

# Growing a Commercial Construction Company

A Financial Manager's Guide

**PROCORE**







## — INTRODUCTION

# A Competitive and Risky Industry

Construction is one of the most competitive and risky industries in the world. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, around two-thirds of the construction companies founded 10 years ago have already gone out of business. If you look back just five years, nearly half of the businesses are already defunct. And one-quarter of businesses founded in March 2020 had disappeared only two years later.

What is it that makes some construction companies survive and others fail? Two construction companies that start operations today could flip a coin: The loser will be out of business within five years. But the truth is that most of the factors that lead construction businesses to fail are completely within their control.

This guide explores how financial managers and other construction professionals can:

- + Recognize the conditions necessary for growth
- + Identify financial risks before they sink the company
- + Implement processes that improve financial decision making

Many people are quick to assume that outside forces — and luck — determine whether a business succeeds or fails. Some construction professionals think this way about projects that go wrong: It wasn't our fault. There was bad weather, a tough labor market, or inflation. But couldn't we account for these possibilities?



The fact is that there are no secrets, just better preparation, better procedures, and better decision making. We've included details about that approach in this guide, taking into account the experience of contractors who shared with us the financial management strategies that lead to a thriving construction business.

At the end of the day, construction businesses thrive on profit and cash flow. Many construction companies see themselves as contractors first and businesses second — but there are no projects for companies that go bankrupt. Financial managers have the important role of analyzing, forecasting, and evaluating every aspect of a construction company through the lenses of profit and cash flow.

**Many companies see themselves as contractors first and businesses second — but there are no projects for companies that go bankrupt.**

With a good financial management strategy, construction businesses translate trade and industry knowledge into profit. Without financial management, a company may look profitable on paper but run out of cash — or worse, never realize that its project portfolio was doomed from the start.

Our focus in this guide is on commercial construction businesses, which face a unique set of opportunities and challenges during growth periods. However, many of these general principles apply to residential and public construction as well. Keep reading to get a handle on how successful construction businesses create sustainable growth using financial management strategies.





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# 01

— CHAPTER 01

## Conditions for growth

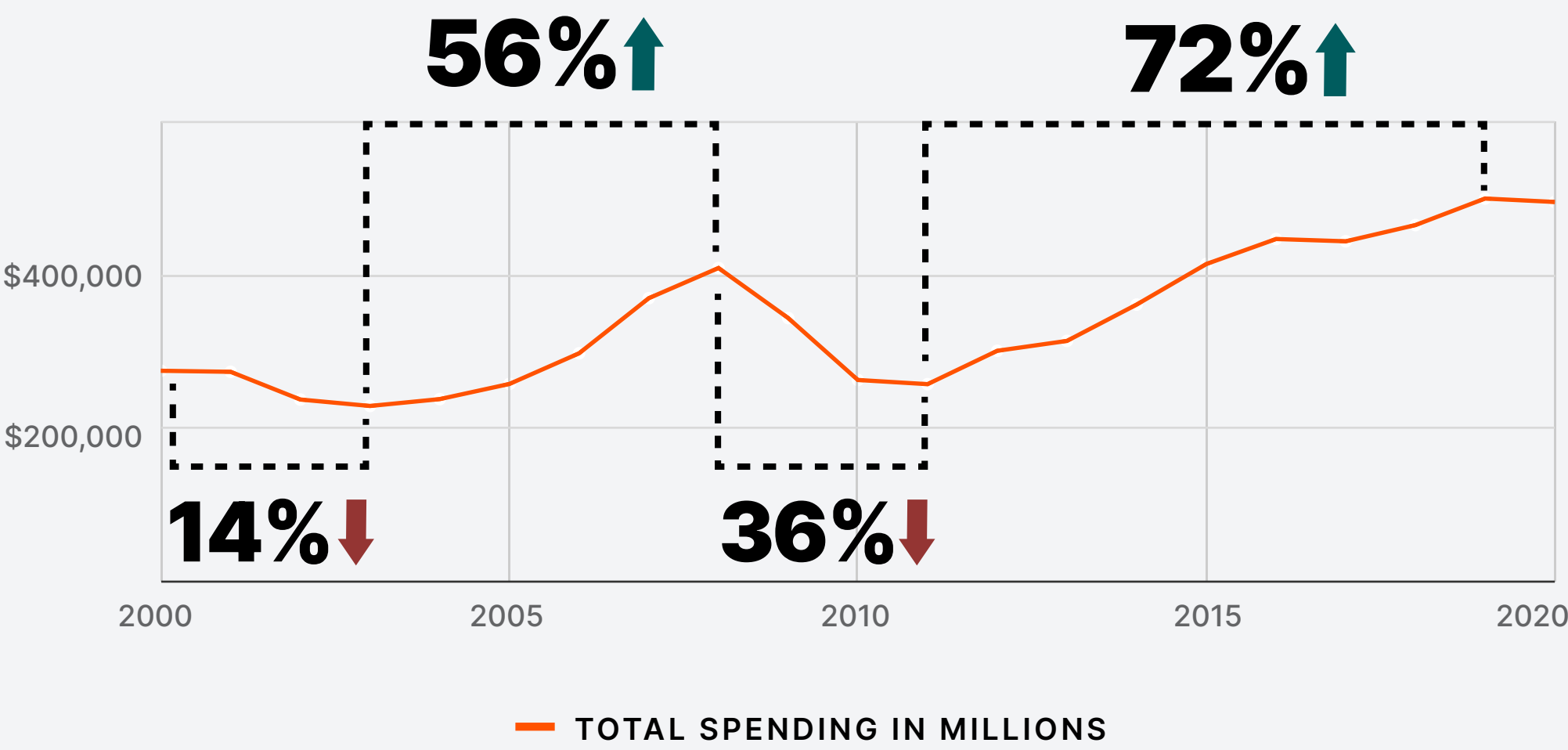
For financial managers, growing a construction company often starts with recognizing conditions for growth — both in the market and within the organization.



# External Conditions

Construction is a market-driven industry, and the commercial construction sector experiences boom and bust cycles in response to broad economic conditions. When incomes rise and credit is plentiful, developers respond to demand by building offices, retail, warehouses, and more. Eventually, the cycle reverses as supply begins to outpace demand, inflationary trends lead to rising interest rates, or weaknesses in the broader economy lower demand for new commercial investments.

Since 2000, the commercial construction industry has experienced two major busts: from 2000 to 2002 and 2008 to 2011.



Data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that private commercial construction spending decreased 14 percent and 36 percent respectively at the start of these two busts. Five years after each bust, commercial construction spending increased 56 percent and 72 percent, respectively.

