

CONSTRUCTION IN THE CLOUD

TRACKING LABOR

Also inside:

Harnessing Data

BCX Grouping Tool for Takeoffs

Integrated Tool and Asset Tracker

BuildCentrix



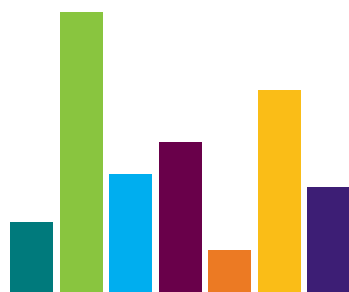
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Know Thy Project—

Tracking labor can save time, costs, and energy on delivering your projects



Labor is the largest expense on most projects. That means the more you know about labor costs—what they are, how to track them, and how they relate to productivity—the better.

By / Jessica Kirby

A fully integrated, robust timekeeping solution with interfaces for every application gives contractors a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The easier a timekeeper is to use and the more tailored it is to user needs, the more likely it is to provide managers and forepersons with real-time answers to the simple question: “How are my projects doing, and which ones do I need to focus my attention on?”

“Labor is typically the largest expense on nearly every project,” says James Beveridge, CEO at BuildCentrix (BCX). “Tracking, monitoring, and understanding your labor data in real time equips contractors with a powerful means of controlling costs and productivity, while optimizing their labor force.”

BCX offers three different interfaces in its TimeCard module—one for the shop and two for the field. “The shop-specific interface, called Modal, is a pop-up that allows fabricators to go to any workstation, including an iPad or laptop, select their

user icon, and enter their time—sort of a “tap and go” scenario,” Beveridge says.

Because fabricators work on so many work orders during their day, this interface allows them to enter time as they go and not have to remember throughout the day and enter it at the end of their shift. Each shop administrator sets the time increments, whether they use shop codes, and how they track time, which could be by work order, by job, by labor code, or with any combination thereof.

“It is super fast for the fabricators, it’s easy and quick for supervisors to approve time cards at the end of the day, and, of course, it creates a simple download and import for payroll clerks,” Beveridge says.

The Matrix interface is a faster and easier way to enter field data, which is typically done at the end of the day. It works for individual time entries and in combination with the Crews

function. Forepersons set a crew in the admin area, adding all the people working in a crew, and then complete one time entry for everyone on the crew, again with the ability to break it down by job, phase, or labor code.

The Line interface is mostly used when users are simply doing basic time tracking by job and when they have each person entering their time. The simplicity makes it fast to enter hours at any point in the week, as required.

“Besides the huge benefit of being able to easily integrate into any accounting program, saving huge amounts of time for payroll, the real-time reporting is a huge benefit for field forepersons because they can look up total hours on all their jobs and focus on any that are having problems,” Beveridge says. “This is more efficient and accurate than waiting for all the reports from accounting to get done, and the simplicity reduces stress and helps to keep projects from going off the rails.”

When fully integrated into the shop and in the field, BCX TimeCard allows managers to pull data at any time to compare budgeted and actual time on each job and to share the data with

“BCX timecard is super fast for the fabricators, it’s easy and quick for supervisors to approve time cards at the end of the day, and, of course, it creates a simple download and import for payroll clerks,” Beveridge says.

the estimating department. Best of all, the TimeCard module can integrate into any accounting or ERP system, reporting software, or monitoring dashboard.

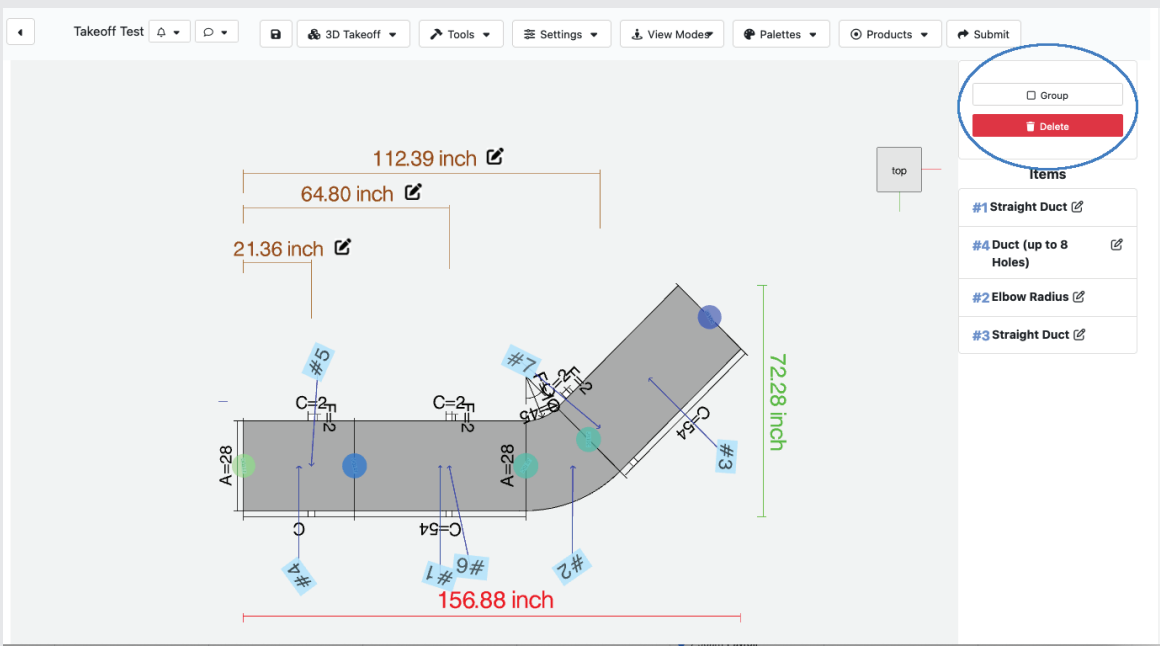
“By adding up all the features and customization, it’s easy to see how the BCX timecard is a far more robust solution for mechanical contractors than stand alone or generic timecard apps or software,” Beveridge says.

