Mobile Technology Advances in the Construction Industry

There is no doubt about it, the future is mobile. As mobile technology continues to advance and improve, the benefits for construction companies continue to expand. Adopting a mobile strategy can help companies increase job profitability and efficiency with the click of a button.

According to a forecast by Forrester Research, tablet sales are expected to overtake laptop sales by 2015. This only reinforces the fact that mobile technology is becoming more integrated with the way people communicate and do business. Additionally, the adoption of mobile technology is easier than ever as consumers use more mobile apps in both their personal and professional lives.

The Push Towards Mobile.

A study done by IDG Research Services found that three key factors are driving the demand for mobile technology in the workplace: executive demand, an increasingly mobile workforce, and the demand for real-time information. As a result, the capabilities of mobile technology in business are expanding, with increasing possibilities where work can be done, as well as what types of work.
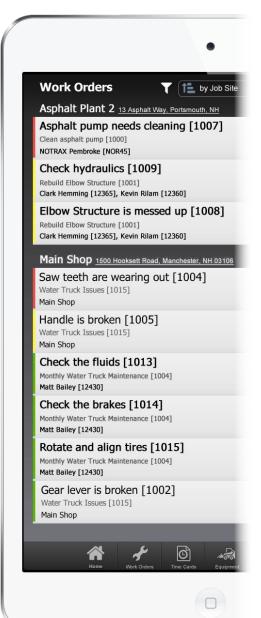
The effects of mobile technology can be seen throughout construction businesses. Whether it is a foreman working in the field, managers in the office, or mechanics in the shop, where one benefits from mobile technology. The business impact of mobile technology is also significant, as data tracking, real-time information and increased communications between the field and the office allow companies to respond and adjust to changes more efficiently than ever before.

Mobile in the Field: Three Examples of How Technology Improves Accuracy and Efficiency on the Job Site

- **Capturing Labor and Equipment Hours**
  Accurately capturing employees' hours in the field is key to tracking costs associated with a project. Paper time cards can be difficult to read once they are turned in to the office, causing inaccurate employee tracking. Mobile based programs that allow field foremen and project managers to clock employees in and out on the job site help cut down on these mistakes and inaccuracies.

KEY ADVANTAGES:

STREAMLINE COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATE MORE EFFICIENTLY

EMPOWER YOUR MOBILE WORKFORCE WITH REAL-TIME INFORMATION

REDUCE PROJECT RISK BY UTILIZING DASHBOARDS AND REPORTS

EXPAND COVERAGE BY WORKING CONNECTED OR DISCONNECTED TO THE INTERNET

Similarly, tracking equipment hours inaccurately can lead to inefficient uses of equipment, as well as incorrect cost tracking. A field foreman or project manager can account for equipment hours on a tablet device and mark the information down as it occurs, rather than having to remember it later.

- **Instantly Analyzing Daily Production**
  The ability to instantly analyze daily production allows field foremen and project managers to make necessary changes and course corrections immediately, rather than waiting days or weeks for the information to become available. This ability can make all the difference for a project being completed on time and on budget.

- **Creating Repair Requests**
  Equipment downtime can be costly for companies. The sooner equipment malfunctions are reported and repaired, the less money companies lose. Mobile technology gives field foremen the ability to create repair requests directly from the field when equipment encounters issues rather than delaying the request until they return to the office. This gets the equipment up and running faster. Foremen can even attach photos to the request so the mechanics in the shop can see the problem right away.

Mobile in the Shop: Three Examples of How Mobile Technology Allows Mechanics to Efficiently Repair Equipment

- **Planning and Tracking Work Orders**
  Using mobile technology, mechanics in the shop can receive work orders on their tablets, allowing them to immediately begin necessary repairs. In addition to having the details of the request at their fingertips, they can see past work orders for a specific piece of equipment and access repair manuals. Having the complete history of a piece of equipment in the palm of their hands allows the mechanic to accurately diagnose and repair equipment quickly and efficiently.

- **Attaching Photos to Work Orders**
  A picture can be worth a thousand words when it comes to repair requests. Mobile technology allows the person creating a repair request or work order, as well as the mechanic in the shop, to take photos using their tablet and attach them to the repair request or work order. The mechanic can then reference the photo while diagnosing an equipment malfunction or add a photo showing modifications or other work done.

- **Capturing Hours and Parts Usage**
  As with employees in the field, accurately capturing mechanic hours can greatly affect a company's bottom line. Using mobile technology, a mechanic can track the amount of hours they spent on a work order allowing the time to be allocated correctly.

  Shop personnel can also view real-time data on what parts have been used for various work orders and what parts are available. They can use this data to keep an accurate inventory of parts and supplies, cutting back on equipment downtime related to ordering parts.

Mobile in the Office: Three Examples of How Mobile Technology Allows the Office to Use Information from the Field and the Shop to Seamlessly Manage a Business

- **Streamlining Communication**
  Effective communication is the key to any successful business. Mobile technology allows the information from the field and the shop to be immediately linked to the information from the office, keeping everyone on the same page. Companies no longer need to worry about people seeing inaccurate or out-of-date information as a result of something being

updated in one program but not another.

Furthermore, mobile technology allows everyone to instantly communicate when there is a problem or issue that's needs attention. Everyone has access to the same information and can immediately troubleshoot issues or make course corrections as needed.

- **Instantly Approving Information and Requests**
  On the job, any delay can affect whether or not a project finishes on time, and costs associated with delays can quickly add up. With mobile technology, companies can cut back on delays that result from waiting on approval from the office. Field foremen can instantly submit requests from the field, which are then delivered to the office in real-time allowing for quick and efficient approval. Office staff can also instantly view and approve timesheets submitted from the field or shop, streamlining the accounting process.

- **Tracking Costs and Production in Real-Time and Making Course Corrections**
  The ability to track how a job is doing in real-time means there will be no surprises at the end of a project. Real-time information tracking in the field gives the office instant access to how well a job is going. This allows the office to make any necessary course corrections and plan for additional staff if needed.

The effects of implementing mobile technology can be seen across all departments within a company. As mobile technology continues to grow and expand, the practical applications available for construction companies will only increase. Setting your business up for success now will allow your company to grow and succeed within the ever-evolving construction industry.

ABOUT

Founded in 1993, B2W Software is a provider of enterprise-class construction solutions for the heavy construction industry. For more information, visit www.b2wsoftware.com or contact B2W Software Sales at (800) 336-3808.