

# Construction Productivity Software Buyer's Guide:

## How to Choose the Best Mobile Construction Apps for Your Company

Make an informed decision before you buy so you can make a positive impact on your bottom line.



# What's Inside

## **3 Introduction**

## **4 Review Your Needs Before You Start Shopping**

## **5 Questions to Ask While Shopping for Your Construction Software**

## **7 Most Common Construction Software Features**

Money and Accounting

Scheduling

Team Management Features

Document Tracking and Management

Material Management

Equipment Tracking

## **9 Recommendations by Major Category**

Top Construction Productivity App

Top Construction Project Management App

Top Cad /BIM Mobile App

Top Photo Mobile Apps

Top Time Entry Mobile Apps

Top Mobile Cloud Storage

Top Safety Mobile App

## **14 Construction Productivity Software Buyer's Checklist**

## **15 See Live Demo**

About PlanGrid

Connect with PlanGrid

About the Guide

Request More Information



## Introduction

A mobile app for construction used to be more of a novelty—or a nice addition to your project management lineup. Today, however, the right construction software is a must and will have a huge impact on the way your teams collaborate, how swiftly you complete projects and tasks and even the overall success of your project.

Construction mobile apps are no longer a fad and they're changing the industry for the better in many ways, but which one is right for you? Behind the slick advertising and compelling campaigns, you'll need to look at not only your own goals and needs but the usability and long-term outlook for any construction app you are considering. Since an application of this type will impact your entire workflow and all teams, it is essential to make the best possible choices from the start.

Learning more about the different options that are available to you and discovering what factors or questions you should investigate will help you pick the right construction software for your brand and needs.

Since they have surged in popularity, the number of brands now offering construction apps is higher than ever before. In many cases, the app is offered by someone who has never stepped foot onto a construction site, but who combined stock photos and a few basic applications to create something that mimics the software offered by real construction brands. These apps look good on paper, but lack the true functionality needed to effectively manage multiple projects or truly anticipate the needs of your team and brand.

How can you determine if the app you are considering is not only legitimately useful for a construction firm, but suited for your specific needs as well? We've done all the work for you so you can make an informed decision and start making a difference to your bottom line.



## Review Your Needs Before You Start Shopping

What features will make the most difference to you in a typical project or workplace? Knowing the features you need and will use most often provides you with a wish list of functions and components to look for. Ask yourself these questions before you begin shopping and you'll be able to make a comprehensive list of items you truly want and need in a construction app:

### **What are your company goals & how will mobile software help you meet those goals?**

Mobile construction software benefits your company in a variety of ways, but knowing which features matter most to you will help you make the best possible choices for your company.

Do you need all team members to be able to access your projects, want to ensure safety by making it easy for your Spanish speaking workers to communicate and understand things on the worksite or do you need to relay information in real time between the suits in the office and the actual job site? Knowing which components matter most will help you make informed decisions about your mobile construction software.

### **How will the software be deployed and will there be someone dedicated to ensuring its success?**

Choosing the right software is just the start. You'll need to have someone in charge of onboarding and ensuring that your team has the right tools to learn and complete jobs. You'll also need to make sure the entire team adapts to the software, even if you roll it out slowly over time. If you have existing equipment, you need to make sure you can actually use any software you are considering and that the app is user friendly for everyone on your team.

### **Does it work with or integrate with my current software?**

Ideally, your construction software should integrate and interact with your current software seamlessly, making it easy to post details as you need to and allowing you to work more efficiently than ever.

### **How will you determine return on investment?**

Which outcomes matter most for you? Saving time, boosting productivity or expanding the number of projects you can handle? Knowing the end goals and how you'll measure ROI can help you make the right decision and ensure you make the most of the construction software you choose, too. If you can't properly measure ROI you will have no way of measuring success or understanding if the software you have chosen is truly doing all it should for your brand.



## Questions to Ask While Shopping for Your Construction Software

Once you know what you need, how you'll measure ROI and what you want most from a specific solution, you need to look at some individual companies or offerings. Ask these questions and evaluate the answers to be sure that the solution you've chosen is the right one for you.

### **Does this software company have deep experience in the construction industry?**

The company you buy from should be deeply rooted in the construction industry. A company who made a clever app might have some components you can use, but unless they are immersed in the industry, they may not truly get all your needs and concerns.

