From **chaos** to **confidence**

Your guide to choosing a **construction ERP**

How to find the best ERP solution for your construction business

Choosing an ERP for your construction company is a major decision, but you don't have to navigate it alone. This guide will demonstrate what separates basic accounting software from a truly connected construction ecosystem. You'll learn how a purpose-built construction ERP unites your field and office operations to eliminate double data entry, automate complex workflows and give you the real-time financial visibility needed to scale your business. Finally, you'll get an actionable vendor evaluation checklist to help you select the right solution for your unique operational needs.

While your project teams are out in the field building, your finance team is hard at work in the back office, monitoring cash flow, ensuring payroll goes out on time and managing the financial risk that comes with every contract.

One small slip-up can lead to overbillings or missed costs that threaten your company's financial health. On top of that, even one poorly handled project can put your reputation (and your cash flow) at risk.

But what if you could see up-to-the-minute job costs as your project unfolds (not days or weeks after)? What if you could connect your critical business functions from the field to the back office and spot financial risks before they impact your bottom line?

Connected, construction-specific enterprise resource planning (ERP) software can make this happen.

Sounds great, right?

But no two companies are the same. Your business is unique, and what might be a good fit for others may not work for you. So how do you know what ERP is right for your business? Read on to find out.

The point solution problem

The high cost of managing your business in silos

Your company probably uses individual tools ("point solutions") for back-office functions like accounting, payroll and HR, while your field team uses different software for project management, BIM and daily reports. However, all too often, the field uses one solution while accounting uses another, and the data never meets in the middle.

If your company has one or two local projects running at a time, this disconnect, while still a headache, is somewhat manageable by piecing together spreadsheets and off-the-shelf financial software. **However, as your company grows and takes on three, four, five or ten projects running concurrently, keeping track of all the invoices, subcontracts, change orders, WIP reports, equipment, crews, etc., can quickly overwhelm your finance team.**

Add to that the complexity of things like multi-state payroll, prevailing wages and shifting retainage, and it becomes clear that when your individual technology solutions don't work together, small inefficiencies can snowball into major financial risk.

Disconnected field apps
- Delayed job costs
- Missing change orders
- Manual timesheets

Fragile spreadsheets
- Manual data re-keying
- Mismatched job codes
- Outdated WIP calculations

Siloed project management
- Unbilled work
- Cash flow strain
- Profit fade & write-downs

Generic accounting software
- Rigid billing & invoicing
- Basic GL without cost codes
- Manual AP processes

Weeks of data lag | Financial blind spots & risk

Beyond bookkeeping: The power of a connected construction ERP

Real-time visibility from field to finance

A construction ERP acts as a single source of truth, bringing all back-office and field functions into a single unified system. Instead of standalone solutions for accounting, field operations, estimating, equipment, service, etc., a construction ERP acts as a central hub that connects every part of your business, so data flows seamlessly across the organization. That means when one person enters or alters anything, that change is immediately reflected across the entire system. No more waiting for a phone call or a weekly meeting to know what is happening on your jobsite.

