THE LEADING BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR CONTRACTORS

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APRIL 2026



IN THE OFFICE
Managing tariff volatility

IN THE FIELD
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HOW BUSINESS OWNERS SHOULD PREPARE FOR A SHIFT IN LEADERSHIP

Chris Buttenham
CEO & Co-Founder
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CARMEN CAPOCCIA

CHECKLIST

- **PHONE CHARGER**
- **BUSINESS CARDS**
- **CUSHIONED, COMFY SHOES**
- **NOTEBOOKS AND PENS GALORE**



Senior Managing Editor Carmen Capoccia

As I write this letter, the Construction Business Owner team is prepping for CONEXPO-CON/AGG, construction's largest trade show. It's held every three years in Las Vegas, and we'll come away from this monster event with plenty of insights to share — so stay tuned! My favorite way to prepare for business trips is to throw everything on a checklist, ranging from useful tips (put business cards in front pack pocket) to incredibly obvious (don't forget your socks).

For me, lists are a small way to exert control in chaos. Everything's less scary in small, digestible chunks, right? In an article for The Guardian, Louise Chunn said, "'Write my novel' is a pretty foreboding task; 'outline first chapter of my novel' is far friendlier and stands a chance of getting done."

It's no secret: preparation makes big projects easier to do. That applies whether you're packing for a long trip or considering selling your business. The latter involves a little more than a checklist — which is why we've zeroed-in on business management for this issue. Starting on page 28, you will find strategies for navigating succession planning, the skilled labor shortage and next-gen recruiting. As the labor gap grows and a cohort of leaders prepares to retire, many executives will need to shore up their workforces and prep their businesses for transition in the coming years.

For additional resources, check out constructionbusinessowner.com for more expert lessons and strategies.

As Q2 gets underway, I hope your plans are fruitful and your to-do lists are satisfyingly checked off.

Until next time,

Carmen Capoccia

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JOB ORDER CONTRACTING 101: FOUNDATIONAL INFO FOR CONTRACTORS

ON DEMAND

What You'll Learn:

- **The Basics of JOC:** Understand the fundamental principles of job order contracting (JOC) and how it differs from traditional project delivery methods.
- **Benefits for Contractors:** Discover how JOC can help you secure more projects, reduce bidding time and increase efficiency.
- **Real-World Applications:** Hear about contractors who have successfully implemented JOC in their projects.
- **Accessing JOC Programs:** Learn about the different ways you can access Gordian's JOC solutions and start benefiting from this innovative procurement method.

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SPEAKER



Mary-Neil Jackson
Senior Manager, Contractor Engagement
Gordian

Mary-Neil Jackson is the senior manager of contractor engagement at Gordian. With nearly a decade of service, she has become a leading expert in job order contracting (JOC) and a key contributor to the advancement of this procurement method. Throughout her tenure, she has strengthened contractor relationships and ensured partners are well-prepared to navigate JOC's unique requirements.

Jackson's expertise has helped contractors streamline operations, improve project delivery and maximize growth within the public sector. She has also led Gordian's contractor education initiatives, developing training materials, workshops and programs that have set a high industry standard.

A respected leader in contractor engagement, Jackson's commitment to excellence and her innovative approach continue to enhance Gordian's reputation as a trusted provider of construction cost data, software and services.

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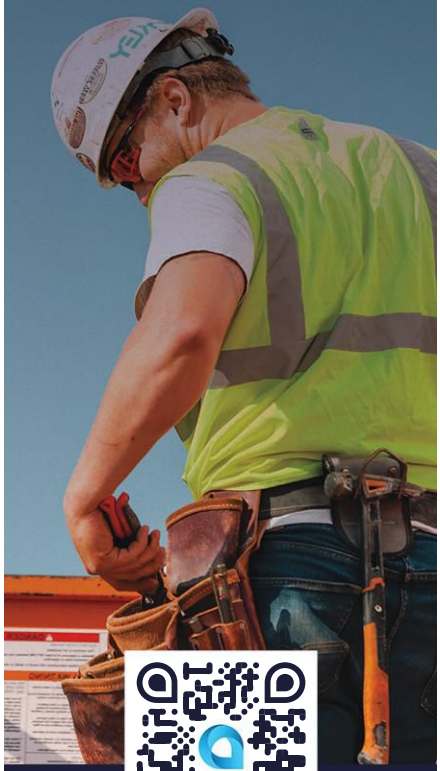
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ACQUISITIONS

John Deere Acquires Tenna
Deere & Company has completed its acquisition of Tenna, a construction technology company. John Deere announced the intent to acquire the company on Dec. 22, 2025, and the agreement was concluded on Feb. 18. Tenna will continue to operate as an independent business marketed directly to construction customers under the Tenna trade name and will focus on scaling and growing the business through its mixed-fleet customer-focused business model. Visit johndeere.com and tenna.com.

Armstrong World Industries Acquires Eventscape Inc.
Armstrong World Industries Inc., a manufacturer of interior and exterior architectural applications, including ceilings, specialty walls and exterior metal solutions, has acquired Eventscape Inc. It specializes in the design, fabrication and installation of high-design, complex architectural features for multiple applications, including ceilings, feature walls, facades and public art installations. Eventscape's teams provide turnkey solutions, overseeing projects from concept development through to final installation.
Visit armstrong.com/eventscape.

Komatsu Plans to Acquire Assets of SRC of Lexington Inc.
Komatsu North America has entered into an agreement to acquire assets of SRC of Lexington Inc., a supplier of remanufactured components and parts for construction and mining equipment. The acquisition will strengthen Komatsu's remanufacturing capabilities in North America as demand for reman solutions continues to grow. Visit komatsu.com.

NEW HIRES



Ellen Zimmer

Tarlton

Ellen Zimmer has joined Tarlton as chief financial officer and vice president to oversee the company's financial strategy, accounting, treasury and long-term planning initiatives. Zimmer brings more than 20 years of accounting and finance experience in the region to Tarlton's executive leadership team. A certified public accountant, she previously served as controller for a national design-build general contractor, where she spent eight years developing expertise in construction accounting and risk management. Most recently, as director of finance for a global wholesale distributor and manufacturer, she led strategic acquisition integration, built and developed high-performing teams and spearheaded companywide AI strategy implementation. Visit tarltoncorp.com.



Mark Hans

Nicholas & Associates

Nicholas & Associates hired Mark Hans as senior Wisconsin business development manager to help expand the construction firm's presence and drive growth in the state. A 15-year veteran in construction business development, Hans will build a pipeline of education, multifamily, industrial, municipal/civic and sports/athletic field projects for Nicholas & Associates, starting in southeast Wisconsin. Hans will be based in the firm's Milwaukee office until a new headquarters opens later this year in Oconomowoc. Most recently, Hans served as manager of business development for JW Industries LLC for 15 years, where he helped lead sustained growth and bolstered the company's position in the sports construction market. Visit nicholasfoc.com.



Michelle Rousseau

Willmeng Construction

Willmeng Construction hired Michelle Rousseau as director of trade relations. Rousseau's role was created to proactively grow their base of specialized subcontractor firms to serve their expanded market sectors. This position is unique to general contractors and is specifically designed to truly drive deeper partnerships and mutually leverage the strengths of the companies. Rousseau will focus on being a dedicated resource for those trade partners, serving them from project preconstruction stages through warranty stages, as well as serving as a source of information and guidance for trade partners to navigate expanded opportunities within Willmeng. Rousseau brings over 11 years of construction industry experience to the role. Her experience includes virtual design and construction and trade coordination. Visit willmeng.com.



Bryan Pavalko

RBA Builders LLC



Gabe Baltodano

RBA Builders LLC

Bryan Pavalko was named CEO of RBA Builders LLC, and Gabe Baltodano assumed the role of president. Pavalko has acted as president and stakeholder since 2014. As CEO, he will focus on guiding RBA's long-term strategy, supporting leadership development, and ensuring the company remains adaptable. Baltodano, formerly vice president of risk management and personnel, has been with RBA since 2016. As president, he will oversee day-to-day operations while continuing to provide steady support across the organization. Visit rabllc.com.

INDUSTRY UPDATES

Equip Exposition Moves to 2-City Rotation Starting in 2029

Equip Exposition, the international landscape, outdoor living and equipment trade show, announced plans for a two-city rotation beginning in 2029, expanding global access with direct international air traffic and new venue choices for attendees and exhibitors, as well as enhancing outdoor demonstration opportunities in its longtime host city. Equip Exposition will be held at the Orlando County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida, Oct. 10-12, 2029, with shows in 2031 and 2033. The trade show will be in Louisville in 2028, 2030 and 2032. The 2025 show expanded to 1.2 million square feet and drew nearly 30,000 registered attendees from all 50 states and 52 countries, marking an attendance and net square footage record for the fourth year in a row. Visit equipexposition.com.

ACA President & CEO Mike Ireland Announces Retirement

Mike Ireland, who has served as president and CEO of the American Cement Association (ACA) for the past eight years, has announced his retirement. A search committee has been established to identify a candidate who will assume the organization's leadership role. "It has been an absolute honor to work with the many wonderful people in this industry, which carries the unparalleled responsibility of not only facilitating everyday life for people around the world, but for making modern-day society possible," said Ireland. Some of the major accomplishments during Ireland's tenure include the association implementing its Shaped by Concrete campaign to raise awareness of cement and concrete's benefits in everyday life, launching the Roadmap to Carbon Neutrality, which is a strategy for cement manufacturers and members of the cement-concrete-construction value chain to reach net zero by 2050, and rebranding the 109-year-old organization from Portland Cement Association to the American Cement Association. "ACA appreciates Mike's leadership, spirit of collaboration, and the unique sense of humor he is famous for to help navigate the industry through its many successes and challenges over the past several years," said Monica Manolas, ACA board chair and region president, Ash Grove East. Visit cement.org.

New Wellness Workdays Program Integrates Mental Health, Trauma Support & Safety Training

Wellness Workdays, a national provider of workplace wellness solutions, announced the launch of Strong Minds, Safe Sites: a comprehensive program designed specifically for the construction industry. The program provides psychological safety training to strengthen both worker well-being and jobsite safety. Strong Minds, Safe Sites aims to help construction companies support their workforce through grief, trauma, stress and mental health challenges while also improving safety outcomes, retention and performance. The program is tailored to meet the specific needs of the workforce with services offered on-site and online, including but not limited to post-trauma and grief support, psychological safety training, workforce engagement initiatives, mental health first aid training and certification. Organizations can select individual services or combine offerings to meet the needs of their workforce. Visit wellnessworkdays.com.

Caterpillar Teams With Geotab to Strengthen Full Fleet Offering

Caterpillar Inc. is collaborating with Geotab Inc. to make it easier for customers to manage their entire fleet. Integrating Geotab's on-highway capabilities into Caterpillar's VisionLink software, will result in a single platform that provides a full fleet solution. For customers, that means improved uptime, productivity, safety, compliance and cost efficiency across on-highway assets, as well as Cat and non-Cat off-highway assets. Geotab, an on-highway solution provider with nearly 5 million connected vehicles across 160 countries, offers fleet management, safety and driver capabilities. When combined with the more than 1.6 million connected off-highway assets reporting through VisionLink, the result is a view of the entire fleet. AI-enabled cameras will be available to customers from their local Cat dealer , online at parts.cat.com and through other Caterpillar e-commerce solutions. These tools aim to help customers quickly find and purchase the solution that best fits their needs. Captured on-highway data will be visible to the customer alongside their off-highway equipment data, providing a single source, full-fleet solution. Visit cat.com and geotab.com.

Chevron's Delo TorqForce MP First Fluid to Meet TES 781 Specification

Chevron announced that Delo TorqForce MP has been approved by Allison Transmission as the first, and currently only, lubricant to meet the new TES 781 specification for stationary off-highway applications. TES 781 is Allison's latest evolution in transmission fluid standards for fracturing, pumping and other continuous-duty environments that demand maximum durability and uptime. Designed to support the extended performance requirements of Allison's 5000, 6000, 8000, 9000 Series and FracTran transmissions, the new specification enables operators to safely extend oil drain intervals up to 2,500 hours or 48 months, more than double the limit of legacy TES 439 fluids. Visit chevronlubricants.com and allisontransmission.com.

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Workforce Ready

Inside the new Rick Lott Technical College

BY MEGAN BEAM

In Plant City, Florida, one of the nation's fastest-growing regions, a new campus is reshaping how workforce education is delivered. The recently completed Rick Lott Technical College stands as Hillsborough County Public Schools' (HCPS) premier vocational training hub, purposefully built to close the local skills gap and prepare students for high-demand careers.

Delivered by Skanska and designed by Harvard Jolly | PBK, the 52,000-square-foot, two-building campus reflects a broader shift across Florida toward hands-on career and technical education (CTE) facilities that directly align with regional labor needs.

A Campus Built for Workforce Demand

Situated on 16 acres in Plant City, the new Rick Lott Technical College was developed for HCPS, the seventh-largest school district in the U.S.

The campus will host up to 900 student stations, significantly expanding workforce training capacity for both high school students and adult learners.

The college's mission is clear: provide hands-on career and technical education (CTE) programs that prepare students for immediate entry into high-demand industries, including the following:

- Automotive technology
- Computer technology
- Construction trades
- Diesel technology
- Electrical systems
- HVAC
- Welding

By concentrating resources in one campus, HCPS is positioning itself to meet growing regional demand for skilled labor across construction, mechanical and technical fields.

Strategic Goals From Day 1

From the outset, the project team focused on both functional and strategic objectives. Functionally, the facility needed to provide modern lab environments capable of supporting rigorous, hands-on instruction. Strategically, the campus had to serve as a long-term workforce development engine for Hillsborough County and contribute to Florida's expanding CTE ecosystem.

Florida has seen significant growth in workforce training programs in recent years, and this project reflects that momentum. The facility not only expands post-secondary opportunities but also strengthens the talent pipeline for local employers struggling to fill skilled positions.

"Florida is experiencing remarkable growth in workforce development and CTE programs that are expanding access to high-demand career pathways," said Daniel Abou-Jaoude, vice president at Skanska. "We're honored to play a role in this momentum by delivering the modern Rick Lott Technical College that will equip students with the skills needed to fulfill in-demand jobs."

Like many Florida construction projects, weather and site conditions posed early challenges. Delays at the outset required careful coordination and proactive scheduling adjustments. Despite those hurdles, Skanska's construction team delivered the project on schedule — some components were even completed weeks ahead of timeline. Maintaining momentum like this under shifting conditions required close collaboration among field

Rick Lott Technical College project team members



teams, trade partners and the design firm, along with disciplined schedule management.

Close coordination proved especially critical as the team navigated endangered species mitigation requirements and an unusually heavy rainy season. These factors created early schedule pressure, requiring Skanska to work closely with trade partners, the owner and community stakeholders to maintain clear communication and manage expectations.

To keep the school operationally viable despite delays, the team adjusted sequencing and turned over portions of the campus in phases, providing usable space while construction continued. The phased delivery approach demanded detailed planning and teamwork but ultimately enabled the project to overcome early setbacks and achieve completion even earlier than anticipated.

The ability to absorb early disruptions while preserving the completion date underscores the importance of contingency planning and team alignment, particularly on public-sector education projects with fixed academic timelines.

The project also reinforced the importance of continuous stakeholder engagement throughout design and construction, particularly regarding finishes and final appearance. As the building neared completion, stakeholders revisited the originally planned industrial, unpainted exterior aesthetic and determined it did not align with their vision for the finished campus.

Because communication channels remained open among the owner, design team and builder, the team was able to pivot and incorporate a painted exterior finish before final delivery. The experience highlighted the need to consistently reaffirm expectations with end users and decision-makers so that the completed facility reflects their evolving understanding and priorities.

