

6 Reasons Smaller Construction Firms Can Benefit from Construction Software



Maximize Your Potential by Going Digital

The world is awash in technology. From smartphones and their related applications increasingly consuming our attention, to more recent innovations like generative artificial intelligence on the verge of upending countless industries, technology is constantly at the forefront of our world.

The construction business is no different. Even though the industry has a longstanding reputation as a laggard when it comes to technology adoption, in recent years—especially since the COVID-19 pandemic—construction has made tremendous strides in its embrace of digital tools to get more done with less.

In fact, according to a construction technology report by global real estate services company JLL, the industry managed to jam roughly 36 months of technology adoption into a single year thanks to the pandemic, which spurred a rise in remote work and need for digital communication and collaboration.

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Paper Pervades

Despite the accelerated progress, too many construction firms still rely heavily on paper to manage essential workflows. This is especially true of smaller contractors, who often don't have the dedicated information technology (IT) teams and budgets to spearhead new technology implementations, leading them to believe that using today's cutting-edge digital tools is out of reach.

As of 2020, the most recent year for which data are available, these small to medium-sized construction firms (SMB), which can range in size from one employee to a few hundred, represent about half a million of all total construction businesses in the United States alone. SMB firms represent similar proportions of all construction firms in Europe and the Asia-Pacific Region.

This means a large portion of the industry may be on the outside looking in when it comes to digital technology adoption, at a time when governments around the world are pushing these tools to make construction more efficient and environmentally sustainable.

Thankfully, it has never been easier for SMB construction firms around the world to adopt digital tools. In this eBook, we outline six reasons why it's never been a better time for smaller construction firms to embrace the benefits that come with using digital technology.



Reason 1: The Hidden Costs of Paper-Based Workflows

Using paper for many construction processes and workflows may be familiar, but it's likely eating into SMB owners' potential efficiency and profits—more than you realize:

- ✓ **Printing costs:** The ink and hardware required to print large construction documents isn't getting cheaper, and tabulating these costs on a per-project basis is labor-intensive.
- ✓ **Potential for errors:** Miscommunication is more likely with paper, as varying versions of documents physically travel from location to location with multiple collaborators commenting in potentially illegible handwriting.
- ✓ **Lost jobs:** In today's digital world, more and more general contractors and design firms require project partners to collaborate with digital tools, meaning firms stuck using paper-based workflows might miss out on work.

Case Study: See how this civil and structural engineering consultancy saved thousands in monthly printing costs by switching to digital tools: <https://www.bluebeam.com/customers/bornhorst-ward>



Reason 2: Evolving Tech Models Make Adoption Widely Accessible for SMBs

While the costs—both hidden and tangible—with using paper continue to climb, adopting digital tools has never been more affordable, even for smaller firms without IT teams and big budgets.

- ✓ Lower upfront costs: The competitive landscape in construction has created an environment where it's easy for firms to test new software products for free or with minimal financial commitment.
- ✓ Lower total costs: Once a new digital solution is implemented, the ongoing costs for use continue to decrease, as most construction technology companies have shifted from expensive perpetual licensing models to monthly Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) subscription offerings. This gives contractors the flexibility to adjust, or even cancel, their plans if needed.

In all, this greater affordability and accessibility means smaller construction firms can vet, train and integrate new digital tools easily without large financial or lengthy time commitments.



Reason 3: Efficiencies Gained with Digital Bolster Profitability

Lower total costs, paired with ease of testing and implementation, make embracing digital software tools an easy decision for SMB construction firms. But what makes today’s construction technology even more attractive are the efficiencies gained after putting them to work.

Moreover, as the construction industry continues to deal with a crippling skilled worker shortage amid a tight labor market, all while building and infrastructure demand remains high, construction firms that embrace digital tools can get more done in less time and with fewer workers—resulting in reduced overhead costs and more profits.

The time savings gained by streamlining document transportation and stakeholder collaboration alone are well worth the cost of digital adoption—but the cumulative impact of taking manual workflows digital for smaller construction firms can be life-changing.

