



THE Field Data Collection
& Labor Productivity Tool
for **Trade Contractors.**

SECRETS TO MANAGING PROJECTS **PRODUCTIVELY** **AND PROFITABLY**



Secrets to Managing Projects Productively and Profitably

The continued growth and level of optimism in the construction industry makes for an exciting time. According to Stephen Sandherr, chief executive officer of AGC America, “Construction firms appear to be very optimistic as they expect demand for all types of construction services to expand.”

However, contractors must not be complacent in their success. The biggest room in the world is the room for improvement. While many contractors are experiencing a record number of projects and increased revenues, there is always more that can be done to increase productivity and profitability.

In this eBook “5 Secrets to Managing Projects Productively and Profitably,” you’ll learn:

1. How to gain jobsite visibility

2. How to track and improve labor productivity

3. How to eliminate time wasted searching for documents

4. How to maintain proactive, positive communications with owners and GCs

5. How to make your team accountable

Secret #1:

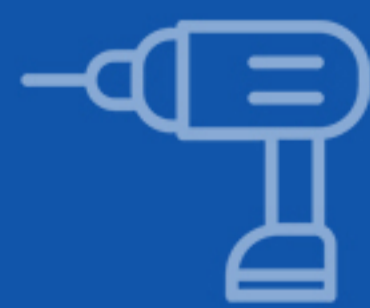
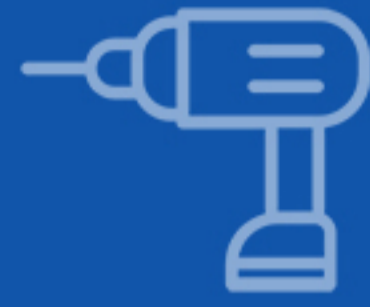
How to gain jobsite visibility

Because construction happens in the field, it becomes difficult for many project managers and executives to understand what is going on unless they visit the jobsite. However, it can be increasingly difficult to be productive if they are spending time driving back and forth to different job sites and back to the office.

Advancements and the widespread availability of mobile devices have opened the door in delivering visibility to jobsite activity. The information captured from the field can be shared in real-time to provide a window into the daily workings in the field and initiate action in the office—whether beginning the documentation process for an RFI or invoice for accounting.

One quick and easy win to gain jobsite visibility is the daily report. When completed on a regular basis, daily reports provide critical documentation to build a timeline throughout the life of the project. From jobsite photos, delays, equipment and more, daily reports deliver visibility into jobsite activity. In order to be productive and profitable on a project, the team must capture the following information on a daily report:

- **Date and weather**
- **Photos**
- **Subcontractors**
- **Equipment**
- **Crews**
- **Materials**
- **Issues**
- **Safety**
- **Delays**
- **Comments**

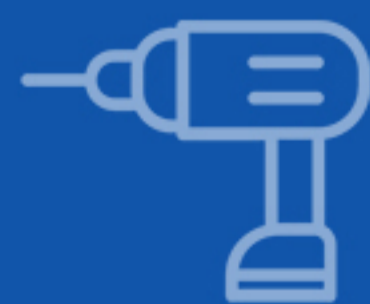


A daily report app helps provide consistency in the information captured by field teams. Additionally, when using a mobile app, field teams are more apt to capture vivid details using the talk-to-type feature versus having to write on paper or type within an electronic form.

“With the daily reports app, I capture how many men, how many hours, any issues, and that information is right there and available for the office to review,” says Patrick Hughes, site superintendent for Foreman Electric. “My project manager in the office does not have to come here and ask me what is going on. It has definitely made my job easier and it is very easy to use. With daily reports, the supervisor in the office doesn’t have to come here and ask me what’s going on.”

Insider tip: One line item on one daily report can save the job thousands or even millions of dollars on a project.