### **What is their long-term vision, strategy and roadmap?**

Switching your legacy applications and the way you manage workflow to a whole new system is a big commitment, and you need to be sure that the product you choose will be well supported, regularly updated and that new, useful features will continue to roll out over time. "Selling lots of apps" is not a strategy; the solution you choose should be one with a future and that has a clear vision and plan for what comes next.

### **Who owns them and what that means to you?**

Take a look behind the curtain and learn about the company that makes the software you are considering; the way they run their business says a lot about how they will be to work with.

### **How does the company grow—and how do they care for customers after the initial sales process?**

Does the company thrive on new innovation and treasure existing customers, or do they sell and move on? You need to know that you'll get plenty of support post-sale.

### **What is their after-sale support and why does that matter?**

Your team will need support as you set up and convert to this new solution; what kind of support is offered and how easy is it to find help? There's a big difference between being able to call and speak to a human or being handed a manual and told to look things up for yourself.



**What is their customer satisfaction rate? Do they have happy customers?**

What do other customers or clients have to say about the brand, their support and their product? If you can speak to others who use the product, you'll get a good idea of what to expect yourself.

**What are their hours of support and how quickly do they respond to concerns, issues and reports?**

Knowing how to find help should be easy; the company should have a clear process for finding support and be open and reachable when you need them.

**How are releases, bugs and fixes communicated and resolved?**

Any software needs regular updates to continue to run effectively. From security patches to upgrades and additions in functionality, you should receive regular updates for your software in a way that does not disrupt your workflow.

**If they don't have a feature you need, when will it be available?**

What is planned for the future and what components are in the works? You should know about what the company has planned and what to expect from them as time passes.



## Most Common Mobile Construction Software Features

### Common Construction Software Components (and why you need them)

The best construction software for your needs is going to depend on your actual preferences and the way your team works, but most brands offer a similar lineup of options and features. The differences lie in how well the software performs the tasks it is supposed to and how robust and useful those components truly are. Look for these features as you evaluate a piece of construction software to be sure that you have everything you need to save time, money and hassle on your job sites.

### Some of the most popular and commonly offered features include:

- Finance, Invoice and Accounting
- Scheduling
- Team Management
- Communications
- Document Tracking
- Material Management
- Equipment Tracking
- Customer Relationship Management

### Money and Accounting

Most construction software comes with accounting and financial support, which is useful if you do not have a dedicated on-site accountant. From payroll to budgets and invoicing and even billing and cash flow, knowing where you are money wise can help you make the best decisions for your brand.

### Scheduling

Many construction software contains scheduling capabilities, allowing you to schedule individual projects, deploy teams, assign tasks and track progress.

### Team Management Features

Depending on your needs, team management can be as simple as tracking activities, status and time or far more robust. Some programs offer GPS tracking and other features are designed to give you insight into exactly what is happening with your team. Team management software is incorporated right into construction applications and makes it easy for your entire team to collaborate and work together whether they are in the same location or not.



### **Document Tracking and Management**

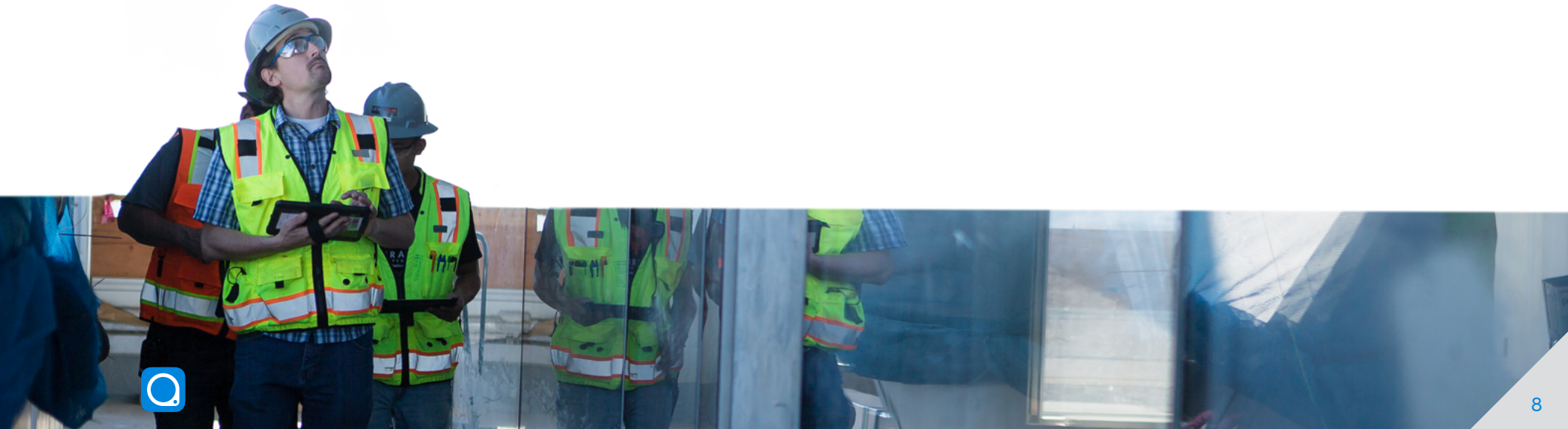
Simply switching to construction software can allow your team to communicate and collaborate without creating reams of extra paper. Your software should be able to effectively manage your documents and ensure that every member of your team can access RFIs, project documents, phase tracking, sub tracking, proposals, permits, purchase orders and more. Anyone who needs to and who has been granted access can see where you are at a glance and access everything they need from a mobile device.