The campus layout prioritizes student success and long-term career development. Rather than retrofitting older facilities, the project team created purpose-built labs and classrooms tailored to the specific needs of each trade discipline.

Lab spaces allow students to train in environments that closely replicate real-world jobsites and technical workplaces. Modern classrooms, integrated administrative areas and flexible instructional spaces support both traditional coursework and applied learning. The result is a campus that bridges the gap between education and employment.

Community Impact & Long-Term Influence

The Rick Lott Technical College represents more than a new set of buildings. It expands HCPS' post-secondary programming and provides students with accessible pathways into stable, well-paying careers. For local employers, it strengthens the pipeline of trained talent entering the workforce.

The community response underscores the campus's significance. The education center was widely viewed as essential to supporting Plant City's growing population and delivering targeted workforce training aligned with local economic needs. Local government officials remained engaged throughout construction, visiting the site and tracking progress. Since completion, feedback has reflected strong appreciation from community members and stakeholders who see the college as a meaningful investment in both students and the region's long-term economic vitality — aligning closely with Skanska's mission to build projects that matter to the communities it serves.

The project is also part of Skanska's broader portfolio of workforce-focused facilities across Florida. The firm has delivered similar education projects statewide, including the Dr. Michael A. Grego Leadership Center and the Wilton Simpson Technical College, as well as K-12 campuses such as Newsome High School, NeoCity Academy and Collins K-8 School.

As workforce development continues to gain priority across the state, projects like the Rick Lott Technical College reinforce a growing trend: educational facilities designed for both instruction and direct economic impact.

Looking ahead, the success of this campus positions Skanska to continue expanding its footprint in workforce and K-12 development by delivering modern educational environments that meet both community needs and evolving labor market demands.

Megan Beam is editor-in-chief of Construction Business Owner Magazine & Digital Media.

'Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven, but Nobody Wants to Die'

Confronting the myths & truths of business management



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.

No, this is not a sermon or reflection on my years in Sunday school. However, it does provide a glimpse into many of the myths that individuals have as they look at their businesses, projects or even lives. Think back to when someone asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" This isn't the 5-year-old version of you who said "astronaut-doctor-pirate" but the version in your high school or college years who started to shape who you are today. More than likely, there was a dose of "I'd like to own my own business one day" or "I want to be the president of a construction business."

"Shoot for the stars," they say. "Never settle, and be all you can be." While there are certainly individuals who did achieve their dream, there are many who also realized that their vision for the future was maybe grounded in a level of ignorance. This is not to say that being an owner, president, grand pooh-bah, etc., is a bad dream — ahem — but being a head coach of a football team and playing wide receiver on a football team are two entirely different things. Same sport but different skills, talents and competencies. Even being an owner and coach of a team are completely different, but in the construction industry we fail to embrace some of the most fundamental truths. Do you find yourself failing to recognize this in yourself and your team members?

Wants to Be an Owner Until They Have to Be an Owner

Being an owner in a business requires many things, but one important item that may be overlooked is money/capital. To most, this is glaringly obvious. However, for many people in the industry, there is a perception that being an owner is glamorous, filled with amazing vacations, nice cars and mansions.

Now that I have your attention, most owners, while not destitute, are saying, "When do I get my boat and mansion?" The reality is this: Being an owner of a successful business should come with rewards, but the following items are often forgotten:

- *The risk* — The construction industry is one of the riskiest business ventures in the world, and for every successful contractor there is a wake of failed businesses.
- *The equity trap* — The business may be worth $X million, but try going to the ATM to withdraw that cash. The banks, bonding institutions and owners will most likely grimace when equity is "removed." So, while team members think the business is sitting on a pile of gold, they forget that the gold is sitting under a layer of granite.
- *The bad times* — When times are good, there are distributions and bonuses and dividends. In bad times, there are cash calls, no bonuses and the ever-present risk of losing your home. Once again, the rewards may be grand, but there are risks that are not talked about enough.

In short, there are many owners who wouldn't have it any other way. The juice



Photo Credit: VectorMine - stock.adobe.com

is worth the squeeze, and they couldn't see themselves working for someone else. However, new shareholders/owners must be "Mirandized" to understand the responsibilities and encumbrances that may come with being an owner.

Wants Accountability Until They Are Held Accountable

"Our biggest problem is that no one follows the playbook — we need more accountability in this place!" Perfect. We will create a Brand X Operational System that everyone has to utilize, and we will track compliance to ensure the standards are being universally followed. Problem solved.

"Well, as long as it is *my* way, we'll have no issues." And there is the rub. First, the answer is not to remain a lawless bunch of barbarians, regressing further into chaos. Instead, these processes and tools should be developed by the team that will use said processes and tools. Getting their fingerprints on the development moves the behavioral modification in the right direction.

Wants to Be the Leader, But They Really Just Want to Be a Manager

In a similar vein to being the president, there are many individuals who want to be promoted just because it appears to be the natural evolution of things. For example, "I've been a project manager for five years, so being a project executive is the next step."

While on the surface the progression makes sense, the responsibilities of the roles should be completely different. Put another way, one is about managing a project, while the other should be about managing people who manage projects. This is where terms like delegation, collaboration, development/nurturing and motivation for all the perspiration come into play.

"I love construction, but I hate having to work with all these people." Look, there is nothing wrong with being a project manager or superintendent. Being the best project manager is an incredible career goal. Growth as an individual does not necessarily mean upward. It may be a broader view, evolving in a role to do possibly more complicated projects, adopting new technologies, etc. Construction organizations need both leaders who set direction, align their resources and provide the development of the team, and managers who run projects well, provide the controls and follow the playbook.

Wants to Be Innovative Until It Means Changing

"We want to be the most innovative company in the construction industry": Another bold statement that is often the manifestation of a firm's grand strategy. Being innovative sounds sexy and attractive to younger associates looking for a company that isn't grounded in an antiquated mindset. However, how many firms declare themselves as innovative but can't honestly say the last innovation — big or small — they introduced?

Being innovative means there may be a shake-up for the good or something that will be changed. To be clear, this is not simply adopting the flavor of the month or trying to roll out a half-cooked idea that will never gain long-term traction. Innovation also does not necessarily mean incorporating AI, autonomous equipment, drones, new tablets, spaceships, etc. Innovation means changing for the better ... and we all know how much people LOVE change.

Best-of-class firms lean into some of these perceptions and provide clarity to associates on the benefits, consequences and challenges to all aspects of their business. For instance, think about the ownership comment again. As senior leaders are looking to their next generation, they need to help future generations understand those risks of being an owner, almost to a point of "negative selling." There is certainly an enormous upside to being an owner, but a future shareholder can make a more objective decision about their future and their risk tolerance when presented with facts.

Regardless of the situation, businesses will be well suited to create a vision of how to effectively live on earth to eventually "get to heaven."

Tried & True Tax Planning Strategies for a More Profitable 2026

Consider these opportunities for your firm's finances



JAMES C. LUNDY JR. is a managing director in CBIZ's tax and business services division and part of the national Construction Industry Practice group with over 40 years of industry experience. He works with more than 300 construction entities, specializing in tax compliance, succession planning and representation before tax authorities. Lundy Jr. is a nationally recognized speaker and author, honored by both the Tennessee and Alabama Societies of CPAs and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA). He frequently trains firms on construction tax rules and has held leadership roles with major industry organizations. Visit cbiz.com.

For construction companies, tax season can offer a valuable opportunity to look back on the prior year and assess the efficacy of planning strategies. Careful analysis and the guidance of a tax professional familiar with the construction industry can yield insights that will help you improve your plans — and profitability — over the year ahead.

When revising your tax plan, it's essential to account for anything that has changed due to recent legislation. In the wake of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), that's particularly important now. In addition to this major new legislation, rapid policy shifts have imposed certain pricing challenges. To overcome them, make sure your plan for 2026 includes certain operational adjustments that will help you identify and respond to supply chain upheaval and increasing input costs.

Here are several of the perennial tax strategies that are always among our top recommendations for construction firms refining their practices, as well as new insights that may help your business take more complete advantage of opportunities introduced by OBBBA.

Tax Planning Top Priorities

Accounting Methods

Depending on their volume and length of contracts, contractors can report tax revenue from construction contracts under several methods of accounting, each of which can produce different results. Selecting the proper allowable method is the first choice construction companies should make when tax planning.

Possible Allowable Methods of Accounting

Financial Statement

- Percentage of completion

Tax

- Tax percentage of completion (POC)
- Completed contract
- Tax POC excluding retainage and/or subcontractor payables
- 10% deferral method
- Cash
- Accrual
- Accrual excluding retainage

Review work-in-process (WIP) schedules for open and closed jobs to identify contracts that lend themselves to deferral opportunities. The intended use of the project, the type of work being performed and the percentage completed at year-end are important factors.

Understanding the WIP, your contract language and having thorough knowledge of Internal Revenue Code (Code) section 460 (special rules for long-term contracts) will enable you to identify tax deferral opportunities.

Takeaway: Contract reporting for financial statement and tax reporting purposes should be different due to Code section 460. Applied correctly, the Code should result in income tax deferrals.

Accounting Methods OBBBA Update

The OBBBA increases the types of construction projects excluded from the requirement of using the POC method. Under prior law, contractors other than certain small contractors were required to use POC for long-term contracts unless they were home construction contracts. The home construction exception applied to a building with four or fewer dwelling units. Where an exception applies, the contractor can use the completed contract method, which can defer profit recognition until the time when construction is substantially complete, or any other acceptable accounting method.

The new law expands the home construction exception to residential construction contracts, which includes apartment buildings, condominium complexes, student housing, long-term care facilities, prisons and other properties with multiple residential units. If the average stay is more than 30 days, it qualifies. This law change is effective for contracts entered into in tax years beginning on or after the date of enactment of the OBBBA (i.e., for contracts entered into in 2026 for calendar-year taxpayers).

Takeaway: This could require a method change for contractors; however, allowing the use of any acceptable method for tax purposes (cash, completed contract, etc.) while remaining exempt from alternative minimum tax and look-back interest calculations should result in significant tax deferrals.

Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT)

Code section 460 directs that using a tax method other than POC can result in AMT. However, many deferral opportunities for companies do not result in AMT:

- Non-long-term contracts are exempt (contracts that begin and end in the same fiscal year).
- Home construction contracts (now including the new definition of residential) are exempt.
- The 10% election deferral is exempt.
- The difference due to Code section 460 cost allocation is not a preference.
- C corporations are exempt.
- Equipment for which a bonus depreciation election has been made is exempt.
- Equipment for which a Section 179 election has been made is exempt.
- The qualified 20% business income deduction is exempt.

Takeaway: AMT is calculated at the owner level for flow-through entities (S corporations and LLCs,) so proper planning and application will result in significant savings.

Bonus Depreciation

The OBBBA restores the 100% depreciation bonus introduced by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and makes it permanent. This can incentivize investment in machinery, vehicles and other assets; improve cash flow and accelerate equipment upgrades that have been on hold. This provision applies to property that is both acquired and placed in service after Jan. 19, 2025.

Additionally, the maximum amount a taxpayer may expense under IRC section 179 has been increased to $2.5 million, with the phase-out threshold beginning at $4 million. This becomes increasingly important for companies paying taxes in states that do not conform to the OBBBA's 100% bonus depreciation.

Takeaway: Balancing construction contractors' equipment needs with the current tax laws and allowable depreciation methods is a crucial consideration in retaining working capital and the resulting profitable operations.

Job Costing Processes

Between tariffs, supply chain disruptions and other trade factors, the last several years have seen a notable rise in input price instability. Ensure your job costing process is designed to account for changes that can happen quickly, even overnight. Estimated costs should be revisited as often as necessary, as they will have a major impact on the taxable income associated with your projects.

Takeaway: Percentage of completion accounting for financial statement and tax purposes can result in an overstatement of income (and income taxes) if estimated costs are not accounted for properly.

The planning strategies that construction and contracting firms should revisit each year are numerous. But given recent legislative and economic changes, these may be the most important areas of focus for those optimizing your firm's financial position for a successful 2026.

For a more comprehensive analysis of your business' posture, make sure to take full advantage of other techniques available to construction companies, including:

- Repair and maintenance regulations
- Owner wages and bonus structures
- The qualified business income deduction
- Research and development credits
- 179D deductions
- Section 45L credits (expiring for jobs that are started after June 30, 2026)
- Work opportunity tax credits
- Strategies relating to pass-through entities and state and local tax (SALT) caps

Built to Care

How Andersen Construction turns well-being into a business advantage



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-yearold 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 651307-7883. Visit safeproject.us.

In construction, culture often centers on a set of values posted on a wall or listed in an employee handbook. At Andersen Construction, culture is something people experience daily on jobsites, in offices and in how leadership shows up when it matters most.

Founded in 1950, Andersen Construction is a general contractor focused on vertical building projects across a wide range of occupancy types. With offices in Portland and Eugene, Oregon; Seattle, Washington; and Boise, Idaho, the company does not specialize in a single sector. Instead, it has built its reputation by being adaptable, consistent and intentional in how it serves clients and employees alike. Internally, the goal is simple but demanding: to be the builder of choice for every client they work with.

That same mindset extends to how Andersen invests in its people.

A Culture Built From Within

Today, Andersen employs approximately 450 people and self-performs between 10% to 20% of its work. The company is highly regarded for its commitment to safety, lean construction, sustainability and innovation. In 2023, Andersen became an employee-owned company, further reinforcing a long-held belief that people are not just workers — they are long-term partners in the business.

That philosophy is perhaps best reflected in the career of Kristina Ewing, director of health and wellbeing. She has been with Andersen Construction for 22 years. Ewing began in the finance department before moving into her current role in 2017 and 2018, when she also assumed responsibility for employee benefits.

"It is honestly really difficult to talk about Andersen without talking about the core values, because they are so ingrained in how we operate," Ewing said. "The fact that I have been here 22 years and that is not unique speaks to how valued people feel and how they see this as a career, not just a job."

That sense of care is tangible. Ewing is accessible to employees at all levels, takes time to explain benefits clearly and actively asks for feedback from employees and their families. When something is not working, changes are made.

Making Mental Health Visible

Construction remains one of the highest risk industries in the nation for substance use, untreated mental health conditions, suicide and opioid overdoses. Andersen made a deliberate choice not to treat those realities as uncomfortable topics to be avoided.

From the moment employees are hired, they hear about Andersen's commitment to mental health and opioid reduction during onboarding. The message is reinforced consistently.

"The more people hear us talk about it, the safer they feel asking for help," Ewing said.

"Mental health has always been something I knew I wanted to make a big

part of our well-being efforts. I know what it feels like to show up to work when your life feels chaotic and you are pretending everything is fine just to get through the day."

Ewing regularly incorporates her own lived experience into mental health discussions, a practice that has helped normalize conversations that are often avoided in construction. That openness has led to moments that confirm the impact of the work.

"There has not been a single training or talk where someone has not stayed behind to share something really vulnerable," she said. "Sometimes it is someone I barely know. Allowing people to be seen and holding that space is powerful."

Because of her leadership in this area, Ewing was invited to help build the Construction Suicide Prevention Partnership in the Portland area. The partnership brings local construction companies together to reduce stigma and prevent suicide, working in conjunction with Lines for Life, the nonprofit that operates the regional 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. ln this partnership is where Ewing connected with SAFE Project.

Supporting Recovery Through Structure

Mental health conversations alone are not enough. Andersen recognized early that recovery support requires clear policies, consistent practices and benefits that remove barriers rather than create them.

Rather than relying on informal accommodations, Andersen has built recovery-friendly practices directly into how the company operates. These practices strongly align with first-dose prevention strategies advocated by SAFE Project. SAFE Project has co-presented with Ewing in webinars and at conferences, sharing these strategies as best practices in employee health benefits.