Generally, economic downturns do not hit all sectors of commercial construction equally. For example, in the wake of the 2008 financial crash, spending on new shopping centers had decreased more than 80 percent, while spending on new office buildings had only decreased 50 percent. During the recovery, spending for office space also increased at a faster pace than spending for shopping centers.

**Construction businesses that survive for the long haul know how to approach each market cycle.** Notably, many construction companies outlast market busts — in fact, more than 20 percent of construction businesses founded just before the 2008 financial crash are still in existence today. These companies know that handling a down market requires different strategies for managing capital, overhead, and cash flow.

Successful construction companies find opportunities to grow **regardless of the current market conditions.**



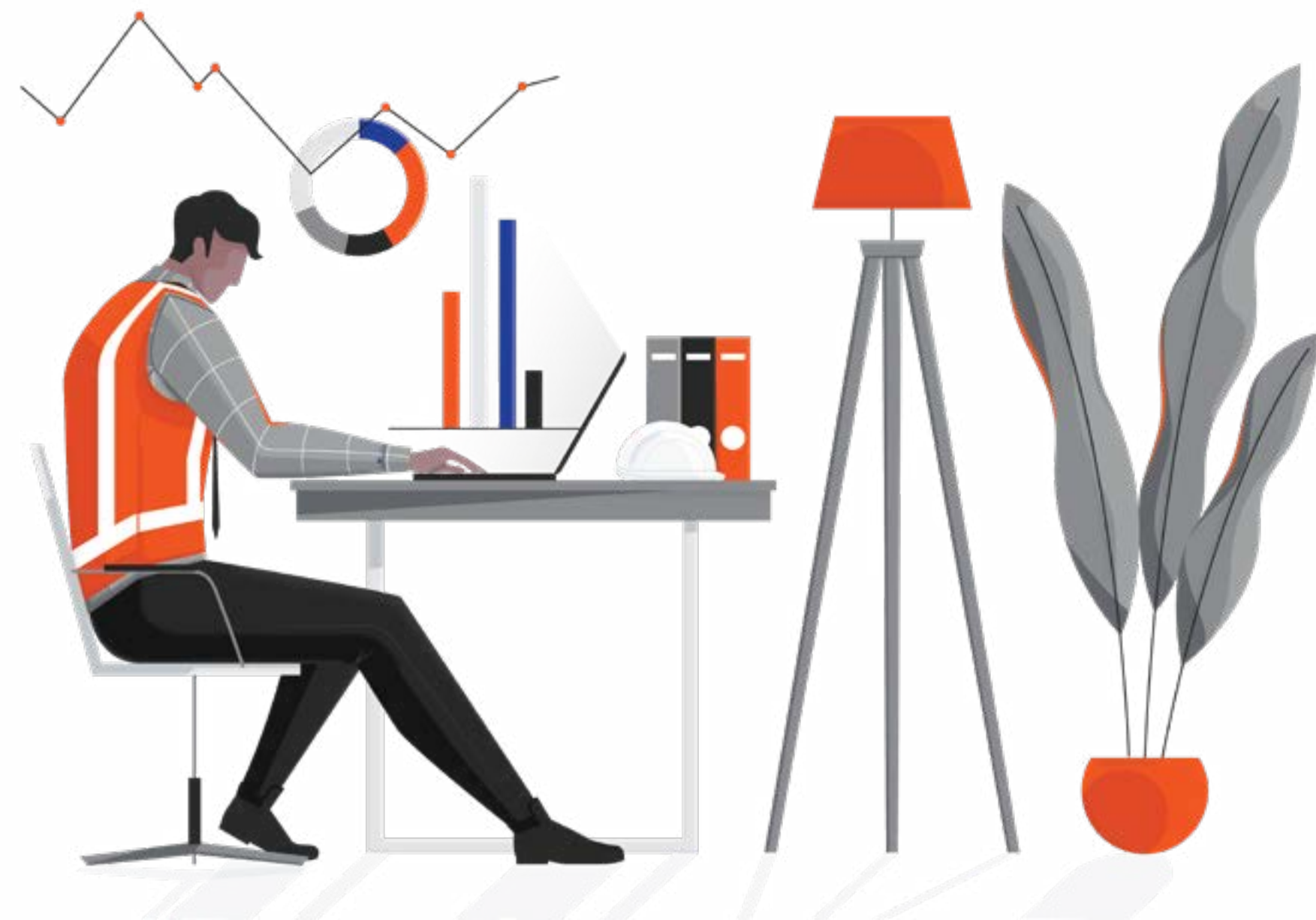
# Internal Conditions

In order to take advantage of market opportunities for growth, companies must also consider the internal business conditions that make growth possible.

Optimal internal conditions are created through a variety of processes and procedures that employees follow to identify, evaluate, and act on opportunities.

In some sense, construction companies are always either growing (or shrinking), but a sustained period of growth requires a focus on building the right processes to stay profitable even as costs and complexity increase.

**We'll spend the rest of this guide looking at the strategies successful businesses use to positively manage finances during a growth cycle.**



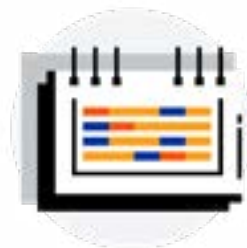
## Internal business conditions that can lead to growth:

- ☒ Evaluating past projects for performance and profit margin
- ☒ Identifying opportunities for strategic hires that could open a new market segment
- ☒ Examining bidding patterns to see if opportunities exist for greater volume

## What are the takeaways for financial managers?



**Business growth begins with market growth.** Financial managers recognize the signs of a favorable market: high occupancy rates, low-cost debt capital, rising incomes, and more. Speculators take risks and hope for demand, while financial managers survey the local and national economic landscapes for clear signs.



**Market data is a lagging indicator.** All financial professionals run the risk of focusing on the last cycle instead of preparing for the next one. Busts usually arrive quickly after periods of growth, and growth usually emerges gradually after periods of stagnation. Strong financial management requires immediate recognition of the right response to the present cycle.



**The big picture isn't the whole picture.** Busts and booms do not hit equally across the entire economy, so financial managers need to look at their company's regions and specialties to better understand how the economy is influencing their business.

## Key Questions

**Is the construction industry currently in a period of growth or contraction?**

---

**How does the current economic landscape affect the types of projects you work on?**

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**How can you use the current market cycle to prepare for the next one?**

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**Does your business have the right internal conditions in place to grow?**





# 02

## Cash flow

— CHAPTER 02

Cash is king, and a financial manager who helps a company stay on top of cash flow should be treated like royalty. According to Stephen Covey, author of the well-known book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, one foundation of success is to “begin with the end in mind.” Financial managers need to anchor all of their activities on the end goal: building a financially resilient and profitable business with well-managed cash flow.