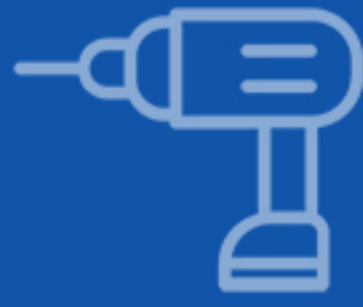


Secret #2: How to track and improve labor productivity

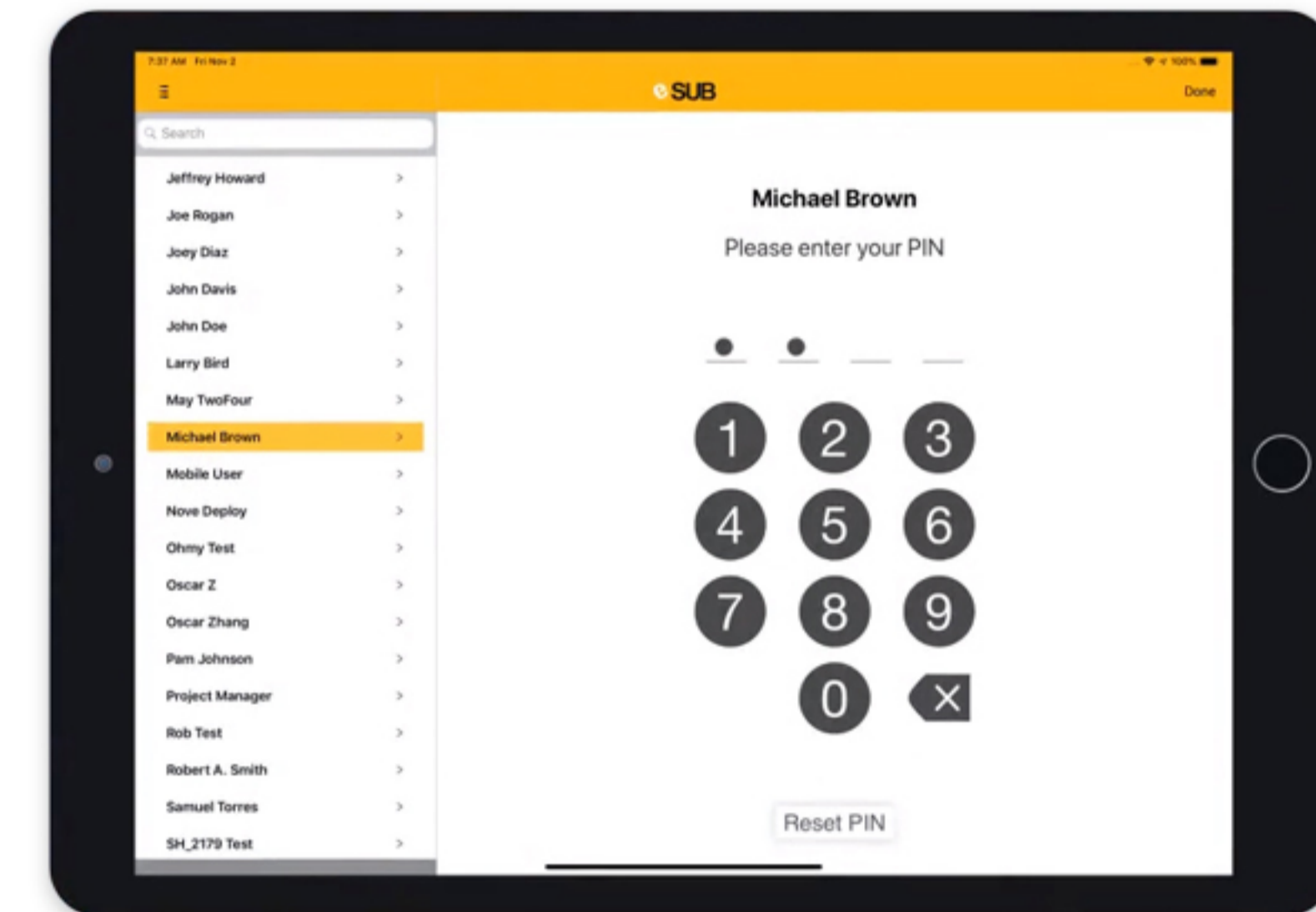
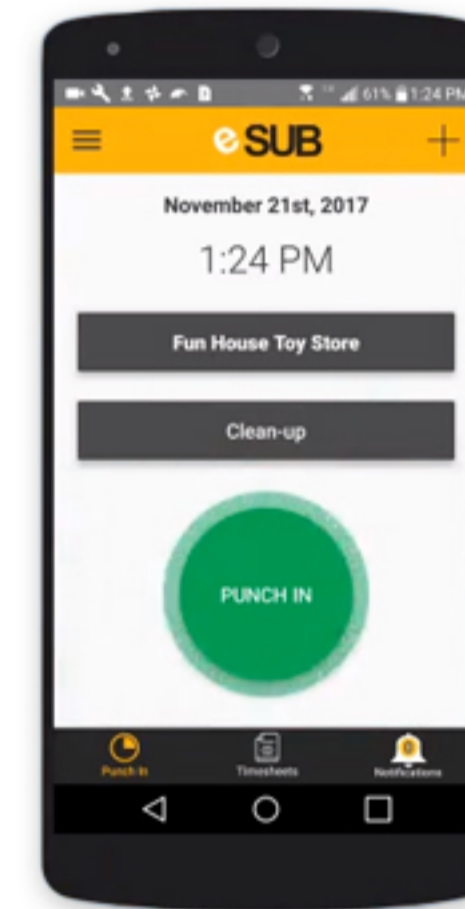
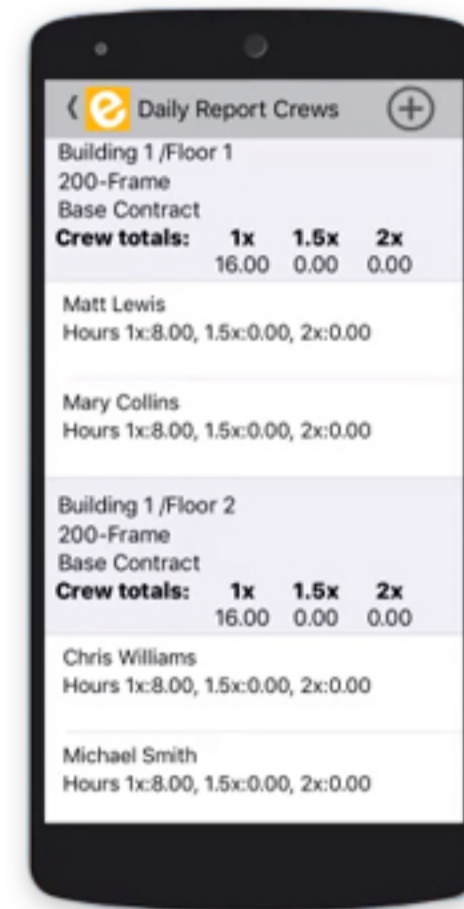
The number one risk to project profitability is labor, which is also the hardest to control and most expensive. In order to manage this risk, project managers must be proactive and closely track their labor costs on a project.