Key practices and offerings include:

- **Clear policies that support treatment and recovery.** Andersen provides options and support for employees pursuing treatment, with defined processes that balance care, safety and compliance.
- **Opioid safety education and alternatives to opioid-based pain management.** Employees receive education on opioid risks, safe use and nonopioid pain management options to reduce exposure and long-term dependency.
- **Naloxone in workplaces and at jobsites.** Naloxone is available on jobsites and in work locations as a standard safety measure, reinforcing overdose prevention as part of overall jobsite safety.
- **Co-dispensing naloxone when opioids are prescribed.** When plan members are prescribed opioids, naloxone is provided alongside the prescription, paired with education and care navigation.
- **Opioid-sparing surgical procedures and nonopioid alternatives.** Andersen's health plan prioritizes care models that minimize or eliminate opioid use, which is especially important for individuals in recovery.
- **Drug deactivation and disposal products.** These tools allow employees and their families to safely dispose of unused medications, reducing the risk of misuse or diversion at home.
- **Flexible leave policies under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Family and Medical Leave Act.** Employees have access to flexible leave when needed to support treatment, recovery or ongoing care.
- **Flexible workweeks.** In many cases, employees can work four-day schedules, an approach that remains rare in construction and has proven meaningful for work-life balance and well-being.

Together, these practices create a consistent message. Recovery is supported through structure, education and access, not handled quietly or inconsistently.

Giving Back as Part of the Work

Andersen's commitment to well-being extends beyond its workforce through the Andersen Foundation. What began as a promise to complete one meaningful give-back project for every project won evolved into a foundation that allows the company to make a broader, more lasting impact.

Most projects are staffed and supported by Andersen employees who are paid for their time. Community service is treated as part of the work, not something employees are expected to do on their own time. Being able to step away from daily responsibilities and build something meaningful for others has proven to support employee mental health, sense of purpose and connection to the company's values.

A Practical Model for Construction Leaders

Andersen Construction has endured more than 75 years by evolving intentionally while staying grounded in its values. Its approach to mental health, recovery and benefits design shows that caring for people is not just the right thing to do — it is also smart business.

For construction business owners looking to strengthen culture, reduce risk and retain talent, Andersen offers a clear takeaway: Listen to your people. Build structure around care. And treat recovery and well-being as a core operational priority, not an afterthought.

2026 Will Be a 'Year of Action' as Infrastructure Momentum Holds Firm

A look at major construction projects taking shape across the US



As president and CEO of Strategic Partnerships Inc., MARY SCOTT NABERS, a former statewide office holder in Texas, has decades of experience in the public and private sectors. Her unique expertise is her success in connecting the two sectors. Nabers is also a well-recognized expert in the public-private-partnership (P3) world and an experienced business development professional. Strategic Partnerships Inc. publishes Government Market News, the premier platform for connecting public and private sector leaders in the government marketplace. Visit spartnerships.com.

With 2026 well underway, there's an abundance of activity linked to extremely large infrastructure projects throughout the U.S. While federal funding support will not be as available in the future as it was in 2022-2024, funding is still flowing in 2026. That's because much of the federal funding support of today was authorized on a multiyear clock that runs through the federal FY 2026 budget. State and local officials, sponsors and private sector investors, however, are beginning to join forces to supplement funding support for critical infrastructure projects in almost every state.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) own tracking shows substantial investment this year, and many federal funding programs are continuing to move through the obligation and outlay process. That means that 2026 will not be a funding cliff year, but instead a delivery and execution year.

For infrastructure modernization, the expectation for 2026 is that there will be continued volume, with the most abundant opportunities clustering around initiatives with multiyear funding authorizations. Highways and bridges, transit capital, airports, ports and related safety and resilience programs will be hot markets. Funding through 2026 will keep large project development moving. Water and grid modernization projects will be well-funded, and there is always a chance that Congress will reauthorize infrastructure project funding in the next federal budget.

The following various types of infrastructure projects that are described in this column provide a glimpse of what to expect through the end of this year.

Washington State

A large-scale ferry terminal electrification project will soon launch in Seattle. Estimated to cost between $80 million and $120 million, the project is being designed to deliver shore-side power and charging infrastructure needed to support hybrid-electric ferry vessels.

The work will include installation of terminal charging capabilities at two dock slips. New electrical infrastructure will be built to supply power for vessels to plug in and recharge while docked. Multiple vessels will be able to be charged simultaneously, allowing ferry schedules to remain consistent during peak service periods. The project will also include a supplemental battery energy storage system to increase grid capacity and help balance loads while charging is occurring.

This effort is part of a broader, systemwide commitment to electrify 16 terminals and modernize all the Washington State Ferry locations. A request for qualifications for the project is scheduled for release in May, with construction anticipated to begin later in 2026.

Mid-Atlantic Region

Officials in Richmond, Virginia, will launch a $190 million project to replace the Mayo Bridge, a high traffic crossing

that connects downtown Richmond with neighborhoods across the James River. The project is being developed in partnership with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and will be funded through a mix of local, regional, state and federal sources, including a pending federal Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant.

The project will fully replace the existing bridge, a structure that is more than a century old and nearing the end of its useful life. Structural deterioration and flood vulnerability make rehabilitation impractical. The new bridge will be built slightly east of the current crossing, allowing traffic to remain in service during construction. It will be designed to prioritize safety and multimodal access.

Vehicle traffic will be reduced to one lane in each direction to create space for wide, protected bicycle lanes and a separated pedestrian walkway that meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. The new bridge will also provide direct access to the planned Mayo Island Park and enable connections to regional trails and transit.

VDOT anticipates using a design-build delivery method. The project is currently in preliminary design, and solicitations are expected in late 2026.

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) officials have plans to expand and modernize part of the I-97 corridor in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. The project is intended to address growing congestion, improve safety and enhance long-term mobility, and it carries an estimated cost of $113.8 million.

The corridor will be widened from four to six lanes to provide three travel lanes in each direction over approximately 7 miles. Additionally, the scope will include upgrades to three major structures along the corridor.

The improvements involve the northbound bridge over MD 450, as well as both the northbound and southbound bridges over a nearby roadway. Ramp configurations will also be modified to improve traffic flow, reduce merging conflicts and enhance overall safety.

The project will call for a design-build procurement model, and the construction will be phased. The project is currently in the planning and preconstruction phase, with construction anticipated to begin in late 2027 or early 2028.

South

The North Carolina Department of Transportation has announced a $491 million highway reconstruction and capacity expansion project to rebuild the I-40/I-440/US 1/US 64 interchange in Wake County and widen Interstate 40. The combined effort will reduce traffic, enhance safety and update one of the most popular transportation routes in the area.

The scope of work includes widening I-40, fully rearranging the interchange, improving multimodal connectivity, upgrading bridges and drainage systems, and enhancing ramp operations. Major right-of-way acquisition and utility relocations are also included, reflecting the project's size and complexity. When complete, the improvements are expected to support long-term regional growth and freight mobility while reducing travel delays in the Research Triangle area.

The project is currently in the project development and pre-procurement stage, with environmental documentation and design criteria still being finalized. The North Carolina Department of Transportation plans to start the design-build procurement process in mid-2026.

West

Along the U.S. Highway 50 corridor between Pueblo, Colorado, and the Kansas state line, a $72.5 million project will soon be launched by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). It will be designed to address safety issues along this rural freight corridor. The roadway serves both heavy truck traffic and regional travelers and the project's objective is to increase operational effectiveness, lower crash risks and improve reliability along Colorado's key east-west routes. The work will call for 12 new passing lanes that will be built along US 50. Additional project components will include roadway widening, shoulder improvements, upgraded signage and striping, and safety features.

Delivery for the project will be structured as a construction manager/general contractor public-private partnership. This will allow early collaboration between CDOT and a private construction partner during the design phase. Design is expected to continue throughout the rest of 2026, with construction anticipated to start in 2027.

It is important to remember that when projects are still in the planning phases, it does not mean "no action." It means that sponsors are gathering funding, completing environmental work, finalizing governance, and deciding which delivery model will get them to construction fastest. Contractors should treat 2026 as a year to map owners and primes, track grant-dependent schedules, and get positioned with decision-makers and stakeholders attached to the projects.

Often, the planning stage of large projects allows for the scope to be influenced while designs are still fluid. Interested parties who are working locally during the planning-stage initiatives end up with a significant competitive advantage when procurement documents are finally released.

A Blueprint for the Future of Construction Is Emerging From the Data Center Sector

How these megaprojects are developing best practices for the broader industry

BY AMY MARKS

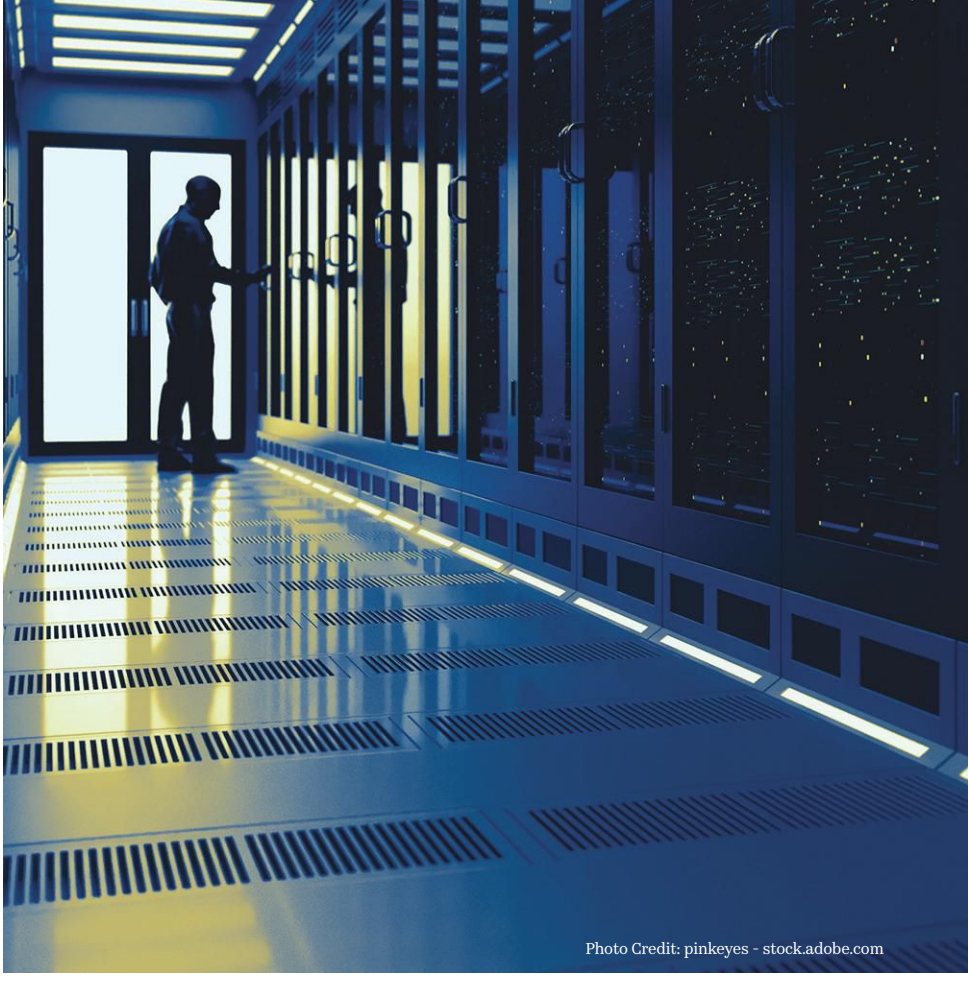


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Data centers are a niche segment of the construction industry, but big things can come from small places. The data center sector has become a hothouse for innovative construction practices that have the potential to transform the entire industry.

Construction innovation thrives in the data center sector for several reasons. Data center companies, which are part of the tech industry, are known to embrace new technology and innovation. That is a key factor, but the biggest reason is the extraordinary demand for data centers, which requires them to be built at a breathtaking scale and speed.

The explosion of artificial intelligence, the ever-increasing demand for cloud computing and the exponential growth of data all require data centers as their indispensable infrastructure. That has led to high demand for the construction of new data centers — demand that represents hundreds of billions of dollars in investment.

With demand that high, data centers need to be built bigger and faster than ever before. And that necessity has been the mother of invention, making continuous innovation truly vital to this sector of the construction industry. Building data campuses this large, at lightning speed (while also ensuring quality, safety and sustainability) is only possible by rethinking every aspect of how we design, build and operate.

While we are applying these innovations to data centers specifically, they are just as relevant for the entire construction industry. Construction faces a perfect storm of challenges including rising demand, increasingly aggressive timelines, escalating workforce challenges, intensifying pressure on profits, increasing sustainability requirements and more.

To address these challenges, the entire industry must reconsider its approach to design and building. Developments in the data center sector offer a strong model for overcoming these obstacles.

My company, Compass Datacenters, is leading three crucial areas of innovation in the data center sector that can serve as best practices for the broader construction industry.

Stronger Together: The Importance of Closely Coupled Partnerships

In order to succeed in this industry, we must have a collaboration mindset for solving complex problems. Success rarely happens in a vacuum, and that is just as true for organizations as it is for individuals. Bringing together the expertise, creativity and problem-solving of multiple organizations is critical for addressing complex challenges like the ones the data center industry faces in building at unprecedented scale and speed.

This belief has led us to new types of supply chain contracts and enterprise agreements that enable more trust and transparency with our partners



— behaviors that fuel the engines of innovation. This collaboration has birthed successful initiatives that have driven major advancements in construction, structural precast processes, power systems, cooling systems and other critical aspects of data center construction. One example is our partnership with Vertiv. Together, we jointly developed a hybrid cooling system (one of the most important components in data center construction) that solves technical challenges related to supporting AI computing. Another example is the collaboration with Coreslab, Shockey and Wells/Gate, which drove innovations in precast and prefabricated building systems that reduce embodied emissions from concrete and steel by 33%.

Too often, partnerships across the construction industry are transactional, not truly collaborative. By adopting a closely coupled supply chain model like the one we are using at Compass, our partners have scale. This gives the construction industry a stronger foundation for solving the biggest challenges we face not just in data centers, but in other building types as partners learn and invest.

The Future of Our Industry: Manufacturing Mindset & Practices

Another best practice from the data center sector is the adoption of the design for manufacture and assembly (DfMA) approach to construction. If you aren't familiar with DfMA, it is a framework for designing components of a given end product with the intention of making manufacturing and assembly easier. It creates end products that are not only higher in quality, but also far more efficient to manufacture. The physical output of DfMA is manufactured products, including prefabricated assemblies like mechanical, electrical and skids; power center modules; and multitrade racks.

Every aspect of how we design, build and operate our data centers has been shaped by a commitment to prefabrication and continuous improvement. It goes beyond just a standard kit of parts to systems optimization. These manufacturing principles inform everything we do, leading to reduced waste and innovations and efficiencies that enable us to complete buildings in a fraction of the time it did just a few years ago.

These best practices are transforming the rest of the construction industry, helping to solve numerous challenges such as the skilled labor shortage, shrinking delivery timelines, increasing sustainability demands and more.

The Use of AI-Driven Analysis Will Be Transformative

The insights available to us today through AI and machine learning (ML) are mind-blowing, providing professionals in every sector with insights about their business that will be so compelling that they demand action. AI/ML are fueling a massive wave of innovation at Compass, enabling us to supercharge our commitment to continuous improvement. The ways that the data center construction sector is using AI are a model for how it can be adopted in impactful ways across the industry.

We use AI-driven insights to improve every step of designing, building and operating our data centers. By working with our partners, we share data that leads to major advancements in cooling and power systems. Today's AI insights are greatly accelerating our capacity to generate, test and identify successful innovations, streamlining the entire journey from ideation to piloting to adoption.