# Cash Flow

Cash flow is the difference between cash **coming into** a business and cash **going out** of a business.

For construction businesses, tracking cash flow at the company level means looking at incoming and outgoing cash related to operations, investing, financing, and taxes. Preparing a cash flow statement gives executives a high-level look at the company’s financial health.

Of course, other financial metrics — like a current ratio or a quick ratio — may tell a different story, which is why it’s important to keep cash flow top of mind. For example, a typical construction business using the percentage of completion accounting method could show a quarterly net profit on its balance sheet — but that may include revenues that are recognized but not yet received.

Annual Cash Flow Statement - Capital Contractors						
	Historical			Projected		
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Opening Cash Balance	\$ 275,892.00	\$ 2,656,509.00	\$ 4,949,061.50	\$ 20,261,596.73	\$ 30,899,515.85	\$ 49,117,974.66
Operating Cash Flow						
Net Earnings	\$ 1,350,000.00	\$ 2,025,000.00	\$ 3,645,000.00	\$ 12,418,660.80	\$ 16,392,632.26	\$ 23,769,318.77
Plus Depreciation & Amortization	\$ 38,392.00	\$ 57,588.00	\$ 103,658.40	\$ 353,168.32	\$ 466,182.18	\$ 675,964.16
Less Changes in Working Capital	\$ 72,487.00	\$ 108,730.50	\$ (64,321.00)	\$ (209,225.00)	\$ 348,210.00	\$ 504,904.50
Cash from Operations	\$ 1,460,879.00	\$ 2,191,318.50	\$ 3,684,337.40	\$ 12,562,604.12	\$ 17,207,024.43	\$ 24,950,185.43
Investing Cash Flow						
Investments in Property & Equipment	\$ (42,882.00)	\$ (102,889.00)	\$ 56,233.00	\$ (532,399.00)	\$ 388,978.00	\$ 486,222.50
Cash from Investing	\$ (42,882.00)	\$ (102,889.00)	\$ 56,233.00	\$ (532,399.00)	\$ 388,978.00	\$ 486,222.50
Financing Cash Flow						
Issuance (Repayment) of Debt	\$ 582,754.00	\$ 121,598.00	\$ (89,392.00)	\$ (102,355.00)	\$ 622,456.38	\$ -
Issuance (Repayment) of Equity	\$ 379,866.00	\$ 82,525.00	\$ 528,993.00	\$ (1,289,931.00)	\$ -	\$ -
Cash from Financing	\$ 962,620.00	\$ 204,123.00	\$ 439,601.00	\$ (1,392,286.00)	\$ 622,456.38	\$ -
Net Increase (Decrease) in Cash	\$ 2,380,617.00	\$ 2,292,552.50	\$ 6,455,663.96	\$ 10,637,919.12	\$ 18,218,458.81	\$ 25,436,407.93
Closing Cash Balance	\$ 2,656,509.00	\$ 4,949,061.50	\$ 20,261,596.73	\$ 30,899,515.85	\$ 49,117,974.66	\$ 74,554,382.59





Cash flow gives an honest look at the present that's incredibly important during a growth period. When revenue grows for a construction business, expenses grow as well. New hires, larger mobilization costs, and more overhead can quickly sink a business that doesn't have sufficient liquidity and working capital.

In order to have sufficient cash flow for growth, commercial construction businesses may need to implement some of the following strategies:

- + Maintain a sufficient **bank line of credit** to cover cash-strapped periods
- + Secure **contractor-specific financing** for materials, equipment, or other mobilization costs to improve working capital
- + Implement processes to promote **faster payments** so that accounts receivable delays don't significantly affect cash flow

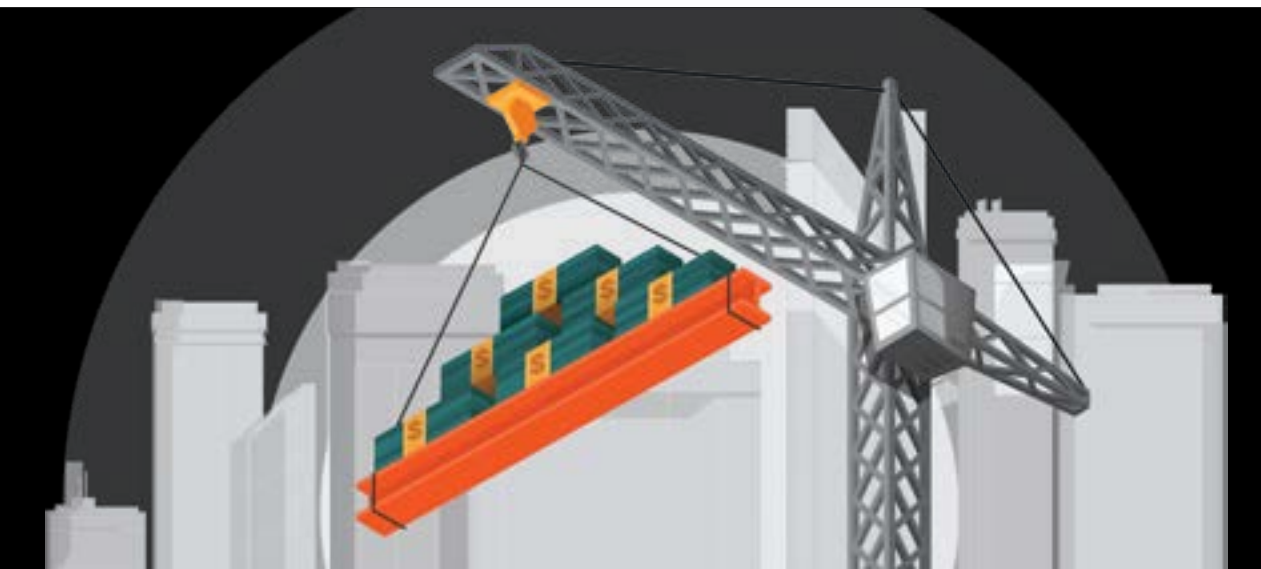
In short, construction businesses that are growing need to remember that profit is crucial, but it doesn't tell the whole story.

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Even if your growing business is profitable, you can't meet payroll or buy materials without cash. Far too often, profitable construction companies wind up in bankruptcy because they failed to manage their cash flow.