Paper time cards create a tedious process for collecting and tracking labor costs—from manually completing them in the field, driving them back to the office, and then manually entering the timecards into an accounting system. During this process, the project team is waiting to receive labor costs, which can be up to two weeks or one month. Unfortunately, the project team is working with outdated information and it may be too late to steer the course on project profitability.

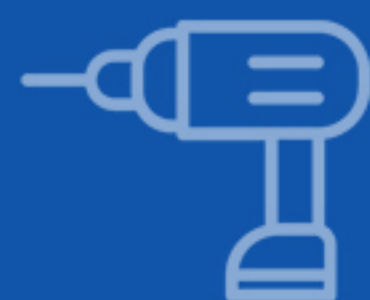
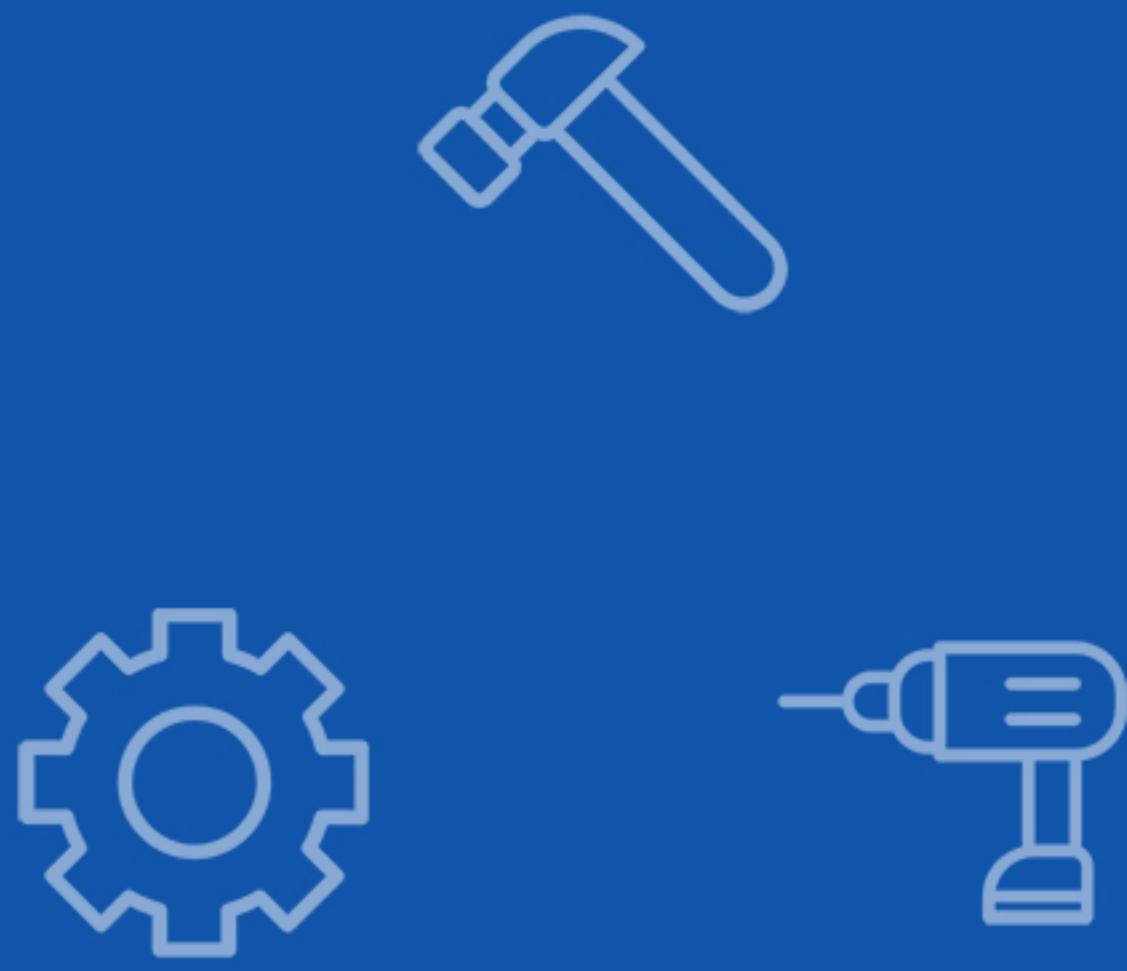
The key to managing labor productivity effectively is to utilize real-time information. Similar to daily report apps, mobile time tracking apps have opened the door to improving this process greatly. There are several different time tracking solutions available. It is important to utilize an application that is flexible enough to accommodate your organization's workflow—whether through foreman entry, individual punch in and out, via kiosk, or a combination of all three.



Mobile time tracking apps allow field teams to create digital time cards tied to projects and cost codes. The information syncs back to the cloud in order for project managers to view labor productivity reports. When time apps are part of a project management program, the labor hours and productivity information feeds directly into project management program. There is no longer a dependence on accounting for the actual hours and costs and the information is captured in near real-time. The visibility into labor allows project managers to view actual costs against estimates and track labor efficiency regularly to make adjustments to improve labor productivity and project profitability.



Insider tip: If you wait until the end of the month to see labor costs on projects, you are too late.



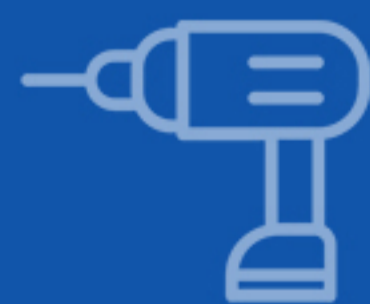
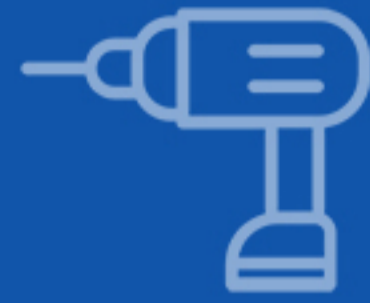
Secret #3: How to eliminate time wasted searching for documents

The number of documents in a commercial construction project can be enough to occupy several filing cabinets with paper and or take up several gigabytes of server space for electronic documents. Not only is the amount of documentation overwhelming, unless everyone is diligent about saving items in the appropriate places and tracking the status, finding the appropriate document becomes another nightmare.