### **Material Management**

Sometimes paired with equipment tracking, material management tools allow you to control, track and manage the materials and consumables you have on hand, from delivery to installation. You'll also be able to track the materials you've ordered from the moment they arrive until they are actually used on site. The more you know about your supplies and consumables, the more efficient your process will be.

### **Equipment Tracking**

Where is your own equipment? It is deployed to a job site, undergoing maintenance or in use? How often is it maintained and is the warranty current? Your construction software can help you track these important details and ensure your equipment stays in good repair. Without proper tracking and follow-up, you won't know something is wrong until it breaks—and poorly maintained equipment causes a safety hazard for everyone on your site. Construction productivity software helps you locate, care for and utilize the equipment you own and ensures you are operating safely.





## Recommendations by Major Category

We've done all the work for you when it comes to picking out some apps in each category. Our *Dollars & Sense of Mobile Construction Apps* ebook features our favorite lineup of applications—already vetted and verified. Our construction software experts scoured the industry to identify and sample the most useful applications in a variety of verticals and to pinpoint the right products for your needs. This [free download](#) can give you an industry insider's look at the latest construction software options and let you know which apps you'll be able to rely on again and again.

Our lineup of vetted, trusted applications includes our top picks in each category, narrowing down your choices and eliminating the rest. We cover the top apps and best construction software in each of the following categories, including:

- Top Construction Productivity App
- Top Construction Project Management App
- Top Cad/BIM Mobile App
- Top Daily Reporting Mobile App
- Top Photo Mobile Apps
- Top Time Entry Mobile Apps
- Top Mobile Cloud Storage
- Top Safety Mobile Apps



## Top Construction Productivity App

25 percent of projects slip by over 20 percent and 25 percent of all project costs grow in the field by over 30 percent.<sup>1</sup> These percentages increase when you take into consideration megaprojects, 98 percent of which "suffer costs of more than 30 percent." Indeed, a whopping 77 percent of megaprojects are at least 40 percent late.<sup>2</sup>

Inefficiencies, such as schedule slip and project growth, are the biggest contributors to job overrun, impacting schedules, budget and labor productivity that result in an average cost increase of 80 percent of original value. While many factors contribute to cost overruns, the primary factor is low productivity. The good news is that with construction productivity apps, builders can eliminate time waste and increase field productivity by improving communication and collaboration.



Achieving widespread adoption of technology is usually the biggest hurdle for most construction companies, but [PlanGrid](#) was built especially for field use, making it easy for those who aren't tech-savvy to learn and use. PlanGrid's construction productivity software allows teams to collect, manage, and collaborate in real-time on drawings, submittals, markups, photos, issues, and RFIs. PlanGrid improves productivity in enumerable ways, by reducing trips to the trailer and time expenditures, allowing teams to complete field measurements with ease instead of surveying, and enabling document control that reduces costly errors and rework.



[DOWNLOAD GUIDE](#)

While many factors contribute to construction project cost overruns, the primary factor is low productivity. In fact, construction is one of the few industries that is less productive now than it was 50 years ago. Low construction productivity costs the U.S. global economy \$1.6 trillion a year. As costs from inefficiencies continue to soar, the construction industry must make productivity a priority. Download this ebook to learn the seven best ways to complete projects faster, reduce costs, win more bids, and increase profits.

<sup>1</sup> Intergraph. [Factors Affecting Construction Labor Productivity: Managing Efficiency in Work Planning.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Siriram Changali, Azam Mohammad, and Mark van Nieuwland.