Learn more or schedule a free demo today at buildcentrix.com ■

Using the Group tool when creating a takeoff

BITS + BYTES

Building an online takeoff can sometimes mean moving a lot of fittings around in a tight space to accommodate jobsite or blueprint requirements. During the process of moving these fittings they may become disconnected or “unsnapped,” which means they have to be reconnected, taking up valuable time. When they are moving around multiple fittings, users can avoid problems by simply using the Group tool. To create a Group, use the Select tool in the menu bar to grab an item, then hold down the Control button and click on the fittings you want to group. Once they are all selected, hit the Group button on the right menu. Now this group of fittings can be moved around on the canvas just like a single fitting. If you would like more information or training on any aspects of BuildCentrix, email support@buildcentrix.com. ■



The Power of Analytics:

Harnessing Data for Process Improvement



By Dave Halabourda

Despite what you may think, data is pretty rad, and nobody can tell me anything different. The ability to quantify, deduce, and extrapolate information from even a few seemingly simple data points is incredible, and I'm going to explain just how much of an impact they can make in your world and your manufacturing processes.

Data analytics involves examining data sets to uncover patterns, trends, and insights. These insights can support data-driven decision-making. In process improvement some of the obvious things you're looking for are workflow inefficiencies, opportunities to optimize resources, and even things like maintenance needs on equipment or machinery. Some of these may be obvious but others aren't so visible to the naked eye until you start digging into the actual data.

Collecting data can come from a wide range of sources. It can be as simple as reviewing historical job costing reports that outline hours required to manufacture common parts, but it can get as complicated as IoT (Internet of Things) sensors and tracking equipment. Most data is readily available if you just know where to look. The historical data is the simplest place to start as most companies keep extensive records of labour resources and job costs. It's always important to confirm the quality of the data you're reviewing but with enough data it's easy to fact-check and pinpoint any irregularities.

Tools to analyze data come in a broad range of flavours from advanced data visualization tools and machine learning algorithms to everyone's best friend, Microsoft Excel. To be honest, if you're just starting in the process all you need are a few formulas and some free time. The first step is to identify the key metrics you want to focus on. They can include manufacturing time, defect rates, or damage caused by improper sequences or excessive material handling.

Once the data has been collected and you're ready to formulate a plan, it's relatively straightforward.

Prioritize issues – Rank issues based on impact and resources required to address them.

Set goals – Establish specific, measurable, achievable, and time-bound goals for each prioritized issue.

Define action plans – Create detailed action plans outlining steps required to achieve the goals with realistic timelines.

Implement changes – Carry out the action steps as planned, maintaining focus on the objectives and timelines.

Review and adjust – Assess the results to determine effectiveness and use the insights gained to review and refine the process to make ongoing improvements.

Managing changes like this is key to their success and continued monitoring will help you either react quicker if things go wrong or help you improve your processes for the next time.

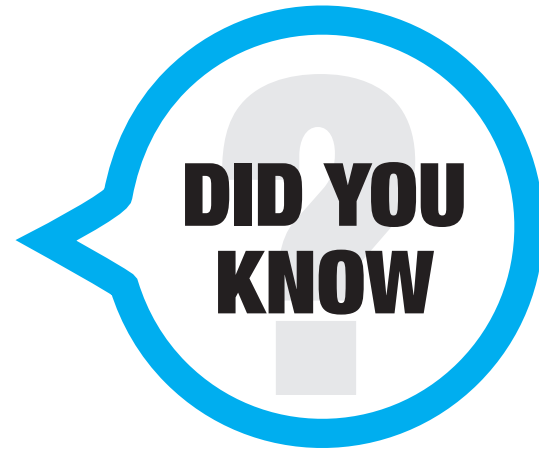
Data analytics has been around forever and will continue to shape businesses and the world. With recent advancements in machine learning and AI integration fields like real-time data processing and predictive analytics are going to grow exponentially. These capabilities becoming more accessible should lead to a significant boom in efficiency and productivity, reducing redundancy in the workforce and increasing overall improvement globally.

