

# Build smarter with tech

Why your construction company should use smart technology



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# Chapter 1

## Introduction: The state of the construction industry today

Your construction company wants to deliver the best, most cost-effective building projects every time, but it's not always easy to do. Even though demand for work is high, success often feels like an uphill battle. Skilled labor shortages and the rising costs of materials are tightening already-small margins. This puts pressure on you and your project team to focus on speed over quality to come out ahead.

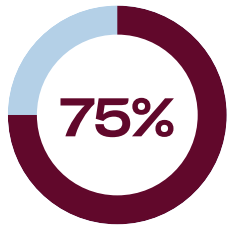
Materials costs are rising faster than your clients are willing to pay, often forcing you to absorb increases and find other ways to make up for it.

**The cost of materials has seen the highest price increase in more than 5 years. Between February 2016 and February 2017, prices have increased by 4.8%.<sup>1</sup>**

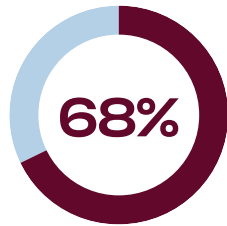
Current labor shortages are having far-reaching effects across the industry. It takes time to find skilled workers, and they're likely to cost you more money.

**70% of surveyed construction firms have a hard time finding qualified workers to hire.<sup>2</sup>**

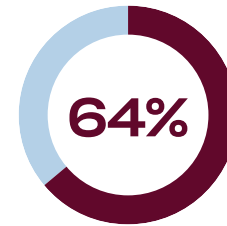
### Effects of labor/subcontractor shortage<sup>3</sup>



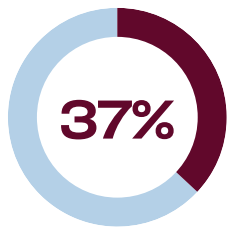
higher wages/  
subcontractor bids



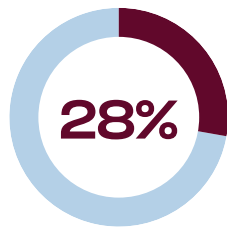
higher home prices



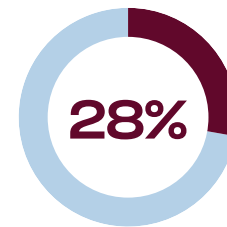
increased difficulty  
completing projects  
on time



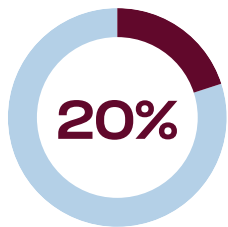
sought labor/subs  
from wider geography



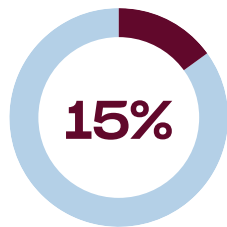
turned down  
projects



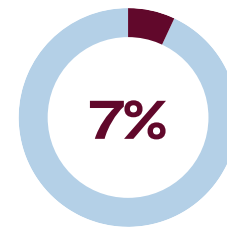
unprofitable projects



fewer accepted  
orders



lost/cancelled sales



other

## **So, how can you stay profitable while building projects you're proud of?**

Technology helps you find new ways to improve the speed and quality of your projects. Creating efficiencies using time-saving tools can make up for the money lost from labor shortages and rising costs.

We know adopting new technology can be difficult. It's hard to bring together contractors to successfully complete a project—even without factoring in technology challenges. And since you rarely work with the same team twice, you might not want to spend the time getting everyone up to speed.

The key is finding the right technology. Find a solution that unites different technologies and independent construction companies. Your work—and the industry—will be better for it.

**“As labor challenges continue to grow, technology will play an increasingly important role supporting the existing workforce, while inspiring the next generation of industry professionals.”**

*Sarah Hodges, Director of Construction Business Line at Autodesk<sup>2</sup>*

# Chapter 2

## Lay the groundwork with tailored tools

Offset your shrinking margins by committing to smart technology. Adopting new technology and management techniques could add \$1.6 trillion in value to the construction industry and improve its lagging productivity.<sup>4</sup>

What's more, mobile device use in the construction industry is on the rise. Mobile devices make it easier for your workers to access their files from anywhere—whether on the job site, working with a client, or in the office.

**Construction professionals say that having mobile capabilities on the job has increased in importance—by 20%.<sup>5</sup>**

### Mobile importance increases

2012:



2016:



Embracing technology can help make the request for proposals (RFPs) process simpler and easier, give your team immediate access to files, and help everyone work better, together.

