

GUIDE

4 Ways to Improve Field Productivity



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The productivity issues construction faces now needs no introduction, as nearly everyone is considering how and where to invest in to support their field teams and keep projects on schedule. Recruiting more skilled workers is an old fall back. However, that is becoming increasingly expensive since skilled workers are scarce, and firms are resorting to incentives and bonuses to attract them.

Many companies are instead looking to operational improvements to “do more with less.” In this guide, we recommend 4 ways to get additional productivity from your existing teams to accelerate delivery of projects without sacrificing quality.

1. Improve Access to Information

28% of firms say that a lack of on-site information is the biggest factor impacting their productivity³. Construction workers report that as much as 35% of their time is spent on non-productive activities, including looking for project information⁴. Yet because there is such an emphasis on staying on schedule—75% of firms emphasize a need for rapid decision-making in the field⁵—many workers are rushing decisions and making mistakes, which consume more time to fix.



52% of rework, an avoidable \$7.1 million on average, is directly caused by poor data management and miscommunication⁶.



As an example of a technology solution that provides data access to create efficiency and productivity, our own cloud-based app, Align Cloud, enables field users on any device to view and search the full catalog of assets available both onsite and in your warehouse and yard, which they can then requisition or return through the same interface. Workers across all job sites thus spend less time on non-productive activities like tracking down the necessary tools and equipment. Any increases in efficiency and productivity reduce the pressure to make rapid decisions and, thus, the likelihood of rework.

If your firm does use software and apps, another way to **improve access to information is to integrate your data across these systems to eliminate data silos, double-entry, and human error.**



21.4% of firms use three or more mobile apps for their projects⁷, yet only 16% of executives surveyed say their organizations have fully integrated systems and tools⁸.

By reducing downtime,
you give your workers
more productive
hours on every project
while increasing the
ROI on your tools and
equipment.

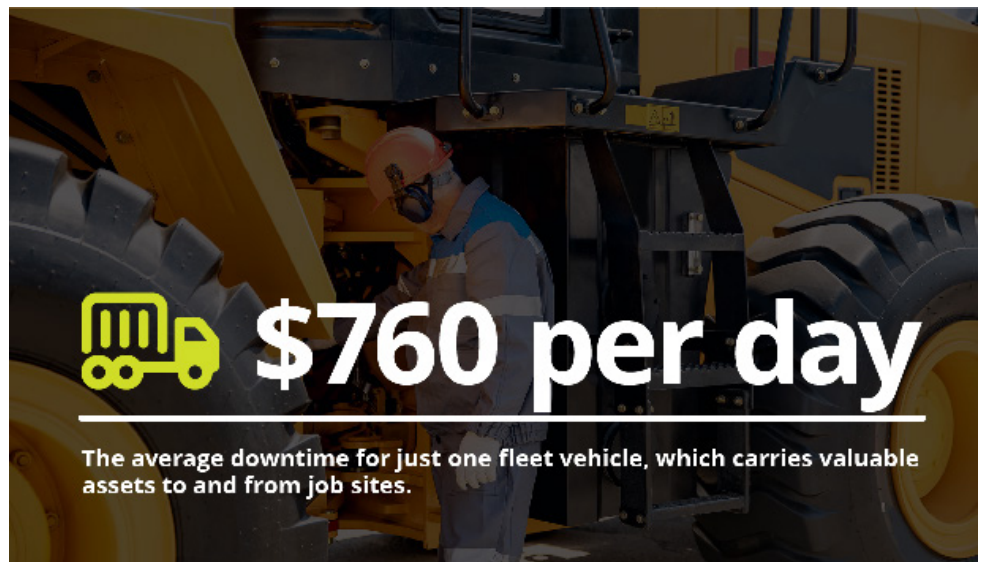
So if you do look to invest in technology, it must integrate with your existing systems (our own Align Cloud includes an Integration Catalog to make discovering and activating integrations effortless).

