorly maintained assets can lead to extended downtime and costly workplace injuries. Managing maintenance with a fleet solution allows fleets to correct small issues before they become big problems. In the event of a vehicle or equipment accident, fleets can pull all service-related data and inspections for the asset involved to prove maintenance compliance and that the accident wasn't caused by a preventable mechanical failure.

Additionally, fleets can use a fleet solution's mobile app to instantly access any needed asset documentation, including registration and insurance.

When integrated with telematics or a driver management system, fleet solutions provide actionable data around driver behavior. Track and monitor such problematic behaviors as speeding and distracted driving, as well as harsh braking, acceleration and turning. This data can be used to source recurring mechanical issues due to driver behavior and highlight which drivers may need to be coached or trained to reduce certain behaviors.

Value Add for Fleets

Most fleets are familiar with the necessity of tracking fleet-related data as it pertains to regulatory compliance, but data tracking offers benefits beyond that. The more data fleets gather, the more insights they can gain into expense per asset, high-maintenance items, asset use and location, and more. Fleets can use this data to see how much each asset is costing them and determine optimal replacement cycles. Additionally, they can use historical data to determine which fleet operating costs are inflated and where actual versus budgeted dollars are being spent.

To get the best understanding of your fleet operation, it's important to determine total cost of ownership (TCO) for assets. Because heavy equipment is remarkably expensive, it's vital to manage costs, risks and depreciation to maximize asset lifespan and overall profitability. Fleet solutions automatically calculate fleet assets' TCO, eliminating potential errors and reducing time and frustration associated with manual calculation.

From achieving better on-time maintenance compliance and increasing ROI through utilization data to reducing costs, fleets using digital solutions are seeing value in the technology. ▲

Rachael Plant is a senior content marketing specialist for Fleetio, a fleet optimization platform that helps organizations run, repair and optimize their fleet operations. Visit fleetio.com.







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Photo Credit: Kingspan Insulated Panels North America

Why IMPs Are a Smart, Simple Material Alternative

Understanding insulated metal panels & their impact on commercial buildings

BY KARIM MURI

The rising cost of construction materials, labor shortages and heightened sustainability expectations are pressuring contractors to find building solutions that can do more with less. As construction professionals search for ways to streamline costs and simplify projects, one solution is steadily gaining ground: insulated metal panels (IMPs).

Unlike traditional multilayer wall assemblies that require sheathing, insulation, water, air and vapor barriers to be installed separately, IMPs integrate all these functions into a single, high-performing component. That all-in-one design can help reduce installation time and minimize on-site labor — without compromising performance or aesthetics.

Here's a closer look at how IMPs reshape commercial construction by reducing complexity and unlocking real cost savings.

1 Panel, 4 Layers of Protection

IMPs consist of a high-performance insulating foam core sandwiched between two durable steel skins. But their simplicity belies their engineering sophistication.

Each panel offers four critical barriers: air, water, vapor and insulation. This multifunctional performance means one panel can replace multiple building layers traditionally installed by separate trades. With R-values up to 8.0 per inch, the panels also meet the most stringent energy codes without additional insulation.

Eliminating redundant layers not only cuts material costs; it also reduces the number of potential failure points introduced by multiple trades and materials — points where moisture can more easily intrude, increasing the risk of mold, mildew and long-term structural damage.

Faster Installations

Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) predicted that construction spending will increase in 2026 in response to "presumed lower interest rates." As the demand for commercial construction rises, contractors will be looking for ways to increase capacity.

IMPs streamline the building process, helping contractors complete projects faster. These prefabricated panels are designed to be installed in a single pass. This simplification of the construction process reduces the chance of scheduling conflicts and delays, making it easier to stay on track and meet project deadlines.

Time-lapse footage has shown that IMP installations can take about half the time of traditional multicomponent wall system installations. This increase in efficiency not only helps contractors manage more projects but also provides the opportunity to take on additional work without compromising quality. By reducing installation times, contractors can maximize their productivity, manage large workloads and increase their bottom line.

