Whitepaper

How a construction operations solution can end your spreadsheet habit

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For any large construction company that relies on spreadsheets to store their data, the problems with this system become clear very quickly.

Employees regularly find themselves juggling between separate spreadsheets with disconnected and inaccurate data that requires time consuming processes to keep updated. The inefficiency, inaccuracy, and backwardness of depending solely on spreadsheets can cause the operations of a construction company to grind to a halt. A modern construction operations solution can seamlessly integrate data between your departments ensuring accurate data that can be collected and distributed through automated processes. Many also provide in depth analytic capabilities to help you better understand your company's operations and to guide high-level strategic decision making.

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A modern construction operations solution can take the data spread between multiple spreadsheets and integrate it across field, warehouse, and back-office teams.

For back-office teams this will enable better asset management, financial oversight and procurement, and enable a streamlined reporting and analytics program. Between warehouse and field teams the automated ability to track tool location, condition, maintenance schedules, and field operations is invaluable. This can streamline a significant number of the tasks that are tracked using spreadsheets into a program that eliminates most of the administrative work and delivers higher levels of data quality. In short, a construction operations platform can break spreadsheet dependence by simplifying and improving the mechanisms through which construction operations are managed. These improvements come about in many ways. Below we go into more detail on how these solutions can specifically improve your company's operations.

1. Sync data between departments

With remote work on the rise, communication between teams and departments within larger companies has only grown in importance. With spreadsheets people can easily forget to update information or enter incorrect information. The disconnect can lead to decisions being made with incomplete or incorrect data that can lead to disastrous results. A modern construction operations platform can collect data related to the day-to-day operations of your company and seamlessly deliver it to your teams in the back-office or on the jobsite without delay. Beyond the analytic insights offered by this data, the ability to ensure that all your teams have access to highly accurate, and timely data across all departments makes sure that all teams are working with accurate information and don't have to spend time manually updating spreadsheets. Additionally, most construction operations solutions offer mobile applications that can be accessed through phones, desktops, or tablets.

Having mobile access to information that is accurate and automatically updated can help to give information on tool inventory, condition, and location to warehouse staff. This helps to identify problems like lost or stolen equipment, inventory shortages, or equipment that is not in usable condition before they can cause delays on the jobsite. Construction is often about problem solving, with a construction operations platform that syncs data between all departments, being able to identify and correct problems before they occur can be the difference between an on-time and under-budget project and a delayed project with unhappy clients.
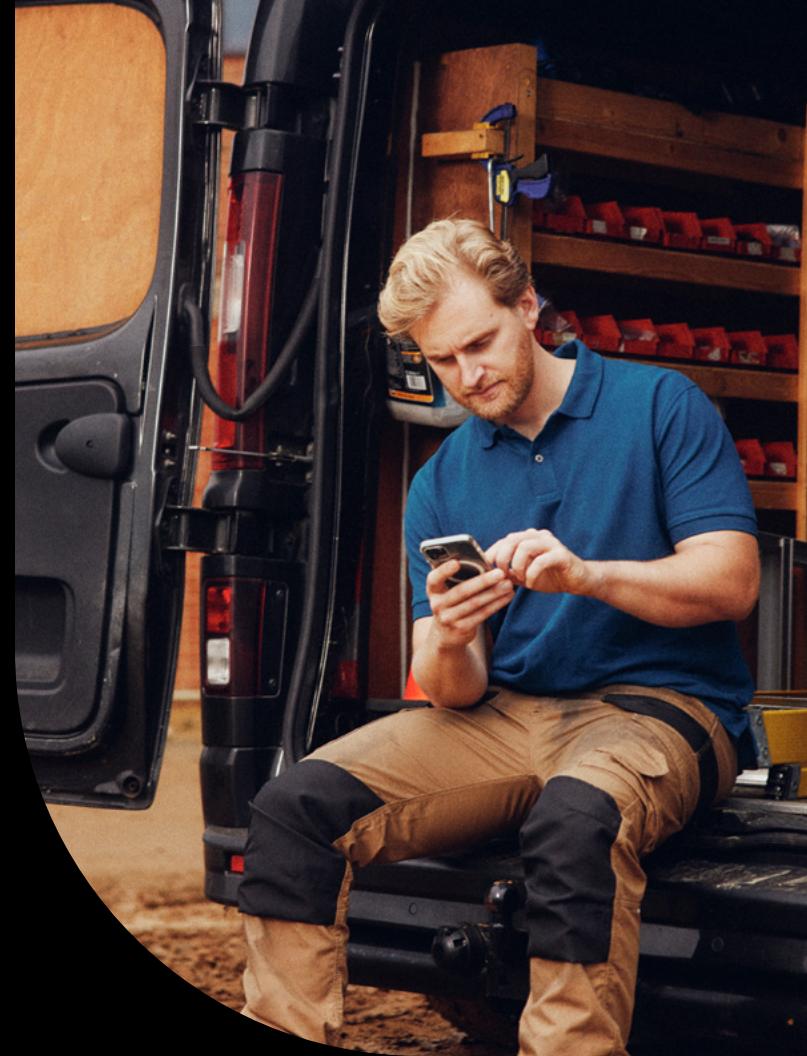
2. Automate data collection processes