["The Construction Productivity Imperative."](#) McKinsey Global Institute. July 2015.



### Top Construction Project Management App

Managing multiple projects across multiple jobsites can be a difficult task. Each project has its own costs, schedules, and documents—and each project its own delivery process, including planning, design, procurement, construction, and operations. For these reasons, a majority of construction professionals are currently using mobile construction apps to help them manage projects. Project managers can collect field data as well as record important project information with mobile devices. Mobile project management apps help streamline the workflow and improve communication on the jobsite, which can accelerate schedule delivery and reduce costly mistakes.



**eSUB's** construction project management software was built specifically for subcontractors. Their mobile and cloud project management software connects the field and office in real-time. eSUB integrates tightly with PlanGrid, so you can save snapshots of drawings and annotations to eSUB documents and synchronize your RFIs between the two applications, for a complete record of what happens on the job site.

### Top Cad/BIM Mobile App

Design information used to be restricted to paper, making it difficult to access, but mobile apps now enable project teams to access and alter design plans from any location. These mobile apps for BIM also make it easier for teams on the jobsite to collaborate with architects and owners on any changes or adjustment by enabling project teams to record important information about project materials and design. What's more, by leveraging 5D modeling, teams can now even see how design changes will impact cost and labor.

## GRAPHISOFT®

A great BIM viewer mobile app is **BIMx** from Graphisoft, which is free on both Android and iOS devices. BIMx essentially allows users to upload a 3D drawing and explore it. Construction companies can use BIMx to illustrate to customers what they will get and why they should sign a contract, show workers on the jobsite how the end result will look to guide them while they perform the work, and solicit important feedback from workers and supervisors about an issue by referencing the drawing.



### Top Photo Mobile App

Before the advent of smartphones and mobile technology, to get accurate project progress reports builders had to rely on written documentation and/or buy expensive equipment to reliably capture accurate real-time activities of work-in-progress. But the best and most complete construction site reporting features both written and visual records and the right mobile construction photo app will not only enable you to capture and document small details or large aerial views of a project, but also enable you to incorporate photos into documents, do "field captures" of various locations that can be added to smart document programs, and view real-time dashboards showing progress from multiple job sites at once.



While there are many mobile construction photo apps, to get a complete and accurate assessment of your project's progress, you need a view from the top. [TrueLook](#) uses drones to take aerial photographs of jobsites. The app deploys drones manned by professional pilots who are trained to photograph and video your work. In days, your app will be populated with 20 or more high-res aerial images and an edited video for you and your customers to review.

### Top Time Entry Mobile App

Time tracking used to be a nightmare before mobile technology. With mobile time-tracking apps, companies can track time for each employee on each job site while streamlining the approval and payment process. Not only do mobile time tracking apps allow workers to clock in and out from their mobile devices, but supervisors can use those apps to verify that workers were on the jobsite during that time with GPS tracking. These apps reduce payroll errors and ensure companies don't pay for work that wasn't completed. With mobile time tracking apps bookkeepers can say goodbye to handwritten payroll and login to desktop software to see all tracked time.



[TSheets](#) is one of the best mobile time tracking app on the market. With the simple touch of a button and easy-to-use graphical interface, employees can clock in, clock out, take a break, submit PTO or timesheets, change tasks, and track GPS coordinates—all in seconds. Recorded time sheets can be easily exported to QuickBooks.



### Top Mobile Cloud Storage

It's critical for construction teams to be able to save important project data—such as blueprints, contracts, and reports—in a location where others can quickly access it. Cloud-based mobile technology allows them to store those documents safely and access it easily, which improves communication and collaboration. Cloud-based file storage and sharing makes construction teams more efficient and less likely to make costly mistakes as they are able to access everything they need right from their mobile devices.



**Box** for Construction gives architectural, engineering and construction firms a simple, secure way to plan, design and undertake projects. With Box, firms can intuitively share blueprints, photos and construction specs on any device, getting projects done on time and on budget. Used in tandem with productivity apps like PlanGrid, Box simplifies coordination and troubleshooting for workers in the field. Snap photos and video of work sites or safety hazards and share securely using Box.

### Top Safety Mobile App

Safety is a primary concern in the construction industry because it's one of the most dangerous industries to work in. In fact, construction tops the list for the most deaths by industry sector for the 2015 Census of Fatal Occupations, with 937 deaths in 2014—beating out even transportation and hunting.<sup>3</sup> Mobile safety apps not only save lives, they can help you save money and increase your profit margins because safety accidents are a major cause of delays that result in costly schedule overruns.



