

The Step-by-Step Guide to Choosing Construction Software for **Main Contractors**



Trimble
Construction



STEP 1:

Define your needs

Even if you've been making do with spreadsheets and duplicate books, there comes a time when every contractor needs to graduate to better, more efficient methods of managing their jobs.

The tipping point might come because you've just taken on a much larger project or when teams expand and find keeping track of every job more than a full-time job. Whatever it may be, it's a sign that things are going well. Still, you must modernise and embrace construction technology to keep your momentum.

Usually, the need to switch from your current system to a more modern, reliable, and accessible one coincides with your business being busier than ever. Even so, making time for your company's digital transformation is important.

Your business will suffer when teams become overwhelmed by current workloads and they don't have the tools they need to maintain service levels. Things fall through the cracks, customer service levels drop, and you might find that your hard-won reputation is on the line.



STEP 1 CONTINUED:

The good news is that the right construction software can solve many of these problems, including:

- Improving collaboration and communication across various teams and departments
- Better project and progress tracking and a corresponding increase in profitability
- Eliminating “double work” that occurs when working with a patchwork of different systems and solutions
- A single source of up-to-the-minute information for employees at every level and in every role
- Better management of human and equipment resources
- Access to real-time project information allows your team to respond to delays and problems faster, lowering costs and improving on-time delivery

Many large contractors can feel too busy to change, but the old, manual ways of recording information that used to work for their business simply don't meet their current needs.

Construction software can help you solve many of these problems and better use your resources, but it's very important to find the right software for your company.

Spend time defining what matters in your business and which areas you need the most help with. List any software packages that you might want to integrate with your new systems, and decide which employees will be using the software, where, and how.

Understanding where you are struggling to cope is the first step in deciding which construction software solution is best for your business.



STEP 2:

Look at the Big Picture

Construction-based companies worldwide at nearly every industry level have always been more hands-on and less technology focused. It comes with the territory, and that's a very good thing when it comes to getting the job done right.

However, suppose you also want to get the job done on time and make a profit doing it in the modern business landscape. In that case, you'll have to embrace technology and the digital tools that allow us to do things faster, better, and more accurately.

Many large contractors do use some software in various departments, but often, they're disconnected, stand-alone systems that still require a lot of hands-on, manual work by your team.

This makes things harder for employees and management – particularly when they're trying to analyse company-wide data – and also means there's an increased risk of human error.

Choose Construction Specific Company-Wide Solutions

Suppose you want to avoid doing things twice (or more) and give your team quick and easy access to all the information they need when they need it. In that case, a construction-specific, company-wide solution allows your

Construction specific solutions provide automated data flow and real-time collaboration across all departments.



team to perform better at every level and in every department.

Software tools that are built for construction connect job sites to project management offices, offer resource tracking and planning tools and even integrate with many popular construction accounting solutions.

Automated data flow, real-time collaboration across all departments and tools built for the construction world's challenges all translate to better performance, cost savings and improved productivity.

Unique Construction Challenges

In some ways, your construction business is a lot like other businesses. You have vendors to pay, send invoices, and track inventory.

But some situations are unique to the construction industry.

Whether it's progress billing, defects liability periods or escalation clauses, many business processes are integral to construction that you just don't find in any other business. While it's fairly easy to find tools that can create invoices and pay vendors, it's not always

easy to find solutions that help to connect the field with your project management team and support all of these construction-specific processes.

That's why so many of the business software solutions out there just don't work as well for construction-based businesses, for several reasons, including:

- Does not offer features for technical and on-site construction management roles
- Can't create necessary approval processes for a construction environment
- Aren't customisable
- Aren't compatible with construction technology and terminology.

In short, traditional business management software just does not solve the problem of compartmentalising your business and still requires you to find (and integrate) tools for technical and project teams.

STEP 3:

Set Expectations

There's a good reason why a whole sector of the business consulting world is dedicated to change management. Change is always harder than you think it will be, and making the leap to the right kind of digital tools and technologies for your construction business is no different.

The single biggest reason for this is that you cannot simply pause your business while you select the right software, manage the rollout and train your people to use it correctly.

Quotes still need to go out, jobs still need to start and end, and teams still need to get things done.

This is why it's so important to ensure that you have a clear picture of what your business needs, what you want, and what your budget for not only the software but for managing the transition will be.