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Reason 4: Organized, Streamlined Communication and Collaboration

By taking previously paper-based stakeholder document reviews digital, firms can save time (and money) on several fronts:

- ✓ Eliminating transportation: When various stakeholders need to sign off document reviews, they no longer have to be in the same room. Nor do documents need to physically travel between separate offices.
- ✓ Minimize errors, potential for re-work: By taking previously manual markups and translating them into a clean digital environment, construction firms can drastically cut down on the possibility that illegible comments lead to jobsite errors, causing costly re-work. Moreover, today's digital collaboration tools automatically generate a detailed record of every comment or markup, eliminating the potential for miscommunication.
- ✓ Single source of truth: By digitally storing and collaborating on the same documents, small construction firms reduce the risk that multiple versions are being circulated. This ensures that official project documents are being viewed by the right stakeholders with the correct permissions.

Case Study: See how going digital saved this small construction firm from making a \$50,000 error: <https://www.bluebeam.com/customers/solid-earth>



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Reason 6: Fully Digital, Safely Secure, Brilliantly Sustainable

By embracing construction-specific technology tools to store project documents, small construction firms can enable a level of security previously unattainable with paper. Most of today's digital tools come with multiple layers of security, protecting sensitive project documents at a time when the industry is among the top targets of cyber criminals.

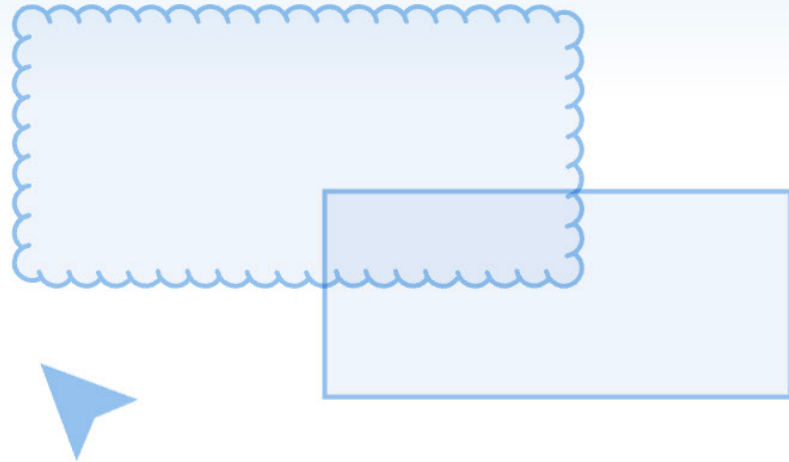
What's more, the storage and backup capabilities embedded with these tools mean SMB owners can rest easy knowing their critical documents and project data are safe and secure.

Finally, at a time when all businesses are looking to reduce their carbon footprints, going digital gives construction a powerful yet simple way to drastically improve its sustainability efforts.



Bluebeam Around the World

See how these global customers have embraced the power of going digital to transform their construction businesses.



In Europe

By going digital, ClearTech:

- ✓ Won 50% more projects
- ✓ Grew its client portfolio to include companies such as Salesforce, Facebook and Amazon
- ✓ Took on international projects in Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia, where it has opened an office to focus on growing its business in these regions

Read more: <https://www.bluebeam.com/customers/cleartech>

By going digital, Plumco:

- ✓ Cut use of paper by 92%
- ✓ Provided customer quotes 75% faster
- ✓ Saved roughly 80% on the time and cost of quoting

Read more: <https://www.bluebeam.com/customers/plumco>

By going digital, SMG:

- ✓ Reduced risk of errors thanks to total transparency throughout its projects
- ✓ Ensured better project-wide collaboration thanks to easy mobile access onsite or off
- ✓ Decreased paper printouts for more sustainable resource management

Read more: <https://www.bluebeam.com/customers/SMG>

Bluebeam Around the World



In Asia-Pacific

By going digital, Bornhorst + Ward:

- ✓ Saved AU \$4,000 in monthly printing costs
- ✓ Increased office space by 10%, thanks to elimination of paper storage
- ✓ Realized ROI on digital tool investment in just three months

Read more: <https://www.bluebeam.com/customers/bornhorst-ward>

In the US

By going digital, FMG Architects:

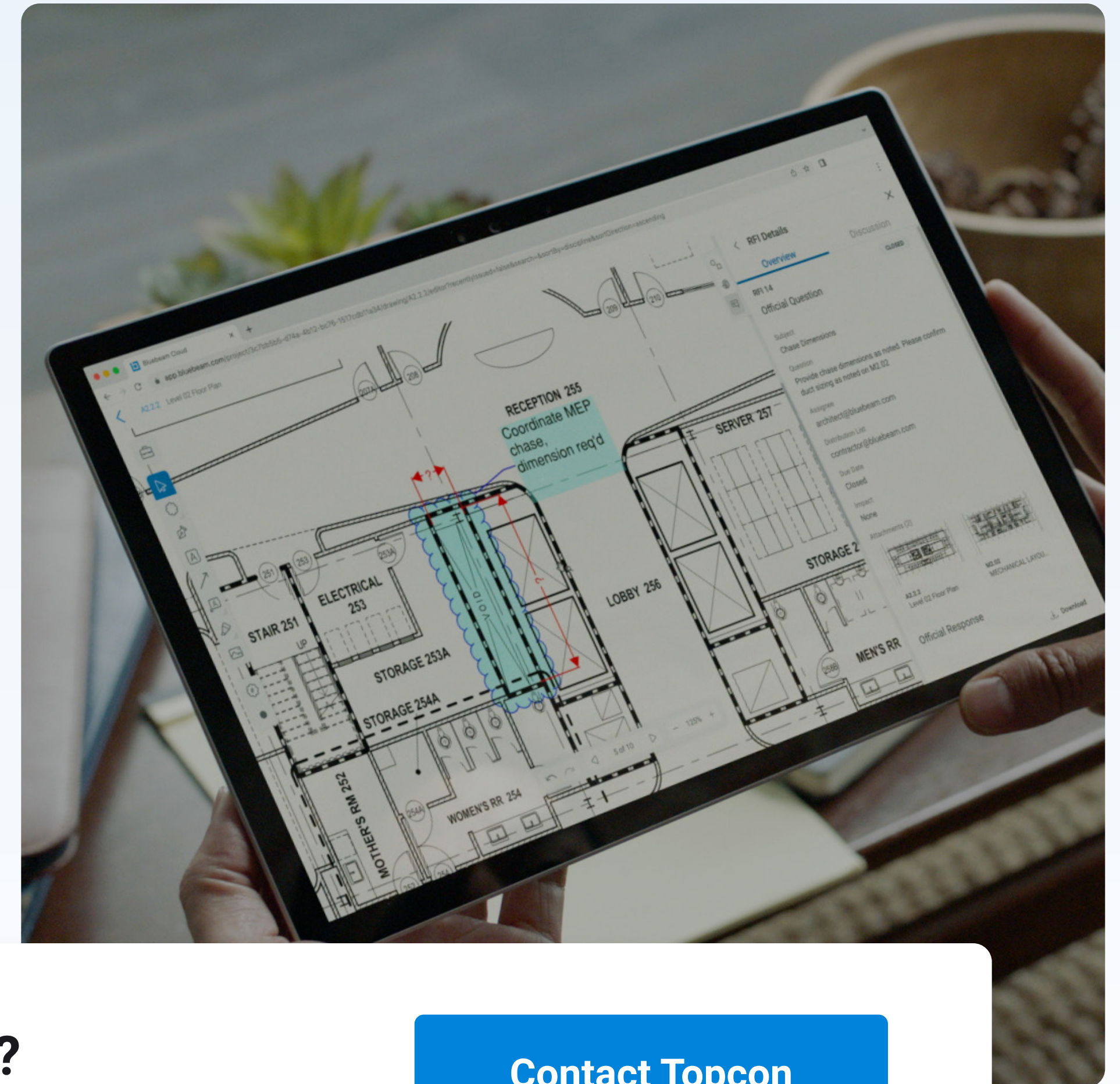
- ✓ Successfully transitioned to remote-first work amid the COVID-19 pandemic
- ✓ Increased time savings by taking document reviews to a digital, real-time collaborative environment

Read more: <https://blog.bluebeam.com/fgm-architects-bluebeam-revu>

Getting Started on Your Digital Journey

Adopting construction technology tools doesn't have to be scary. Thanks to the industry's evolution, today's digital tools have never been more tailor-made for smaller construction firms.

This is especially the case with Bluebeam, whose construction industry digital solution has allowed millions of customers around the world to cut down on the costs associated with analog, paper-based workflows in favor of streamlined, secure and simple digital markup and collaboration tools.



Ready to learn more?
Give Bluebeam a try for free!

Contact Topcon Solutions



Learn More About Topcon Solutions
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