Data analytics is fascinating and can significantly guide your decision-making process in a wide variety of ways. If you haven't already, I encourage you to start digging into some data in your department or field and see what kind of insights you find. I'm curious to see what you come up with. Are there any specific or unique metrics you follow specifically? ■

David is a seasoned sheet metal worker with a dynamic background in drafting, BIM, project management, and operations. With extensive experience across multiple facets of the industry, he blends hands-on expertise with strategic insight, driving innovation and efficiency in every project he undertakes. David is passionate about optimizing processes and embracing new technologies.

BCX has a fully integrated Tool & Asset Tracker

Let's face it—tools and other assets can be a pain to keep track of at the shop and in the field. Stand alone tool software and apps mean administrators have a lot of double entry and additional work to do to keep track of products going in and out of the tool room. The BCX Tool & Asset Tracker is built right into the BCX platform where everyone from field personnel to shippers and accountants already has an account and is actively using the features. Adding tools and equipment is a fast and easy process and can be done in bulk for those exporting tool data from another system. Tools and assets can be billed in multiple different ways so they easily fit into your existing accounting and billing method. Checking tools in and out and generating billing, inventory, and total inventory value reports is fast and easy making the BCX Tool & Asset Tracker a great choice for managing your assets. If you would like more information on the BCX Tool & Asset Tracker, email support@buildcentrix.com. ■



Order #	Last Name	Job Name	Job Number	Requested	Tracking	Status	Progress		Assign
229137	Non-Billed	ADMIN Sheet Metal	1-229132	2024-08-22	2024-08-22	× Cancelled	Cancelled	0 / 0	Assign
229121	Non-Billed	ADMIN Sheet Metal	1-229085	2024-08-08	2024-08-08	○ Not Started/Received	0%	0 / 1	Assign
229047	Non-Billed	ADMIN Sheet Metal	1-229032	2024-07-04	2024-07-04	☑ Ready for Shipping/Pickup	100%	1 / 1	Assign
229018	Jang	25032024	25032024	2024-06-26	2024-06-26	○ Not Started/Received	0%	0 / 1	Assign
229012	Non-Billed	Joe UID Job 2 x	1104	2024-06-11	2024-06-11	☑ Ready for Shipping/Pickup	100%	1 / 1	Assign
229011	Jang	ADMIN Sheet Metal	1-229001	2024-07-05	2024-07-05	☑ Ready for Shipping/Pickup	100%	1 / 1	Assign
228888	Non-Billed	Davidson Bros. Mechanical ...	293-226124	2024-03-14	2024-03-14	× Cancelled	Cancelled	0 / 0	Assign
228802	Non-Billed	277 2 test	14112023	2024-02-07	2024-02-07	○ Not Started/Received	0%	0 / 1	Assign
228800	Non-Billed	27112023	274112023	2024-01-23	2024-01-23	☑ Ready for Shipping/Pickup	100%	1 / 1	Assign
228765	Non-Billed	27112023	274112023	2023-12-06	2023-12-06	⊙ In Progress	50%	1 / 2	Assign
228628	Non-Billed	ADMIN Sheet Metal	1-228543	2023-10-11	2023-10-11	⊙ In Progress	50%	1 / 2	Assign
228584	Non-Billed	ADMIN Sheet Metal	1-228543	2023-09-27	2023-09-27	○ Not Started/Received	0%	0 / 1	Assign
228545	Non-Billed	ADMIN Sheet Metal	1-228543	2023-09-01	2023-09-01	☑ Ready for Shipping/Pickup	100%	1 / 1	Assign
228390	Non-Billed	24/7 Plumbing 22nd	June 22th override	2023-08-03	2023-08-03	○ Not Started/Received	0%	0 / 1	Assign
228363	Non-Billed	ADMIN Sheet Metal	1-228360	2023-06-02	2023-06-02	○ Not Started/Received	0%	0 / 1	Assign

BuildCentrix

BCX comprises the following modules. While there is no requirement to use them all, they are available for contractors to grow into.

- Field ordering of sheet metal and piping and plumbing
- Machine integration
- CAM integration (Trimble, PractiCAM, CAMduct)
- Watts orbital welder
- Field timecards
- Shop timecards
- Labor reporting
- Payroll integration (all applicable payroll packages for contractors)
- ERP/accounting integration for jobs and labor codes
- Revit® integration
- CAD integration
- Content generation (not dependent on old Windows databases)
- Labor and material costing and pricing
- 3D Blueprint takeoffs for duct, plumbing, and piping