## **Simplify the RFP submission process**

Consolidating RFPs is often paper- and time-intensive work. And the time it takes you to gather information from vendors and manage all the files could be put to better use.

With file-sharing technologies, you lose mounds of paperwork in favor of digital organization. This makes it easy to sort through the information you need. Plus, better feedback and sharing processes help you serve clients' needs more reliably and collaborate to do superior work.

“Similarly ... firms need to adapt to changes in how their clients handle RFPs. This may seem like a difficult challenge, but firms that change their internal processes and become more flexible in how they deal with clients will give themselves an edge.”

*2017 Engineering and Construction Trends, PwC<sup>6</sup>*

## **Give everyone on your team immediate access to files**

Real-time collaboration tools help your team work together across locations, minimizing back-and-forth communication and redundant work. Immediate access to the files you work with every day can also speed up work and lessen workers' frustrations. Contractors who rely on server-based systems have to either work from the office—removed from the construction site without real-time information—or use VPNs, which can be slow and cumbersome even for simple tasks.

Constant access to the latest versions of files can keep each worker informed, so everyone in your team is working with the most up-to-date information.

## **Help your team work better, together**

You can also use technology to bring teams together to work more efficiently. When everyone has access to the same documents and files, they can work faster and reduce redundant work. And collaboration creates better job satisfaction since employees know they're building better projects.

**“Proper construction document management may not spring immediately to mind as the root cause of high-priority issues that add significant cost and time to a construction project, not to mention sour general contractors' relationships with stakeholders—but more often than many GCs realize, it's the silent killer for all sorts of construction project issues.”**

ConnectConstruct blog<sup>7</sup>



# Chapter 3

## Become more competitive with Dropbox

You can combat industry challenges and maintain or improve your margins with the right technology. By bringing your resources together in one easily accessible place, you can improve efficiency across teams. Dropbox is the ideal tool to help construction companies like yours use technology to drive efficiency and spend more time building.

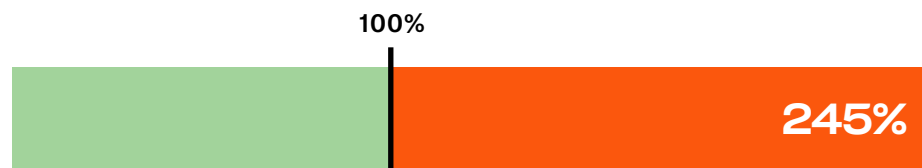
### Speed

Slow file access can halt productivity in its tracks. Dropbox Business syncs up to 4.6x faster than competing products,<sup>8</sup> so you don't have to wait until your lunch break for your file to load. And there's no need to log in and wait for a VPN to load your files on the job site. You can easily access remote files wherever you're working.

### Everett J. Prescott, Inc.



Prior to implementing Dropbox, submitting bids was paper-intensive and took 2.5 hours each. Now, Dropbox powers the submittal process and reduces that time to prepare a bid package to just 30 minutes.



**245% return on investment** based on time saved just from completing submittal packages

## Access

Whether you're talking with a client or working on the job site, you need to be able to access your files. But large renderings or videos can load slowly and take up space on your devices. With Smart Sync, you can access all files from any device—without taking up all your hard drive space. View and work with files from the apps you rely on daily, with advanced previews and seamless app integrations.

View and comment on files wherever you're working. From CAD and BIM files for building renderings, PDFs for receipts, or XLS for working through budgets, Dropbox makes them easily accessible from your device.

## Collaboration

When your teams work together toward a single goal, sharing ideas and information can often lead to better overall projects. But sometimes, collaborating across teams can create less transparency. With Dropbox, you can break down silos to make working with vendors, contractors, and clients completely seamless.

## Dropbox simplifies every stage of the construction process.

- **Bids.** The first step to securing a job is submitting bids, and it can be hectic. But with Dropbox, you can request, collect, and award bids in one organized place.
- **Contracting:** Collaborate across all kinds of file types and sizes during the design process to produce the best plans. Work with engineers, architects, interior designers, or anyone else on your team to put together final building designs.
- **Construction:** Keep vendors and clients involved in the project throughout construction. Simply create separate folders for each so construction managers can share files without having to give them full server access. Reviewing the latest blueprints and sharing progress photos and videos becomes quick and easy from any device, allowing onsite workers or in-office team members to access the same files. And surveyors can share measurements and observations of fieldwork in real time.

- **Completion:** Work together across job sites and offices to get approvals from project managers, finance team members, clients, and more.