**American Red Cross**

Being able to deal with injuries swiftly and accurately on the jobsite may mean the difference between completing your project late or completing it early.

With the **Red Cross First Aid app**, safety managers and other supervisors can get expert advice on almost any medical emergency, including broken bones, strains and sprains, and wounds. Packed with comprehensive resources like videos, quizzes, and step-by-step instructions, this app can help almost anyone on the jobsite provide accident victims the treatment they need in an emergency.

Overall, construction mobility is revolutionizing the way construction teams work by increasing productivity, automating important workflows on the jobsite, and improving communication and collaboration.

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of Labor. "National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2015."



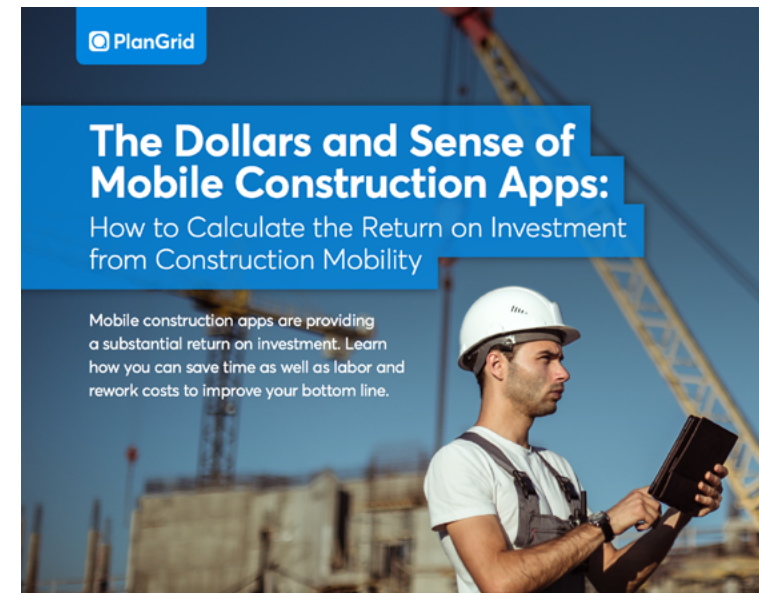
# Construction Productivity Software Buyer's Checklist

Determine which features matter most:

- Decide on the options you'd like, but can live without
- List the features you might need in 1, 3 and 5 years
- Review options based on the criteria above
- Try a demo or trial version
- Try your top pick out on mobile and on your own devices to see how it works
- Research the provider to be sure they regularly update and maintain their products
- Talk to current users to get additional insight
- Ask about provided training and migration support

Since the solution you choose will impact your business for years to come and affect the way that your job sites run, taking the time to study your own needs and to locate the best construction software for your brand ensures you get every feature you need and as much benefit as possible for your team and your brand.

Our detailed ebook and comprehensive comparisons are designed to help you get on the fast track to choosing the right construction software for your team. Armed with this knowledge, you'll be able to make an informed decision about the construction apps that will make a big difference in the way you work. [Download your free copy of Dollars & Sense of Construction Apps](#) today and get started with the right applications and programs for your business.



[DOWNLOAD GUIDE](#)



## See a Live Demo

or give us a call at +1 (415) 429-1227

PlanGrid construction productivity software is the easiest and most cost-effective way to get substantial return on your investment in construction mobile apps. By using PlanGrid you will:

