



VIEWPOINT

GOING PAPERLESS

THE DIGITAL
CONSTRUCTION
ORGANIZATION

Paperwork is more than just a headache, it's also a liability. According to Construction Business Owner, 70 percent of businesses would fail in three weeks if they experienced a catastrophic loss of paperwork. It takes an average of 18 minutes for someone to locate a particular document, which can cut into efficiency, and the cost of paper per employee is \$80 — even more reasons companies in all industries are trying to ditch paper.

In construction, each new project comes with a mountain of paperwork, including bid documents, payroll and subcontracts, making finding a specific piece of information time-consuming and complicated — not to mention the storage space required to maintain proper records.

To solve these problems, many contractors are digitizing processes and documentation as a way to speed access to information across office, team and field personnel. With 50 percent of project management teams still using manual processes, there's much to be gained by adopting construction-specific technology to go paperless.

BENEFITS OF GOING PAPERLESS

Cost overruns and delays are often the norm in the construction industry — large projects usually take 20 percent longer to finish than expected and are as much as 80 percent over budget — so the need to improve efficiency in construction is critical to improve profitability. Documents that can be instantly shared between offices and on-site crews, particularly when involving changes to projects, prevents lost time and creates significant cost savings.

Construction is one of the least digital industries, second only to agriculture, which means there are plenty of reasons to implement solutions that significantly impact the bottom line. With projects spread out geographically and becoming more complicated, it is critical that office, team and field personnel communicate quickly by sharing documents.

Moving to a paperless (or nearly paper free) office also offers many other benefits:

- “ **EASE OF TRACKING PROJECTS:** Construction is a complex industry and includes everything from tracking subcontractor schedules and timesheets to acquiring the right permits. Then there are change orders, supplies, invoices and payments that all need to be tracked. Having a cloud-based collaborative document management system accessible to everyone improves efficiency because all involved see the real-time status of a project.
- “ **SAVE TIME AND MONEY:** By eliminating the need to file, store and search for documents, companies can focus efforts on work that moves projects forward. Secure document management can also save money by reducing unexpected costs from missed paperwork or change orders.
- “ **ENHANCE SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE REPORTING:** Paperless applications help make sure the right people are notified and receive the correct information in a timely fashion. Using technology can also ensure safety inspections occur when and where they should as well as make compliance reporting more accurate by using date, time and location stamps.



- “ **IMPROVE BUDGETING AND BILLING ACCURACY:** Software that automatically bills and tracks payments speeds the process of getting paid. Electronic project data is easier to group and analyze, which can improve future project forecasting and bid accuracy. Look for software that includes full accounting functionality and is integrated across other functions like project management, equipment tracking, materials management and more.
- “ **RISK MITIGATION:** Digital documents are easier to access should a conflict arise or if you need proof that something was properly addressed, including safety certifications and contract agreements.

Having a paperless office also appeals to the next generation of workers. Much has been written about the shortage of construction industry professionals, and the skilled labor market continues to tighten as more people retire. A paperless office with automated processes and workflows makes a company more competitive in attracting, hiring and retaining top talent.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN TECHNOLOGY

Implementing the right technology with the right partner makes all the difference when transitioning to a paperless system. Look for integrated software systems that offer:

- “ **ROBUST DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT:** Software that allows you to easily scan, store and share documents with all parties across office, team and field operations streamlines and maximizes the flow of information.
- “ **EASE OF USE:** If the system is too complicated to use, adoption will suffer and the transition can fail. This includes capabilities like batch scanning so that multiple documents can be entered into the system and auto-routed with ease.



- “ **SECURE COLLABORATION:** Be sure systems securely allow multiple parties (inside and outside of the organization) to collaborate on necessary plans, bids and other paperwork. More robust systems will be able to track changes and communicate them to field teams.
- “ **INTEGRATION:** Paperless systems should be integrated throughout the organization—from accounting and payroll in the back office to submittals and change orders in the field to job progress and reporting across the entire team. This will improve workflows, allow teams to stay ahead of project costs and provide better real-time insight into project data.
- “ **AUTOMATION:** Look for paperless systems that improve operational efficiencies and streamline processes. Those that help eliminate steps can free staff time to focus on more important aspects of project management.

Look for functionality such as optical recognition scanning so documents and key words can be searched with ease. This is critical to quickly locate information in large documents, saving even more time. Good document management systems have intuitive search capabilities, the ability to drag and drop into different areas within software, versioning control and other features that make document management seamless across departments.

It’s also important that paperless systems have a mobile component for use in the field. Systems that enable electronic signatures in the field as well as the ability to alter digital documents and access them remotely eases integration and saves valuable time. The system should also automatically update documents when data is entered or revised.