**“When I create a folder in Dropbox, I can share large files with subcontractors, and they can upload their submissions right back—so I have those as soon as they’re done. It’s a lot easier than using an FTP site.”**

Steve Swanson, Centric Projects

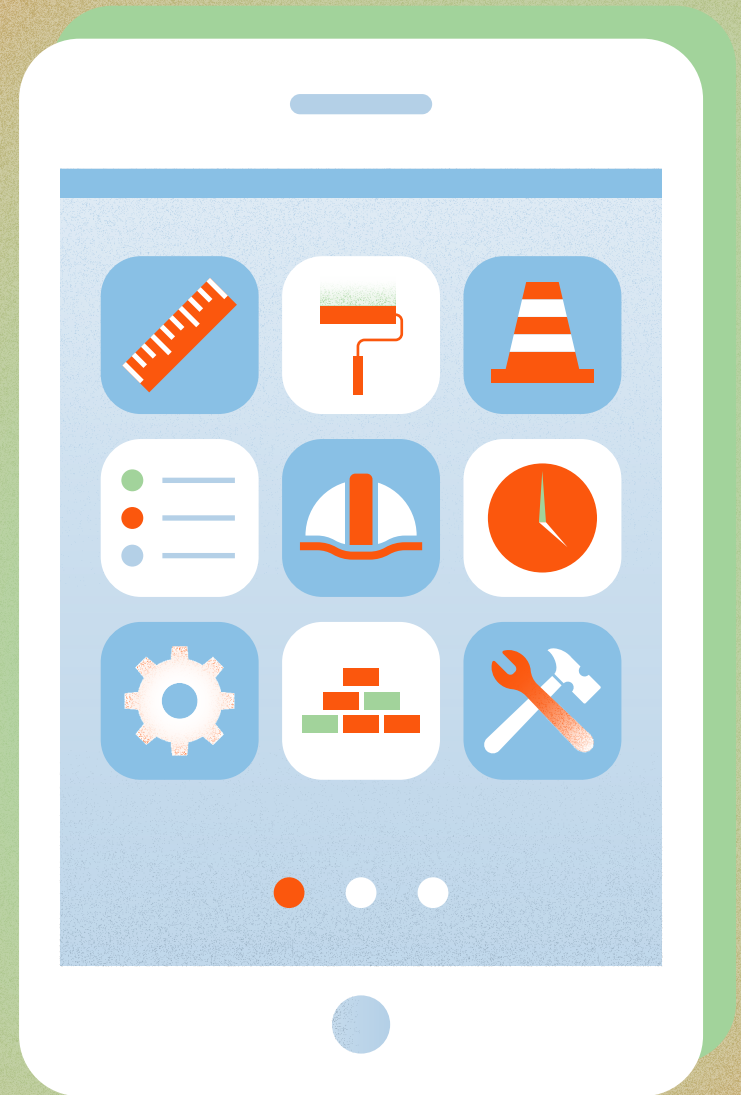


## Dropbox integrates with apps you already use

Here are just a few technology companies we've partnered with to help simplify construction managers' work processes.

**“A lack of software applications that integrate is one of the biggest problems in our industry.”**

Survey participant in the [JB Knowledge report](#)<sup>9</sup>





**Autodesk:** Help your engineering and construction teams collaborate on designs and iterate more efficiently. Access your entire library of files stored in Dropbox directly from your AutoCAD application without needing to keep local copies or worrying about staying in sync.



**PlanGrid:** Upload your plans directly from Dropbox to PlanGrid, and save As-Builts and Snapshots back to Dropbox to access them on any device, wherever you go.



**FIELDWIRE**

**Fieldwire:** Use Fieldwire to mark up blueprints, add photos, track issues, and schedule tasks directly from the field. The integration with Dropbox ensures that any changes made in Fieldwire are automatically synced back to Dropbox, and vice versa.



**Adobe:** Adobe Acrobat Document Cloud and Dropbox have teamed up to help you do more with your PDFs, from anywhere. Edit PDFs on the go, share your work in seconds, and pull up the latest drafts of your PDFs anytime, anywhere.



**DocuSign:** The e-signature process has never been easier. Simply sign documents or request signatures through DocuSign right from within your Dropbox account.



**Microsoft:** The Microsoft and Dropbox integration lets you co-author Excel, PowerPoint, and Word files in real-time by simply opening your document from a shared Dropbox folder. And changes are saved directly to Dropbox, so everyone stays on the same page.



# Conclusion

## Tech at the end of the tunnel

Despite challenges in the construction industry, the future looks bright. Tools like Dropbox can help you build smarter and complete your projects with ease.



## Talk to sales

**To learn more about how Dropbox can help your team, reach out to your partner sales representative today.**

### Sources

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