Many construction companies who do make the switch to industry-specific software tools appoint an internal team to manage the process, and it's common for companies to overlap their old and new systems, working in tandem until the new system is completely set up, tested, and introduced to employees before phasing out your old systems.



Ensure that you have a clear picture of what your business needs, what you want, and your budget.

STEP 3 CONTINUED:

In fact, managing digital change in your construction company is very much like project managing a big project – with all the challenges and steps between day one and final completion.

The right construction software will change your business for the better, but there will be some effort and time involved in getting there.

Learn As Much as You Can

One of the most important steps in preparing yourself for your construction company's digital transformation is to learn as much as you can about what construction software and technology can do and how the latest cloud-based tech works in general.

Investigate the top software options for your construction industry sector and consider all the features and functions.

At this point, you want to start looking for features that you need now but also consider tools and technologies that might help you in the future. A vendor that partners with your organisation and knows the 'big picture' is very important if you want to avoid another big shift in the near future.

So, while you're investigating the tools and software solutions that are out there, ask questions, view demos, get recommendations, and learn as much as you can about where construction tech is now, where it's going, and what might be possible soon.



STEP 4

Understand the Difference Between Price and Value

As your organisation is investigating construction software solutions for your business, one common question will almost certainly be, “how much does it cost?” While this is certainly a big factor in the decision process, it’s important to understand the difference between price and value.

It’s also a good idea to learn more about how software services are priced and how costs may increase over time as your needs change, and your organisation grows. The software that offers the best price now might not be able to grow with your organisation.

How Construction Software Is Priced

These days, most enterprise software – including construction software – is designed to be used on the cloud. This allows employees to access your construction software from anywhere, on any device, and it means you don’t have to invest in a powerful server and server maintenance. There’s also technical support, built-in security, and many other benefits for companies that are looking for effective, feature-rich software solutions.

Look holistically at how a software can grow with your business as your needs change, not just at initial costs.

STEP 4 CONTINUED:

However, unlike the old days, when you used to buy your software on a CD and install it on your local desktop computer, cloud-based construction software platforms usually have some kind of subscription plan.

There may be several different costs that make up your quote for construction software, such as:

- Deployment and setup costs
- Per user subscriptions
- Tiered package options with more or fewer features depending on the price

All of these factors can greatly affect how much your company pays for construction software, so be very careful when you are evaluating the cost of your shortlisted software options. There may be more than meets the eye!

Must-Have Value-Added Services

Of course, there are some value-added services that have nothing to do with how many users you have or which package you choose for your construction software, but they're no less important in ensuring you get the right software for your company. These include:

- Easy to access technical support
- Training services and tutorials
- Regular upgrades and security support
- Integration with other apps and software packages

All of these services will make a big difference to how you use your new construction software and what your experience working with the company that provides it will be. Be sure to investigate them while you're exploring pricing.

It's also a good idea to find out more about the company behind the software. While newer tech companies may offer more budget-friendly options, they often have limited staff, which can make it very difficult to get support and training when you need it.

STEP 4 CONTINUED:

Construction Software ROI

The final topic we need to discuss when it comes to price versus value is ROI or return on investment.

Construction software that is a good fit for your business will not only reduce redundant work, improve productivity and increase profits but it has also been proven to offer distinct and measurable benefits.

94% Increased efficiency in the construction phase

83% Reduced errors and reworks

89% Achieved time-savings in the construction phase

83% Achieved cost-savings in the design phase

This means that while construction software is certainly a cost of doing business, most companies who choose and use the right software will cover all associated costs in increased profits and lower expenses.

**The right software will
pay for itself through
increased **profits** and
lower **expenses**.**



STEP 5

Deployment and Security Decisions

The next big step in choosing the right construction software for your business goes beyond features and functionality and deals with the nuts and bolts of deployment and security.

Many large construction companies have dedicated, on-site IT specialists who can maintain networks and servers, monitor security, and perform repairs and maintenance when needed. However, the vast amounts of project data that are being shared on a daily basis means that security can become a huge risk if there are not permissions, workflows and an infrastructure in place at every step of the way.

Cybercrime, ransomware, and malicious software use have increased exponentially over the past few years.

This means that choosing to host and manage your own software systems on a local network is not only a lot of work but could put your business at risk of data breaches, fraud, network failure, and more.

This is one of the reasons why cloud-based construction software has become so popular since it became available. It's always accessible, professionally maintained, and hosted on servers that are constantly monitored for performance and security.