The success we have already had with AI/ML serves as a guide for how other organizations in the construction industry and beyond can drive innovation and continuous improvement. In order to do that, it is critical that more aspects of business are digitized. Although this presents a challenge, the exciting thing is that the progress and benefits we have already seen so far from AI/ML are only the beginning of what is possible. Digitizing systems across your operations and exposing that data to AI/ML will undoubtedly provide you with insights that will allow your business to transform for the better.

The data center construction industry has the unique challenge of rising to meet our society's explosion in demand for compute power. But instead of looking at this as a problem, we can choose to see this as an opportunity to blaze the trail for what the next generation of construction practices will look like.

Through innovating at every juncture, from the way we work with our strategic partners, to our adoption of more efficient construction practices, to digitizing our business's data so that AI/ML can streamline and accelerate success, data center construction will continue to lead the industry path to innovation. And although the data center building boom may not be touching your construction business, we are confident that these innovation strategies will be valuable to your success as we look to the future of our exciting industry.

As senior vice president of innovation at Compass Datacenters, Amy Marks is transforming the built environment by pioneering industrialized methods, digital innovation and sustainable practices. She leads Compass' innovation and sustainability strategies, aligning them with the company's strategic anchors to drive change in construction and design while fostering collaboration across industries. Visit compassdatacenters.com.



How to Create High-Impact Marketing Videos

Tips & tricks for construction companies

BY ANDY BEOHAR



Construction companies face unique challenges when it comes to marketing. Projects unfold over long periods, take place in active jobsites and are judged by visible results rather than promises. This makes video marketing especially powerful for the industry, as it brings real projects, proven outcomes and genuine expertise to life in a way that builds trust with potential clients.

Producing powerful marketing videos does not depend on having a large budget or hiring a full-scale production team. What it does require is understanding what makes construction videos compelling, planning strategically and executing with purpose. Here's how construction companies can create videos that capture attention, build trust and ultimately drive business growth.

Understanding What Makes Construction Videos Compelling

The best construction marketing videos tap into something fundamental: People love watching transformation. There's something inherently satisfying about seeing an empty lot become a building, a dated space modernize or a complex problem get solved through skilled craftsmanship.

Powerful videos go beyond simply displaying finished projects by weaving a clear story. Each construction job follows a natural journey, starting with a problem, moving through the building process, and ending with a strong, successful outcome. Videos that capture this journey create emotional connections that pure project documentation never achieves.

Authenticity matters more than polish in construction marketing. Prospective clients care less about flashy visuals and more about seeing real skill, reliability and clear evidence that a company can get the job done. A slightly rough video showing real work often outperforms a slick, generic promotional piece that could belong to any construction company.

The numbers back this up — Forbes reports that viewers retain 95% of a message when they watch it in a video, compared to just 10% when reading it in text. For construction companies where projects represent significant investments, this kind of message retention can be the difference between winning and losing a bid.

Planning Your Video Content Strategy

Before picking up a camera, construction companies need a clear strategy. Random videos posted occasionally won't move the needle. Strategic video content aligned with business goals creates measurable impact.

Start by identifying the target audience. Are you reaching out to commercial developers, residential homeowners, industrial facility managers or municipal decision-makers? Each audience has different concerns, priorities and information needs. Videos should speak directly to these specific interests.

Define clear objectives for each video. Some videos aim to generate brand awareness, others showcase specific capabilities, and some address common objections or questions. A time-lapse video of a commercial build serves a different purpose than a client testimonial or a safety protocol demonstration.

Map out a content calendar that balances different video types and maintains consistent output. Rather than creating 10 videos in one month and then going silent for six months, plan for sustainable, regular content that keeps the company visible and top-of-mind.

Essential Equipment & Setup

High-impact videos don't demand expensive equipment, but certain basic tools make a significant difference in quality and professionalism.

- **Camera equipment —** Modern smartphones shoot excellent video quality that's perfectly adequate for marketing purposes. For construction companies just starting with video, the phone already in hand is the best camera. Those ready to level up can invest in a basic DSLR or mirrorless

Photo Credit: Vulp - stock.adobe.com



camera, but it's not necessary for creating effective marketing content.

- **Stabilization —** The difference between amateur and professional-looking footage often comes down to stability. Shaky, handheld footage looks unprofessional and can be distracting. A basic tripod costs less than $50 and immediately elevates video quality. For moving shots or walking tours, a gimbal stabilizer provides smooth, professional-looking footage.
- **Audio equipment —** For interview-style videos, testimonials or any content featuring spoken words, audio quality matters tremendously. Viewers will tolerate less-than-perfect video quality, but poor audio drives them away quickly. A simple lavalier microphone that clips onto clothing or a directional shotgun microphone significantly improves audio clarity compared to built-in phone or camera microphones.
- **Lighting considerations —** Natural light is a construction videographer's best friend. Schedule shoots during morning or afternoon hours when sunlight is plentiful but not harsh. For indoor shots or testimonials, position subjects facing windows to take advantage of natural light. Basic LED panel lights provide affordable supplementary lighting when needed.
- **Time-lapse setup —** For project time-lapse videos, dedicated time-lapse cameras or specialized apps turn regular cameras into time-lapse machines. The key is secure mounting that keeps the camera stable and safe throughout the project duration. Weatherproof housing protects equipment from the elements during long-term outdoor shoots.

Capturing Compelling Footage

Great construction videos start with great footage. Understanding which moments to record and how to present them visually can greatly influence the impact of your content.

Wide establishing shots set the scene and provide context. Start videos with wide angles that show the full scope of a project site, the surrounding area, or the scale of the work. These shots address the viewer's initial question: "What am I looking at?"

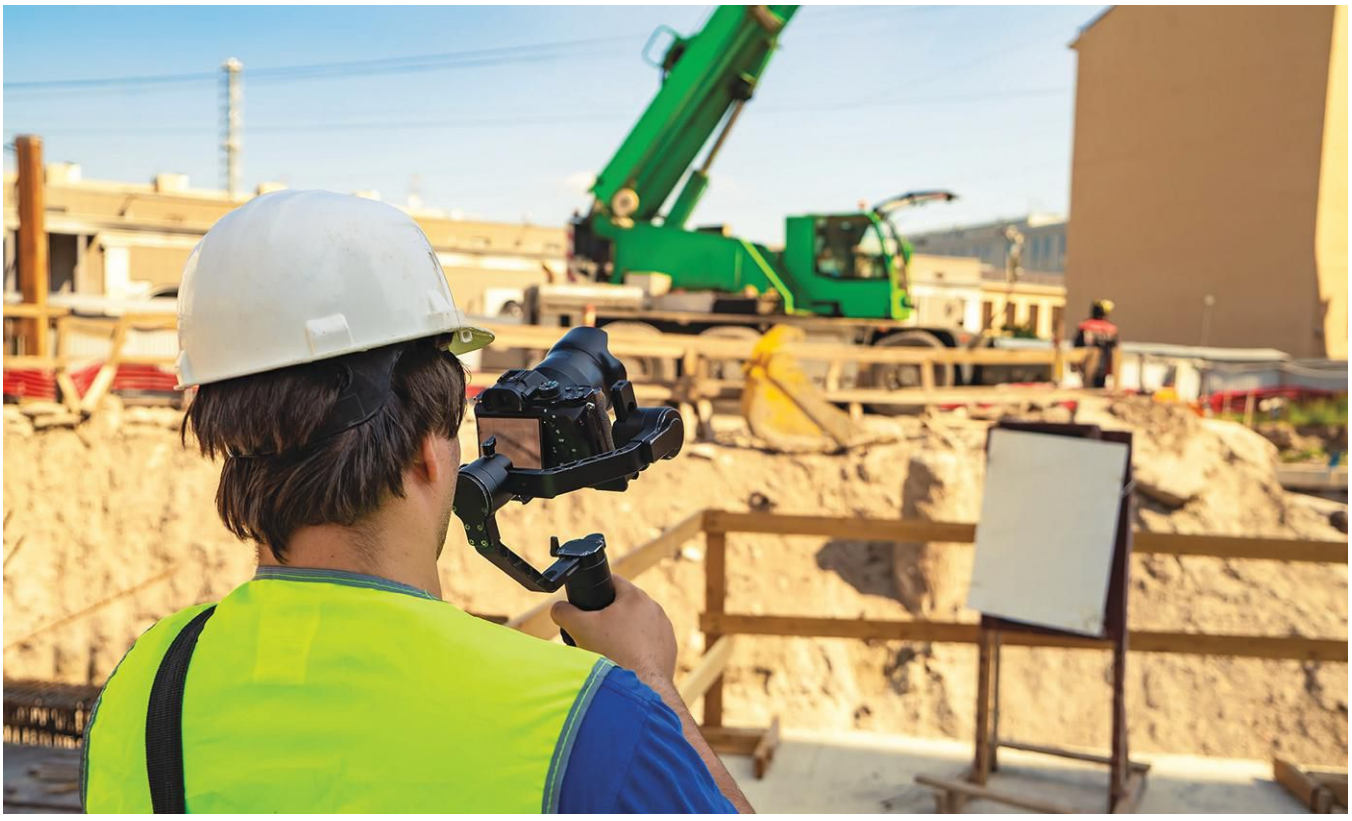
Medium shots show the work itself — crews in action, equipment operating, materials being installed. These shots form the bulk of most construction videos, demonstrating activity and progress.

Close-up detail shots highlight craftsmanship, quality materials and precision work. A close-up of a perfectly aligned tile installation, a smooth concrete finish or an expertly welded joint showcases skill and attention to detail that sets quality construction companies apart.

Capture footage from multiple angles. Variety keeps videos visually interesting and allows for more dynamic editing. Circle around work areas when possible, shoot from ground level and elevated positions, and capture both wide perspectives and intimate details.

Record more footage than seems necessary. It's far easier to have extra footage and not use it than to realize during editing that crucial shots are missing. Aim

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for a 5:1 or even 10:1 shooting ratio — five to 10 minutes of raw footage for every minute of final video.

Creating Different Types of High-Impact Videos

Different video formats serve different marketing purposes. A well-rounded video strategy incorporates multiple types.

- **Project showcase videos —** These highlight completed work in its best light. These videos usually run one to three minutes and feature the finished project from multiple angles, emphasizing key features and quality details. Background music sets the tone while brief text overlays can highlight project specifications, challenges overcome or notable features.
- **Time-lapse compilation videos —** Compressing long project timelines into captivating short videos creates dramatic content. The transformation from start to finish becomes engaging when condensed into 30 to 90 seconds. These videos can perform exceptionally well on social media, where they tend to be watched repeatedly and shared widely.
- **Client testimonial videos —** Building trust through social proof happens naturally with testimonial content. The most effective testimonials feel conversational rather than scripted. Encourage clients to talk about their original challenges, why they selected your company and the outcomes they experienced. Let them speak naturally in their own words. Keep questions simple and open-ended: "What was your biggest concern before starting?" "How did the team address challenges?" "What stands out about the finished project?"
- **Process and capability videos —** Educating potential clients while demonstrating expertise positions companies as industry leaders. These videos might explain different construction methods, showcase





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Humanizing the business and helping clients connect with the people behind the projects builds rapport before the first phone call.

specialized equipment or techniques, or walk through the company's quality control processes. Educational content helps clients understand the value they're getting.

- **Team and culture videos —** Humanizing the business and helping clients connect with the people behind the projects builds rapport before the first phone call. Short introductions from key team members, footage of safety meetings or training sessions, or clips from company events show that real, competent, personable professionals will be handling their project.

Editing for Impact

Editing transforms raw footage into compelling stories. Even basic editing dramatically improves video effectiveness.

1. **Start strong —** The first three to five seconds determine whether viewers keep watching or scroll past. Open with the most visually interesting footage — a dramatic transformation, an impressive aerial shot or a compelling statement from a satisfied client.
2. **Maintain brisk pacing —** Cut between shots every three to five seconds to maintain visual interest. Lingering too long on any single shot causes viewers' attention to wander.
3. **Use music strategically —** Background music sets the mood and energy but shouldn't overpower the content. For videos without a voice-over, music carries the emotional tone. For testimonials or narrated content, use subtle music that enhances the message without overpowering the narration.
4. **Add text overlays sparingly —** Brief text can highlight key information — project specifications, timelines, locations or client testimonials, but too much text clutters the screen and distracts from visuals. Keep it concise and easy to read.
5. **Include branding elements without being heavy-handed —** A logo in the corner, company colors in text overlays and contact information at the end remind viewers who created the impressive work they just watched.
6. **End with a clear call to action —** Every video should guide viewers to the next step: visit the website, request a quote, call for a consultation or follow on social media. Make the call to action specific and easy to follow.

Optimizing & Distributing Videos

Making excellent videos is just the beginning of the work. Strategic distribution ensures the right people see them.

Optimize videos for each platform. Square or vertical formats work better on Instagram and Facebook, while horizontal formats suit YouTube and website embedding. Platform-specific editing maximizes reach and engagement.

Write compelling titles and descriptions that include relevant keywords. Potential clients searching for "commercial construction time-lapse" or "office renovation before and after" should be able to find the content easily.

Add captions to every video. Many viewers watch videos with sound off, especially on social media. Captions ensure the message comes through regardless of audio settings.

Post videos across multiple channels — the company website, YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and email newsletters. Each platform reaches different audience segments and serves different purposes in the marketing funnel. For construction companies targeting specific geographic areas or demographics, Facebook and Instagram ads offer powerful targeting options that can put compelling project videos directly in front of ideal prospects.

Measuring Success & Refining the Approach

Track video performance to understand what resonates with the audience. View counts, watch time, engagement rates, and conversion metrics all provide valuable insights. Pay attention to which videos generate the most comments, shares and inquiries. Use this data to refine future content and focus on what works.

Powerful marketing videos have become crucial for construction companies aiming to differentiate themselves in a crowded industry. With strategic planning, basic equipment and consistent effort, any construction company can create video content that showcases their expertise, builds trust with potential clients, and drives real business results.

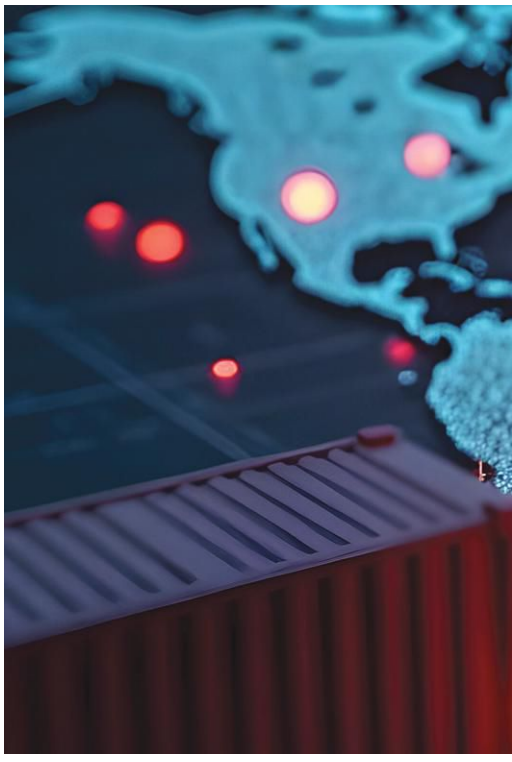
The companies that embrace video marketing now will have a significant competitive advantage as the industry continues evolving toward digital-first client engagement.

Andy Beohar is the managing partner at SevenAtoms, a San Francisco–based construction marketing agency. SevenAtoms specializes in helping construction companies, contractors and building industry businesses drive consistent growth through data-driven paid search and paid social campaigns. Beohar develops and executes high-impact digital marketing strategies that generate qualified leads, increase project opportunities and deliver measurable results for construction firms. Visit sevenatoms.com.