Construction ERP

Field & shop

- Mobile time tracking
- Daily field logs
- Equipment utilization

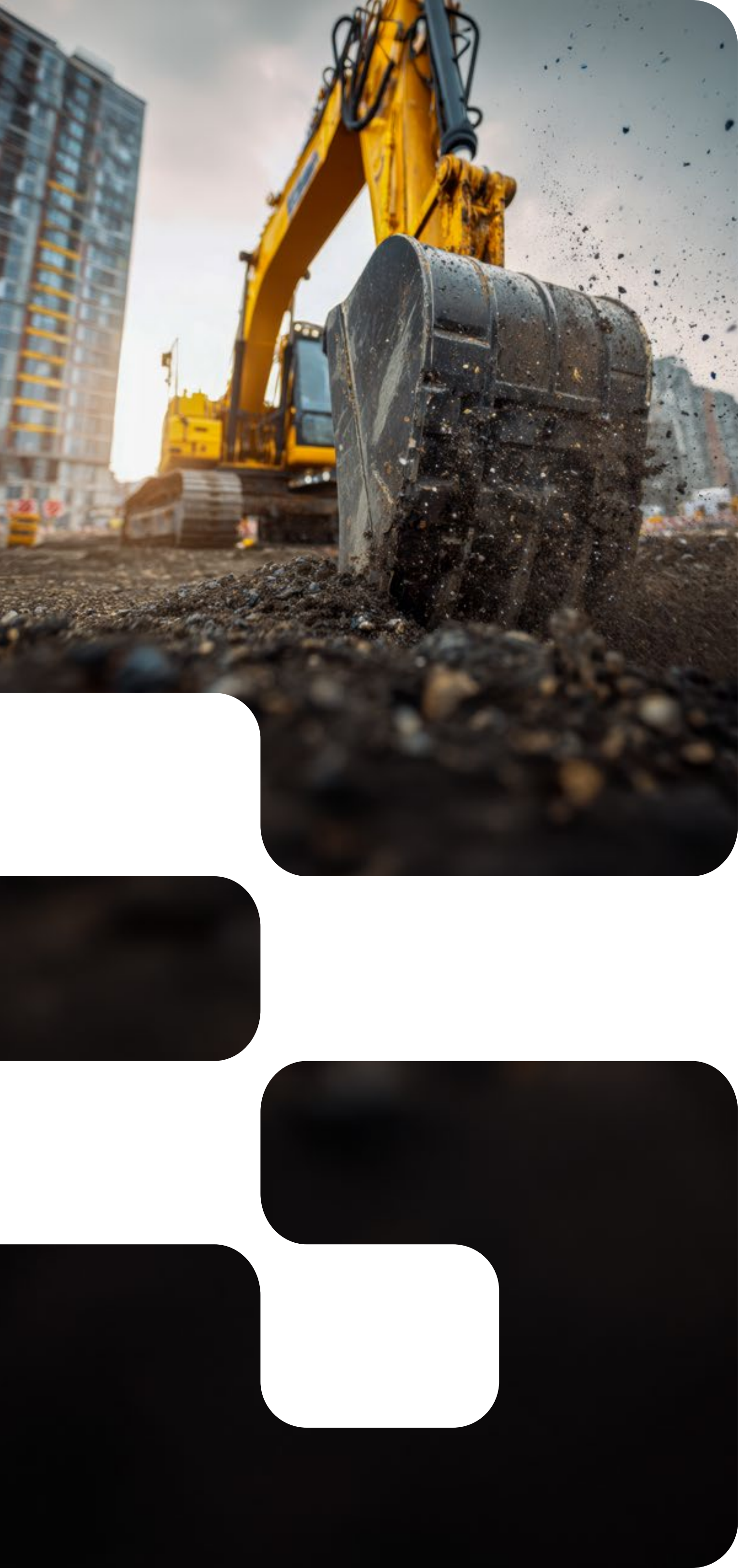
Back office

- Real-time job costing
- Multi-state payroll
- AP/AR & AIA billings

Executive insights

- Live WIP reporting
- Margin analytics
- Cash flow projections

Instead of operating in a vacuum separated from the rest of your business, a connected ERP turns once-isolated functions within your organization into a well-oiled machine that keeps your business profitable.



A good construction ERP does more than just track numbers; it provides a solid foundation for everything you build and every dollar you earn, allowing your teams to:

Protect profit margins

Get real-time job costs directly from the field.

Lower risk

Mitigate project and financial risks with fewer errors and less rework.

Collaborate seamlessly

Share data across entire project teams in real time to improve team communication.

See real insights

See which projects are profitable, which ones aren't and where you should focus in the future.

Boost efficiency

Automate tedious and redundant tasks to increase productivity across the office and field.

Moving from disconnected point solutions to a unified construction ERP delivers significant operational returns across your entire organization.

According to benchmark research from Hobson & Company, contractors using connected construction management software saw:

100% SAVINGS in redundant application expenses

66% FASTER payroll processing

50% LESS time spent tracking AP invoices, billing and field data

40% REDUCTION in time managing work and service orders

30% FEWER project delays and rework

3% INCREASE in topline revenue

0.75% BOOST in gross margins

A connected workflow from field to finance

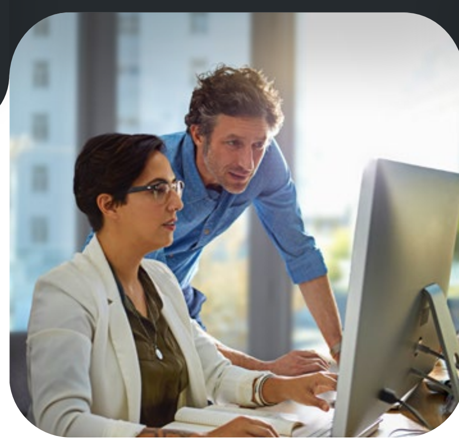
Here's what a connected construction ERP looks like in practice:

On the jobsite

A foreman logs worker hours or submits a daily report through a connected project management app directly from the field.

