TOP 5 REASONS CONSTRUCTION HATES TECH & TOP 5 REASONS THEY SHOULDN'T

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ZBRELLA Tech is taking a look at five very real reasons construction professionals hate construction technology. What made the list? And why should you change your mind about it? Let's read on!

Technology Is Viewed as a Threat

"We do use some technology and it can be useful, but technology cannot make decisions or lead people." – Construction Professional

Too often, construction professionals view technology as a means to an end: an end where they will be replaced by machines with advanced technologies. There is a constant battle on the worksite between emerging technologies and the "old way" of getting things done. Professionals feel threatened by technology that promises better efficiency and many feel as if technology is almost an insult to their own skills.

Onsite, the phrase, "Technology is not a substitute for…..(guys who install the pipes, the pavers, the builders, inspectors, etc.)" is prevalent.

Why You Shouldn't View Technology As a Threat

The problem that most professionals have is their point of view on technology. Most technologies are meant to be an aid, not a replacement, that is meant to enhance the way they work onsite. A tablet for instance is not meant to compete with the professional using it, it's meant to improve that professional's workflow and processes.

The sooner construction stops viewing technology as a physical being who can replace them, the sooner both technology and construction will be able to coexist.

The Learning Curve

Managers are all consumed with systems and tracking and think a computer program will somehow make it faster, but in reality it is just more time spent doing frivolous tasks with little actual impact in the field. We manage work and an excessive learning curve says that tool is taking away from actually managing the work. – Construction Professional

Technology comes with a big learning curve no matter how you cut it, and for the aging workforce, the learning curve only grows bigger. Many professionals feel that the time taken to learn the technology is not worth the "supposed" payoff they were told about. Trying to manage the already heavy workload with the added burden of a new tool throws their routine into a frenzy.

For the construction industry, many professionals view technology as a waste of time because it takes away from doing what is most important: their job.

The Light at the End of the Learning Curve

Like anything new, it takes time to learn and get accustomed to. What a lot of construction professionals do not realize is that the payoff that comes after the learning curve is huge and makes it well worth the time spent. If implemented correctly (both by the technology and construction company), technology has the ability to improve processes by connecting projects in real-time, helping completion times speed up, reducing costs, and so much more.

Eventually, the new technology should help relieve the workload off the professionals who felt as if they didn't have the time to learn the technology in the first place. When used correctly, technology works from the ground up, helping the people on the field using it, the people in the office, the stakeholders, the joint partners, and the company as a whole. Simply remember this: the time spent learning tech will provide great value in the future.

Lack of Practical Training

Training, training, training! I feel like often times companies are not providing their people with the proper training that will enable them to efficiently use new technology to work smarter and not harder. Also with new technology you have to expect that work flows and processes will change, it's critical that these things are thought through, documented, and communicated to your teams. - Construction Professional

One of the BIGGEST complaints about technology is that there is a lack of practical training. If professionals are not trained correctly, the learning curve we talked about above becomes even steeper. That leads to the frustration of technology wasting people's time, because let's cut to it, if staff isn't trained correctly, then technology IS a waste of not only time, but money.

Professionals often walk around the field not knowing what to do with the tools given to them, and they either spend too much time trying to figure it out or toss the tech to the side in defeat. They develop an aversion to not only the technology they are trying to figure out, but any future technology that will be implemented.

Train, Train, Train

In order for people not to hate technology onsite, construction companies have to start training employees well. They have to have people who understand both construction and technology leading them and their staff towards success. When employees are properly trained in technology they don't experience as much aversion towards it (or future implementations of it), they embrace it more, they understand how it can and will make a difference, and it will improve their everyday workflow. Not to mention, it will make the expensive technology investment and learning curve worth it.

The right attitude towards tech starts with the right training, and having the right people in place to do so is essential.

Comfort Zone vs Growth Zone

I agree that new innovations in construction technology can at times prove challenging to those who have been doing things in the same way or fashion for many years. – Construction Professional

In any business in any industry in the world, employees develop a comfort zone in which they don't like to leave. In construction, this is especially true. Many professionals in the field feel as if the old fashioned way of building is superior to any assistance that technology can provide. There is an old school mentality that runs deep in the roots of construction.

Technology is often seen as a time waster, a nuisance, and a threat. And the saying in the field goes, "Why fix something that isn't broken…"

Growing Onwards

The comfort zone vs the growth zone is a dangerous battle. Any booming business knows that employees must leave the comfort zone in order to grow. People in the field (again, especially the aging part of the workforce) find it unnecessary to change and endanger business growth. The great thing about technology is that if tech is properly implemented, and if tech is properly taught to the employees using it, it can become a huge benefit.

Most onsite technology aids the people on the field, essentially aiming to make their job easier. When technology and construction come together in unison, a company can enter the growth zone while introducing their employees to a new type of comfort zone, one where their tools aid in their everyday job and help them simultaneously grow with the business.

Technology As a Fix All

Put simply, the I/T industry has a long history of "over promising" when it comes to the construction industry. While I wouldn't characterize it as "hate", this has led to a healthy skepticism by many executives who are "once bitten, twice shy" when it comes to the next big 'solution'. – Construction Professional

Many technology solutions promise this: a total packaged, one-size-fits-all solution that fixes every problem. And the problem is, most of these solutions don't deliver on the promise. A lot of construction professionals believe that technology will be a fix all, only to find out later that it couldn't be further from the truth.

Because of the over promising that comes from the technology industry, a large distrust developed on the side of construction, and rightfully so. Big solutions cost big dollars, and when the investment fails, it doesn't look too good on the side of technology.

Technology as a Tool

A lot of construction professionals view technology as a fix all and the important thing to remember is that it is not a fix all, it is just a tool. Because of this expectation, professionals are usually met with disappointment. When we change how we look at technology and how it can really help us, we can start to form a better, healthier view of what technology is and what it can actually do for the construction industry.

Technology does not fix all of its problems, but it helps aid in creating better processes and workflow. And, one of the most important things to remember is that technology is only as good as the person using it (simply put, what good is a pencil if you don't know what to do with it?). Construction must create a realistic expectation level for what technology can actually do and what it's actually accountable for. Then and only then can trust start to be repaired between the two industries.