Managing Tariff Volatility: A North American Perspective

How contractors are strengthening supply chains, contracts & contingency planning

BY ADRIAN PELLEN & THOMAS STRONG



The construction industry is navigating unprecedented challenges as turbulence caused by both current tariffs and potential tariffs have created ripple effects across North American supply chains. Recent data indicates an estimated 3% to 5% increase in total project costs, affecting everything from basic materials to fixtures and appliances. This volatility is forcing construction executives to fundamentally rethink their approach to risk management and project planning, such as supply chain resilience, contract structure and contingency budgets.

Building a Resilient Cross-Border Supply Chain

For construction executives, the business impact extends into the deeply interconnected North American construction market, shedding light on the complex dynamics between U.S. and Canadian operations. For example, steel fabricators in Quebec have reported a striking difference in risk tolerance between the two nations: While Canadian projects face delays or cancellations, U.S. clients are willing to absorb tariff costs to maintain material flow. This difference in attitudes between countries highlights the critical nature of cross-border supply chains and the industry's interdependence.

Some construction executives are conducting in-depth audits to better understand where they're exposed to international materials, and some firms are diversifying supplier networks or even warehousing critical materials in advance to hedge against future material shortages. For many construction executives, these moves reflect lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, when supply chain instability wreaked havoc on timelines and budgets. Now, companies are applying the same mindset of building operational resiliency to mitigate the impact of trade policy uncertainty.

However, the tariff effects go beyond direct material costs. Secondary impacts include increased transportation costs due to equipment tariffs, as logistics companies pass on higher expenses for commercial vehicles. Even projects using domestically sourced materials feel the impact through transportation costs and components that rely on international supply chains.

With material costs climbing and trade policies shifting unpredictably, contractors are facing more financial pressure midproject than ever before. These unexpected increases can squeeze already-tight margins and throw off budgets that were locked in months earlier. In search of a safety net, many turn to their contracts — or the courts — for relief. But that's where things get tricky.

Why Contracts Matter More Than Courts

When costs spike midproject, many construction executives look for legal protections to mitigate the financial impact. But the reality is that most courts don't offer relief just because materials got more expensive. Tariffs, inflation and supply chain disruptions are viewed as part of doing business, especially in the construction industry where costs are not fixed.

To mitigate potential reputational risk, many construction leaders are now building more flexibility into contracts from the start. This includes clear language around who absorbs tariff-related costs, when prices can be adjusted and what happens if global trade conditions shift during a project. The goal is to prevent finger-pointing later by getting ahead of the issue during negotiations.

Contractual Language as a Risk Management Tool

Beyond legal language, the structure of contracts itself can make a big difference in how well contractors can adjust to tariff-related swings. Here's how different project contracts are

Photo Credit: ModernFiles - stock.adobe.com



playing out in this environment.

Fixed-price contracts still appeal to owners who want cost certainty, but general contractors (GCs) are growing wary. In a volatile market, absorbing unexpected cost hikes can wipe out margins. Many GCs are now pricing in extra room or asking for built-in protections if tariffs spike.

Time and materials or cost-plus agreements give GCs more room to pass through material costs, but they shift the risk to owners. These models work best when both sides trust each other and commit to transparency.

Design-build models offer speed and integration, which can help avoid delays tied to tariff-sensitive materials. But again, how risk is allocated depends entirely on how the contract is written.

More owners and contractors are also using escalation clauses, i.e., provisions that allow material pricing to shift in response to changes in indexes or tariffs. Others are adding renegotiation triggers, so if tariffs rise more than a certain percentage, both parties agree to come back to the table and talk about adjustments.

The Role of Contingencies & Insurance

Another trend many construction executives are implementing is bigger contingency budgets. Some construction leaders are now setting aside 11% to 12% in bids — up from the traditional 5% to 10% — to account for unpredictable cost increases. This shift also has insurance implications, as coverages also need to rise to account for higher valuations. Project valuations are rising to reflect potential material hikes, and builders' risk programs are being reexamined to ensure coverage matches today's market realities.

Looking Ahead: Permanent Changes in Risk Management

Many leaders in the construction industry recognize that even if today's tariffs are rolled back or not implemented, developing strategies to mitigate the impact of supply chain challenges and economic uncertainty is key for mitigating long-term risk and ensuring business continuity.

For many construction executives, the focus now is on staying agile so they can adapt to continued uncertainty. Owners and contractors that plan ahead rather than react after the fact are better positioned to navigate a fast-changing environment. For firms operating across borders or sourcing internationally, these strategies are no longer optional — they are essential.

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Bonding Capacity in a Changing Market

Travelers' surety leader breaks down how growth, leverage & underwriting shifts are redefining bonding capacity

BY MEGAN BEAM



Growth, complexity and capital structure shifts are reshaping the surety landscape for today's contractors. From record-setting backlogs to the rise of employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) transactions, the past year has introduced new underwriting considerations that demand greater transparency, disciplined financial management and more proactive communication. In this Q&A, Bryce Grisom, senior vice president for surety at Travelers, shares his perspective on what's changed most in surety underwriting, where contractors often misjudge their bonding limitations and how firms can better align backlog expansion with financial strength.

What has changed most in surety underwriting over the past 12-18 months, and what do contractors still misunderstand about those changes?

A challenge that contractors, surety agents and underwriters are navigating in today's construction industry is the growth in both single job size and total backlog. Over the past 12-18 months, many contractors are working through their largest jobs ever that come with increasing complexity and longer duration. If a job encounters issues with profit fade or generating cash flow, there is the potential to put strain on the balance sheet. This makes visibility into the work program and open communication among all parties in the surety relationship critical.

Another significant shift in surety underwriting has been the surge in highly leveraged ESOP transactions, which present new risk assessment challenges. Whereas private equity (PE) firms were most active four or five years ago, ESOP transactions are now becoming more popular, often at multiples larger than what a PE firm would pay.

Some of the recent valuations of construction firms seem to be overly optimistic, assuming that the construction industry and the earnings being generated today will continue to grow indefinitely. These valuations do not always consider a potential slowdown in economic growth, much less a potential recession. The debt service requirements to fund these transactions can result in liquidity challenges that could put the new employee owners in a difficult financial position.

Although we at Travelers are strong believers in employee ownership structures, the additional leverage some newly formed ESOPs are assuming may not be as easily serviced as many experts would have you believe and could negatively impact a firm's access to both banking and surety credit.

Beyond financial statements, what operational, managerial or project-control factors most influence a contractor's bondability and capacity for growth?

Competent, reliable underwriting depends on a contractor submitting a well-thought-out and strategic business plan. Financial results are going to fluctuate, but surety underwriters are most comfortable when they can clearly understand where a contractor is headed and, therefore, be in a position to better evaluate the risks surrounding that plan. Ultimately, though, nothing replaces a contractor's ability to generate cash earnings from operations.

Where do contractors most often misjudge why their bonding capacity is limited, and how can that gap in understanding be addressed?

Over the last 40 years, we have seen erosion in some of the more traditional working capital and net worth ratios. Deterioration in liquidity and capital ratios will have a direct impact on bonding capacity.

What distinguishes contractors who successfully recover from a bond claim from those who struggle to regain surety support?

The most important factor is early engagement with frequent and open communication. Bringing the surety underwriting and claim teams together

Photo Credit: thodonal - stock.adobe.com



with the contractor enhances trust and leverages the strengths and experience on both sides of this equation, enabling the surety company to better help and support the contractor.

How should contractors strategically balance backlog growth with financial strength, operational capacity and risk management?

There isn't a single answer to this question. The first thing a surety will try to assess is how much risk a contractor is taking in its backlog. These risks can include simple things such as geographic expansion, growth in job size or taking on new types of work with new owners, all of which typically increase the risk profile.

Of late, contractor procurement type can also impact how aggressive a surety may choose to be. Firms that are successful in utilizing more collaborative procurement models — such as progressive design-build — will likely be viewed more favorably than those that are more active in hard-bid and straight design-build procurement models. There are opportunities for mobilization payments and cash flow terms that further lessen the risk burden and can help expand operational capacity.

How far in advance should contractors engage their surety team when planning expansion, new markets or alternative delivery methods?

Earlier is always better. Large national or global sureties can contribute a wealth of knowledge that contractors might not possess or even be aware of. This kind of data and deep expertise can ensure that as a contractor grows in its current business or expands into new markets, they do so with the most current information and the valuable products and services they need to be successful.

What do contractors most underestimate about the value a surety provides beyond issuing a bond, and what long-term advice would you give them today?

A truly supportive partnership allows the surety to help the contractor more thoughtfully manage their risk. Besides simply providing bonding, the right surety will offer experience and knowledge on the pitfalls to avoid, as well as access to opportunities to successfully execute a business plan. A surety that can provide claim and legal expertise, in-depth consultation on strategic business planning and matters of succession are key differentiators that go beyond issuing a bond.

Some sureties have very experienced underwriting talent who have seen the ups and downs of prior market cycles and who understand current contractual term trends on active major procurements. If a contractor wants to take advantage of this positive viewpoint and industry knowledge, all they have to do is ask.

Lastly, a contractor should have confidence that its surety broker and underwriter are supportive of its business plan. Underwriting major procurements shouldn't be a race to the fastest "yes." If a contractor submits a bid for work that is outside of the plan, the surety should ask questions. In fact, if they do ask questions about the bid's prudence, then it's safe to assume that the surety is in alignment with the long-term vision of the contractor and looking out for the contractor's best interests.

Megan Beam is editor-in-chief of Construction Business Owner Magazine & Digital Media.



FRACTIONAL LEADERSHIP:

A Risk-Smart Solution to Succession Planning & the Labor Shortage

Exploring the rise of fractional leaders & their role in construction

BY PAUL THEISEN

Photo Credit: borevina -adobestock.com

For many companies, the leadership challenge is no longer just about finding talent; it's about sustaining it. Succession planning gaps, executive burnout, shifting labor expectations and an increasingly mobile workforce have fused into a persistent leadership shortage that traditional hiring models fail to solve.

Fractional leadership offers a strategic solution. Once viewed as a last resort or compromise, fractional executives have emerged as a risk-smart, battle-tested approach to two of today's most pressing challenges: succession planning and executive labor scarcity. When designed intentionally, fractional leadership is a strategic bridge that strengthens leadership capacity, especially for construction firms navigating complex operations and distributed teams.

How Fractional Leadership Works

Fractional executives bring intention and clarity, helping companies focus on both the present and the future. That's why a skilled fractional leader prioritizes succession planning, recognizing that talent continuity drives performance and long-term success.

Fractional executives serve as the lead authority within a specific domain — technology, finance, operations or strategy — bringing executive-level rigor without requiring a full-time price tag. They identify the capabilities and capacities an organization truly needs, then help design an operating model that delivers them.

This approach allows executive leadership teams (ELTs) to maximize resources, retaining strategic oversight at the top while building a strong bench of full-time managers and directors to execute the plan. These team members benefit from a qualified mentor-coach relationship with the fractional executive.

A smart succession strategy promotes internal leaders two or three times before they reach the top role. Guided by an experienced fractional executive, this progression ensures leaders are prepared, not just promoted, creating maximum coverage while optimizing return on labor investment.

This is not a choice between one or the other; it's a deliberate combination. Investing in strategic leadership on a fractional basis creates a resilient, scalable organization built to last.

The Construction Labor Challenge

Executive succession gaps exist more often than many construction firms are willing to admit. Many organizations operate with only three or four full-time C-suite leaders, when seven or eight are realistically needed to manage strategy, operations and growth at peak effectiveness. Rather than filling these gaps, firms often live with them, exacerbating risk and slowing growth potential.

The construction industry's broader labor shortage compounds the challenge. In the U.S., the sector reported needing over 500,000 additional workers in 2024 and nearly 450,000 in 2025 just to meet demand. Projections from Associated Builders and Contractors indicate the industry will need 349,000 net new workers in 2026, rising to 456,000 in 2027 as construction spending growth resumes.

Meanwhile, 92% of construction firms report difficulty finding qualified labor, according to the Associated General Contractors of America and the National Center for Construction Education and Research.

Fractional leadership helps close this gap. Many of the additional executive roles do not require full-time hires. Fractional executives provide the right level of strategic guidance without overbuilding cost or complexity, reframing the conversation from "we can't afford it" to "we can't afford not to have it."

In some cases, fractional executives can either provide long-term leadership for a specific domain or serve as interim, full-time leaders when workload, complexity or organizational culture require temporary support.

Above all, fractional leadership fosters durability. Too many temporary leaders cycling through senior roles create organizational whiplash, as each new executive brings different philosophies, systems and priorities that can destabilize momentum. When designed with permanency and alignment, fractional executives provide continuity, mentor managers and directors, and build the leadership pipeline for long-term success.

Where Fractional Leadership Delivers the Greatest Value

Construction technology leadership is the clearest example of where fractionals excel. Technology ecosystems are complex, fast-evolving and deeply intertwined with operations, finance and the customer experience. Many firms rely on "acting" leaders who may be capable operators but not qualified technology executives. Fractional technology executives bring strategic rigor, governance and alignment.

Fractional chief financial officers deliver similar value, either leading finance directly or managing strategic initiatives alongside a full-time leader. Operating executives can also provide project- or systems-based support or augment existing leadership bandwidth.

The rule of thumb is simple: Any domain not fully covered by a qualified, full-time C-suite executive is a prime candidate for fractional leadership. Some experienced fractionals can consistently outperform unqualified "acting" executives, particularly in areas requiring specialized expertise. This is the crux of why fractional leadership is rising: It allows construction firms to allocate leadership more effectively, using the same budget while dramatically improving outcomes.

Reducing Risk During Leadership Transitions

Leadership transitions are among the riskiest moments in an organization's life cycle. Fractional executives reduce that risk through one powerful asset: hindsight. A qualified, tenured fractional executive brings pattern recognition — knowing what to do, what not to do and when to act. Their experience accelerates decision-making, increases confidence and prevents costly missteps, providing clarity when ambiguity is highest.

When chosen wisely, this hindsight translates into foresight for the organization, turning past experience into a proactive competitive advantage.

A Measurable Impact on Succession & Labor Strategy

Consider a scenario where a senior executive exits unexpectedly. Rather than rushing to replace them with a full-time hire, a company installs a part-time fractional executive at the top of the function. Beneath them, one or two manager- or director-level hires step into expanded roles.

The fractional executive provides strategic leadership and accountability. The managers gain real development, mentorship and exposure. Over time, the organization builds operational depth rather than perpetuating dependency on a single individual.

This model is already working. Many organizations have long-term fractional executives embedded within their ELTs, closing leadership gaps while building stronger internal pipelines.

Beyond the Job Description

Fractional executives deliver value beyond their formal responsibilities. They repair customer service reputations using executive influence, strengthen leadership teams with complementary skills, and bring objectivity, identifying operational gaps and cultural misalignment that insiders often overlook.

They also excel in contract negotiation, mergers and acquisitions support, international expansion and vendor management, bringing the perspective and rigor of large organizations to construction firms. Perhaps most importantly, they expand access to networks, resources, benchmarks and trusted relationships that would otherwise be out of reach. If you're a construction leader relating to this, it's time to consider going fractional.