That's why the real goal for managing cash flow is not just recording the past, but making projections into the future. A financial manager with the right resources can detect difficulties well in advance — giving company leaders time to act. Of course, a company needs to invest resources into the tools, processes, and approach that makes accurate analysis and projection possible.

**It all starts with monitoring finances at the project level, which is where construction companies live and die.**





## What are the takeaways for financial managers?



**Cash flow is the ultimate goal.** Profit is important, but only if a company also has enough cash on hand to stay in business and keep growing.



**Forecasting is superior.** Anyone can prepare a cash flow statement with data from the past. Excellent financial managers put processes into place that enable projections that aid company leaders.



**Everything starts at the project level.** For construction companies, the greatest source of revenue and expenses comes from individual projects, which is where financial managers need to start optimizing their approach.

## Key Questions

What is the company's current cash position?

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Have you created a cash flow projection that takes into account various growth models?

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How often does your company leadership review cash flow statements and forecasts?

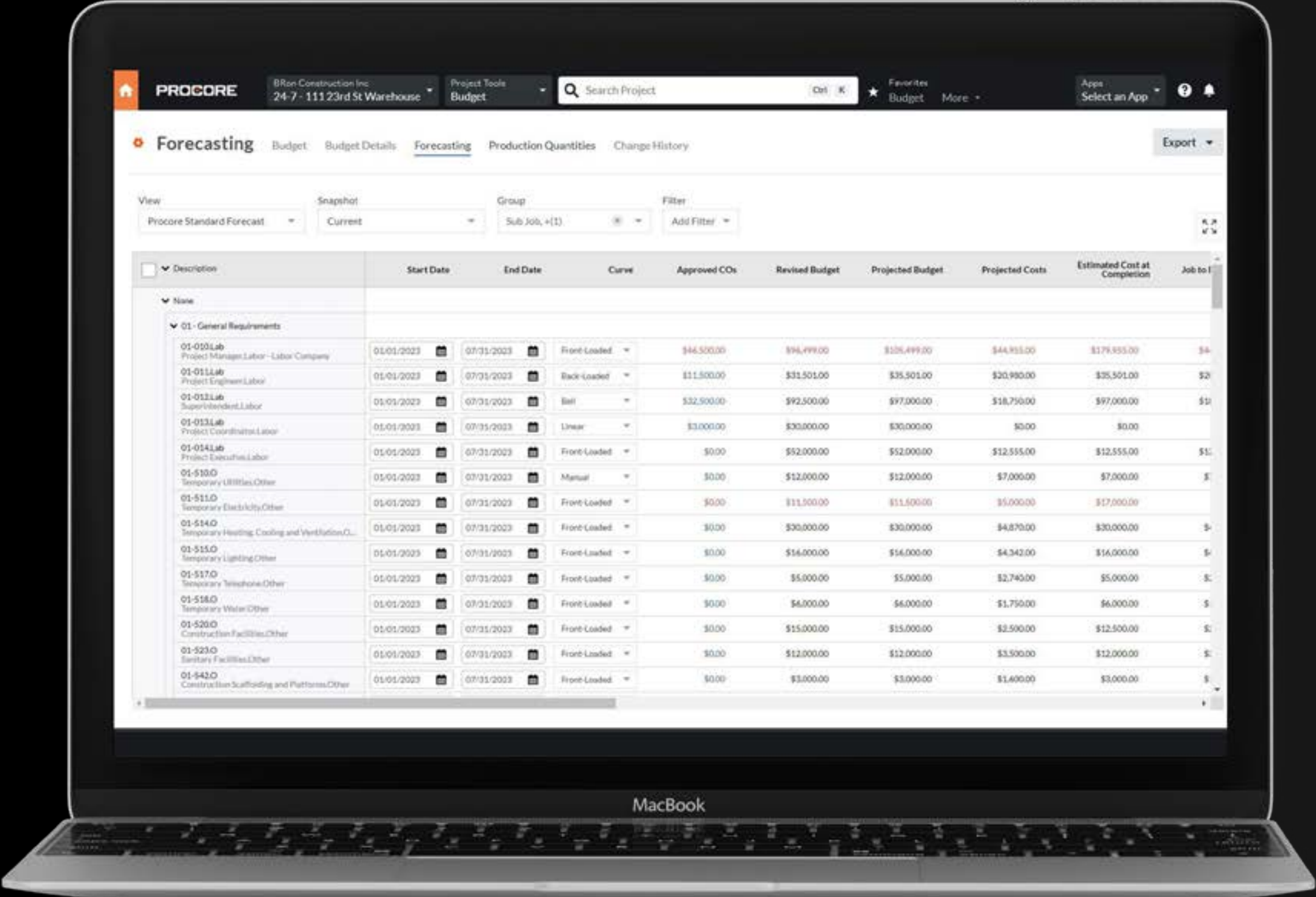
02



CHAPTER 03

# Project cost monitoring

Cash flow on the company level ultimately relies on cash flow at the project level. So a financial manager who wants to see the company succeed needs to closely monitor finances for each individual project that a company is working on.





## Construction projects are financially complicated for a variety of reasons

- + **Every project is different**, even for companies who do similar types of work over and over.
- + **Payment cycles are irregular**, unlike traditional manufacturing, due to retainage, high days sales outstanding (DSO), and a variety of payment schedules.
- + **Contractors spend most of each project cash flow negative** due to high up-front costs, long collection cycles, and the credit-heavy nature of the industry.

For these reasons and many others, construction projects are notoriously difficult to manage financially. However, project finances are the lifeblood of a construction company, so financial managers must work to carefully monitor the progress of each project.

## What does it mean to monitor a project's finances?

At minimum, financial managers should be able to:

- ☒ Project cash flow over the lifetime of the project to anticipate periods of negative cash flow.
- ☒ Track the current project completion percentage against the total project budget spent to ensure the project is on track.
- ☒ Identify the amount paid to date and the amount earned to date (less retainage) to determine the project's cash position.
- ☒ Determine how much of a project's contingency fund has been used to cover costs.





During a growth period, when the volume of projects is increasing, project sizes are expanding, or the business is expanding into new types of work, these activities become especially important.

Accurate reporting data enables a financial manager to determine if a project is on track — and if it's not, examine the reasons why. Monitoring each project mitigates risk by giving companies the data they need to make proactive decisions before projects go off track.

But here's where the difficulty starts for financial managers: Monitoring is only as good as the available data. If a project is missing data about a change order, an invoice, a payment application, or any other vital financial information, then financial managers aren't actually evaluating the project at all.

**That means the next step for a company pressing for growth is having **reliable data and effective automation.****



## What are the takeaways for financial managers?



**Monitoring projects is the cornerstone of financial management.** Projects that stay on track build a strong business, and projects that go off track derail a business — unless someone is monitoring them to make proactive changes.