If your company is still using Excel-based logs that need to be manually updated, it is time to move on. Manual processes and the risk of error when logs are not updated in a timely manner can throw a huge wrench into your team's productivity. Think about the time spent searching for documents and the time spent waiting due to the lack of accessibility to updated drawings or status of an RFI, Submittal, and Change Order.

Moving from pen and paper, Excel spreadsheets and physical servers to a document control solution will take your team to another level in terms of project organization and standardization. The benefits a cloud-based document control solution include:

Unlimited storage – Filing cabinets and server space have a finite capacity. Cloud-based document control solutions often come with the benefit of unlimited storage. This serves as a great benefit given the number and the size of documents.



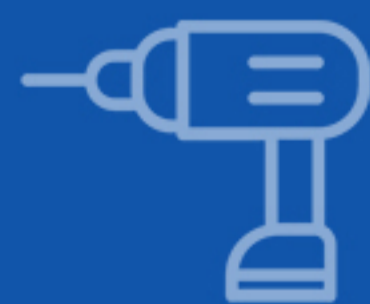
Central repository – Document control solutions serve as a centralized database of information to house all project-related documentation and communication. Everyone knows exactly where all documentation is and removes the need to email information back and forth. No more siloes. Information at your fingertips.

Document tracking – Many construction project management solutions go beyond document storage and create a streamlined process from creation, and tracking, to storing. eSUB allows users to create documents, attach any supplemental information, and distribute. Additionally, the document is logged and tracked accordingly in the system. All team members can easily view which ones are answered, pending, number of days late, and date responded. This is critical to ensure appropriate follow-up and may serve to provide just cause for a delay.

Field accessibility – Through the cloud and connected mobile devices, information is easily accessible to the field. All files uploaded into file folders are hosted in the cloud and available from virtually anywhere and any device. The field workers can retrieve the most updated drawings and view the approvals for RFIs to be most productive in the field.

Two-way email integration – Emails are an important communication vehicle and can help to create a project timeline. Remove all the emails out of your team's inbox and store them in the central project repository.

Insider tip: Consolidating documentation from all projects into a construction management system provides a global overview in one single location for quick access and reporting.

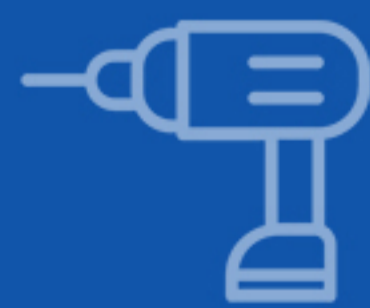
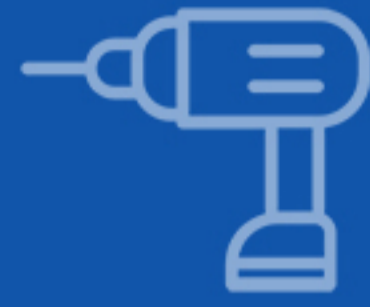


Secret #4: How to maintain proactive, positive communications with owners and GCs

Successful construction companies are the result of positive relationships with owners, developers, general contractors, and suppliers. Communication is key to any type of relationship, and open communication reduces the likelihood of potential issues.

