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Going digital: 3 keys to thriving in the new construction era

The construction industry is in the midst of a transformation. More and more construction companies are going digital, for a number of different reasons: **higher productivity levels, reduced wastage and cost and increased profitability**, to name just a few. Here are 3 key elements that contribute to a thriving business plan in this "new era" of construction.

1. People

People are the first and most important resource for any organization (including construction firms). Obviously, **you can't expect to enjoy sustainable success** if your employees and contractors don't buy into your processes.

Unfortunately, when going digital, many construction firms neglect to seek that buy-in from their key stakeholders. This leads to a major disconnect between the initial implementation of new technology, and how many workers actually use it on a day-to-day basis.

The solution is, in a word, communication. You need to keep your people in the loop at the very outset of any major change. For example, you should do what you can to get buy-in across the board before launching a new pilot program. Then, if the pilot program is successful, it's important not to scale the new solution arbitrarily, but to roll it out in a gradual way — allowing workers across your company to become familiar with it. Training and patience are key, but the people in your company will reward you for the consideration you show.



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2. Process

Over the past couple of decades, the construction industry has seen a negligible year-over-year rise in productivity, compared to other sectors like manufacturing. Granted, construction is not a "production-based" industry in the traditional sense of the word; however, the sector's value could be increased by trillions of dollars if its productivity was raised to the average for the economy as a whole.

The implementation of streamlined digital processes can play a huge role in boosting productivity levels. In fact, research indicates that "going digital" can result in a productivity gain of up to 15% and a cost reduction of approximately 5% per project.

You can incorporate digital transformation into your plans by first pinpointing operational "bottlenecks" that are holding your company back from optimal performance. Then, model digital solutions that can fill the needs you've identified. With standardized, digitized workflows in place, you'll be able to avoid unnecessarily wasting time and money, and your business can experience faster growth.

3. Technology

Even though construction remains one of the least digitized industries throughout the globe, there are plenty of opportunities to embrace new, innovative solutions. It's important for construction companies to look at the "big picture," and view digital transformation as more than a stop-gap measure to fix specific process issues, but as an opportunity to streamline and optimize their businesses for sustainable growth.

At the same time, new technology should be implemented to fix pain points that are actually hindering growth. For best results, tech solutions must be delivered as fully integrated, cohesive systems — or they must fit seamlessly within existing systems. A siloed approach is counterproductive, as is a "tech-first" approach that focuses more on the "cool gadget of the week" rather than finding practical solutions to existing problems.

If you take these 3 key elements into account as you begin your digital transformation journey, you'll find that the reward is well worth the investment. Your construction company will no doubt experience increased growth and will enjoy a strong market position for years to come.