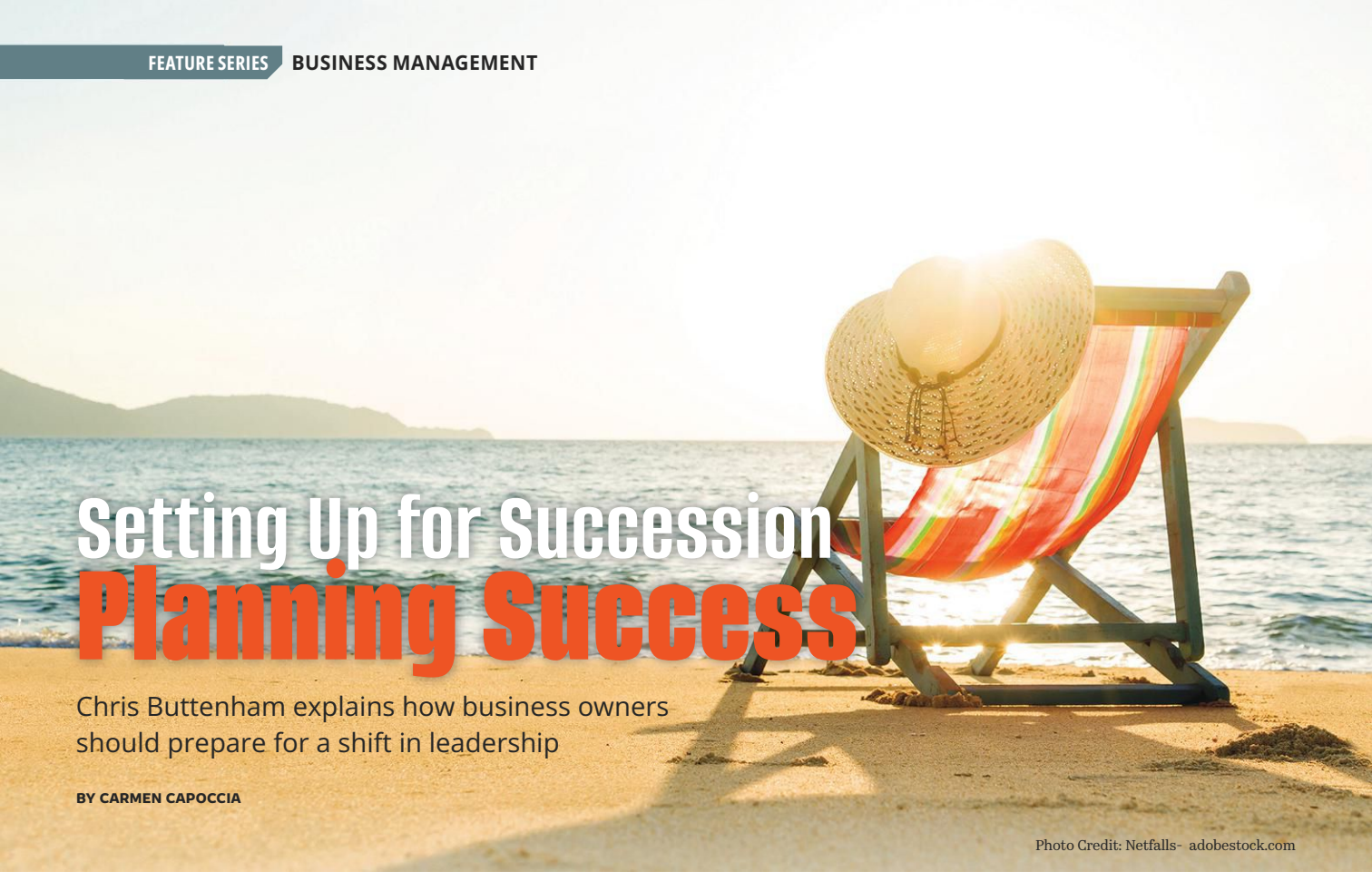
Why Construction Companies Are Positioned to Benefit

Construction is inherently geographic. Projects are distributed. Teams are mobile. Fractional executives fit naturally into this environment. Many firms also face family-business succession challenges. Fractional leaders provide objective balance, external perspective and critical competencies to bridge generational transitions without disrupting culture. They expand the leadership tool kit for teams that have grown up inside the organization.

The future of leadership isn't about more people — it's about the right people, at the right level, for the right amount of time. Fractional leadership gets that equation right.

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.





Setting Up for Succession Planning Success

Chris Buttenham explains how business owners should prepare for a shift in leadership

BY CARMEN CAPOCCIA

Photo Credit: Netfalls- adobestock.com

Transitions can be messy. Change is hard enough on a personal level, and the idea of company change may feel overwhelming. The National Center for Construction Education and Research reports that 49% of the industry's workforce will retire by 2035, so many construction businesses will be facing leadership transitions in the near future. Construction Business Owner spoke with Chris Buttenham, CEO and co-founder of Reins, about how contractors can retain a strong workforce while preparing for change.

Tell me about your background.

I'm the co-founder and CEO of Reins, where we help independent business owners reward and retain their key employees using modern incentive tools like phantom stock and profit sharing — what we call alternative equity. I grew up in the trades, watching firsthand how hard owners work to build something meaningful, and how difficult it can be to keep great people aligned for the long term. After building and exiting a previous software company, I started Reins to give millions of independent businesses the same tools that were traditionally reserved for private equity or venture-backed companies.

In your experience, where do companies struggle when going through transitions?

Most companies don't struggle with the idea of transition — they struggle with preparation. Whether it's leadership change, succession or growth into the next stage, the common issue is a lack of alignment with the people who actually run the business day to day. Owners often carry too much themselves for too long, and by the time they're ready to step back, there isn't a clear leadership bench or shared incentive structure in place. Transitions go smoothly when key people are prepared early, trusted with responsibility and financially aligned with the outcome.

What is the No. 1 thing an owner should prioritize when they're planning to retire?

For retirement, the No. 1 priority should be building a leadership team that can operate the company without them. Not manage it with oversight — run it. That means clear decision rights, financial literacy, operational accountability and aligned incentives. If the business still revolves around the owner, it has too much key-man risk.

What if they're planning to sell the business?

If they're planning to sell, the priority shifts slightly to making the business transferable. Buyers pay for durability and predictability. They want to see a second layer of leadership, recurring revenue, clean financials and key employees who are motivated to stay through the transition. The more the business feels independent from the founder, the more valuable it becomes.

How can owners ensure their top people are prepared for a leadership transition?

It starts earlier than most owners think. Leadership development is not a last-year project: It is a multiyear process.


Chris Buttenham

- First, give emerging leaders real responsibility, not just titles. Let them own outcomes.
- Second, ensure they are exposed to the financial side of the business including key metrics like gross profit, the bottom line and context as to the current state of these.
- Third, align incentives so they think like owners, not just managers. When top performers understand how decisions impact the long-term value of the company, and when they benefit from that value, they step into leadership differently. Preparation is not just training. It is building an ownership mindset combined with accountability over time.

Where do you see construction leaders fail in their businesses, and how can they address that?

It's rarely a technical failure and almost always a people and leadership issue. Many construction and home-service businesses grow successfully on the back of a strong founder, but they don't build systems that outlast that individual. Without clear career paths, incentives and leadership development, great employees eventually leave or disengage. The solution isn't complicated, but it does require intention: Develop leaders early, share success in a meaningful way and create visibility into how employees benefit when the company grows.

Tell us about Reins' MARE framework. How does that apply to businesses?

MARE stands for the modern agreement for rewards and equity. It's a simple, flexible framework that allows owners to grant ownership-style incentives — like phantom stock or structured profit sharing — without giving up actual equity or control. The goal is alignment. When employees can clearly see how their performance connects to long-term financial reward, retention improves, leadership strengthens and succession becomes far more achievable. In practice, MARE turns compensation from a short-term expense into a long-term growth strategy.

Is there anything else owners should know?

Independent businesses are the backbone of the economy, and the next decade will bring one of the largest ownership transitions we've ever seen. The companies that succeed won't just be the ones with the best equipment or marketing: They'll be the ones that build real alignment with their people. Owners who start preparing early, develop leaders intentionally and share success thoughtfully will create stronger businesses, smoother transition and lasting legacies

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





STRATEGIC TECHNOLOGY Investment Pays Off

Managing large-scale residential construction with precision while recruiting the next generation of workers

BY PETER HADDOCK

Photo Credits: Peter Haddock

The Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex is home to over 7.5 million people, and its rapid growth is leading to large-scale residential developments.

Building a 300-lot high-end residential development with custom ditch lines required millimeter-level precision, but for Mount Pleasant, Texas-based Stephenson Dirt Contracting, it was "just another day at the office." After all, the company operates a diverse range of machinery across multiple areas, handling work from multiphase commercial projects to oil field maintenance.

The company, established in 1987, has been harnessing the latest technology for decades, evolving from a small firm into a highly regarded, experienced sitework contractor. Approaching this project in the fast-growing Texas prairies and lakes region simply required the next iteration of technology.

While technology makes handling large-scale residential construction projects easier, its real benefit may be its role in attracting the next generation of workers. Younger workers are digital natives, and by making the construction industry digital-first, the industry can help address the long-standing worker shortage that has plagued it.

Training the next generation of workers to use the latest technology not only maximizes productivity on the immediate Texas project but also helps the Stephenson Dirt team overcome structural workforce challenges by developing talent rather than relying on recruitment.

A Company With a Deep History

Change and evolution are part of the Stephenson Dirt story. The company began using high-precision surveying equipment early, helping to gain a foothold in supporting the oil industry.

Today, as in its earliest days, the company views technology as a strategic response to an ever-changing landscape, largely centered on the talent shortage.

"We soon realized that capturing information using this equipment was really valuable for setting out, and then we set up systems on the graders and upped our productivity an insane amount," said John Kent Stephenson, general superintendent.

"This was because we weren't having to have a guy out there manually checking levels, so the graders could just fly through those locations and punch them out," Stephenson added. "We then started investing in more technology and diversifying the business into more commercial and residential construction projects like this."

The company now operates several crews across the region, equipped with over 80 earthmoving machines. At least 60% of them are fitted with machine control, which a local dealer, Four Point Solutions in New Braunfels, provided.

"Having used other systems before, the service we get from them smokes what we had in the past," Stephenson said. "If we have a problem, they just jump on it, and the next day or even hours later, we are back up and running. They also supported

our rollout of the Leica ConX system, which allows us to send all our models using the mobile network to our machines across any jobsite."

For the Dallas-Fort Worth residential development project, Stephenson Dirt required accurate grading and ditch shaping across hundreds of plots. It also needed to manage changes in dirt volume due to water saturation.

The only way to accomplish this was to ensure real-time communication and coordination across teams and with clients. That would require training new operators efficiently in GPS and machine control workflows.

"This is a typical job for us, taking a virgin plot and reshaping it for housing," Stephenson said.

As part of the core excavation and material movement phase, the team performed 6-foot moisture conditioning to create a site that spans more than 150,000 square meters.

The Solution

To successfully approach the project, the Stephenson Dirt team used a range of equipment for the core earthworks part of the project, including three Caterpillar motor scrapers, three Cat D6T dozers and a Cat D4. In preparation for the plot shaping, they also turned to a Komatsu PC360LC. And with the need to water down the earth, the team tapped into a local water main, setting up a pump system to fill two Volvo A40D trucks.

To ensure the project is graded according to specification and to eliminate the prospect of expensive rework, the team fitted the Cat D6T dozers, the excavator and the lead Cat 621B paddle scraper with Leica Geosystems' 3D machine control from Four Point Solutions. But adding machine control technology to dozers and an excavator was just one aspect of the technology deployment.

"Recently, we have also paired drone surveying with our earthworks models, which again helps to visualize the project," Stephenson said. "This has been huge as we can let our clients know if we are growing dirt or losing dirt in real-time.

"This is a real issue in Texas as we have to water down the sites to effectively move and place the dirt, and this process swells the dirt," Stephenson added. "So, it grows, and we still need to move it and monitor it over time to also see what we lose."

Changes immediately affect a project's costs, timeline and production. By keeping the client updated, the company can collaborate with its client, maintain productivity and inform them of any changes in real time, thereby mitigating potential surprises upon completion.

By doing so, the Stephenson Dirt team has gained a competitive advantage by perfecting its digital workflow with support from its local dealer team.

"When you are looking at incorporating 3D machine control on any size of site, but particularly large projects like this, you need to start with robust survey control; without it, you don't have anything," said Phillip Gillen, a dealer manager with Leica Geosystems.





"This is where Stephenson Dirt has worked hard to perfect its end-to-end process," Gillen continued. "From survey control, it's all about the data prep and working up the project design files. These often come in a CAD format, highlighting the deliverables that are needed for the project."

The team then converts these into earthworks models for the specific machine types.

"In the case of this project, it would be excavators, motor scrapers and dozers," Gillen said. "With accuracy particularly important across the site, the team in this case is using a localized base station that the machines are measured against for horizontal and vertical tolerances.

"So, with everything linked together, when the operators show up for work, the first thing they do is check to see if there are any model updates, which are sent through the cloud," Gillen added. "These are then downloaded, and they can go to work safe in the knowledge they are putting the right dirt in the right place."

The Results

One only needs to look at the way Stephenson Dirt has adapted its business to use different methods and adopt a 3D approach to project delivery to see how the industry is evolving.

Retrofitting machine control on older equipment, such as Cat scrapers, can increase the equipment's value by improving productivity.

As an added benefit, the team is developing the next generation of talent, like 21-year-old Oscar Miranda, who has already operated a range of machines, including excavators, backhoe loaders and skid steers. Given that many contractors struggle to hire, the Stephenson Dirt team knows that a mix of technology and mentorship can turn recruits into highly effective, productive team members.

Despite his young age, he operates a Caterpillar 632F paddle wheel motor scraper. The first machine Miranda operated was a skid steer while working on various tasks on one of Stephenson Dirt's residential projects.

The best way for Miranda to begin in the industry is to gain a broader understanding and operating experience in various roles and machines.

"The skid steer was a lot of fun to drive, and I learned a lot about how to handle it in different tasks from shifting dirt to moving other materials around and generally keeping the yard clear," Miranda said. "It was definitely the best machine to start on, as I had to quickly learn how to operate the joysticks and change attachments."

Once he had mastered the skid steer, Miranda went on to operate a backhoe loader.

"With the backhoe again being a utility machine, I found myself doing even more tasks like learning how to dig trenches," Miranda said. "This then helped me to progress into working on excavators. But I always had my eye on the bigger machines, so I pushed myself hard to get an opportunity to work on a dozer."

While the industry grapples with a long-standing labor shortage, companies that embrace technology and a digital-first mindset gain a competitive advantage.

Peter Haddock is an award-winning journalist, content creator and industry commentator specializing in the construction and mobile plant sectors. He is the host of on-site videos, webinars and live events; the owner of Content for Industry; and a correspondent for Earthmovers Magazine.



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Photo Credits: Bobcat

Building Skills for a Smarter Jobsite

Why training is becoming a competitive advantage as equipment gets smarter

BY SUMMER PETERS

Construction equipment has changed significantly in recent years. Machines that once relied almost entirely on operator feel and experience are now supported by digital displays, automated functions and connected technologies designed to improve efficiency and accuracy. For contractors, this evolution presents a clear opportunity — but also a challenge.

As equipment becomes more capable, operators are expected not only to run a machine, but to understand how to use built-in tools that help them work faster, effectively and more consistently. This change has widened the skills gap and made training a strategic business priority.

From Manual Operation to Machine Optimization

Modern jobsites are increasingly shaped by technology. Features such as bucket leveling, attachment recognition, machine guidance and fleet management tools are becoming more common across equipment categories. Together, these technologies reduce the need for complex, dual-action inputs — allowing operators to work more intuitively, maintaining consistency and productivity.

For experienced operators, this shift can be energizing. Many want to know whether there is a tool, setting or feature that allows them to complete a task more efficiently. For newer operators without proper instruction, the amount of technology in today's machines can feel overwhelming.

