

**Editor's Note:** Looking for answers to your tech issues?

Send your construction-related technology questions to [heyfred@foundationsoft.com](mailto:heyfred@foundationsoft.com).

**Q:** I own a commercial contracting firm with about fifty employees. We do a lot of work in surrounding states. Last year, we decided to replace our old DOS accounting package with one that would allow us to do job costing. A friend convinced me that the “contractors” version of a popular small business accounting system would handle all our needs. Well, we bought it, and it’s been very disappointing.

Our payroll person now spends more time calculating employee withholding from different locations (and sometimes has to generate multiple paychecks each pay period for the same person!), because payroll doesn’t support these functions. In addition, the job cost reports don’t allow us to sort by vendor, so it takes a series of spreadsheet reports and additional data entry to see detailed billing information on jobs.

This software just doesn’t work the way our business operates. However, I hate the thought of looking again. What do you suggest?

Doug

**A:** It sounds like this has been a painful, yet educational, experience for you. But let’s look on the bright side. At least now you have a much better idea of what kind of features and detailed information you will need from your next construction accounting software package.



Yes, Doug (you knew what my answer would be), you really have no choice but to upgrade to a system that can handle multi-state payroll, flexible billing and job cost reporting and other functions specific to your construction business. General accounting software—even a contractor’s edition—simply doesn’t address all the nuances and endless reporting possibilities growing construction firms demand.

Remember, the time you spend

now to find the best-fit software for your company will undoubtedly save you plenty of time and money down the road.

Best wishes for your success!

Fred ■

*Disclaimer: Technically Speaking reserves the right to change names and edit questions for privacy, length and readability issues.*