Energy Efficiency That Pays Off

With commercial buildings accounting for roughly 17% of U.S. energy consumption, operational costs are a key consideration in material selection. The continuous

insulation of IMPs helps limit thermal bridging and maintain a more consistent indoor temperature, reducing heating and cooling costs throughout a building's life.

These performance advantages also contribute to carbon reduction goals. By enhancing energy efficiency, IMPs help lower operational carbon emissions, the day-to-day emissions generated from building energy use. Reducing this ongoing carbon footprint is helpful to meet climate benchmarks set by both governments and private organizations.

Cost-Effective Freight

Transporting heavy precast concrete panels can be a significant expense due to their weight and the specialized equipment required for their delivery. IMPs are lightweight and easier to handle, leading to reduced freight costs.

The streamlined logistics associated with IMPs can lead to faster delivery times, minimizing potential delays and associated costs. By opting for IMPs, construction projects can achieve savings in freight expenses, contributing to the overall cost-effectiveness of the building process.

Long-Term Maintenance Savings

Durability is another area where IMPs shine. The panels are designed to remain air- and water-tight for decades, even in harsh climates. Their robust construction minimizes the risk of water damage or degradation, all of which contribute to costly repairs in traditional assemblies.

Unlike traditional concrete walls, IMPs can come with comprehensive weather-tight warranties, helping ensure that buildings stay energy-efficient and free from water intrusion for years. Additionally, IMPs provide paint warranties. In contrast, concrete walls may require repainting two to three times over the course of 20 years, adding to long-term maintenance costs and effort.

IMPs can be manufactured with special coatings that withstand heavy sanitation and cleaning, making them well-suited for high-performance environments like industrial facilities, health care centers and cold storage warehouses. ▲

Visit constructionbusinessowner.com/imp for an extended version of this article.

Karim Muri is vice president of marketing services and strategy development for Kingspan Insulated Panels North America. Muri has led strategic marketing in the construction products market for nearly 20 years. His global experience includes leadership roles in Australia and the U.S., working in both the residential and commercial building sectors. Visit kingspan.com.