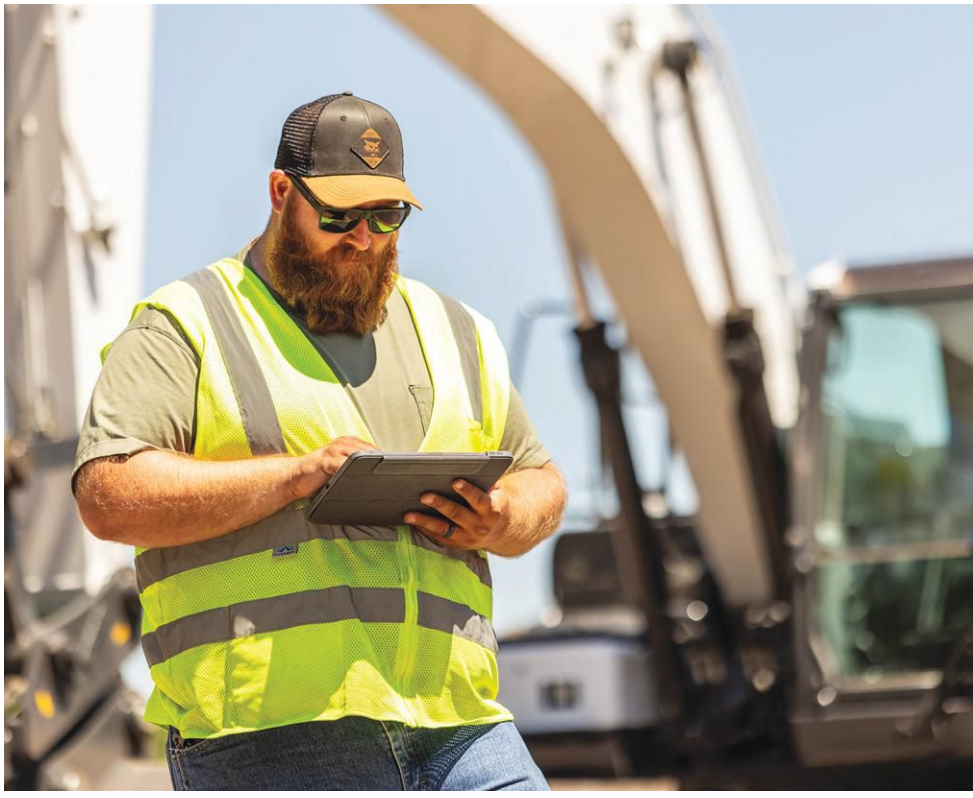
For business owners, the takeaway is

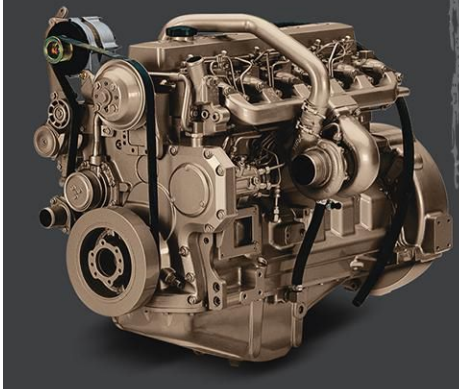
clear: Productivity gains are tied directly to how well operators understand and utilize the tools built into their equipment.

Training Starts Before the Cab Door Opens

While advanced features often receive the most attention, effective training begins with the basics. Before operators ever enter the cab, they need a strong foundation in safe operation and fundamentals of machine controls. This baseline knowledge is essential regardless of experience level.

From there, training should align with the machine's capabilities and the work being performed. Advanced features can improve outcomes, but only when operators understand when and how to use them. Skipping early-stage training in favor of "learning on the job" often leads to inefficiencies, mistakes and increased wear on equipment.





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One Crew, Many Experience Levels

Most construction companies employ operators with a wide range of experience and comfort levels with technology. Some adapt quickly to digital tools, while others may be hesitant or unfamiliar with newer systems.

Successful training programs account for this range by offering information in multiple formats. Short, focused training modules allow operators to absorb key concepts without being overwhelmed. More comprehensive courses that combine video, visual aids, knowledge checks and hands-on practice help reinforce learning and build confidence.

This layered approach ensures that less tech-comfortable operators are supported while experienced team members still gain value from deeper insights into machine capabilities.

Blending Learning Methods for Better Retention

No single training method works on its own. Classroom instruction without hands-on practice rarely translates into confidence in the cab. Likewise, putting operators on a machine with no structured guidance often leads to frustration and inefficiency.

The most effective approach blends online learning with in-person experience. Operators benefit from reviewing their operation and maintenance manuals, studying controls and understanding machine functions before practicing them in real-world conditions.

Positive reinforcement during this process helps operators internalize what they have learned and encourages them to continue improving. When operators are given time to understand controls and apply that knowledge in a practical setting, they tend to adapt quickly — and often become more engaged with their work.

Where Contractors See the Biggest Returns

Investing in operator training requires time and planning, but the returns are measurable. Contractors commonly see improvements in productivity, consistency and overall jobsite efficiency once operators are properly trained.

Safety is a critical part of this equation. Operators who understand their machines are better equipped to work efficiently without taking unnecessary risks. Over time, this leads to fewer incidents, reduced downtime and more predictable jobsite performance. Training might may feel like a delay, but it often prevents far greater losses caused by inefficient operation, rework or equipment damage.

Overcoming Resistance to New Technology

One of the most common barriers to adoption is the pressure to get work started immediately. When schedules are tight, training can be viewed as optional rather than essential. Skipping training often costs more time in the long run.

Clear company commitment plays a significant role in overcoming resistance. When leadership prioritizes training and makes resources easy to access, operators are more likely to engage. Offering





materials in multiple languages and formats helps streamline the experience and supports broader participation.

When operators see that their employer is invested in their success, they are more likely to invest effort into learning new tools and techniques.

Technology as a Confidence Builder

Advanced machine features are designed to support operator skill — not replace it. For newer operators, in-cab technologies can reduce the learning curve by providing assistance during common tasks.

Features like automated leveling or guidance systems help operators maintain accuracy while building confidence. These tools allow new team members to be productive sooner, while still developing the judgment and experience that comes with time in the seat. For contractors, this means technology can play a direct role in workforce development — not just machine performance.

Preparing for the Next Decade

As equipment continues to evolve, adaptability will become one of the most valuable operator skills. The ability to learn, ask questions and adjust to new features will define long-term effectiveness in the field.

Whether an operator has limited experience or is a seasoned veteran, curiosity and willingness to grow are essential. Machines will continue to offer more data, automation and connectivity. Operators who understand how to work with those tools — not around them — will remain in demand.

For construction business owners unsure where to begin, the best approach is to start with a plan. Identify available training resources, set clear expectations and build learning into regular operations rather than treating it as a one-time event. Small, consistent investments in training add up over time. As operators become more comfortable with technology, businesses benefit from improved performance, stronger retention and a workforce prepared for what comes next.

In an industry where equipment represents a major investment, developing the people who operate it may be one of the most valuable decisions a contractor can make.

Summer Peters is a product safety engineer at Bobcat Company. With a background in industrial engineering and engineering management, she specializes in operator safety and training development. A graduate of South Dakota School of Mines, and an experienced trainer, Peters brings engineering, communication and real world experiences to the team. Visit bobcat.com.







Photo Credits: Industrial Flow Solutions

Reliable Pumping Solutions for Construction

How submersible pumps made a difference in 2 major US infrastructure projects

BY STEVE MOSLEY

Water appears in the construction industry in many forms, and its role can be either positive or problematic. It is useful when intentionally integrated into a process or when a project involves capturing or reusing water. More often, though, it becomes a problem, especially when groundwater or rainwater accumulates in a recently excavated area. In any case, having a reliable construction pump is essential for keeping water under control and the project moving forward.

Submersible pumps are a frequently used solution in all types of construction projects. For example, they protect valuable equipment and prevent jobsites from turning into muddy messes. Submersible pumps can also be incorporated into water reuse systems or can be installed below ground to operate with minimal impact on the surrounding area.

This article explores submersible pumps in construction projects. It features two major infrastructure projects: the replacement of the Tappan Zee Bridge in New York and the reconstruction of sea walls in Galveston, Texas.

Key Considerations for a Construction Pump

Construction sites operate in a wide range of environments and impose demands that few other industries face: handling abrasive solids in high-concentration suspensions such as sand, gravel or slurry; maintaining a constant flow of sludge and gritty materials; and preventing pump corrosion.

Construction pumps must combine several key features to be truly effective:

Reliability

A failed pump on a construction site can be catastrophic. Flooding puts personnel and machinery at risk and causes costly project delays. Therefore, pump reliability is critical.

Portability

Construction sites are often remote and dynamic. Workers may need to relocate pumps as project phases change. Lightweight, portable units offer needed flexibility.

Customizability

Every construction project is unique. Modular pumps adapt to each site's specific water management needs.

- *Extended cable lengths* — Some operations require remote power for the pump(s). The ability to install longer cables enables pumps to meet site requirements. Extended cables also provide flexibility to relocate pumps as needed for the project.

- *Intelligent controls* — Modern systems go beyond simple on/off operation. Options such as floatless level sensing, variable frequency drive (VFD) operation to improve efficiency and load management and multipump coordination enable more innovative and efficient dewatering strategies.

When combined with rugged base designs, such as double mechanical seals, abrasion-resistant impellers or hardened wear rings, these features allow pumps to be engineered for reliability under virtually any conditions.

Partnering with a manufacturer can ensure an optimal fit for any application. This might mean a stand that secures the control during operation and transports both the control and pump around the site. Alternatively, it could be a custom strainer or a fixture enabling the pump to fit inside a narrow casing.

This adaptability is indispensable in the challenging, time-sensitive world of construction.

Tappan Zee Bridge Replacement

The New NY Bridge project, an initiative to replace the aging Tappan Zee Bridge, presented a unique combination of engineering and environmental challenges. The 3.1-mile span over the Hudson River carried over 138,000 vehicles daily, necessitating that the replacement be built quickly, safely and without disrupting existing traffic patterns.

In addition to tight time and budget constraints, construction required the controlled movement of large volumes of river water to support proper curing of massive concrete pylons without compromising structural integrity.

At the same time, strict environmental regulations mandated that the surrounding river ecosystem remain protected throughout the process. This included preventing harm to fish, larvae and aquatic habitats, as well as ensuring minimal impact on water temperature and quality.

Dewatering pumps were selected for their ability to deliver consistent high-pressure flow — up to 430 gallons per minute (gpm) and 165 pounds per square inch (psi) — which is critical for curing concrete in the tower pylons.

To meet environmental requirements, each pump was equipped with 5-millimeter (mm) wedge wire screens to prevent the intake of fish and larvae. Temperature controls were also implemented to ensure that water used in the operation did not raise the river's temperature by more than three degrees.

More than 50 pumps were deployed, performing reliably without failures.

Galveston Sea Wall Reconstruction

After Hurricane Ike struck in 2008, Galveston, Texas, faced major infrastructure repairs, including rebuilding damaged sections of its historic 17-foot seawall. Downtown flooding left 6 feet of standing water, and reconstruction crews worked in a city only a few feet above sea level. One of the most difficult challenges was keeping water out of the work zones using cofferdams.

The construction team relied on dewatering pumps to protect jobsites, but their existing pumps frequently failed. Problems included:

- Clogging from silt and sand
- Corrosion from saltwater and abrasive solids
- Frequent downtime from 24/7 operating cycles wearing out motors
- Frequent relocation between jobsites

To keep projects on schedule, the city needed portable, durable pumps capable of handling abrasive solids while operating in harsh, salty environments. After research and field testing, the team replaced their failing pumps with lightweight, hard-metal dewatering agitator pumps.

The pumps were engineered for abrasive environments and included:



- Built-in agitators to mix settled solids with water, maintaining sump volume and discharge flow
- Abrasion resistance from chrome iron impellers and wear plates, plus hardened ductile iron volutes and agitators
- Lightweight, portable construction for fast relocation between sites
- Power options up to 10 horsepower, with flows of 475 gpm and heads of 117 feet

The team tested several units across multiple projects and found them reliable. The city ordered 25 more pumps for ongoing seawall and infrastructure work.

From massive bridge replacements to coastal flood control systems, construction projects require reliable pumping solutions to keep water under control and the project moving forward under relentless, unpredictable conditions.

Submersible pumps that combine reliability, portability and custom-engineered features are essential tools that keep projects safe, on schedule and compliant. With the right pumping tech in place, demanding jobsites can move forward with confidence and efficiency.

Steve Mosley is a product manager at Industrial Flow Solutions and currently living and working in Connecticut. He graduated from the University of Hartford with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. Visit flowsolutions.com.



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Why Worker Interaction Will Matter More Than Algorithmic Power

Investigating the impact of AI & construction safety

BY MELVIN KEYANI

Artificial intelligence is entering construction safety at an accelerating pace. Computer-vision systems now detect missing personal protective equipment (PPE), predictive analytics platforms identify high-risk activities before work begins, and wearable technologies monitor environmental exposure and worker location in real time. These developments are often presented as the next major step forward in safety performance, shifting organizations from reactive incident response to predictive risk prevention. Recent industry research from Wolters Kluwer indicates that approximately 28% of environmental, health and safety (EHS) functions already use AI, while nearly half plan to invest in AI-enabled capabilities within the next year, signaling a rapid transition toward data-driven safety management.

Yet as AI deployment accelerates, a critical risk is emerging that receives far less attention: implementation failure. While industry conversations frequently focus on what AI systems can detect, much less discussion has centered on how frontline workers actually interact with these technologies in real operational environments. This human-technology interface may ultimately determine whether AI meaningfully improves safety outcomes or simply adds another layer of digital complexity to demanding workflows.

Technology Is Advancing Faster Than Implementation Strategy

Construction remains one of the most operationally complex industries, with constantly changing environments, multi-employer jobsites and highly mobile labor forces. In these conditions, safety technology cannot succeed on detection capability alone. Systems must function reliably within fast-paced workflows, be usable under real jobsite conditions — often with gloves, limited connectivity and time pressure — and generate alerts that are relevant, actionable and trusted.

In many early deployments, organizations have prioritized system capability over workforce interaction design. Multiple digital platforms inspections, permits, incident reporting, training systems and AI-enabled monitoring are often introduced simultaneously, each generating its own notifications and reporting requirements. Without careful integration, the result can be alert fatigue, reduced engagement and declining data quality, ultimately limiting the value of the technology itself. AI does not

automatically improve safety performance; implementation quality determines whether it becomes an enabler or a distraction.

Workforce Trust Remains the Overlooked Success Factor

One of the most critical determinants of successful AI adoption is workforce acceptance. Camera-based monitoring systems, behavioral analytics and wearable tracking technologies can deliver valuable safety insights, but they also raise understandable concerns around privacy, fairness and how collected data will be used. Where workers perceive AI primarily as a monitoring tool rather than a safety support system, resistance or disengagement can emerge quickly.

Organizations that achieve stronger adoption typically take a workforce-centered approach. They communicate clearly that AI deployment is focused on hazard detection and injury prevention rather than productivity monitoring; involve frontline supervisors and worker representatives early in pilot programs; and provide transparency about how safety data is stored, governed and used. When workers see that tech supports safer working conditions, acceptance improves.

Avoiding the 'False Sense of Safety'

Another emerging concern is the unintended belief that automated monitoring systems themselves represent the safety control. AI-based detection tools can identify hazards more consistently than traditional observation alone, but they do not eliminate the underlying risk. Overreliance on automated alerts can inadvertently weaken supervisory vigilance or shift attention away from planning, engineering controls and frontline leadership.

The most effective organizations position AI as a risk-identification capability rather than a replacement for professional judgment. Supervisors and safety leaders should be trained to treat AI alerts as one data source among many, while maintaining strong planning, supervision and operational safety oversight.

Measuring What Actually Matters

Many organizations evaluate AI systems based on detection volume how many PPE violations were identified, how many alerts were generated or how many hazards were logged. While these metrics demonstrate system activity, they do not necessarily indicate improved safety outcomes. More meaningful indicators include intervention response times, sustained reduction in exposure to high-risk conditions, workforce engagement with alerts and measurable behavioral changes over time. Organizations that measure these operational outcomes gain a clearer understanding of whether the technology is influencing real-world risk reduction rather than simply producing additional data.