STEP 5 CONTINUED:

Cloud-Based Software Benefits

If you're used to on-device and on-premises software, you might be wondering if cloud-based construction software is really the right choice for your business. While you're deciding, it's worth considering the many clear benefits of using this type of software.

1. It is accessible from anywhere, which means your employees in different branch offices, on different sites, and even working from home, all have access to live, real-time data and tools
2. Reduced IT costs since the devices and desktops used to access software are less critical to software performance
3. Secure and easy-to-access login options and granular security clearance and permissions options
4. Always up-to-date software, thanks to automatic updates
5. Automated data backups and off-site data storage
6. Faster implementation and roll-out
7. Flexible pricing options and solutions that scale and grow with your business
8. Most importantly, perhaps, time really is money in construction. Cloud-based means your projects run quickly and with minimal downtime

STEP 6:

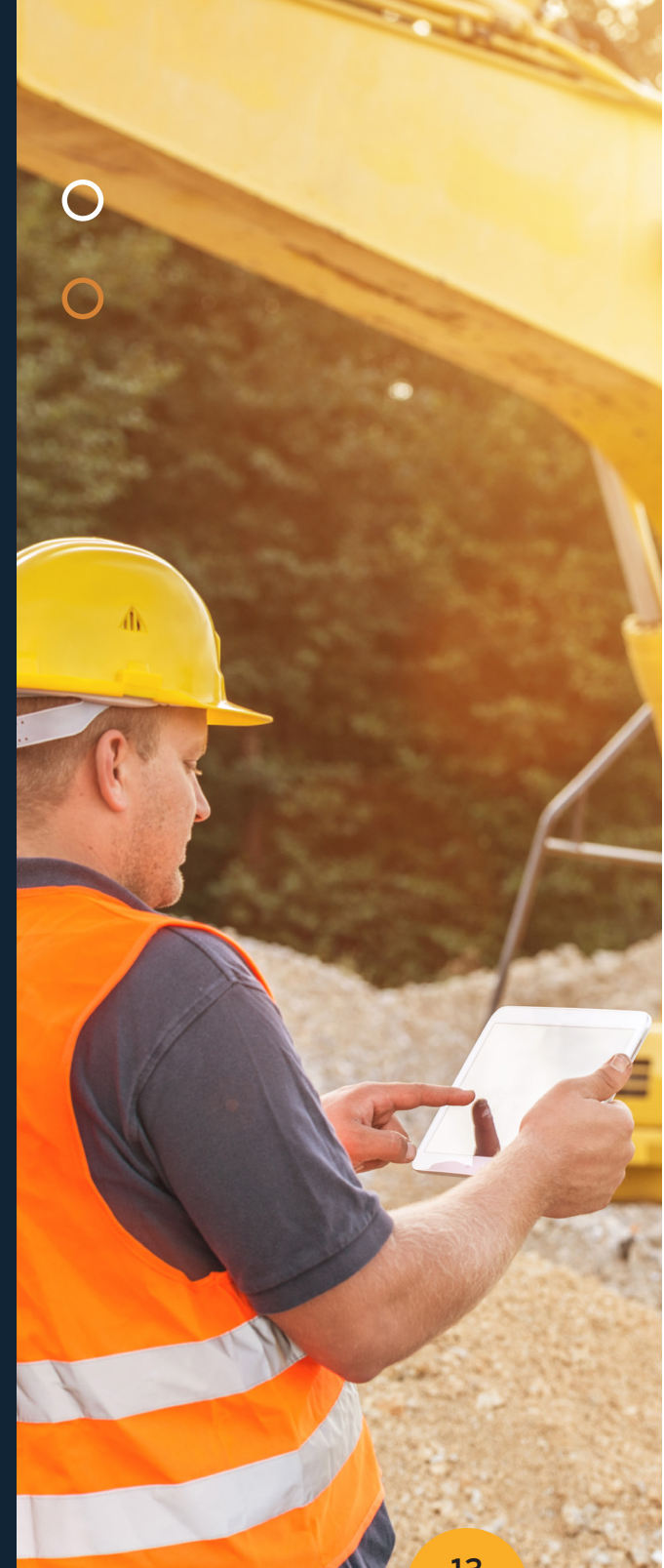
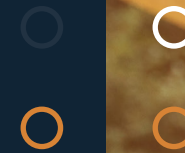
Get Your Team on Board

Surprisingly, some of the biggest challenges construction companies and trade businesses face when selecting, deploying, and learning new construction software solutions is a lack of buy-in from employees.

