

LINQ

7 Ways Mobile Devices are Transforming the Construction Industry





Challenges in the Construction Industry Highlight the Need for Modernization

It's no secret that the construction industry has traditionally been slower to adopt technology and embrace digital workflows. But companies that invest in IT solutions and services enable their employees to be more efficient, make better decisions, and increase visibility into operations—all of which contributes to achieving key business objectives.

Such benefits are essential as the construction industry continues to face revenue declines, project delays, and difficulty hiring skilled workers. The workforce shortage is so serious, in fact, that 72% of contractors struggle to meet project schedules and 45% are turning down work, according to the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce Commercial Construction Index](#).

The construction companies that are thriving today understand something very critical: how to leverage technology—particularly mobile devices—to shore up weaknesses and build on strengths.

In this guide, we're unpacking seven ways in which mobile devices are transforming the construction industry, and how your construction businesses can leverage mobile technology to boost efficiency while saving time, money, and resources.

Mobile devices include the cell phones, tablets, and data devices, such as MiFi's and cradlepoints, that support **employee productivity**, deliver **job-related apps**, and provide **Wi-Fi connectivity** on jobsites.

“As the number of apps that workers use on the job increases, **smartphones** remain the most utilized mobile device on construction sites.”

— Construction Dive



1 Providing Much-Needed Internet Connectivity

Because many jobsites don't have Wi-Fi, mobile devices, particularly portable mobile hotspot devices, have become key for internet connectivity.

While it's true that smartphones can serve as hotspots for the average user, **they also have many drawbacks**, especially if used frequently and among numerous users. With a portable mobile hotspot device, construction companies realize the benefits of improved battery life, flexibility, convenience, more data, and the ability to connect more devices than with a smartphone mobile hotspot.

With increased connectivity comes improved access to the information and applications that employees need to do their jobs— keeping projects running on time and flowing smoothly.

On the flip side, when connectivity is an ongoing issue, it can have a serious impact on operations. Slow speeds or loss of service means that employees have no way to perform any work that requires connectivity. They will also be unable to perform basic administrative tasks, such as clocking in and out of work on a timekeeping app.

The bottom line is that when employees on the jobsite lack mobile access, companies pay the price in poor workflows and project delays.

“When **connectivity** is an ongoing issue, it can have a serious impact on **operations**”





2 Enabling Instant Access to Essential Apps

On many construction sites, apps have become essential to day-to-day workflows. For workers, apps simplify employee time tracking, invoice generation, work order management, and other essential tasks. For companies, apps can be a crucial driver in aligning those daily activities with larger organizational goals, such as increasing productivity in the field and reducing paperwork.

The value of apps on the job site is so significant that mobile integration has become a key factor when construction companies make software purchasing decisions. When mobile integration isn't available, employees must use other methods to transfer data. Often, that means manual processes that are time-consuming and potentially less accurate than entering data directly into a device in the field.



“Cloud mobile business app solutions are **easier to use** and are **more powerful** than ever. Using apps will increase your firm's **productivity** and greatly **reduce costs** compared to traditional paper forms.

– Construction Marketing Association



3 Improving Construction Worker Safety

Keeping workers safe is the top priority on any job site. Construction companies can make their safety programs more effective by using mobile devices to:

- **Deliver** and track training sessions
- **Provide** access to checklists, workflows, and other safety resources
- **Speed up** the completion of compliance and auditing processes
- **Facilitate** coaching and sharing of best practices through collaboration tools
- **Leverage** data-driven insights that can highlight training needs and reduce risks

As construction companies increase their overall adoption of digital technology, safety is one of their primary focus areas. When [Associated Builders and Contractors](#), a trade association, surveyed its Excellence in Construction Award winners, 65% reported using safety technologies. Mobile devices can complement those efforts by ensuring that every employee, no matter where they are on the job site, has the resources to be safe and follow proper procedures.



4 Growing the Number of Use Cases



26.1% of construction companies used mobile devices for tool tracking in 2021, up from **18.5%** in 2020

“The popularity of asset tracking in recent years is due to the **fast ROI** from recovering expenses usually reserved for replacing tools or other equipment from the jobsite.”

