



Technologies that General Contractors
Should Budget For in 2018



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Increase Efficiency and ROI

Day-to-day changes in construction technology may not be obvious to people outside the industry, but those who spend their days on site know precisely how these innovations are changing the field. General contractors are at the forefront of the construction technology revolution and are poised to see significant improvements in 2018.

While general contractors face unique challenges on every construction project, modern technologies are making those difficulties easier to overcome. Structural concerns, worker safety, or disparate communications can become concerns of the past, as a new wave of technology designed exclusively for the construction industry promises to alleviate—if not diminish—these issues.

These technologies offer distinct benefits for contractors and construction industry leaders—everything from enhanced measurement abilities to improved safety protocols to central, cloud-based storage. As other markets rapidly embrace digital tools, construction businesses can likewise adopt tech advancements to carve a respected space within the market and distance themselves from the competition.

Whichever technology you invest in, you will see an increase in efficiency and speed, leading to major cost savings, higher ROIs, and happier customers.



Centrally Located, Digitally Accessible Data Storage

The Sage Group plc, commonly known as Sage, is a leader in this space. The software company offers multiple packages, including [Sage 100 Contractor](#) and [Sage 300 Construction and Real Estate \(CRE\)](#). These construction management solutions give you the confidence you need to run your business, your projects, and your payroll with optimum efficiency and accuracy.

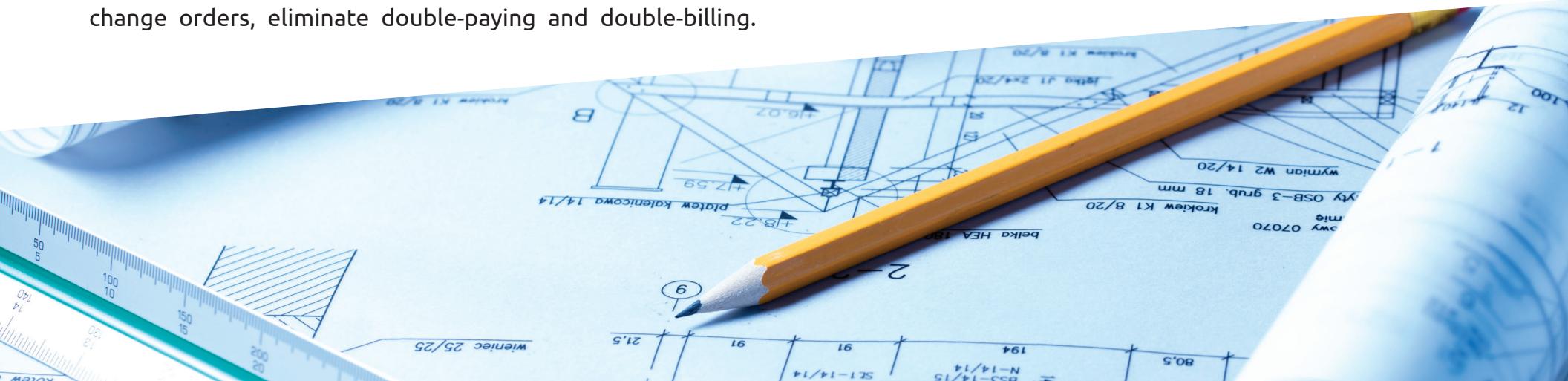
Sage 100 Contractor provides the easiest access to critical job cost and project information to help you manage your business operations more efficiently. Sage 300 CRE enables you to minimize liability in the field with subcontractor compliance tracking of lien waivers, certified reports, insurance certificates, and more.

These solutions document all subcontractor work, budgets, payment information, and more. You can monitor expiration dates of certificates of insurance, easily manage subcontract change orders, eliminate double-paying and double-billing.

And because these solutions are fully integrated with your accounting processes, you'll know exactly where you stand.

Integrated mobile apps offer quick access to all your information on an iPhone or Android device. Built-in views and reports allow for insights into progress, quality control, permitting, compliance, and safety information. Because it's cloud-based, Sage and similar software packages also offer connections to customer management apps, tax and payroll, estimating programs, and more. AvidXchange is a Sage partner for payment management, giving contractors the ability to manage payables, from invoice receipt through vendor payment.

While larger organizations will benefit from storing everything in one place, so will contractors and sub-contractors. Everyone with necessary access can quickly see job site information for the entire portfolio of projects: General





contractors will appreciate an ability to tap into job site details from anywhere in the world, and sub-contractors will benefit from centrally stored information paired with an easy method to communicate with the general contractor and other team members.

Traditional office businesses have been working to better sync their work processes, communication, and accounting into one system for years. The growth of platforms like [Oracle](#), [SAP](#), and other enterprise resource planning (ERP) software is evidence of this shift.