Many employees are so used to the old, outdated systems they've been using for so long that they mistrust any new software before they've even tried to use it.

It's very important that management teams not only support the choice of construction software but that they take an active role in championing it and communicating the benefits of the system to their employees.

Consider encouraging employees to become Champions of the products, taking the lead to chat to - and encourage usage from - their peers. Change management is multi-layered, and employees often need to understand how the new systems benefit their specific role rather than being forced to use it.



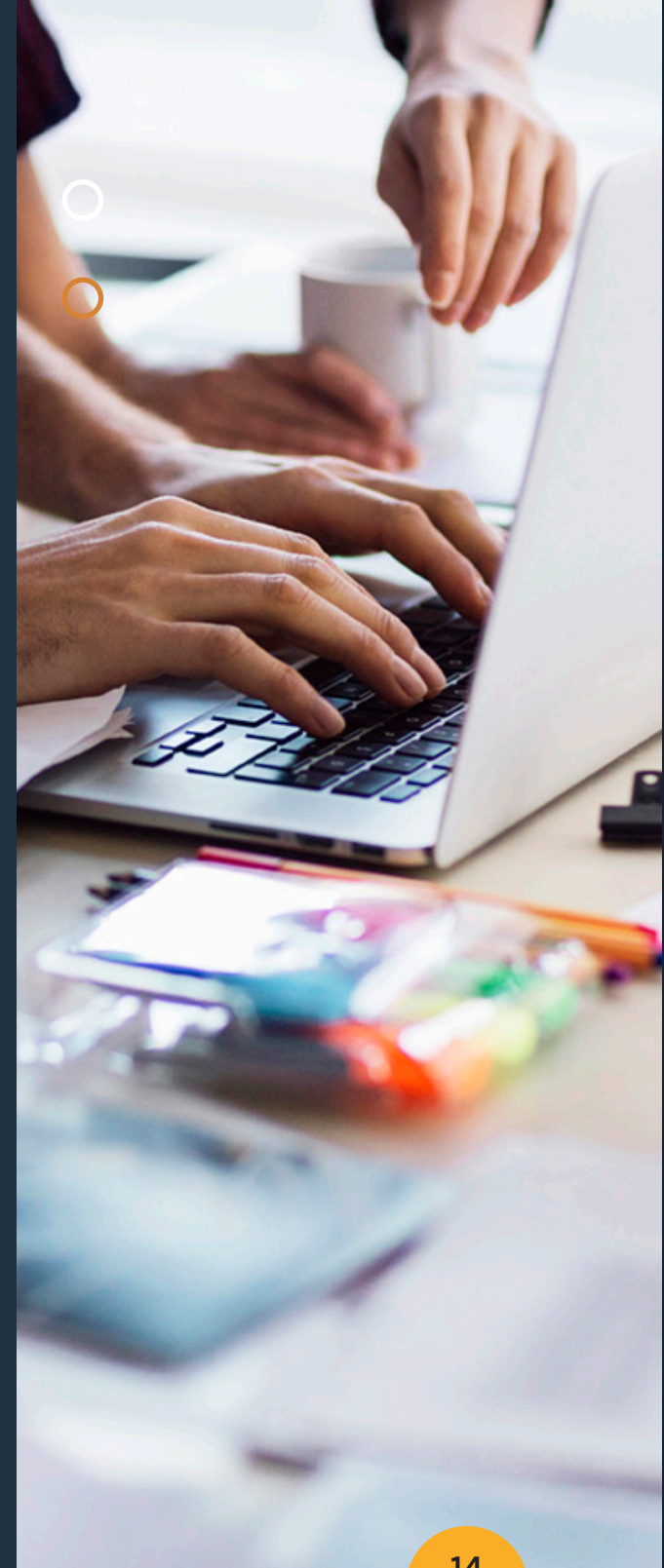
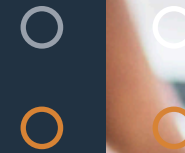
STEP 6 CONTINUED:

Be Clear About Benefits

However, before your C-suite can drive digital change in your company, they first need to be clear about the benefits your new software choice will offer. These may include:

1. Benefits to all areas of the company rather than to one department or team
2. Which real-world challenges your new construction software will solve, and how
3. Whether the software addresses the needs and pain points of all company departments
4. What kind of processes, systems, and tasks will be sped up, improved, or even eliminated
5. How your new software will improve communication, record keeping, and accountability
6. What kind of training, support, and integrations will teams have access to?