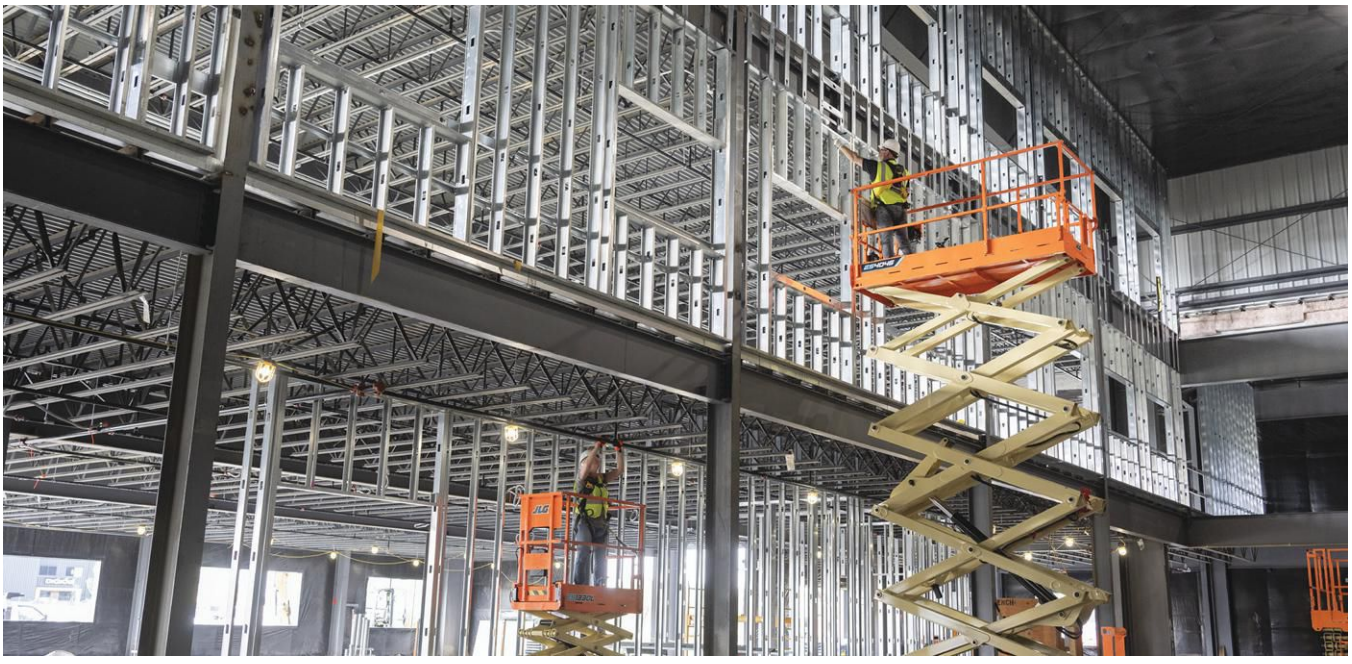


Photo Credit: JLG

Microsized Scissor Lifts Are the Next Big Trend in Rental

Why bigger isn't always better

BY BOB BEGLEY

The equipment rental industry has long been defined by scale — big machines, big projects and big investments. But in recent years, a new trend has taken hold that flips that logic on its head. Microsized scissor lifts, once considered niche tools, are now among the fastest-growing segments in the access equipment market. Compact, electric-powered and engineered for indoor and outdoor work at height, these machines redefine productivity in tight spaces.

As urban jobsites become denser and more complex, and as facility maintenance continues to evolve with heightened sustainability and safety standards, the rise of the microsized scissor lift represents not just a product innovation, but a fundamental shift in how, where and why work at height is being performed.

The Urbanization Effect: Built for Tighter, Taller Spaces

Urbanization is one of the strongest drivers of demand for microsized scissor lifts. In cities around the world, space is at a premium. Buildings are growing taller while floor plans are becoming more compact and segmented. This shift is putting pressure on contractors and tradespeople to find equipment that fits within narrow corridors, operates quietly and causes minimal disruption to surrounding activity.

Unlike traditional scissor lifts, microsized models are designed to navigate these restrictions. With platform heights up to 26 feet and machine widths typically at 32 inches or less, they can pass through standard doorways, fit into passenger elevators and roll easily over weight-restricted flooring. Their lightweight frames allow for use on suspended or delicate surfaces like raised access floors, making them ideal for work in modern office buildings, schools and universities, hospitals, laboratories and clean rooms, hotels, casinos, museums and data centers.

The Expanding Role of Indoor Access Equipment

What began as a tool for interior finish work is now being used for a much broader range of applications. Electricians, HVAC technicians, fire suppression specialists, painters and IT teams are all adopting microsized lifts for tasks that

previously relied on ladders or push-around platforms.

These compact machines are used in facilities ranging from universities and museums to airports and casinos: locations where indoor access must be unobtrusive and equipment must meet stringent operational requirements. Noise-sensitive environments, in particular, benefit from electric microsized lifts, which operate quietly and produce zero emissions.

Additionally, because these compact lifts can be driven at full height and support up to two workers with tools, they allow for faster, more efficient workflows than traditional stepladders or low-level access equipment.

Micro Lifts Meet Macro Expectations

Today's renters expect more from compact equipment. In response, manufacturers have engineered microsized lifts that deliver on performance, safety and versatility without sacrificing the size advantages that define the category.

Standard features on many modern microsized models now include front-wheel drive, pin-based load-sensing systems with zero-weight load calibration, zero-degree inside turning radius and leak containment systems, while unique features like advanced battery monitoring systems, pothole protection and variable tilt functionality differentiate competitive models and brands.

Control systems have also become more advanced and smart interfaces are increasingly more common.