The Evolving Role of Safety Leaders

As AI technologies expand across construction operations, the role of the safety professional is evolving. Safety leaders are increasingly involved in evaluating technology effectiveness, ensuring ethical deployment, supporting workforce engagement and integrating digital systems into operational workflows. Their involvement is critical in ensuring AI solutions are designed not only for detection accuracy but also for usability, workforce acceptance and operational practicality.

A Human-Centered Future for AI in Safety

AI has significant potential to strengthen safety management across construction and other high-risk industries, particularly through improved hazard visibility and earlier identification of emerging risks. However, the long-term impact of these technologies will depend less on algorithm sophistication and more on how effectively they are integrated into the human systems of work. Organizations that invest in workforce consultation, usability, training and governance alongside technology deployment are far more likely to achieve measurable safety improvements.

Over the next five years, AI capabilities are expected to become embedded across inspection platforms, permit-to-work systems, equipment monitoring and workforce safety applications. Organizations that develop human-centered implementation strategies today will be better positioned to realize the long-term safety benefits of these technologies.

As AI adoption accelerates, the key industry question is no longer whether the technology works. The more important question is whether organizations are designing AI safety systems around how people actually work, because ultimately, AI does not make jobsites safer on its own. How workers interact with AI determines whether its potential is realized.

What Safety Leaders Should Prioritize Now

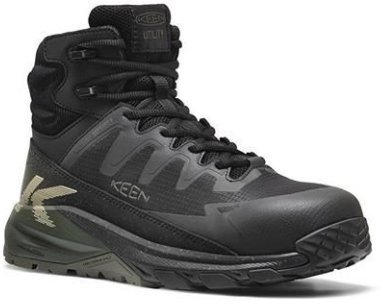
- Pilot AI safety systems with frontline workforce involvement
- Measure behavioral and exposure outcomes, not just alert volume
- Integrate AI alerts into existing operational safety workflows
- Train supervisors on both the capabilities and limitations of AI monitoring

As AI becomes increasingly embedded across safety management systems, the firms that achieve the greatest safety gains will not be those that deploy the most advanced tech, but those that implement it in ways that align with how work is actually performed on-site.

Melvin Keyani is an EHS director at Dornan Engineering, a Turner Construction Company, leading safety strategy across major construction and mission-critical projects. He is also a doctoral researcher specializing in the digitalization of construction health and safety, focusing on how technology design, procurement decisions and workforce interaction influence the effective adoption of safety systems on-site. Visit dornan.ie.

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.



KEEN UTILITY

Targhee Blur

Released: 2/2/26

Availability: U.S. market

What's new? New for spring, KEEN Utility's Targhee Blur is a light, fast athletic work hiker, with "out-of-the-box" comfort that lasts. The Targhee Blur is available for men in mid- and low-collar heights and several colorways.

Specs: This boot features a mid-height upper with KEEN.DRY technology for reliable water protection, KEEN.ReGEN+ cushioning that returns over 60% energy with each step for all-shift comfort, a lightweight carbon toe that protects without weighing you down, and a mid-height upper for agile movement with more protection.



WEATHER GUARD

Weather Guard Pack Rat

Released: 2/3/26

Availability: U.S. & Canadian markets

What's new? This is a fully reengineered steel drawer system built to deliver durability, enhanced security and fleet-ready performance for professional trades, contractors and commercial operators. The redesigned Pack Rat is built from the ground up to solve the problems that plague plastic drawer systems, including cracking, warping, security failures and premature wear. It turns the truck bed or work van into a jobsite-ready workspace, supporting organization and safe access.

Specs: Powder-coated 14-gauge steel construction and steel ball bearings said to outperform plastic competitors. Simplified, standardized security: Integrated 1KEY ULTRALOCK provides one-key control that reduces key inventory hassles across a single truck or an entire fleet. Configurable organization for real work: Adjustable and removable partitions support semi-custom layouts for tools, fasteners and equipment. Easy accessibility to tools and supplies.



CURTIS INDUSTRIES

John Deere Gator XUV855M S4 A/C Cab

Released: 1/1/26

Availability: U.S., Canadian & European markets

What's new? The John Deere Gator XUV855M S4 A/C Cab is a climate-control solution engineered to deliver true air conditioning and all-season protection for four-seat Gator operators. Designed for demanding work environments, this cab provides real, factory-grade air conditioning, shielding occupants from heat, sun, rain, dust and insects while maintaining a comfortable, climate-controlled cabin environment for both front and rear passengers.

Specs: Two double-squirrel cage blowers move 610 cubic feet per minute (CFM) volume of air. Features 24,000 British thermal units (Btu) in its evaporator core, with a 2-ton valve that produces enough ice-cold air for both 1- and 2-row configurations. Ten adjustable vents fully distribute air throughout the cabin to keep the operator and passengers comfortable. A 66-capacity control (cc) scroll compressor provides plenty of refrigerant flow even at engine idle.



4 KINGSPAN INSULATED PANELS NORTH AMERICA

Leo-Klip Fastening System

Released: 2/5/26

Availability: U.S. market

What's new? Engineered to meet modern construction demands, the Leo-Klip and Leo-Klip+ deliver up to a 40% increase in allowable span lengths in single-span applications, enabling faster installation and lower secondary support steel requirements. Simple installation helps to reduce labor demands, increase speed of build, shorten project timelines and lower construction costs.

Specs: Increases spans by 19%-40% in single-span applications, reducing the need for secondary supports. Universal compatibility with Kingspan's KS Series and Optimo panels. One-clip solution for both intermediate and end supports, simplifying installation. Minimized back-fastening, saving on time and labor. No impact on air, water, vapor or thermal performance of panel assemblies.



5 REDARC ELECTRONICS

Tow-Pro Link

Released: 2/2/26

Availability: U.S. & Canadian markets

What's new? REDARC's new Tow-Pro Link is built for the demands of construction and contractor towing. From equipment trailers to jobsite haulers, safe and consistent braking is critical. Tow-Pro Link delivers smooth, even braking with a built-in six-axis sensor and one-touch anti-sway functionality to help maintain control when loads shift or conditions change. Its off-road mode is designed for dirt roads, gravel and uneven jobsite terrain, giving drivers confidence.

Specs: Seven-pin trailer plug connection means no vehicle modifications or specialist tools, just a fast, frustration-free setup that gets you towing in 15 minutes or less. Smartphone, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto integration. Features a USB-A powered remote for users who prefer a physical remote. Everyday mode and off-road modes SwayStop Plus allows users to stop dangerous trailer-sway events with one touch of a button.



6 EMESENT

GX1

Released: 2/16/26

Availability: U.S., Canadian & European markets

What's new? This product marks a significant breakthrough by achieving 5-millimeter (mm) to 10-mm global accuracy to deliver precision for topographic surveying and building and infrastructure construction. It can even reduce the time required to survey a site by up to 95%, reducing what once took weeks into a single day of scanning.

Specs:

- Integrated real-time-kinematic (RTK) georeferencing with real-time quality monitoring
- 4 x 20-megapixel cameras for 360-degree panoramic imagery
- Emesent SLAM algorithm
- Four deployment modes: backpack, survey pole, vehicle mount, handheld
- Integrated batteries for cable-free management
- Rapid accuracy validation reports in Aura processing software



7 SAKAI AMERICA INC.

TS160-4

Released: 2/18/26

Availability: U.S. & Canadian markets

What's new? The TS160-4 introduces a dedicated 3-ton class static pneumatic tire roller to a North American market with limited options. It is remarkable for its "back-to-basics" design, featuring a mechanical engine with no diesel particulate filter (DPF), diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) or engine control module (ECM). Contains simple analog controls for maximum uptime. It offers a specialized, cost-effective alternative for achieving smooth mats and tight joints on smaller paving jobs like driveways and parking lots.

Specs: The TS160-4 features a 51-inch compaction width using seven "superflat" tires. It is powered by a 21-horsepower Kubota diesel engine and has an operating weight of 6,515 pounds. Key specs include a 43.6-gallon water tank with a triple-filtered spray system, all-metal nozzles and a 2.6-gallon release agent tank. It offers superior maneuverability via rear steering and comes with a 3-year/3,000-hour warranty.



8 REFRIGIWEAR

ComfortGuard Bib Overalls

Released: 9/1/25

Availability: U.S. & Canadian markets

What's new? As part of the updated ComfortGuard collection, these bib overalls feature a more flexible canvas shell and streamlined insulation that improves mobility on the job. The design focuses on core warmth and freedom of movement — ideal for active tasks like framing, material handling and equipment operation. The result is winter gear that supports productivity, comfort and durability without adding unnecessary bulk.

Specs: Comfort rated to minus-10 degrees; 200-gram industrial-strength insulation; rugged, water-repellent canvas shell; polyester taffeta lining; adjustable suspenders; reinforced knees and stress points; multiple storage pockets; hammer loop; and reflective trim for added visibility in low-light work environments.



9 NATIONAL CENTER FOR CONSTRUCTION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Construction Foreman Superintendent — Now Available in Spanish

Released: 1/22/26

Availability: U.S. market

What's new? The National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) has taken its Construction Foreman Certification Program and made it available to craft professionals who are eager to grow in their careers but have met language barriers. Now that the program is available in Spanish, more people can access the training needed to excel in field leadership positions.

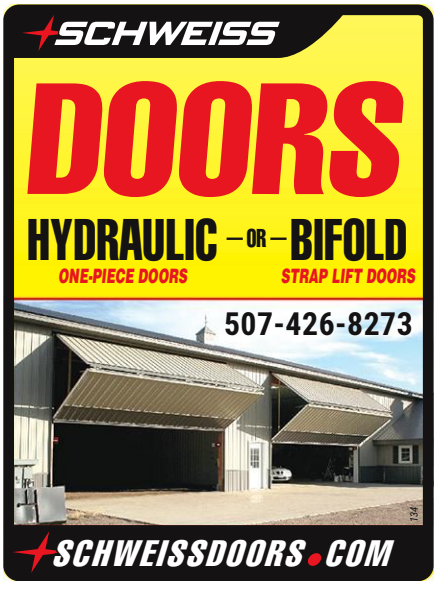
Specs: Five online courses available, along with assessments and continuous learning resources. Package options are available at multiple price tiers. The program serves two critical objectives: risk reduction and employee retention.



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❑ 12 Engineer, Architect
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❑ 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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❑ 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
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STATS

Annual Value of Construction Put in Place

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

$2,168,775

DECEMBER 2025 TOTAL ANNUAL VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION PUT IN

	2023	2024	2025
Total Private Construction	**1,619,686**	**1,688,531**	**1,647,058**
Residential	911,713	939,486	916,177
Nonresidential	707,972	749,046	730,881
Total Public Construction	**476,326**	**503,642**	**521,717**
Residential	10,447	12,040	12,274
Nonresidential	465,879	491,602	509,443
TOTAL Construction	**2,096,012**	**2,192,173**	**2,168,775**

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

"Overall economic conditions remain subdued, with revised 2025 employment data revealing smaller gains than anticipated and nonfarm payrolls increasing by just 130,000 in January 2026. That said, construction employment was a bright spot, adding 33,000 jobs, including 25,000 in nonresidential specialty trades, signaling a positive shift after stagnant growth last year. Architectural services also showed resilience, with a net gain of 1,300 positions in 2025 despite early declines and a slight dip in December."

Richard Branch, AIA CHIEF ECONOMIST

AIA Architectural Billings Index (ABI)

National			*Regional - Billings				*Sectors - Billings			
Month	Billings	Inquiries	Northeast	Midwest	South	West	Multifamily Residential	Commercial /Industrial	Institutional	Mixed
Oct-25	47.6	54.8	45.1	49.6	45.3	42.1	46.8	43.9	46.1	44.0
Nov-25	45.3	51.4	43.1	52.3	46.1	43.6	46.6	45.2	47.6	44.5
Dec-25	48.5	52.9	44.2	51.7	47.7	45.3	45.5	47.8	48.7	44.0
Jan-26	43.8	49.3	42.3	46.3	50.2	46.3	48.4	43.9	46.8	43.4

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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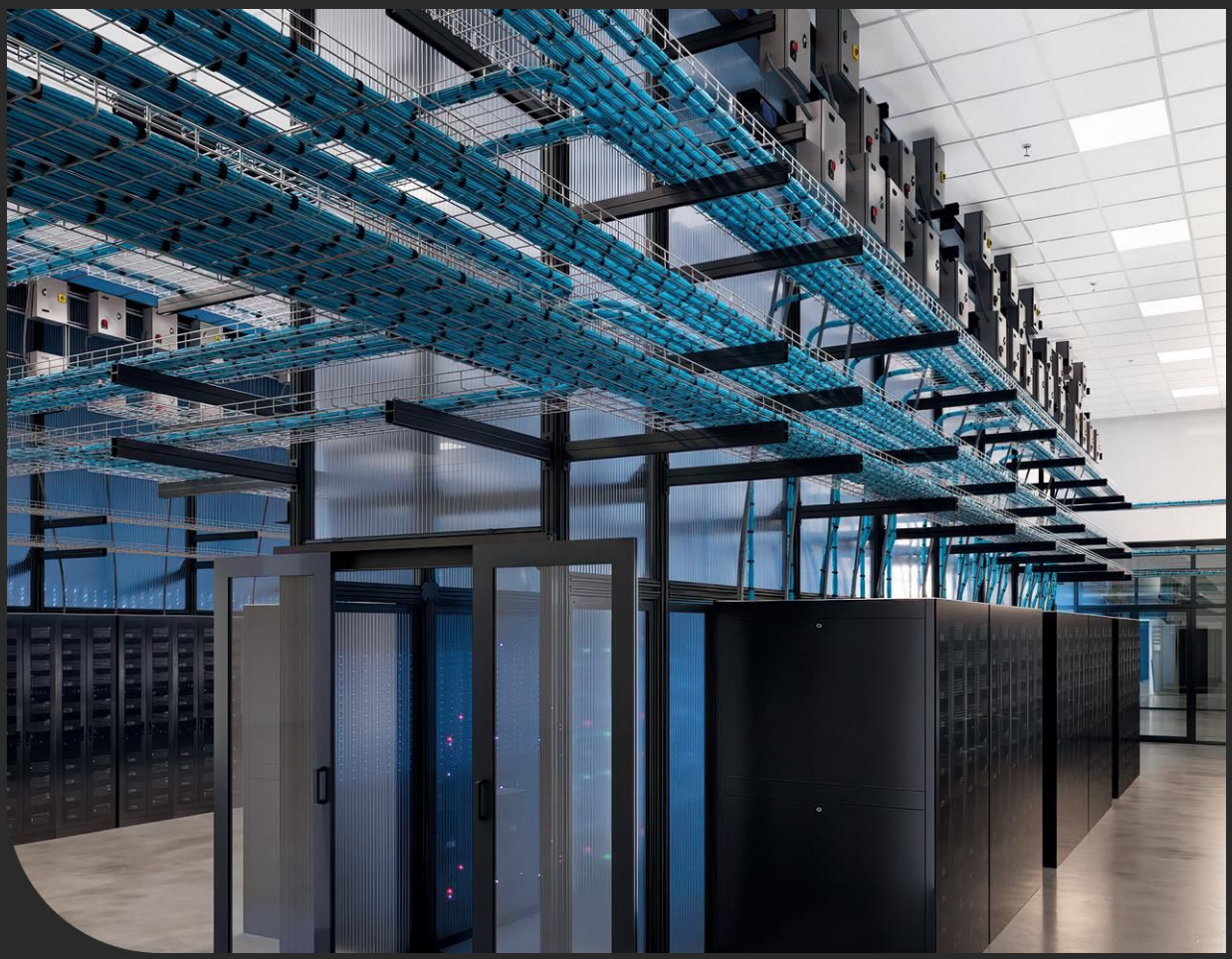
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