**Cash position on each project is key.** Cash flow for construction businesses depends heavily on cash flow on construction projects, so having a clear picture of current cash flow on each project is essential.



**You can only monitor data that is available.** Financial managers depend on real-time, accurate data in order to monitor projects as they are now, not as they were in the past.

## Key Questions

How are you currently monitoring project financials?

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Do you proactively share insights from project monitoring with company leadership?

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What important data is currently difficult to access, not real-time, or missing entirely from your project monitoring process?

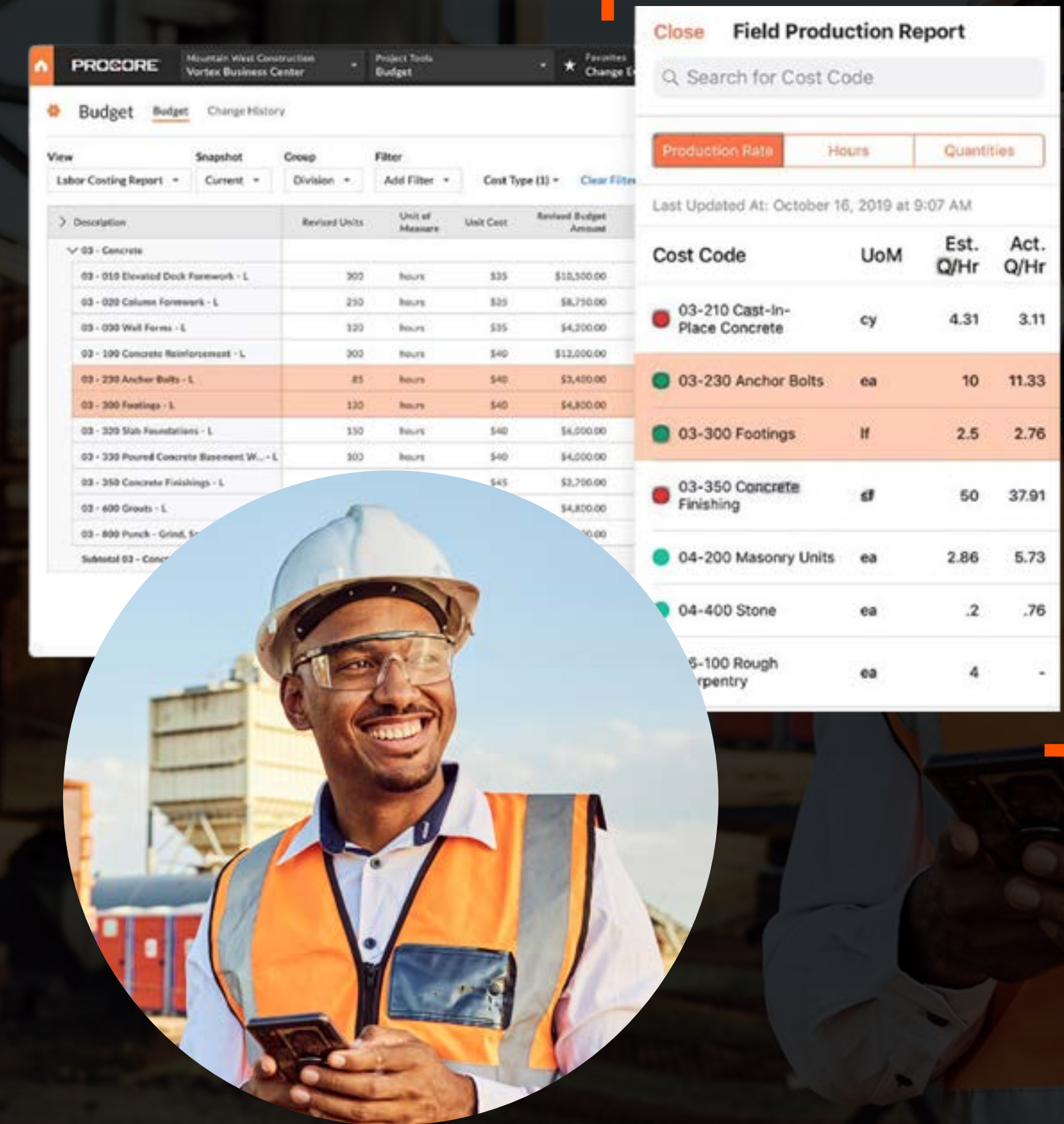
03



# Data and automation

Construction financial managers need reliable data to inform their monitoring and projections. When feasible, data should not only be accurate but also as close to real-time as possible.

In general, construction companies struggle with managing the vast amounts of data associated with a construction project. During a growth period, existing difficulties compound quickly. Manual processes that serve a company with relatively few projects can rapidly deteriorate under the strain of a higher volume.



The image displays two screenshots of construction software. The background is a blurred construction site. In the foreground, a circular inset shows a smiling construction worker wearing a hard hat, safety glasses, and an orange safety vest, holding a smartphone. The software screenshots are overlaid on the right side of the image.

**PROCORE Budget**

Description	Revised Units	Unit of Measure	Unit Cost	Revised Budget Amount
03 - Concrete				
03 - 010 Elevated Deck Framework - L	300	hours	\$35	\$10,500.00
03 - 020 Column Framework - L	210	hours	\$35	\$8,730.00
03 - 030 Wall Forms - L	120	hours	\$35	\$4,200.00
03 - 100 Concrete Reinforcement - L	300	hours	\$40	\$12,000.00
03 - 230 Anchor Bolts - L	85	hours	\$40	\$3,400.00
03 - 300 Footings - L	120	hours	\$40	\$4,800.00
03 - 320 Slab Foundations - L	130	hours	\$40	\$5,200.00
03 - 330 Poured Concrete Basement W... - L	300	hours	\$40	\$12,000.00
03 - 350 Concrete Finishing - L			\$45	\$13,500.00
03 - 600 Grouts - L				\$4,800.00
03 - 800 Punch - Grind, S...				\$0.00
Subtotal 03 - Con...				\$0.00

**Field Production Report**

Search for Cost Code

Production Rate | Hours | Quantities

Last Updated At: October 16, 2019 at 9:07 AM

Cost Code	UoM	Est. Q/Hr	Act. Q/Hr
03-210 Cast-in-Place Concrete	cy	4.31	3.11
03-230 Anchor Bolts	ea	10	11.33
03-300 Footings	lf	2.5	2.76
03-350 Concrete Finishing	sf	50	37.91
04-200 Masonry Units	ea	2.86	5.73
04-400 Stone	ea	.2	.76
05-100 Rough Carpentry	ea	4	-



# A growing business needs tools and processes that can scale with them.

When they start out, many construction businesses use an Excel spreadsheet to track invoices, produce budgets, create project timelines, or build financial statements. This turns individual employees into bottlenecks, with important financial data trapped in static files that are updated manually.