The market's rapid evolution has created a demand for machines that fit physically and integrate seamlessly into the workflow of complex jobsites. These lifts need to move fast, perform reliably and minimize downtime. That's why it's important to consider and compare these three things:

1. *Equipment specifications* — Specific measurements, such as the model's lift reach and lift capacity, as well as its indoor/outdoor rating and how many occupants are allowed in the platform, will provide equipment owners with insights about which applications the machine can be most efficiently used in.
2. *Machine footprint* — The machine's gross vehicle weight, ground-bearing pressure and width, as well as if it has zero-turn capabilities, will suggest to equipment owners where the machine will efficiently fit and how it will effectively maneuver around jobsites.
3. *Duty cycles* — The battery's runtime and charging times will indicate how much uptime (when running) and downtime (when charging) the machine could have per day.

In addition to the three considerations mentioned above, equipment owners should learn all the "extras" available for an original equipment manufacturer's (OEM's) microsized scissor lifts. These features can enhance an operator's productivity and/or extend the machine's performance in certain applications.

A Shift Toward Electric

The trend toward electrification is another major force reshaping the microsized scissor lift category. With growing environmental regulations and increased demand for clean indoor equipment, electric-drive systems are no longer optional but essential. That's because they require fewer scheduled services, give operators more duty cycles per charge and offer users more versatility when working in sensitive or restricted areas thanks to their ability to create a quieter work area, to have less dependency on hydraulic oils and to produce zero emissions.

Where the Market Is Headed

The growth trajectory for microsized scissor lifts shows no sign of slowing. As more industries adopt compact access equipment for specialized applications, expectations for performance, efficiency and environmental impact will continue to increase.

In the future, OEMs will continue to innovate by integrating more connectivity tools like fleet diagnostics and telematics. For rental providers, this means an opportunity to provide more sophisticated machines, as well as the chance to provide more value through support, training and consultation.

One thing is certain: Compact lifts are the future of indoor and outdoor access. And for those in the rental industry, this trend is too significant to ignore.

The Micro Moment: What This Means for Rental Operations

Microsized scissor lifts may be small, but their impact on the equipment rental landscape is anything but.

Rental-ready microsized lifts are filling a clear need: The ability to solve real-world access challenges in confined, indoor environments. Additionally, these machines appeal to a diverse customer base because they can be rented year-round for interior and exterior work, rather than tied to the seasonal construction cycle.

With expanding applications and increasing pressure to operate efficiently, these machines are helping define the next generation of access equipment. ▲

Bob Begley is the director of product management for scissor lifts at JLG.



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.



◀ ARMORGARD
LoadAll LA750-PRO
Released: 9/11/25
Availability: U.S., Canadian & European markets
What's new? The Armorgard LoadAll LA750-PRO is a safe jobsite drywall cart. It is equipped with adjustable clamps to secure your load, an extendable handle for easy steering, and an H-frame design for maneuverability. The ergonomic, center-loaded design also helps to keep materials stable while in motion, reducing the risk of tipping and minimizing strain on workers during transport.
Specs: Weight: 155 pounds
Collapsed dimensions: 61.3-by-21.6-by-17.2 inches
Assembled dimensions: 91.1-by-21.6-by-86.6 inches



▲ REFRIGIWEAR
FrostFlex Heated Vest
Released: 9/1/25
Availability: U.S. & Canadian markets
What's new? The RefrigiWear FrostFlex Heated Vest delivers customizable warmth and flexibility for cold storage work. Worn on its own or zipped into the FrostFlex Insulated Jacket, this vest provides up to 8 hours of battery-powered heat with three adjustable settings. Its 80-gram insulation, breathable stretch-blend shell and water-repellent finish keep wearers warm, dry and mobile without bulk. Zippered hand-warmer, chest and inside pockets add function, while the full-zip front and stand-up collar seal in heat.
Specs: The battery-powered heated vest works alone or zips into the 8300 FrostFlex Jacket. Rechargeable lithium-ion battery lasts up to eight hours. Three heat settings (Off/Low/High). Extra batteries sold separately; replacement instructions are online.