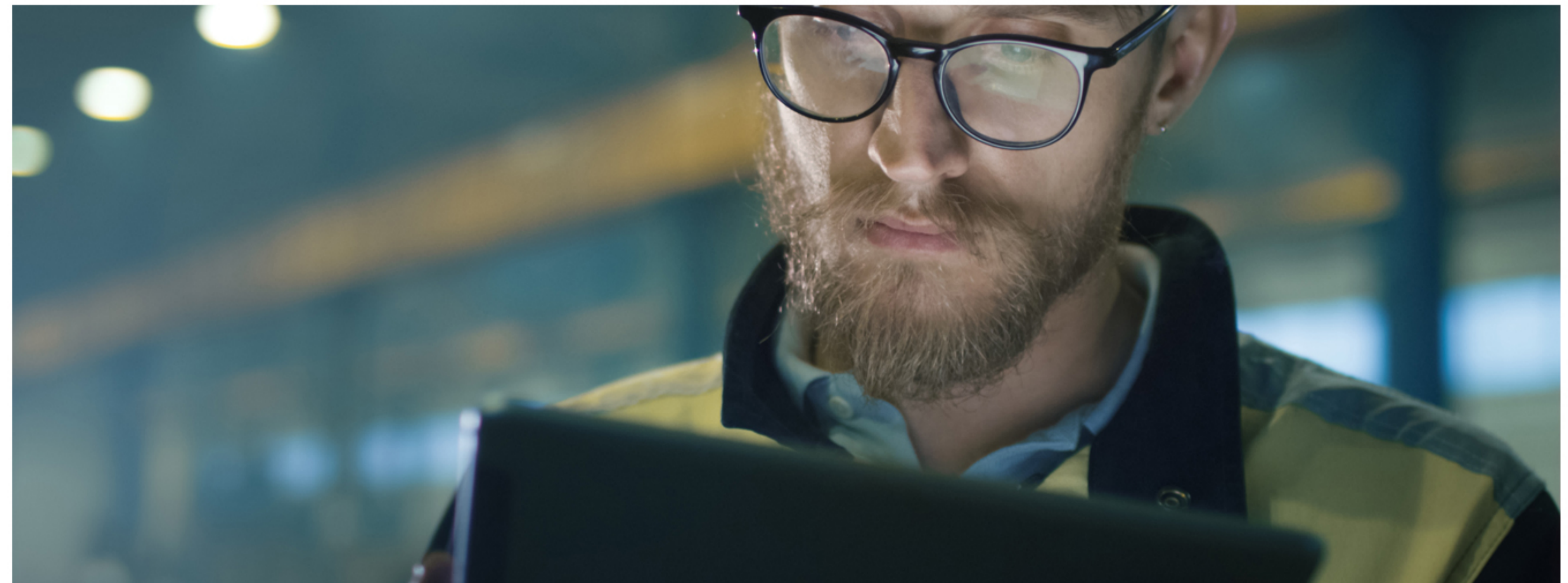
Strains in the relationship among subcontractors and other project stakeholders often occur around miscommunication that results in low quality, delay, cost increases, or rework. To prevent any strains, subcontractors must be thorough in their documentation. When a conflict arises between a subcontractor and a general contractor, the best defense is complete and well documented paper trail. Documentation is not confrontation. Documentation is information.

When the subcontractor completes a daily report and emails it to the general contractor, he is sharing important project information. The daily report tracks production and documents any issues or delays for the general contractor to review. Even if the general contractor does not require a daily report on the project, they will appreciate the update.



Additionally, documenting issues early, such as lost hours or unanswered RFIs, and communicating that information with general contractors will enable them to remove challenges and bottlenecks to push projects forward. General contractors appreciate that information, because no one likes delayed projects and running the risk of liquidated damages. Unfortunately, many subcontractors do not receive the level of respect that they deserve from general contractors. Positive and proactive communication by the subcontractor demonstrates a level of professionalism that serves to strengthen the relationship. More importantly, it will help the subcontractor gain a positive reputation and pave the way for many future projects. In a competitive industry in which companies live and die by their reputation, many general contractors work with subcontractors that they know will deliver high quality work within schedule.

Insider tip: Many general contractors invite subcontractors to collaborate in their project management and document control solution. However, subcontractors need their own project management and document control solution to maintain their own system of record on projects.



Secret #5:

How to make your team accountable

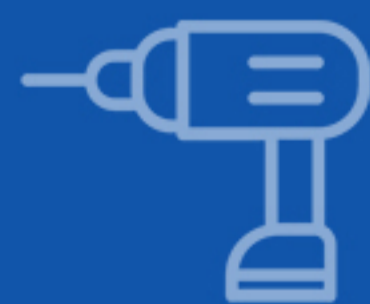
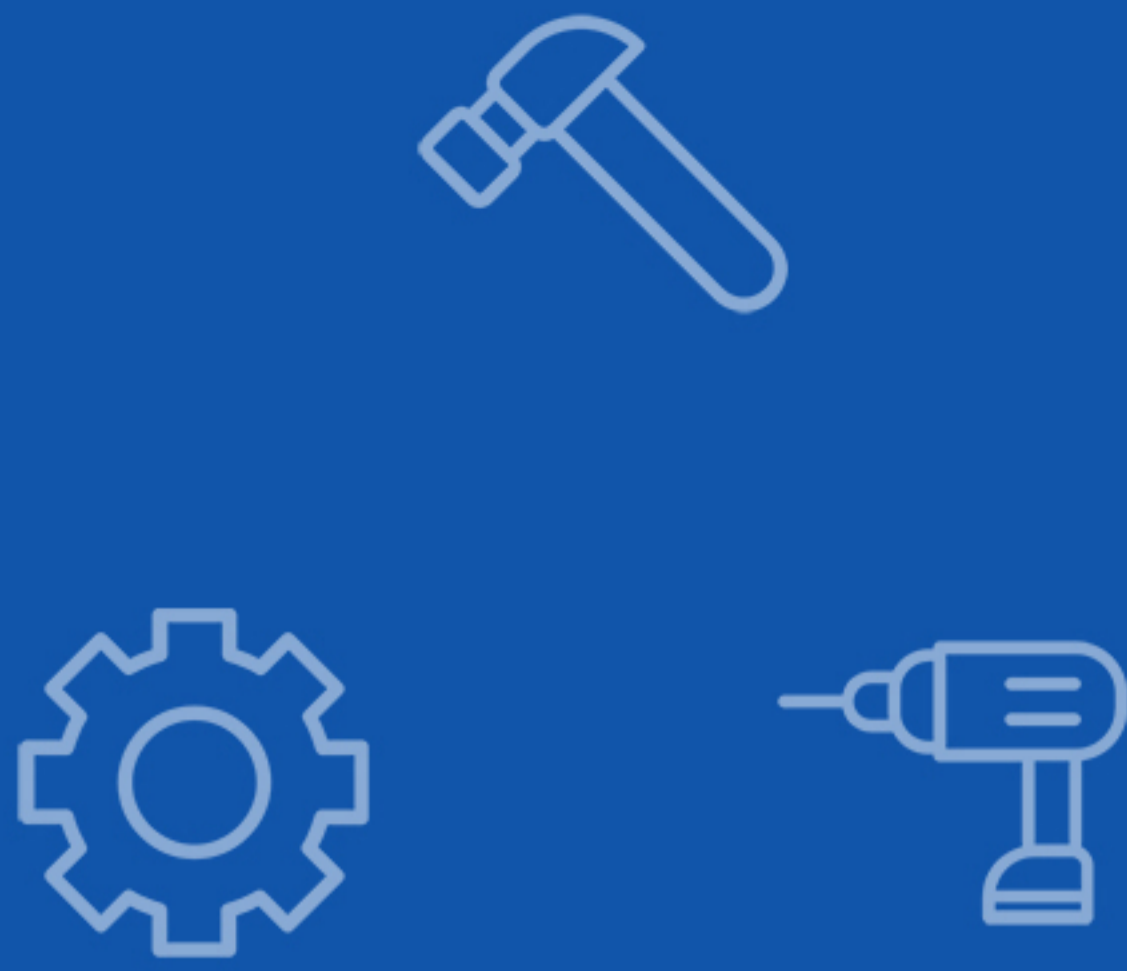
It's no secret that the only way to make technology implementation successful at your organization is to actually use it. The key to adoption is your people and making them accountable.

Construction Executive Dave Hurley implemented eSUB Construction Management at two different organizations. He shares that the younger tech-savvy workers took to the new software instantly. While many of the older workers resisted it, they eventually got on board. They found it extremely easy to use and discovered how it made their job easier.

Dave said that he told his team, "This is not an option. We need you to help us be accountable to our customers. The way we do this is by seeing what is happening inside the job every day to make adjustments and decisions to ensure project profitability. If we cannot get information on the big jobs that you're running, we will put you in a different role on shorter jobs or work through punch list items."

Communication to employees is critical. It is important to share the benefits of the system to make the company better and more competitive with other companies. As the company gets better and grows, this only benefits the workers in their job stability and long-term career goals.

Insider tip: Providing incentives also helps in adoption. Giving rewards and recognition to those who are using the new technology diligently will help to get others on board.



Conclusion: Being Proactive Mitigates Risk and Leads to Increased Profits

Managing construction projects comes with a lot of financial risk to a company. Documentation through a **field data collection and business operations tool** moves from a reactive to proactive project management process. The field is where productivity is measured and profitability is gauged. When tracking and documenting activity in the field, companies receive real-time visibility to productivity and are able to proactively change the course of the job.

Organized project information delivers quick accessibility to information—RFI status, Actual Labor Costs, Jobsite Photos, and more—to empower project managers and executives to make good decisions. Most importantly, in any conflict or claims situation, the company with the best documentation wins. An automated process to organize your project information will make your company become more efficient and protect your profits.



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