Based in Carpinteria, California, [Procore Technologies](#), for example, is an option to centralize construction industry operations under one ERP package. Designed for contractors first, Procore's solutions allow the office and field to collaborate on the full construction process, from drawings and specs to the completed plan. A host of packages offer specialties in project management, quality and safety, construction financials, and field productivity. With more than 2 million users, Procore has already made a significant impact on the construction space and continues to grow.

Most construction industry leaders have run into problems with dispersed and disconnected systems to track your documents and job progress. Technologies like Procore and Sage 100 Contractor bridge that divide.

Instant Communication Tools

Every construction manager knows the sinking feeling of receiving a call from a job site about a problem, mistake, or damage caused by their crew. Until the issue is resolved, events like these can ruin a vacation, tarnish focus, or steal a leader's attention from other important must-dos. These scenarios prove the value of strong crisis communications.

Whether you are building a one-story house or a massive skyscraper, Fieldwire can help iOS, Android, and Windows 10 users link up with instant messaging, punch-listing tracking, construction scheduling, and document management in one convenient app. While there are many compelling uses for this on a day-to-day basis, such as checking in with your team while you are away from the site, it can come into play at critical moments to solve pressing issues.

One Santa Barbara-based construction company shared a story with AvidXchange about a staff member who poorly cut a transformer's supporting line, causing the mechanism to fall into an unfinished foundation. The stress instantly set in on the owner, who had to resolve the situation while out of town with limited information. With [Fieldwire](#), however, it would have been much simpler.

Fieldwire's instant messaging features allow the crew to take photos with their smartphone and send them to a manager

instantly. With larger projects and teams, getting that level of detailed, instant communication could help avert crises altogether or better manage them as they arise.

Fieldwire estimates that users save about 20 hours per month, as time is freed up from basic organization and communication tasks. While pricing starts at \$29 per user per month, it is easy to install and user-friendly, and budgets will benefit from improved efficiency on each construction project.

For general contractors, this opens up enterprise-quality communication with the entire construction team. For large enterprises, managers can reach leaders at each job site with ease. For sub-contractors, they can quickly obtain the answer they need via a message to the general contractor or company headquarters.

Just as two-way radios once revolutionized communications at the construction site, web-connected communications are the new frontier. Though construction may be a bit behind consumer markets when it comes to messaging platforms, don't expect the industry to lag much longer. Fieldwire is just one innovation that's skimming the surface of what's possible for real-time construction communication.

Laser Precision Using GPS Guidance



When you are building a large structure, an error of just one inch can cause serious problems. New construction tools allow you to plot foundations and mark out any part of your plans on the ground with extreme precision.

[Trimble](#) is at the forefront of these new technologies and offers general construction, interior, and underground mapping tools. General contractors will appreciate Trimble ProjectSight, which provides all-in-one collaboration and planning tools for even the most complex job sites. But for location mapping and planning, the Trimble R8S Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) is a ticket to fixing many complex problems.

Integrated hardware and field software make it easy to place footings, retaining walls, formwork, grading, and more. GNSS includes GPS and other mapping systems, and the Trimble GNSS offers packages to match your general construction requirements—whether that's a base station plus a rover, or only one of the two.

The top of the Trimble R8S GNSS is equipped with the Trimble 360 satellite receiver, and the station includes a removable battery pack so you can swap batteries on the go and work with your system all day without interruption. These parts, along with the Trimble Field Tablet, fit together in a hard, construction yellow carry case, so you can easily move it from

A mistake that costs someone a Pokémon is much different than the safety issues that can arise from a flaw in a building's foundation. That's why Trimble uses much more advanced satellite tracking for the precision needed by construction companies.