▶ BRIDGESTONE

V-Steel Highway Service 3 (VHS3) tire

Released: 10/1/25

Availability: U.S. market

What's new? The VHS3 is for mobile and all-terrain cranes. The high-speed radial tire is designed with fleet performance in mind, delivering stability and control while lifting heavy loads and when moving between on- and off-the-road environments. It is approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Specs: The Bridgestone VHS3 tire is manufactured with advanced rubber compound technology and innovative sidewall construction, reducing heat buildup, minimizing irregular wear and extending tire life by 12%. Wide grooves and extended lugs in the tire's new tread design offer improved grip, stability and wear across highways and off-road terrains. Utilizes a redesigned casing that features a lighter belt, bead structure and shoulder design to help reduce fuel consumption while maintaining load capacity.



▲ LEICA GEOSYSTEMS

Leica TS20 robotic total station with edge AI

Released: 10/2/25

Availability: Global markets

What's new? This total station accelerates fieldwork, simplifies daily work, streamlines repetitive tasks and avoids costly mistakes. Embodying Leica Geosystems' surveying expertise, the TS20 also incorporates insights gained directly from surveying practitioners to ensure it is specifically tailored to their real-world needs. A neural processing unit (NPU) powers edge AI. AI-powered target search and automatic target recognition (ATR) enable the TS20 to automatically search, aim and measure even in adverse weather conditions like rain or mist, or when working with reflective tapes. AI-Detect recognizes the target type and alerts surveyors when their target does not match the type they selected in the software. AI-Follow (available as a software update post-launch) saves time by following the Leica AP20 AutoPole even when the line of sight is interrupted.

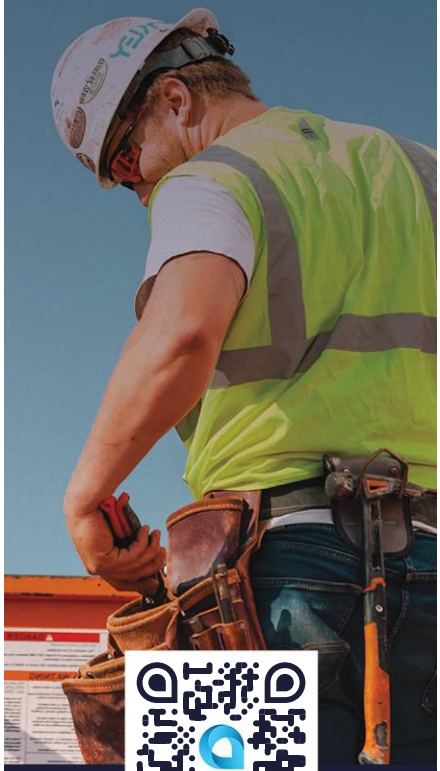
Specs: The TS20 is protected against dust and water. It has mobile internet connectivity for data sharing and Internet of Things readiness. Fast, maintenance-free motors speed up the instrument, reducing the costs of ownership. A new electronic distance measurement system delivers distances with higher frequency. High-speed processors: accelerate tasks such as startup times or processing tasks.

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▲ MATTRACKS

RT60 & RT80 Track Systems

Released: 8/8/25
Availability: U.S. market
What's new? The newly released RT60 and RT80 track systems are designed specifically for compact articulated machines, bringing tighter control, smoother ride quality, and full functionality in places where standard tires can't perform. The new track systems feature a shorter design and improved shape, giving articulated loaders and pivot-steer equipment better steering control and stronger traction. This allows operators to make tighter turns, move smoothly over uneven terrain and perform tasks more easily, even indoors, on soft surfaces or in areas where ground protection is necessary.
Specs: Equipped with a swivel-mounted lower frame and rubber isolation mounts, which help absorb shock and reduce vibration during operation. This setup not only improves comfort for the operator but also reduces wear on the machine and boosts overall stability. Both models use a smooth tread to minimize impact on finished surfaces and improve balance across changing terrain. The RT60 and RT80 are ideal for compact equipment like screeds, trenchers, small loaders and Bobcat machines. Each system can be installed easily, helping crews adapt quickly without downtime. All models are tested in extreme environments, from cold to loose sand, proving they're ready for real-world demands.