## Data problems arise in two similar but distinct ways:

A key piece of data is stored in a **single location** (like an accountant's email inbox), and everyone else who may need to know about it has no visibility.

A single piece of data is stored in **multiple systems**, but none of those systems interact with each other, and employees have to enter the information several times manually.

With data in a **single location**, a financial manager will be working without an essential data point — and worse, the company could lose money if the isolated data is important enough. With **multiple systems**, the financial manager and other employees are much less efficient, spending time repeatedly performing manual data entry instead of working on more valuable tasks.





## Growing companies require a single source of truth for all financial data.

**In this case, a “single source of truth” means a single location, easily accessible by all stakeholders, that holds all current information about project finances.** Just as a project couldn’t get built if every specialty contractor was working with a different set of plans, finances can’t be properly managed if everyone at the company is working with different tools, systems, and software.

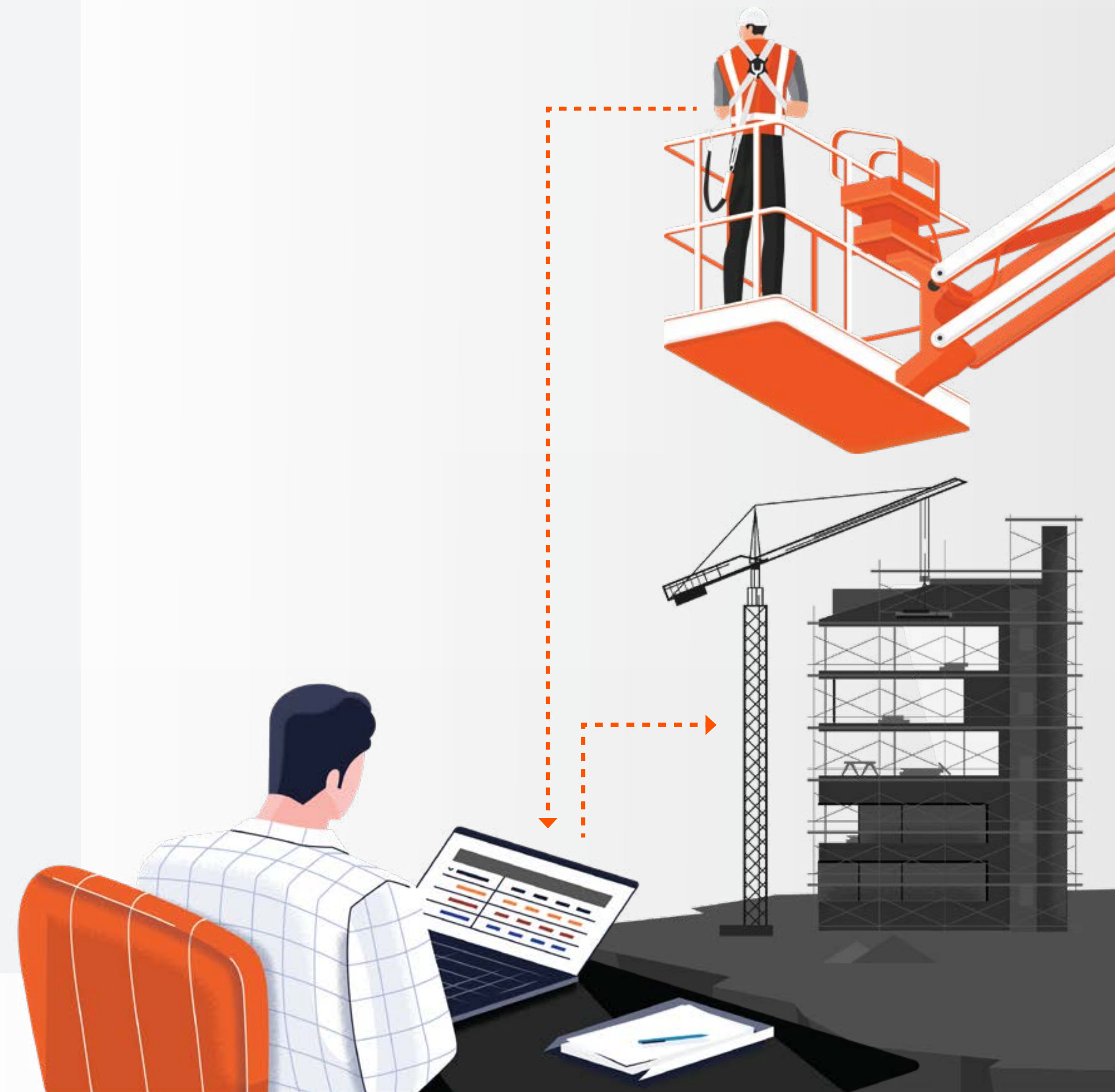
Instead, companies must look for platforms that have integrations that enable systems to communicate and share information, leading to better collaboration and better data.

Automation is also crucial for a growing business, because the amount of data required to manage construction projects is too much for individual employees to input efficiently. Without automation, invoices are forgotten, spending overruns budgets, and change orders get neglected.

With automation, employees are proactively notified about invoices that are due soon, financial managers get pinged when project budgets are off track, and change orders are assigned to the right stakeholders. The system does the dirty work, freeing up mental energy and ensuring nothing important gets left behind.

The upshot of these improvements is that financial managers get back more of a precious resource: time. Instead of spending hours tracking down documents and updating project monitoring models, they can focus on the difficult analysis that makes them worth their salary and more.

**With that extra time, one of the most important things financial managers can focus on is **job costing data**.**





## What are the takeaways for financial managers?



**Analysis is only as good as the data coming in.**

Having systems in place to keep data accessible and processed automatically will ensure that project monitoring is based on real-time information.



**A single source of truth is table stakes for construction companies.** A single repository with all relevant project data creates efficiency gains that free up employees to work on more important tasks than data entry.



**Automation drives efficiency.** Construction projects simply have too many pieces of data to handle without automation. Create systems that manage data automatically so that financial managers can analyze it.

## Key Questions

**Where does your project-related financial data currently live?**

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**Which manual processes can you automate?**

---

**What would you have your office employees work on if they gained 20 percent of their time back?**

04

# 05

## Job costing

— CHAPTER 05

If financial managers are supposed to provide timely information to construction executives, why spend time looking at past projects? It's simple: The biggest opportunities for improvement are hidden in past mistakes. Construction businesses that don't adapt and iterate fail, while companies that evaluate their past projects create a wealth of institutional knowledge that refines future projects.





