

5 ways construction workforce intelligence delivers beyond operational excellence

How cloud-based technology has transformed labor coordination and much more

A [recent survey](#) by [Bridgit](#), the leader in workforce intelligence in the construction industry, reveals a hard truth from general contractors: **70%** say they plan staff allocations no more than two months in advance of a project. A 60-day assignment window may not seem like much to address the following:

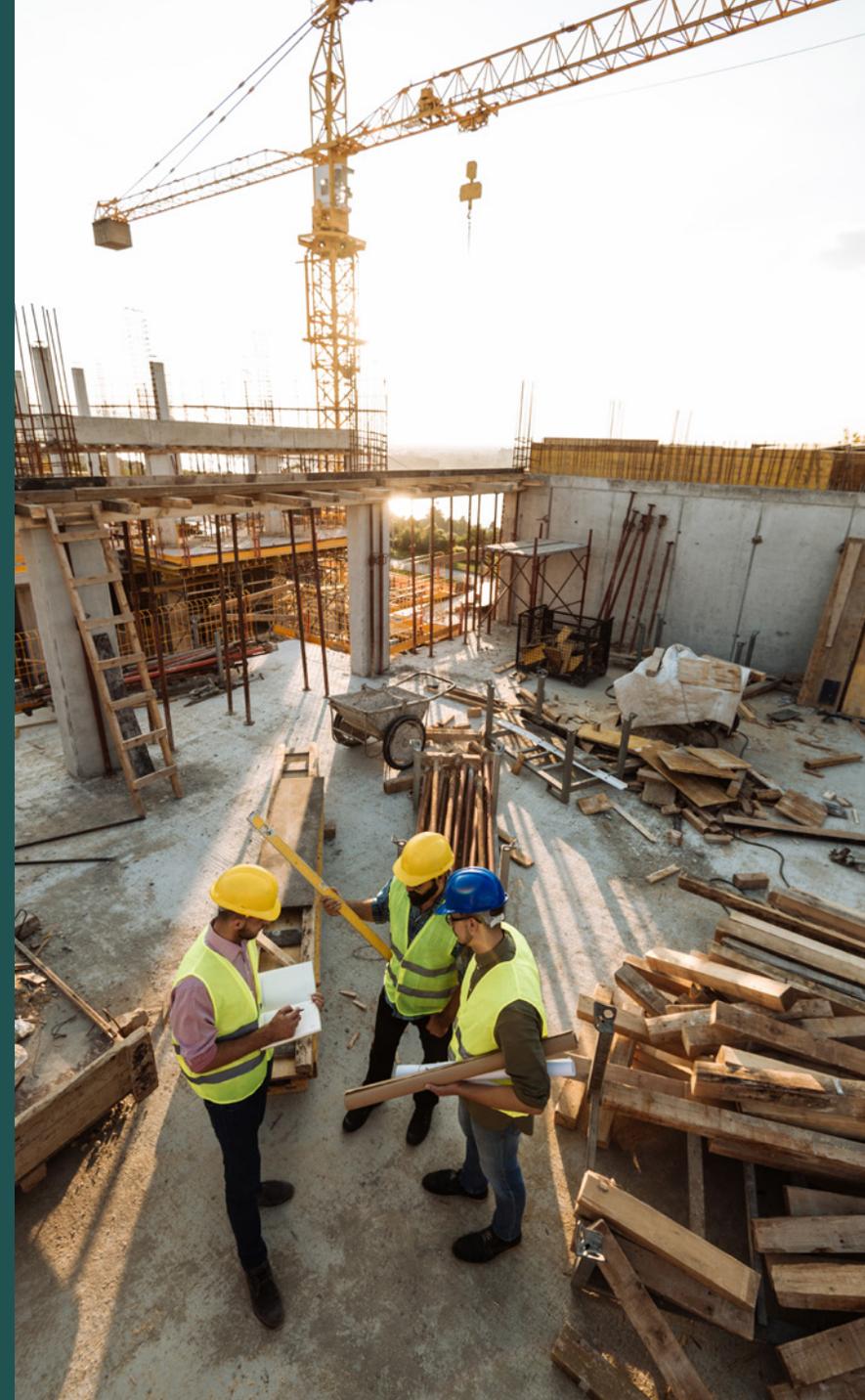
- “Are we understaffed?”
- “Do we have the right talent?”
- “Do we hire or line up subs?”

These are tough questions, especially in today’s labor market.

Now consider the flip side: **30%** of surveyed contractors routinely plan *outside* that window — in some cases, *way* outside a two-month timeline.

If your firm is among this group, you know how the luxury of long-term planning plays to your advantage. For starters, it gives you a leg up in winning bids. **More than four out of 10 GCs say they would win more bids if they could better predict and plan for workforce requirements.**

For the **30%** that have retired workforce planning spreadsheets, homegrown applications, whiteboards, Post-Its — you name it — in favor of a cloud-based digital solution, the immediate advantage only begins to tell the story.