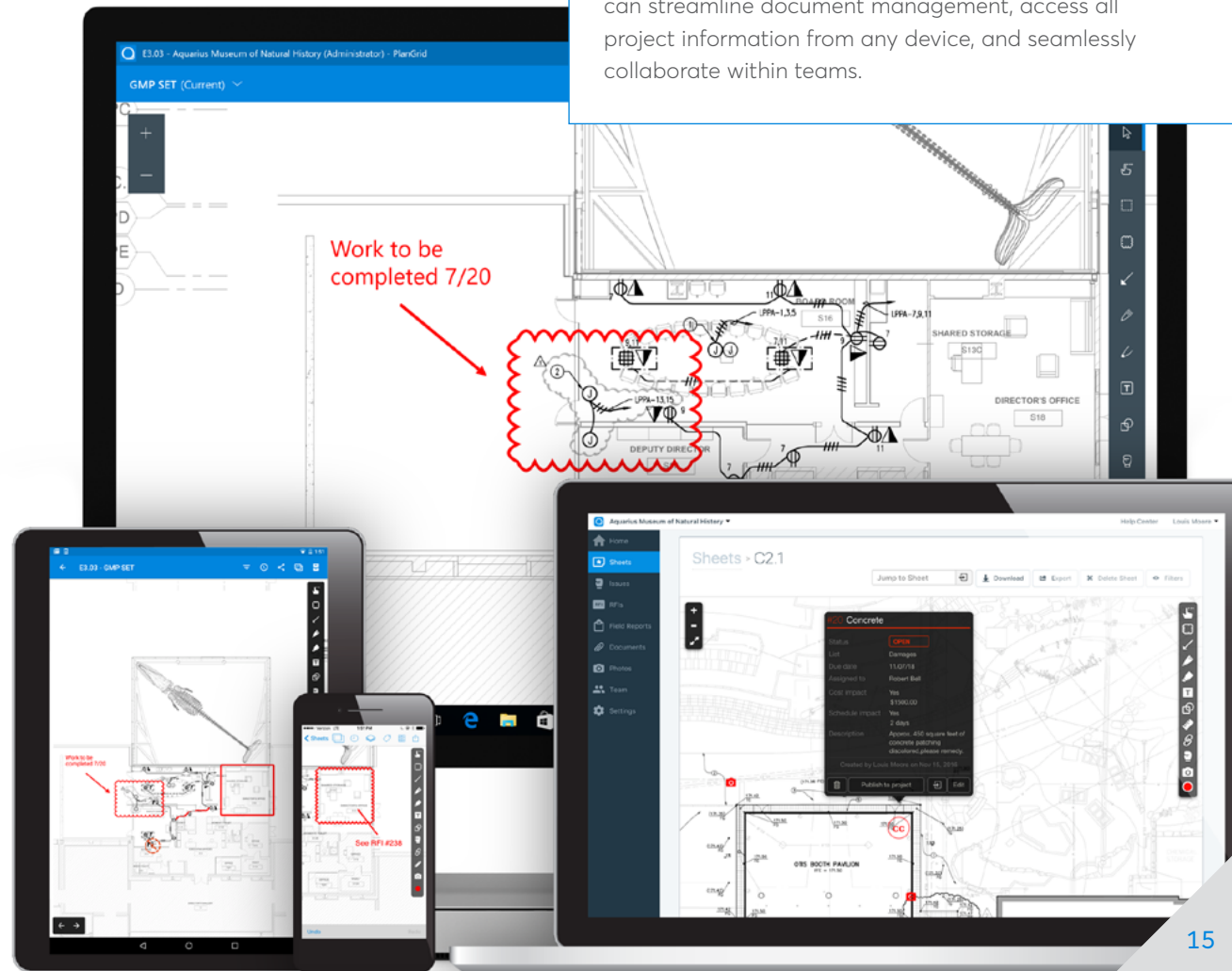
- **Complete projects faster:** 90% of project costs occur in the field not the office and most can be attributed to time waste or delays. With PlanGrid, you can reduce wasteful trips to the trailer and time delays while eliminating costly rework with faster collaboration and communication.
- **Reduce costs:** PlanGrid allows you to optimize productivity in the field, which eliminates time waste that causes project overruns. By completing projects early or on time with PlanGrid, contractors will benefit from reduced costs.
- **Win more bids:** The best way to bid more competitively is not just to track costs so you can provide more accurate estimates—it's to improve your overall productivity. PlanGrid's construction productivity software will allow you to increase productivity so you can reduce costs and win more bids.



Try PlanGrid for Free



There is a reason why PlanGrid is not only the #1 construction app, but also the highest rated. With PlanGrid construction productivity software, you can streamline document management, access all project information from any device, and seamlessly collaborate within teams.





Used on more than 500,000 projects around the world, PlanGrid is the first construction productivity software that allows contractors and owners in commercial, heavy civil, and other industries to collaborate, collect, and share project information from any desktop or mobile device through the entire project lifecycle.

PlanGrid increases project efficiency by streamlining document management, providing construction teams with easy access to all project information from any device, and enabling seamless collaboration within teams.

Guide Author:

**Lynn Langmade**

*Director of Content Marketing, PlanGrid*  
[@llangmade](#)

Connect with PlanGrid



© 2017 PlanGrid, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

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  
(800) 646-0796  
[www.plangrid.com/ca-en](http://www.plangrid.com/ca-en)  
[www.plangrid.com/ca-fr](http://www.plangrid.com/ca-fr)