Use cases for mobile devices in construction continue to grow, creating new opportunities to improve operations and reduce costs. While daily reporting, photos/videos, and time management remain the most popular uses, more companies are also using mobile devices to view BIM files: 32.4% in 2021, up from 27.5% in 2020.

Drone management is also emerging as a popular use, with 10.4% of construction companies using mobile devices for this task in 2020.

Voice assistants, while not new, are a valuable tool that construction companies may be overlooking, according to JBKnowledge: “The ease of documentation on the jobsite could be drastically improved by utilizing voice-to-text technology.”

As mobile devices continue to offer new functions and support new apps, companies should continually evaluate processes to identify areas that could benefit from mobile integration—especially when such improvements can save time and money.



5 Facilitating Effective Digital Workflows



Mobile devices facilitate digital workflows by providing “anytime, anywhere” access to the tools employees need to do their jobs, especially when mobile applications are integrated with broader company systems.

Construction owners who use digital workflows say that they:

68%

Increase the efficiency of internal processes

66%

Lead to better-informed decisions

56%

Improve quality and speed of delivery

44%

Improve cost predictability

Digital workflows also enhance visibility into numerous aspects of operations, which makes it easier for owners to correct and improve project processes. Only **7% of construction owners** who use digital workflows are unable to trace the root causes of errors and delays, versus 36% of owners who do not use digital workflows.

As evidence of the value they perceive in digital workflows, **69% of construction owners** say they frequently or very frequently require contractors to use digital documentation and practices.

“Digital workflow is a sequential, predictable combination of data, guidelines, and tasks that make up everyday processes at a business. By defining workflows digitally, business users can look up **crucial data** instantly, keep track of **processes** and **tasks**, streamline them for **optimal productivity**, and even **automate** them.”

– **Kissflow**, a workflow platform provider



6 Adding Complexity to IT Management

Many IT departments are overworked and understaffed. While digital workflows can pay big dividends in productivity and cost savings, they also represent new solutions to be managed, updated, and protected. As companies move to take advantage of all the benefits that mobile devices deliver, they often need to rethink existing processes or integrate new ones.

Construction companies that deploy mobile devices may find they need help with:

- **Managing** employee's data allowances
- **Installing** and maintaining mobile device software
- **Updating** and **securing** mobile devices inventory
- **Troubleshooting** Wi-Fi connectivity on job sites
- **Setting up** employees' devices

IT staff often lack the time and expertise to manage mobile devices, associated software, and carrier relationships effectively. When a company has a fleet of mobile devices, dealing with carriers, troubleshooting devices, and spending hours on the phone with support can **quickly become a burden**.

Unfortunately, insufficient IT resources can lead companies to forego technology initiatives that can drive business outcomes. One way to take advantage of new-and-improved technology without creating extra work for IT staff is to partner with a managed service provider who can provide mobile device support.

35.2% of construction companies say a lack of support staff is the most significant limitation in trying or adopting new technology



7 Creating a Need for Managed Mobility Services

When construction companies think about managed mobility services, they may have concerns about cost. In practice, such services can pay for themselves through direct cost savings and reduced demand on in-house resources.

The mobile device landscape is more complex than it used to be, and it continues to evolve quickly. Third-party experts can help companies select the best carrier, negotiate the most favorable data plans and contracts, and choose the smartphones that are **best-suited for construction sites**.

Companies also find that day-to-day efficiency increases when they no longer must worry about provisioning mobile devices; managing inventory, data plans, and billing; troubleshooting issues; and setting up new employees.

One of the biggest ways a partner can save money is by **advising on cellular carriers** before contracts are signed. All too often, construction companies select a carrier that does not offer the coverage they need. As a result, they pay early-termination fees and cover the costs of switching lines.



52.9% of construction companies outsource **some or all** their IT management.

Final Thoughts for Construction Companies

Where technology is concerned, construction companies often feel stuck and unsure of the best way to proceed. They recognize that modernization is critical, yet they don't want to dedicate extensive in-house resources to IT management.

Needing to solve that dilemma is one of the most common reasons that construction companies outsource mobile device support to an expert partner. **Managed mobility services** can guide carrier selection and contracts, handle back-end troubleshooting, and streamline billing.

In short, they can manage all the day-to-day issues that arise as employees use their mobile devices for a wide variety of tasks. That frees up the construction company to focus on key objectives: **grow the business, improve operations, and keep projects moving.**



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