HOW TO GO PAPERLESS

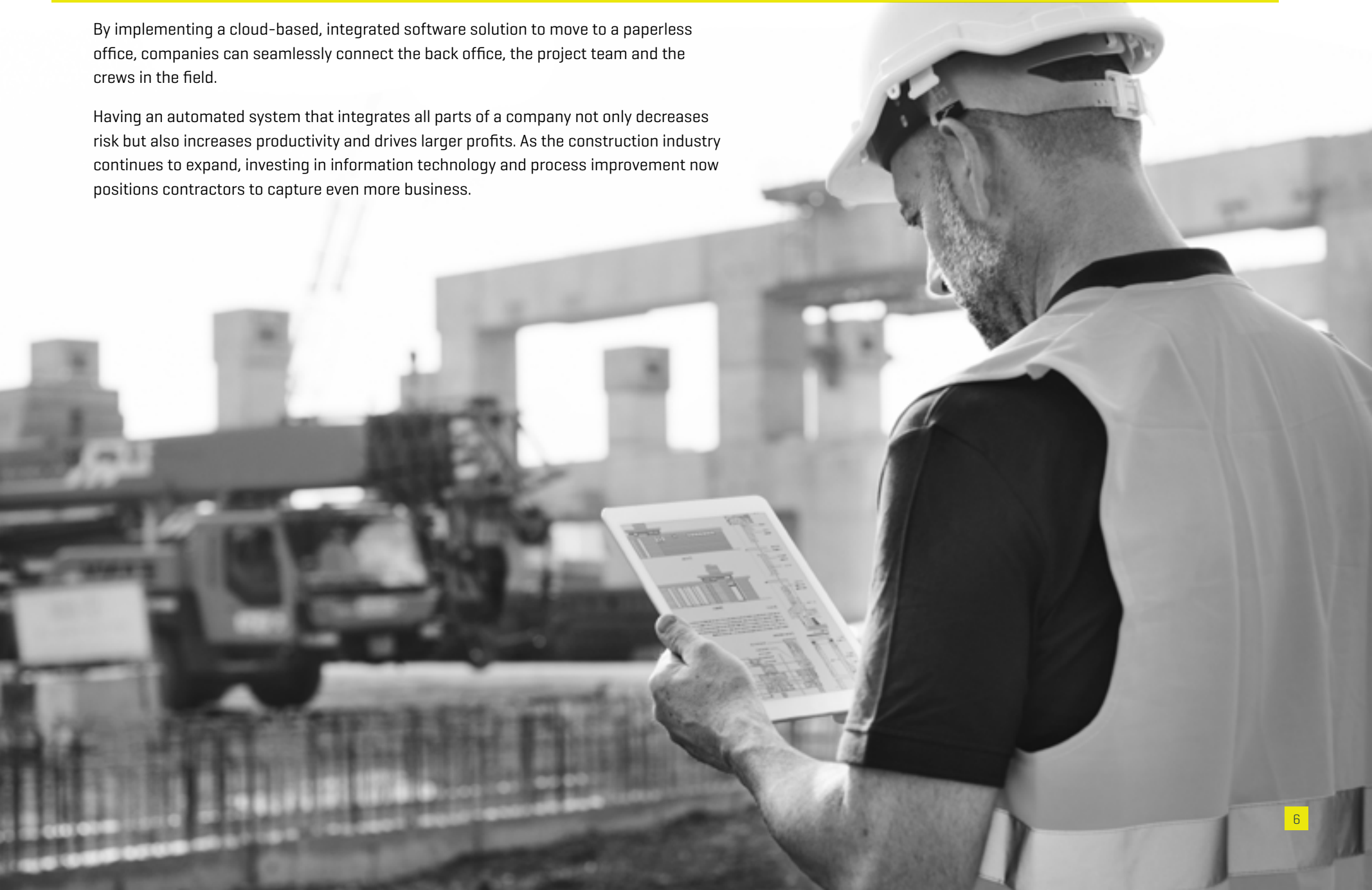
Making the transition to a paperless system can be challenging but easier with proper planning and integration. In fact, leading construction ERP platforms today have cutting-edge digital document management functions included. Take the time to evaluate your specific businesses needs upfront and partner with a provider that will help with implementation and training. Be sure to:

- **DO YOUR RESEARCH.** Understand the challenges you're trying to solve and look for solutions that address as many of them as possible. Make sure the new software is easily integrated and intuitive to use.
- **PLAN FOR THE TRANSITION.** Create a migration plan, including how to deal with paper documents and which ones will be scanned and uploaded. Be sure to create timelines for changing systems, including time to train employees and contractors.
- **PRIORITIZE.** Determine which processes and systems should go paperless first since it's difficult to switch everything at once. Solve your most pressing or costly issues first, then move through your departments.
- **EDUCATE.** Be sure that office, team and field employees all understand the value of the new tools and the full potential of what they do. Focus on training and continuing education to get the most out of your paperless investment.

CONCLUSION

By implementing a cloud-based, integrated software solution to move to a paperless office, companies can seamlessly connect the back office, the project team and the crews in the field.

Having an automated system that integrates all parts of a company not only decreases risk but also increases productivity and drives larger profits. As the construction industry continues to expand, investing in information technology and process improvement now positions contractors to capture even more business.





ABOUT VIEWPOINT

Viewpoint is the leading global provider of integrated software solutions for the construction industry. We are trusted by more than 8,000 customers to connect their office, team and field operations by improving project profitability, enhancing productivity and effectively collaborating across the broad construction ecosystem. Our innovations transform construction by aligning financial and HR systems, project management tools and mobile field solutions to minimize risk and increase efficiency. With clients in 28 countries, we serve more than 46 percent of the ENR 400, and more than a third of the ENR 600. For more information, visit VIEWPOINT.com.