**Financial managers feel they can't afford to look at completed projects. But the truth is exactly the opposite.**

The edge a company needs to win the next bid or increase its profits is often waiting to be discovered in job costing data from a completed project.

With so much going on at every moment in a construction company, financial managers often feel they can't afford to look closely at completed projects.

But the truth is exactly the opposite: Construction businesses can't afford to ignore the past. If you have problems with your projects or your processes, your business is running on borrowed time — even if it looks like you're growing and gaining momentum.

The most important function a financial manager has is alerting company leadership to the right information at the right time. How many construction business leaders would turn down a detailed description of a repeated problem that's costing their company money?

Mistakes compound — and so do corrections. The \$10,000 per project mistake a financial manager identifies starts paying dividends as soon as it's corrected.

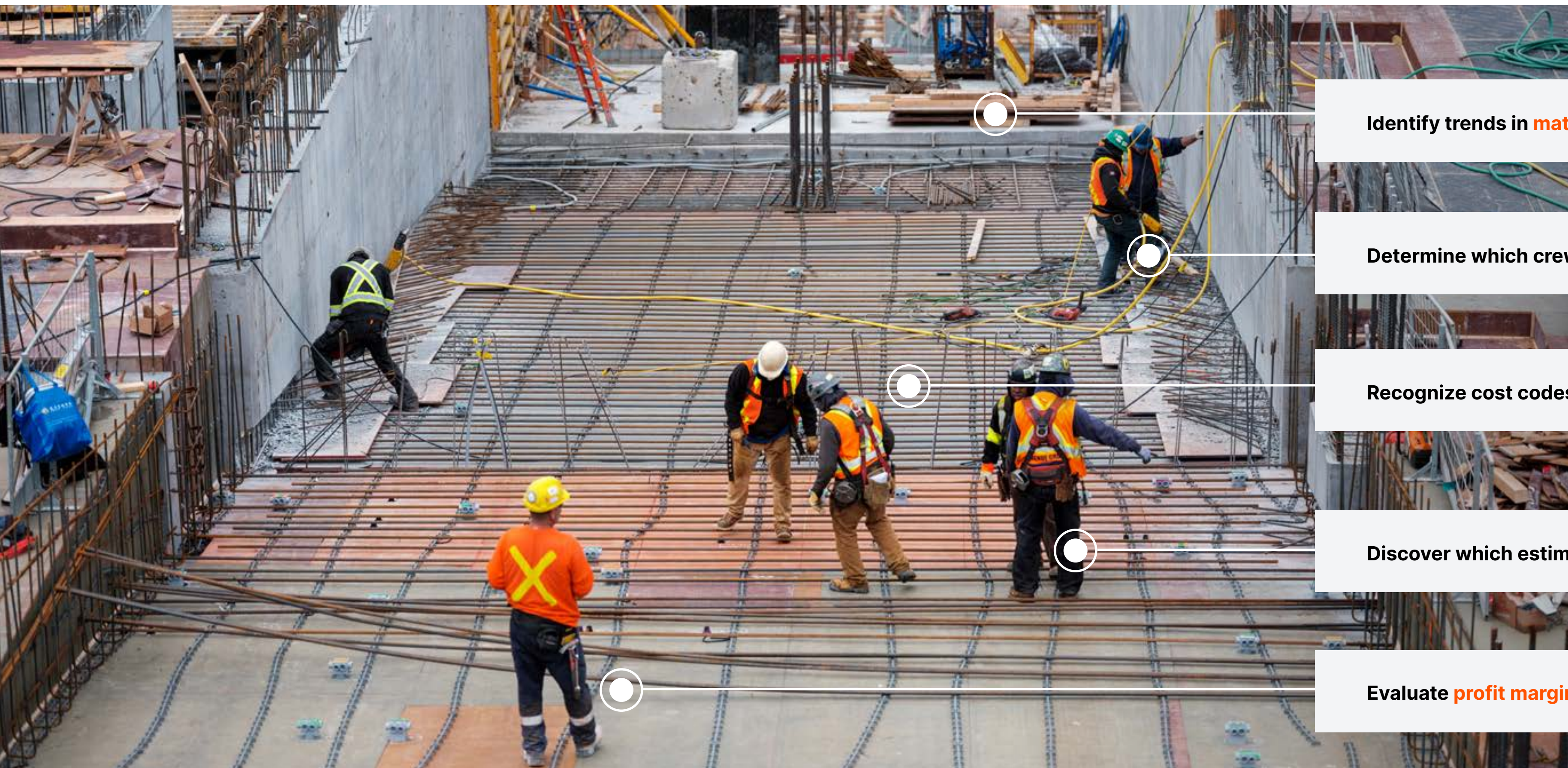
If financial managers always live in the moment, they can identify and correct short-term problems, but they'll likely miss long-term patterns of mistakes. By spending time evaluating job costing data more thoroughly and systematically, financial managers can spearhead change in their organization that leads to long-term success.

**Ultimately, the time spent digging through and analyzing data leads to efficiency gains in **estimating, bidding, and budgeting.****





# What kinds of valuable insights can an excellent financial manager find in job costing data?



Identify trends in **material or labor costs**

Determine which crews are **most efficient** and productive

Recognize cost codes that consistently go **over or under budget**

Discover which estimators are **most consistent** and accurate

Evaluate **profit margin** for various project types



## What are the takeaways for financial managers?



**The future strength of your company often hides in the past.** Institutional knowledge is like gold, but institutional bad habits can sink a company. Identifying opportunities for improvement leads to lasting strength with long-term benefits.



**Patterns of mistakes are more dangerous than one-off problems.** Monitoring project budgets can help control costs in the moment, but finding patterns of mistakes in job costing data can help control costs on every future project.



**Companies that succeed build from experience.** Contractors know that trade experience gives them a leg up on the competition, and the same is true of financial experience. Having an archive of completed projects makes it easier to improve on the next ones.

## Key Questions

How often are you reviewing job costing data or performing post-mortem analysis on projects?

---

What financial patterns have you previously identified on projects that consistently lead to positive or negative results?

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What is the most important change your business needs to make in its approach to repeated project types?





# Estimating, bidding, and budgeting

During a growth period, construction businesses are going to be taking on a greater volume of projects, higher-value projects, or new types of projects. In all of these cases, they will likely experience growing pains in terms of estimating, bidding, and budgeting.

