

# 7 tips for getting field teams to embrace construction software



## Introduction

When it comes to technology in the construction industry, you'd be forgiven for thinking that your coworkers may not be ready to use it on the jobsite. Even though it offers significant benefits—like avoiding rework costs and keeping everyone working from up-to-date plans—the use of mobile devices and applications in the field is still new to the industry. At some companies, switching to a construction field app may require considerable cultural change.

In a 2016 survey of more than 2,600 industry professionals, 79.3 percent of respondents said that mobile technology (including tech used in the field) was either "important" or "very important," while 31.6 percent cited "employee hesitation" as a limiting factor in the adoption of new technology.<sup>1</sup>

The message is clear: Professionals agree that technology should be used on the jobsite, but there needs to be more education about its advantages at the individual level.

Whether you've just bought construction software or you want to inspire your team to make the switch to digital, we've created this quick guide to help get your colleagues on board.

<sup>1</sup> Construction Industry Report, 2016, JBKknowledge





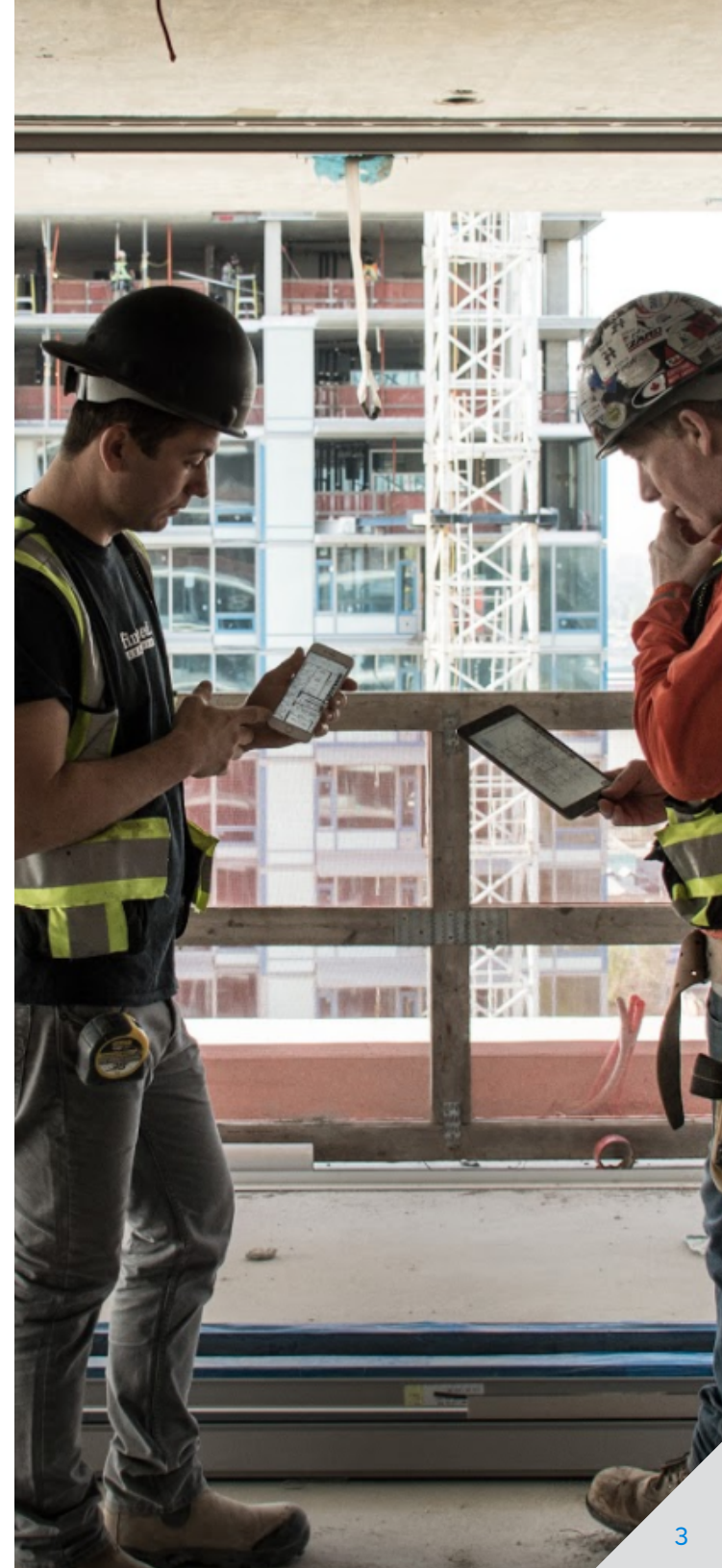
## 1. Show them how much time they'll save

The use of construction software is proven to help projects get completed ahead of schedule, but sometimes this is less obvious to individual team members. Help them understand by explaining how it will improve their work on a personal level. Will it mean fewer trips to the trailer, or make it easier for them to share progress updates? It's hard to turn down your proposal if it gets them home earlier or saves them three or more hours per week.