In the office

Your accounting team can see those hours instantly and automatically generate WIP reports without having to chase down paper timecards or fix messy handwriting.

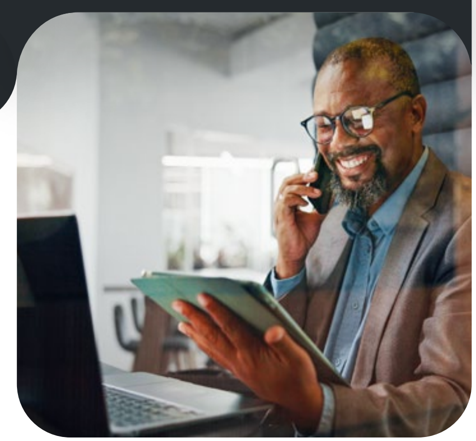


At the bank

Because the real-time labor data is already in your payroll system, weekly checks go out automatically and your crews get paid on time without the Friday afternoon stress.

To your bottom line

The ERP shows labor cost comparisons against your original estimate, so you can see exactly how you're pacing and how much budget you have left.



What to look for in a construction ERP

Five non-negotiable features for your next ERP

Shopping for new software is a lot like reviewing blueprints before you start a project. You want to catch any issues now so you do not have to fix them later, when they're more expensive. Every software company will tell you they have the best tools, but you need to know which one is right for your unique business needs.

Here are a few key features to look for when shopping for a new ERP vendor:

01 Native field-to-finance integration

True integration means your data moves between tools, apps and systems in real time (or close to it) without human intervention. When evaluating ERPs, at a minimum, confirm that routine financial items like mobile timecards, daily jobsite logs, work orders and purchase orders post directly to central job cost accounts without manual batch transfers, CSV uploads or third-party connectors.

02 Purpose-built construction functionality

Generic ERP platforms often lack the critical nuance required to accurately manage complex financial and accounting elements unique to construction. Be on the lookout for built-in fields, workflows and compliance tools for things like retainage, AIA progress billings, cost codes and WIP schedules that are part of the system, not third-party add-ons or manual workarounds.

03 Real-time job cost tracking

Seeing a job is over budget is alarming, but it's much worse if you only find that out after the job has been closed. Find an ERP system that provides you and your project leaders real-time visibility into labor, equipment, subcontractors and material costs, so you can quickly spot budget deviations as work happens, not days or weeks later.

04 Payroll and compliance flexibility

Managing labor costs and certified reporting through third-party payroll bureaus or manual spreadsheets can leave your finance team scrambling to get payroll out each week. An ERP that supports easy or automatic calculations for things like union fringe benefits, multi-state taxes, prevailing wages and certified payroll reporting will help ensure your payroll is accurate and on time without making your finance team stay late on Fridays.

05 Custom executive dashboards

A good ERP vendor will be able to show you real-time executive dashboards that track macro-level health metrics like company-wide cash flow projections, over- and under-billings and portfolio WIP trends. It should be relatively easy to build custom reports, drill-downs and visualizations without exporting raw data into complex Excel spreadsheets.

Maximizing your ERP investment

How to ensure high adoption and smooth transition

Choosing a new ERP can be a significant investment of time and resources, but the benefits are well worth it. Here are some tips to help you get the most out of your construction ERP investment.

01 Understand all parts of the business

Since an ERP will (ideally) touch every business function, you need to know how all the different parts of your organization work. For an ERP implementation to be successful, the new system has to work at least as fast as the current system and still provide all the info your teams need. Meet with department or team leaders and take the time to understand their pain points and daily workflows that could be improved with a connected ERP. Think about questions like:

- Who would benefit from new software?
- What manual tasks are slowing each department down the most?
- Where is data getting lost between the field and the office?
- What needs does each department and user have?
- What processes or tasks in each department could software improve?