As mentioned before, spreadsheets require manual updating. This process can be incredibly time consuming and often involves large amounts of human error and miscommunication. Having to go through different spreadsheets with multiple tabs becomes unmanageable very quickly.

Regardless of the size or competence of your team, errors in spreadsheets are unavoidable. Especially when recording all company information in spreadsheets, these files can include hundreds if not thousands of cells of interlinked data. One incorrect data point can derail the information for an entire company and take hours to identify. A modern construction operations solution automatically collects data related to tool location and condition, fleet vehicle location, tool utilization, and much more.

Manual processes that are required with spreadsheets like manually checking tools in and out of the warehouse can now be handled in a flash with very little room for human error. This also significantly frees up your employees to focus on productivity driving tasks rather than being bogged down with administrative work. Between the ease of use and the efficiency of a modern construction operations solution, any department would happily leave their spreadsheets behind if they are properly trained to utilize modern solutions.

3. Improve efficiency with systemized processes

When it comes to managing a construction company there are repetitive tasks that need to be done day in and day out to maintain standards of productivity, safety, and efficiency. Recording the results of these tasks within spreadsheets or on paper brings in all the possibilities for inaccuracy that we discussed earlier but also makes these processes take much longer and deliver less value. Whether it is staying OSHA compliant or taking note of equipment conditions, a fully featured construction operations solution will have systemized processes that can be accessed through mobile apps or on desktop. This systemization of these repeatable processes will enable faster completion and will help to better enforce the standards that these processes are trying to uphold.

When making a change away from spreadsheet dependance, efficiency and ease of use is enormously important to get adoption from your workforce. The ability to create re-usable forms and templates that can be easily accessed ensures that workers won't have to sort through piles of forms and checklists looking for what they need in a chaotic, loud, and often dangerous job site environment where things can be easily misplaced. For example, Sage ToolOps powered by ToolWatch collects and provides information on tool condition, calibrations, and past maintenance history. This information can be used to ensure that all your tools and equipment are OSHA compliant without requiring every employee to go through time consuming administrative process that require a large amount of knowledge about OSHA regulations that can be very complex and confusing. Removing the administrative work that has a lot of potential for human error not only speeds up these processes to free up workers for more productive tasks, it also maintains higher levels of safety standards and data accuracy. Across all departments, moving from spreadsheets to an integrated and largely automated system that many modern construction operations solutions provide will make life easier in a multitude of ways.

Making the change

The transition away from spreadsheet dependance can be a difficult process that affects departments differently. The years of built-up experience and familiarity with spreadsheets form a bond that not everyone will enthusiastically want to break. In large organizations there are few statements that impede positive change more than "we have always done things this way".

A modern fully featured construction operations solution, like Sage ToolOps, can ease this transition by providing palpable improvements across multiple departments. These improvements include providing higher data quality, automating away time-consuming administrative tasks, improving companywide efficiency with systemized tasks, and helping to transition team members to new technology with robust support and educational resources. For a modern construction company trying to improve their operations a transition away from spreadsheet dependence is one of the easiest ways to vastly improve your company's operational efficiency, communication

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