2. Avoid Site Stoppages Related to Equipment Breakdowns

Even if you have skilled workers and provide the information they need to be productive, your field teams can still suffer from downtime. [Regarding critical heavy equipment](#), construction maintenance experts generally agree that unplanned downtime rates fall 20–30%¹¹.

Multiplied across all the tools and equipment used by your field teams every day, it's no wonder equipment downtime costs companies thousands of dollars a day.

Building a culture of safety is not easy, and it must be genuine to be effective.



As to what that downtime costs companies, the average downtime for just one fleet vehicle, which carries valuable assets to and from job sites, range up to \$760 per day¹².

Even a simple fix, such as implementing [equipment management software like ours](#), which tracks and schedules equipment maintenance (among other features), can have a profound ripple effect on your organization's productivity. By reducing downtime, you give your workers more productive hours on every project while increasing the ROI on your tools and equipment. And since [regular service and calibration reduces workplace injuries](#), the benefits to productivity and profit are multiplicative.

3. Improve Safety Programs

Earlier, we discussed how expensive recruitment has become, but that does not mean labor shortages are not worth addressing, as 44% of firms indicated labor shortages caused them to lengthen completion time for projects already underway⁹. When workers are under pressure to meet tight deadlines, they make mistakes that require rework and are more likely to suffer accidents.

One unorthodox solution we've seen our customers adopt to address their labor issues is consistent and rigorous safety programs, the reasons being:

1. Safety programs help workers avoid injury and illness, ensuring their productivity is not lost.
2. When workers feel safe and appreciated, they work harder, suffer less stress, and are likelier to stay with their current employer.
3. A reputation for prioritizing safety then helps attract and retain more skilled workers.

Building a culture of safety is not easy, and it must be genuine to be effective.



52% of construction firms report prioritizing the needs of their field teams when making technology investments¹



Only 53% of firms utilize safety software on at least half of their projects¹⁰, and that will not cut it.

Fortunately, technology can help. Our own [suite of safety apps](#) makes safety training, inspections, compliance, and reporting so easy. At the start of the day, [five-minute safety briefings](#), which can be delivered remotely, keep field teams focused on safety issues and project deliverables. And throughout the workday, any field worker with a mobile device can [log quick, one-off safety observations](#). This ensures safety is a consistent focus for every one of your workers without wasting valuable time—they're productive now and stay healthy to be productive later. Ultimately, this has a positive impact on financials as well as overall employee satisfaction and morale. It may be a long-term play, but our customers have great success.

4. Identify the technology solutions that will help

52% of construction firms report prioritizing the needs of their field teams when making technology investments¹. Yet surprisingly, only 28% of firms receive feedback from field staff before investing in technology².

If your company has not already deployed technology to support your field teams, feedback may be the only substantial data you can collect to determine where their needs are most severe. So before your company rushes out to buy drones to expedite surveys or spends tens of thousands on recruitment, it's worth your time to talk with your field teams.



Conclusion

As your projects kick into high gear this year, don't miss an opportunity to deliver more successful projects by getting input from your field teams on what they need to be more productive. You may be surprised to learn the biggest roadblocks to their productivity, many of which are solvable with a combination of good communication and the right tools.

If you need help, we've been using technology to solve problems for construction companies for over 30 years, and much of our platform is built on the feedback of field teams. [Contact us today](#), and we'll guide you through the process.



Resources

1-6 <https://construction.autodesk.com/resources/construction-connected/?pgr=0>

7 <https://contechreport.com/>

8 <https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/ie/pdf/2021/09/ie-global-construction-survey-2.pdf>

9 <https://www.agc.org/news/2019/08/27/eighty-percent-contractors-report-difficulty-finding-qualified-craft-workers-hire-0>

10 <https://bim360resources.autodesk.com/optimizing-your-construction-kpi/kpis-of-construction-report>

11 <https://onekeyresources.milwaukeeetool.com/en/construction-downtime>

12 <https://www.elementfleet.com/news/media-coverage/the-true-cost-of-vehicle-downtime>

Is your business suffering astronomical losses on construction projects? Let us show you how Align improves efficiency, safety, and profitability for your organization. **Contact our team today to schedule a product tour.**

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