02 Get organizational buy-in

When evaluating any new ERP software, involve your stakeholders early. Ideally, your end-users (or at least a good representation of them) would be involved in the decision and demo process and be able to ask questions. You may find issues that leadership hasn't considered and/or valuable feedback on how their teams will adapt to the new solution.

03 Build a solid data foundation

Before you move to a new system, review your current organizational data. Think of it like building on a site that has not been leveled. If your current job costs or employee records are messy, moving them into a new ERP will not fix the problem. Take the time to clean up your lists, cost codes, etc., now to ensure your new system has a solid foundation for the next phase of growth within your company.

04 Plan for a learning curve

No matter how easy software is to use, your team will need time to adjust. Expect some operational growing pains during the first few weeks as people learn new ways of working. This is a normal part of growth. To help your team, you should:

- Pick a "super user" in each department to lead the way.
- Set aside dedicated training time so crews do not feel rushed.
- Focus on small wins before trying to use every feature at once.

Preparing for this learning curve will make the transition to ERP systems less painful and more effective in the long run.

Your construction ERP checklist

Identifying and evaluating potential software options requires going beyond high-level feature overviews to tell how well a system truly supports your critical business functions. Use this checklist to validate that a platform can meet your needs.

- ☐ **Workload reduction:**
  Will the software automate repetitive tasks for your team and eliminate manual data entry?

- ☐ **Project setup and estimate import:**
  How straightforward is setting up a new project in the system, and can you easily import estimates without re-keying data?

- ☐ **Lifecycle management:**
  Are your processes streamlined and fully integrated from project initiation through final closeout?

- ☐ **Field-to-office workflows:**
  Does the platform natively connect accounting with jobsite functions without manual CSV uploads?

- ☐ **Data consistency:**
  Will the system establish a unified data structure across your entire organization so everyone works from the exact same information?

- ☐ **Billing and form generation:**
  Can the software automatically generate essential construction forms and requests (AIA progress billings, change orders, RFIs, work orders) directly from live cost data?

- ☐ **Scalability and configuration:**
  Is the platform flexible and scalable enough to support your specific needs now and adapt as your business grows?

- ☐ **Enterprise security:**
  Are strong data security measures built in, including automated cloud backups, multi-factor authentication and single sign-on?

- ☐ **Usability and interface:**
  Does the software have a clean, intuitive interface that makes daily navigation straightforward for all end users (even field teams)?

- ☐ **Analytics and reporting:**
  Does the platform deliver intuitive visual analytics tailored to each role, providing executive WIP visibility and true construction business intelligence?

- ☐ **Vendor commitment:**
  Is the software provider actively committed to continually investing in the product and expanding its functionality to support your future operations?

- ☐ **Construction-focused AI:**
  Does the software utilize AI to standardize project data and streamline routine tasks? And if so, is it purpose-built for construction (just like the ERP system itself)?

Build a profitable future with Trimble

Selecting a construction ERP is one of the most critical strategic investments your firm will make. Moving beyond disconnected point solutions and end-of-month financial surprises requires a platform designed specifically for the complex mechanics of construction accounting.

With more than 40 years of construction expertise, Trimble ERP solutions were built from the ground up to handle the complexity and nuance of our industry. Our enterprise-grade ERP provides the foundation for your financial success by unifying your back office, project managers and field crews into a single connected system.

With Trimble ERP as the backbone of your financial operations, you'll gain the visibility and control to protect project margins, drive long-term profitability and grow with confidence.

Ready to grow your construction business?

Don't let disconnected systems and manual spreadsheets erode your hard-earned profits. Connect with an ERP expert today to see how Trimble can streamline operations and keep your company in the black.

GET IN TOUCH

Trimble is developing technology, software and services that drive the digital transformation of construction, with solutions spanning the entire architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) industry. Empowering teams across the construction lifecycle, Trimble's innovative approach improves coordination and collaboration between stakeholders, teams, phases and processes. Trimble's Connected Construction strategy gives users control of their operations with best-in-class solutions and a common data environment. By automating work and transforming workflows, Trimble is enabling construction professionals to improve productivity, quality, transparency, safety and sustainability and deliver each project with confidence.

For more information, visit: **Trimble.com**.