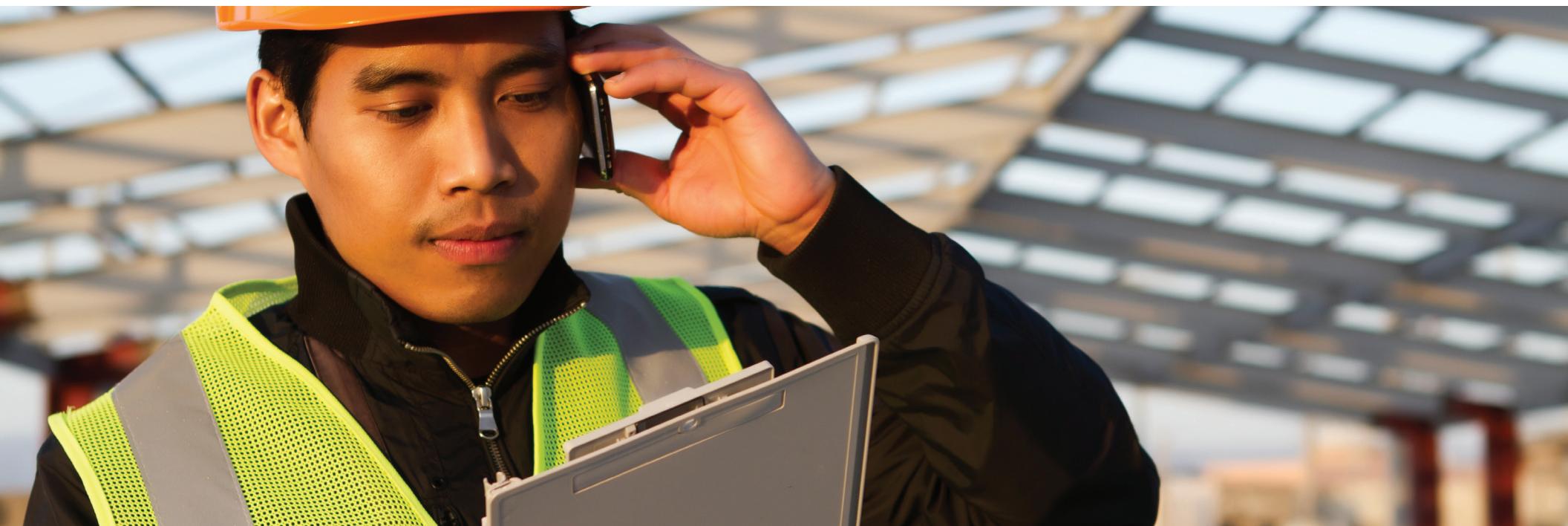
job to job. And, most importantly, it provides sub-centimeter horizontal accuracy, so you always know your construction is spot on.

Individual consumers use GPS technologies for a range of tasks, from driving directions to immersive gaming. The Pokémon Go craze was just one example of how new location technology is entertaining for consumer use, but you can put this technology to work on the job with improved results for your clients, and a more relaxed workday for your team.

Of course, there are more real-world implications from using GPS technologies for construction than for gaming: A mistake that costs someone a Pokémon is much different than the safety issues that can arise from a flaw in a building's foundation. That's why Trimble uses much more advanced satellite tracking for the precision needed by construction companies.

Investing in advanced location systems does more than add efficiency and accuracy to the workplace: It can make you stand out in the market. If a competing bid offers accuracy within a few inches and you can offer accuracy within a centimeter, you might have what it takes to win the job and grow your business. In an industry where reputation is everything, it's hard to justify operating without top-of-the-line mapping systems.

Digital Compliance Documentation and Safety Meetings



It can be easy to blame the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) for ballooning costs and hassles in the construction industry, but the group plays a vital role in protecting both contractors and workers from dangerous situations. However, OSHA compliance takes a lot of work. Fortunately for modern contractors, it takes less work than it used to.

The Safety Meeting App makes compliance much more straightforward and is available for both iOS and Android

devices. The app allows you to quickly document meetings, incidents, and safety checklists from a device that's almost always in your pocket while you're on the job. You can print pre-defined PDF reports when needed, or reference past documentation on the go from your mobile device; you can even take pictures of meetings or incidents and save them to your documentation in case it is ever questioned in the future. All assets can then be stored and safely accessed in the cloud, ensuring that a dropped phone or broken computer won't cause important material to go missing.

The [Safety Meeting App](#) goes beyond simple documentation and storage, with hundreds of safety meeting topics built into the service. When your team gathers at the start of a workday or for a safety check-in, tap into over 950 safety meeting topics customized for 34 trade types. Topics are available in both English and Spanish.

Some examples of safety topics that general contractors may find of interest include:

- A healthy worksite
- Arc welding safety
- Are you prepared for an emergency?
- Driving vehicles and moving equipment safely
- Establishing a hazard communication program
- Forklift safety rules
- Hazardous material warning labels
- Operator visibility around heavy equipment
- Safe operation on a slope
- Tool belt safety
- Workplace electrical safety

Remember: You can never be too safe in construction. It only takes a moment for deadly accidents to occur, so execute the necessary steps that will ensure you and your team leave safely every workday.

For workplace safety, contractors, sub-contractors, and large construction companies are all important players. If someone is injured on your job site, you are implicitly liable to some

extent, even if you followed all safety rules and regulations by the book.

Keep in mind that safety issues can be encompassing: Each time someone gets injured on your watch, worker's compensation insurance rates go up; and when an incident takes place, you not only lose productive hours from your workers, but you're stuck filling out paperwork. Additionally, you may need to find a replacement for your injured worker who needs time off, which can delay your project schedule.

The financial costs of safety failures can put a contractor or construction company out of business. Invest in the health of your workers with technologies designed to improve worksite safety.



Accounts Payable Automation Solutions

One constant in construction, whether you are a general contractor, sub-contractor, or major construction company, is a plethora of bills and payments. Handling this manually could quickly become a full-time job, even for smaller sub-contractors. For general contractors overseeing large projects and for companies with multiple ongoing jobs at the same time, it may require an entire department.