Financial managers can provide key insights that make all of these processes more efficient — and most importantly, more profitable. In fact, financial managers are able to influence two of the main profit centers for construction companies: markup and buyout.







Every construction company needs to establish a minimum viable markup that accounts for business overhead and profit, and every project will include a set percentage for markup to support the company's long-term growth goals.

However, a growing company presents challenges for financial managers:

- + Indirect or overhead costs can accelerate quickly as **project volume increases**
- + Larger or new types of jobs may stretch resources thin, especially if **contingency funds are tapped into as the business adapts**

Financial managers can reduce the effects of both of these difficulties with careful planning. As overhead costs increase, financial managers must constantly adjust the break-even point for annual revenue, which in turn affects the markup percentage that new projects require to be viable.

Additionally, profit center analysis can reveal which types of projects are most profitable, enabling the company to specialize more fully, gaining a competitive advantage in estimating, bidding, and budgeting. Over time, the buyout process becomes increasingly profitable as a business develops supplier, vendor, or specialty contractor relationships that can't be matched by other businesses trying to bid in the same niche.



**In many cases, the solution is specializing in projects that have historically been the most profitable for the business.**

Growing companies can fall into the trap of thinking that more is always better, and financial managers act as a check and balance against expansion for its own sake. As the company grows with more volume or more project types, financial managers have more and more data to support conclusions about which route is most profitable for a construction business.

In many cases, the solution is specializing in projects that have historically been the most profitable for the business. Success breeds more success, and a construction business that can successfully execute a specific project type is likely to continue to develop a competitive edge and beat out its rivals. In this way, the data that financial managers provide will align closely with long-held construction wisdom: The best opportunities are built on reputation, relationship, and trust.

It's no surprise that the most profitable projects a company can pursue are also often the same jobs that a company will easily win — they typically have the most consistent track record of success both internally and externally.

Once a growing construction company has found its groove, it starts out on a path that makes it hard for competitors to interfere.

**Financial managers at these growing companies have so much specialized data that they can more easily forecast, control costs, and make better decisions.**





## What are the takeaways for financial managers?



### **Growth periods strain estimating, bidding, and budgeting.**

Financial managers need to use the incoming stream of data about new projects to make key recommendations to leadership about project selection.



### **Specialization is often the key to long-term growth.**

By determining which project types are most profitable, financial managers can guide a company toward efficiency gains and competitive advantages.



### **Focus breeds excellence in the buyout process.**

When a business builds around a core profit center, its edge in supplier, vendor, or specialty contractor relationships makes it difficult to contend with.

## Key Questions

How often are you performing profit analysis on different project types?

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Would your company benefit more from greater volume or greater focus?

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Are you adjusting your markup percentage to account for overhead growth?

06

— CHAPTER 07

# Forecasting and cost control

Construction business leaders consistently ask the same thing about projects that go wrong: “Why didn’t somebody tell me about this when I could’ve done something about it?”

Financial professionals armed with everything we’ve covered in this guide — reliable data, automation, good estimates, and project monitoring dashboards — are perfectly positioned to spot problems when it’s still possible to deal with them.

A forecast is only as good as the data it’s based on, but a reliable forecast is something you can depend on. Just as sophisticated weather forecasting gives us confidence in the clothes we choose for the day, sophisticated project forecasting gives us confidence in the decisions about which jobs to bid on, who to extend credit to, when to finance project costs, and more.







A construction company should build its forecasts with realistic budget numbers, real-time inputs (invoices, receipts, change orders, etc.), and historical project data. This type of forecasting can save both individual projects and a company's entire portfolio. **Here are some things that great forecasting leads to:**

- + A realistic **company cash flow** forecast points to periods where liquid assets will come up short, **preparing a company** to get additional financing before a problem arises.
- + A timely **project spending** forecast highlights areas of concern, **prompting opportunities for cost control** while a project is still underway.
- + A **portfolio** forecast provides details about resources allocated inefficiently among several projects in the coming months, **enabling project managers** to reassign crews.

Effective project execution and efficient project management are the single greatest source of profit for any construction company. Financial managers with robust forecasting tools provide the behind-the-scenes data and forward-looking vision that can inspire on-the-fly adjustments that keep projects — and businesses — profitable.

**Financial managers at growing construction businesses should all strive to create great forecasts. Companies that accurately model the future make better decisions that support long-term growth.**



## What are the takeaways for financial managers?



**Good forecasts are a goal worth striving for.** Forecasts are only possible with many other processes in place, but the end result is a competitive advantage that enables better decision making.



**Forecasting touches every aspect of construction finance.** From the level of individual crews all the way up to an entire portfolio of projects, reliable data modeling affects every decision a construction company makes.



**Project execution improves when you know what's coming.** Too many project managers are flying without visibility or instruments, but project managers armed with forecasts are able to make adjustments that save projects.

## Key Questions

**What's your current approach to forecasting project and company performance?**

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**What financial mistakes could've been avoided with better forecasts?**

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**How would your leadership's decision making approach change with better data projections?**





— CHAPTER 08

# Putting it all together

We said it at the beginning of this guide: There are no secrets to growth and success in the construction industry. After all, the ingredients for growth are well-known across the industry — larger project volume, bigger contracts, new market segments, expanded geographical reach, and higher bid-hit ratio, for example.

And the businesses that are able to pull off an expansion into a new geographical area or a significant increase in project volume don't have any secrets either — they're just more competitive. We wrote this guide to take the mystery out of what makes a construction business financially competitive.





## Growing a commercial construction business is difficult, but the approach is simple.

It all starts with cash flow, which is always vital for construction businesses — but especially during a period of sustained growth. Understanding your cash position requires you to carefully monitor your project finances, because projects are the lifeblood of a construction company. You can only monitor finances with reliable data that is accessible real-time in a single source of truth, and you'll need automation to drive efficiency in managing vast amounts of data.

Once you have excellent processes in place for tracking all of your company's relevant financial data, you can start to get more competitive. But how? Carefully explore job costing data from past projects to find negative patterns and trends that are costing

the business money over and over again. Use your project data to improve your estimating, bidding, and budgeting processes to identify profit centers and improve profit margins during the buyout and project phases. Finally, start creating forecasts that help you control costs in real time for each project and for the business as a whole.

Growing a commercial construction business is difficult, but the approach is simple. Putting excellent processes into place now will help you ensure you're more efficient as project volume and revenue increase.

**With excellent financial management, you can build a business that takes advantage of booming markets and survives the busts — resilient, data-driven, and proactive.**





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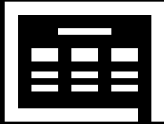
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