

Scorecard:

How does your project independence rank?

For subcontractors, success depends not only on a quality job completed on time but your ability to work with general contractors and other specialty contractors. Subs are at the mercy of schedule and scope changes communicated by the general contractors and other subcontractors. Frequently, it can feel like a constant game of catching up and waiting around.

Primarily due to their dependence on GCs, specialty contractors face an array of business challenges that inhibit them from managing and finishing their work efficiently, including:

- **Unpredictable changes in scope and cost:** Due to fragmented communications, frequently project changes come as a surprise to subs who usually only hear about them just before the work needs to be completed, if at all.
- **Chaotic schedules:** Scheduling is always a hurdle due to coordination issues with GCs and other subcontractors. A change in schedule on one project could derail plans for several other trades and projects.
- **Cash flow:** Subs usually have to front the cost of all materials then get paid back later. Without extensive documentation, it's difficult to keep track of the work and get paid on time.
- **Availability and retainment of skilled labor:** Finding skilled labor is hard especially given the labor shortage. Lack of supply and competing subs also increases the cost of labor.
- **Inconsistent coordination:** On one job, there could be 50 trades on a jobsite at various times during the project. This creates overlap and requires serious coordination and scheduling skills.
- **Poor issue tracking and accountability:** With so many things happening on a job, keeping track of your work can be tough enough.
- **Inadequate reporting and documentation:** Subs need to document everything from materials that they'll need to get paid back for the work that's been completed and installed.

Do you truly own your success on projects? Or do you face these common issues on projects that cost you time, money and business? Consider the following challenges to see how independent your projects rank:

Never (1 point)	Sometimes (2 points)	Often (3 Points)	On a project, you are faced with...
			Unpredictable changes in scope and cost from GCs and/or owners are not communicated in time
			Coordination issues occur with GCs and other subcontractors due to outdated documents and/or unexpected changes
			Payment issues arise due to poor or missing documentation
			It's difficult to find enough labor to complete the job
			Other trades work (or lack thereof) prevents you and your team from completing their segment of a project
			Adequately tracking what work you and your team has done is difficult
			The technology/software you use changes project by project depending on the GCs
			Safety is a concern because teams are often disconnected
			TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS:

8-10: Looks like you're managing your project independently. Should your scope or work change, you might want to consider investing in at least a limited number of field collaboration software licenses as a test run to keep control of your work.

11-15: You could find more independence for your trade and projects by using collaboration software in some capacity. With the most up-to-date plans and documents available at all times, teams are always working from the latest set and can easily compare, identify and manage the smallest changes in scope and cost.

16-24: If you haven't done so already, adopting field collaboration software for your projects should be a major priority to establish more project independence. Key benefits include enhanced project documentation, better coordination, reduced rework and improved quality control. With the right field software that can be used consistently from project to project, your team will be able to work together more efficiently and get paid and recognized for the work completed.

Own Your Trade: Download Our Guide

Are you finding hurdles when it comes to controlling your own destiny as a subcontractor? Wouldn't it be better to have your whole team operate using the same processes and tech, project to project, to help facilitate construction faster? If you're struggling to manage projects independently, download our ebook, ["The Subcontractor's Guide to Taking Control of Project Collaboration,"](#) to learn how to own your trade and improve project collaboration.