In the past, businesses had to manage accounts payable through inefficient processes. Invoices would arrive in the mail from vendors. Then the invoices would have to be matched to an expected bill, verified, and queued to pay. Checks would be printed, an AP manager or executive would sign the check, and it would be sent off again, via snail mail, to pay the bill. This process is slow, expensive, and cumbersome—but it doesn't have to be.

Modern accounts payable systems use advanced matching and digital payments to automate the AP process. These systems allow businesses to lower processing costs, decrease late payments, capture payment discounts, avoid duplicate payments, and better track the end-to-end process from expense to payment.

AP automation solutions from AvidXchange take the sending and approval process for an invoice from 28 days to two or





three. It eliminates manual and error-prone processes like data entry. The industry average cost to manage a paper invoice is \$14.89, and the average cost for a paper check is \$7.15. With automated AP from AvidXchange, that drops to \$1.50 per invoice and \$0.68 per payment, a massive saving.

With automated AP in place, you can redirect your office staff to handle more valuable business tasks and focus on further process improvements, rather than spending time matching invoices and mailing paper checks. These teams can even help

implement and oversee other technology advances you're pushing your business to adapt.

Thanks to partnerships with GCPay and other companies, contractors and other construction industry businesses are saving thousands of dollars in payments costs. However, while you can save big through improvements on the job site, don't neglect to update your office and business technology, which can reap tremendous financial and time savings.

Don't Get Left Behind

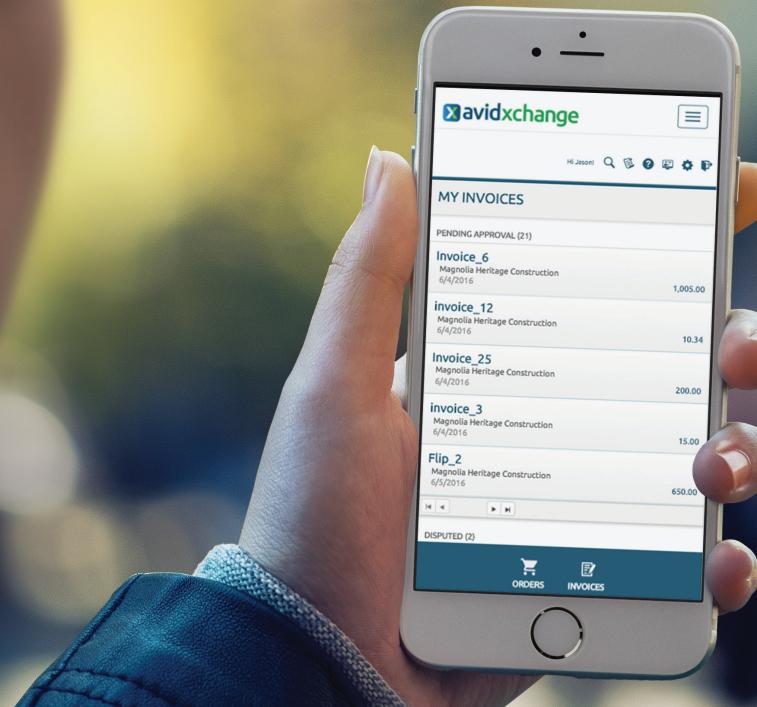
Trendy technologies come and go, but some stick around for the long haul. If you want 2018 to be a breakout year for your construction-related business, you won't regret an investment in the right innovations to improve operations, efficiency, communications, and finances.

Your competitors are not waiting around to see what happens next. Millions of general contractors and construction workers log in to apps like Procore each day; excavators around the world reach into their truck and grab their Trimble systems; job site managers are using their phones to send updates to their bosses; leaders look in on safety meeting attendance; and AP processes are making paper bills relics of construction days past. No longer is new technology relegated to consumer markets: It's ready to transform your on-site projects, even when you're off-site. By engaging these innovations, you can secure a leadership position within the industry.

As the construction world keeps on moving forward, you, too, must become a leader at the forefront of these new technologies. With the right modern investments, you will earn maximum ROI alongside a powerful company reputation.

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Say Goodbye to Paper Checks and Invoices



This guide was created by AvidXchange. AvidXchange revolutionizes the way organizations pay their bills. Serving more than 5,700 clients throughout North America and 400,000 vendors nationwide, AvidXchange is the leading provider of cloud-based, purchase-to-pay solutions for Enterprise and Midmarket organizations, spanning multiple industries including Real Estate, Financial Services, Energy, Nonprofit, and Construction.

Interested in automating your payables and creating efficiencies for your AP team? Schedule a meeting with an AP automation expert to learn how you can increase productivity and protect your business. Our automation specialists will create a customized demo and walk you through the streamlined workflow of an automated AP process.

To schedule a demo, [click here!](#)