▲ HYUNDAI

HT38 compact track loader

Released: 10/1/25
Availability: North American market
What's new? The new Hyundai compact track loader (CTL) features easy, ground access to all daily service and routine maintenance points. A reversible fan and PowerCore air filter help keep the engine free of dust and debris and running cooler for longer life, while a tilt-up cooling module enables easier cleaning of the cooling system to maximize airflow. For extra versatility, the HT38 accommodates dozens of attachments, including a variety of buckets, brooms, grapples, brush cutters, augers, rakes, forks, and snowblowers and pushers.
Specs: The HT38 CTL is powered by a Hyundai engine that provides 115 gross horsepower and has a rated operating capacity of 3,807 pounds. It can lift a 0.8-cubic-yard standard bucket to a pin height of 10 feet, 9 inches. Its operating weight is 12,785 pounds. Also includes several features that contribute to operator comfort and productivity, including a pressurized ROPS/FOPS cab with heat and A/C coming through eight vents. The heated, air-ride seat is also standard, as well as Bluetooth and the 8-inch smart touch display.

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❑ 07 Excavation Work
❑ 08 Wrecking and Demolition Work
❑ 13 Architecture, Engineering and Construction Management Services
❑ 11 Consulting Contractor
❑ 99 Other (please specify)

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❑ 12 Engineer, Architect
❑ 06 Consultant
❑ 99 Other (please specify)

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(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

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❑ 02 Trucks, Trailers and Accessories
❑ 03 Compact Equipment
❑ 04 Lifting and Hoisting Equipment
❑ 05 Safety Equipment and Apparel
❑ 06 Attachments
❑ 07 Concrete and Paving Equipment
❑ 08 Survey and Site Prep
❑ 09 Compressors, Generators and Pumps
❑ 10 Financing and Accounting Services
❑ 11 Software and Technology
❑ 12 Insurance and Bonding
❑ 13 Training and Education
❑ 14 Telecommunications
❑ 16 Greases, Lubricants and Filters
❑ 17 Jobsite Lighting
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Annual Value of Construction Put in Place

August 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 August 2025 figures. (Millions of dollars. Totals may not add up perfectly due to rounding.)

	2023	2024	2025
Total Private Construction	**1,551,822**	**1,642,165**	**1,652,122**
Residential	879,896	899,939	914,845
Nonresidential	671,927	742,225	737,277
Total Public Construction	**431,648**	**489,772**	**517,346**
Residential	9,907	11,490	12,415
Nonresidential	421,741	478,282	504,932
TOTAL Construction	**1,983,470**	**2,131,936**	**2,169,468**

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

$2,169,468

AUGUST 2025 TOTAL ANNUAL VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION PUT IN PLACE

Editor's Note: At the time this issue went to print, the U.S. Census Bureau was still updating its data following the government shutdown. Please visit constructionbusinessowner.com for updated stats as available.

"Architecture firms estimate that billings declined modestly this year. Unfortunately, they are not expecting a significant turnaround in 2026," said Kermit Baker, Ph.D., AIA chief economist. "About a third of firms nationally project that their billings will increase this coming year, and a slightly higher share expect them to remain about the same. Firms with a multifamily specialization are the most optimistic about prospects for 2026."

AIA Architectural Billings Index (ABI)

National			*Regional - Billings				*Sectors - Billings			
Month	Billings	Inquiries	Northeast	Midwest	South	West	Multifamily Residential	Commercial/ Industrial	Institutional	Mixed
May-25	47.2	51.4	43.6	43.5	49.2	44.3	46.1	43.8	46.2	45.4
Jun-25	46.8	53.6	46.5	45.7	50.6	45.8	43.8	47.4	49.2	45.5
Jul-25	46.2	53.4	47.8	45.1	47.5	46.4	43.7	49.9	47.9	42.8
Aug-25	47.2	50.3	46.2	48.0	49.9	43.5	49.9	50.8	44.5	43.3
Sep-25	43.3	50.1	43.8	49.8	47.9	40.6	47.2	46.6	44.3	44.0
Oct-25	47.6	54.8	45.1	49.6	45.3	42.1	46.8	43.9	46.1	44.0

