

IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FIELD AND OFFICE FOR BETTER JOB COSTING

Editor's Note: Looking for answers to your tech issues? Send your construction-related technology questions to heyfred@foundationsoft.com to read the entire series.

Q: I am a project manager for a busy excavating company. I've been in the business since 1989. For several years now, I've used a system of spreadsheets for tracking job costs and progress. I update some key reports daily and others weekly to keep on top of labor, materials, equipment and productivity.

Recently, the company hired a new accounting manager who immediately implemented a new accounting system. Now I have a laundry list of paperwork that needs to be completed and sent to accounting each week. The accounting manager says it will help with job costing, but I don't see the value. I already track and maintain all the information I need.

Alex

A: You bring up a problem that is both common and complex. And though there are a lot of unanswered questions here, the bottom line is that your job does not operate in a vacuum. Construction companies need two-way communication between the office and field to succeed and profit.

Chances are you were doing a lot of your own data gathering and updating because there was no other system in place to provide you with specific

job data. I hope your company's new accounting system is construction-specific and designed to work for the good of both the accounting department and field operations. Since sophisticated job costing systems serve the dual purpose of recording financial transactions and producing timely, accurate job cost reporting, you could have access to detailed job data without wasting time entering and maintaining separate information in spreadsheets.

Of course, in order to take advantage of a system's extensive reporting capabilities, you will need to do your part, which is gathering field data. By communicating exactly what kind of

job data you currently track and what type of reports you would like to see, you can ensure that the system will provide the information you need on a regular basis. Soon, you should have more time to do what you do best: manage your resources efficiently and make well-informed decisions.

Fred ■

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Go to www.constructionbusinessowner.com and read prior Q and A's by Fred Ode.