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It's improved our productivity and fundamentally changed our mindset. Everytime we go to work on something, we don't have to question whether or not we're doing it right.

— Jason Ko, Project Manager, Nan Inc.



## 2. Get a small group committed to testing it

While it might be tempting to try to get your entire company on board immediately, consider testing it out on a small team or a single project first. This will help you properly understand the benefits and address any concerns before getting the rest of the team involved. It will also help you define a process and set expectations for how everyone should use the software once it's rolled out.

### Did you know?

A 2016 survey found that construction professionals who were born in the 80s-90s were only slightly (4%) more likely to say mobile technology is "very important" than someone born in the 60s-70s.<sup>2</sup> Don't be afraid to test software with people of all ages.

<sup>2</sup> Construction Industry Report, 2016, JBKnowledge





### 3. Focus on one or two key functions & use them well

The less work required from your team to adopt a new technology, the better. Start simple by selecting just a few key functions to focus on, and learn to use those well—this will provide you with quick wins that the team can appreciate.

Many PlanGrid users start by uploading sheets and keeping them updated so that everyone is always working from the same set, whether they're on the jobsite or in the office. It might take another week or two to be ready to use more advanced features, but if you prove value early on, you improve your chances of getting your team excited about the new software.



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## 4. Encourage your team to use it together

While some construction software might be useful for individual productivity, tools that improve teamwork and communication will encourage others to use it organically—if you see a couple of coworkers using a new app together in a compelling way, you'll be more inspired to check it out yourself.

Construction software that enables users to share documents, assign tasks and reviews, or work together in other ways encourages productive collaboration, and the time and money saved from efficient teamwork will grow as more people make it part of their daily workflows.





## 5. Define roles & responsibilities across the team

Once you've tested the software on one or two projects (see second tip), use those learnings to agree on how the entire team will use it moving forward. For example, you might have a project engineer agree to update sheets and documents first thing every morning, while the superintendent will publish markups and pictures to the project for everyone else to see. Agreeing on responsibilities and expectations early on is key to gaining long-term adoption across your organization.

## 6. Get support from the top

Even after people start testing software in the field, it's easy to slip back into old habits. To combat this, see if your superintendents or foremen can include a quick reminder during their prework or coordination meetings—the message could be as simple as “Remember to look at the app to review specs for today's work.” Adoption usually starts in the field (rather than the office), but participation from leadership is essential for company-wide commitment.



## 7. Take advantage of training & support

Best-in-class software companies will offer onsite training, online webinars, a responsive support team, and more, so take advantage of these resources. Even spending a few minutes watching a "how-to" video can help your team be successful without disrupting their entire day.

You may also find that some of your team members quickly become experts on how to use the software—recruit these natural champions to help teach new people and guide anyone who is less tech-savvy.

“

I can't believe a [consultant] will come out to the jobsite and train the foreman. This training allowed our internal staff to stay focused on our project tasks without needing to take time out of the day to train subcontractors."

– Chelsea Kahle, Project Engineer





## Conclusion

Even the best construction technology can face resistance in the field. But if it's fast, reliable, and easy to use, all it takes is a bit of encouragement to win them over. By starting simple, recruiting a small test group, and achieving some quick wins, your team will quickly discover the advantages of using construction software on the jobsite.



PlanGrid is the leader in construction software for the field. It helps contractors, owners, designers, and architects collaborate easily from their mobile devices and desktop computers, managing blueprints, specs, photos, RFIs, and punch lists. PlanGrid's platform stores over 50 million digital blueprints, making it the largest digital blueprint repository in the world.

To learn more about PlanGrid or to sign up for a free trial, visit [www.plangrid.com](http://www.plangrid.com) or your preferred app store.

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United States  
+1 (415) 963-4088  
[www.plangrid.com](http://www.plangrid.com)

Australia  
AUS 1800 316 406  
[www.plangrid.com/au](http://www.plangrid.com/au)

United Kingdom  
+44 (0) 20 3695 0292  
[www.plangrid.com/gb](http://www.plangrid.com/gb)

Canada  
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