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

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

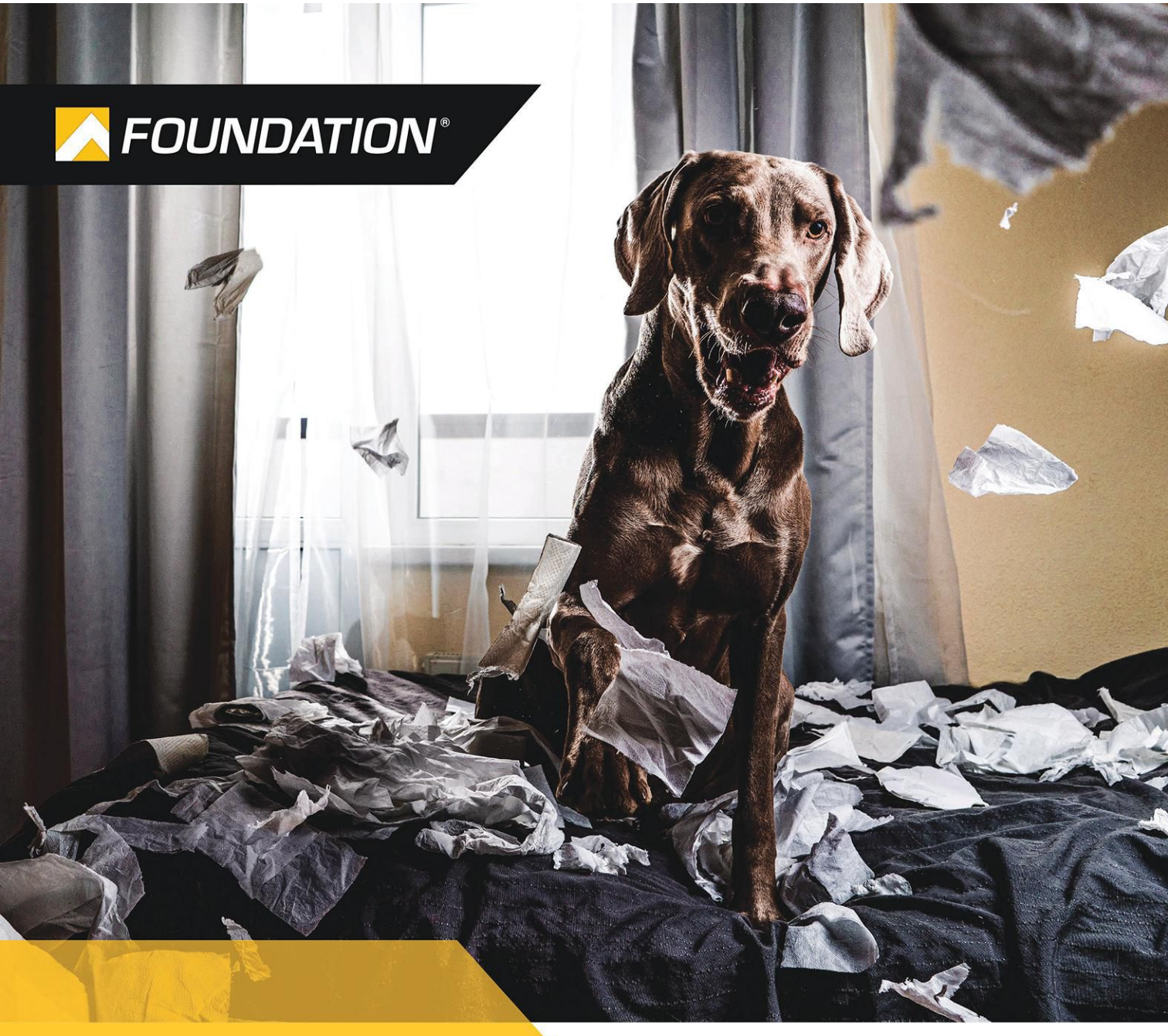


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