Ensuring that the C-suite understands the true benefits of your new construction software means that they are better equipped to assist in the rollout and adoption of the system.



Testing and Limited Access

Even once you are almost certain that you've made the right construction software choice, it's still a good idea to conduct some real-world testing so that you can see exactly what your chosen software can do and how it performs.

Most construction software companies offer limited trial access to a real, fully functional version of their software. This is the best place to start the process, allowing key managers and decision-makers to test and evaluate the parts of the software solution that directly affects them and their teams.

Once the initial testing phase is completed, it's still a good idea to limit who has access to the new software system and how it is used.

Most software will require some type of setup and customisation to work for your business, so choose representatives from key departments to take on this process and create and test your company's personalised software system.

During this process, team leaders, managers, and department representatives will also learn how to use the software and will therefore be able to assist in the rollout process.



Make the Switch

At some point, after you've investigated construction software, reviewed quotes and pricing options, and tested and set up your chosen software, you will need to officially make the switch between your old systems and your new software.

There are several ways you can make this step a little easier for all involved:

1. Set a date for your shift to the new system so that everyone knows when to expect this big change
2. Provide employees access to the software before your deadline arrives so that they can review features and functionality and get comfortable with the new system
3. Arrange training sessions for teams and departments as needed
4. Ensure that all users have access to technical support as needed
5. Provide user manuals, links to tutorials, and other resources to make using your new software easier

6. Make it clear to all employees that all old systems will be retired when your deadline arrives
7. Schedule regular meetings and reviews to discuss the software and any challenges your team may be facing using it

The easier your transition to your new construction software is, and the more support and training your team has, the more likely they will all be to embrace your new system and make the most of it.

Once your team discovers how much time and effort they can save performing their usual tasks, they'll certainly come around to your new system and the many ways it will improve how your company operates.



Construction Specific, User-Friendly Software Solutions for Construction Businesses

If you've been searching for construction software solutions that check all the most important boxes but are still user-friendly, easy to use, and allow you to make the digital transition faster and with fewer teething problems, you might just find the product in the Trimble Viewpoint suite of construction software products.

Viewpoint Field View – Ideal for On-Site Management

Field View is designed to be an easy-to-use solution that connects the field teams with the project management office in real time.

It allows your people to capture site and project information, replaces pen and paper for health and safety forms, daily project updates and more, and creates task workflows that are easy to follow.

The complete audit trail created for each project means every department from project management and operations has the tools they need to complete critical business processes and creates a detailed record of exactly what happened on every job site.

Field teams have easy access to important job-related documents and information – which is the most important factor in construction project success – is easy to access.

With the right collaboration tools, jobs get done faster, with fewer problems along the way, which also means you have more, happier customers.




One of the key benefits for us, particularly using VFP, was the control of access of information

— Willmott Dixon



I can't imagine how we would have captured data and ensured protocols were followed without it.

— Adam Cannon, Project Director, Wates Group



Viewpoint For Projects – Document management made for construction

If your organisation needs to streamline and digitise more of its document management processes, then Viewpoint for Projects might be the ideal solution.

Viewpoint For Projects picks up the project documentation and offers a level of consistency and automated approval workflows that will speed up and simplify everything that matters to your project and document control teams.

Use Viewpoint For Projects to track progress, manage changes as they happen, and stay on top of every timeline.

Document and communication management makes it easy to manage version control, team collaboration, permissions, and more and ensures that you always have an up-to-date picture of your construction project.

Talk to a Construction Software Specialist

Choosing the right construction software is a many-step process, and it can be daunting and time-consuming. That's why so many construction and trades-based businesses still rely on old, outdated processes that don't really work.

Our team of construction software specialists is here to make the choices easier and to give you all the answers you need.



ABOUT TRIMBLE VIEWPOINT

Trimble Viewpoint, a Trimble division, is a leading global provider of integrated software solutions for the construction industry. Trimble Viewpoint software enables customers to integrate operations across the office, team and field to improve project profitability, enhance productivity, manage risk and effectively collaborate across the broad construction ecosystem. With nearly 8,000 clients, including more than 40 percent of the ENR 400, Trimble Viewpoint's innovations are transforming the construction industry by fully integrating operations across financial and HR systems, project management tools and mobile field solutions.

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