Yes, the speed and ease of assigning the right person to the right job at the right time is huge. What busy operations leader wouldn't cheer that? "I get my weekends back," says Jeremy Moe, Operations Manager at The Boldt Company, a Wisconsin-based construction firm and a self-performing GC (#77, 2023 ENR 400).

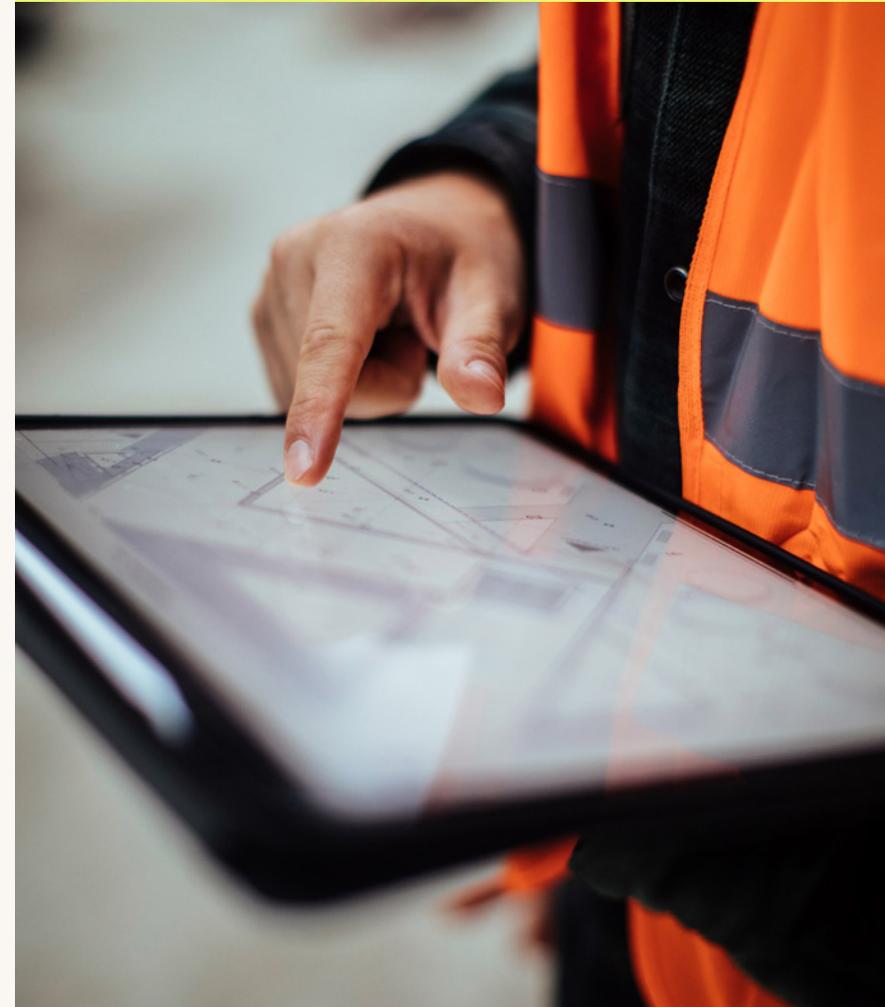
But weekends are just the beginning. Automation presents a cascade of less-featured yet equally compelling benefits. It's a small wonder why so many GCs, self-performing GCs, and specialty contractors have transitioned to digital planning.

This playbook explores the secrets of the **30%**. You'll learn how they use workforce intelligence to inform a surprising range of tactical and strategic business decisions.

Operations is just the beginning. Many of the industry's most respected names now extend workforce intelligence to preconstruction, forecasting, human resources, business development, and recruitment and retention. No more trying to thread the operational needle with unreliable manual planning processes.

It's time to discover how your peers maximize profits with a people-first approach.

Automation presents a cascade of compelling benefits, both direct and indirect.



A pleasant surprise

The state of automated workforce management today is more than an efficiency play. The value goes to the heart of what a construction company is all about: **people**.

Efficiency is just the first reveal in a series of unprecedented decision-support breakthroughs.

Workforce intelligence improves decision-makers' short- and long-term thinking, giving them access to actionable, real-time staffing and forecasting data and analytics.

Time to expand the operation into a new market? Chase larger bids? Offer other construction services? Improve staff retention? Forecast labor requirements for 2024, 2025, and beyond? That power is available with groundbreaking digital workforce planning tools.

It's an innovation Mark Ver Voort never takes for granted.

"Labor coordination is a pain. It's hard work. Unfortunately, a spreadsheet is only a quickly fading snapshot in time," says Ver Voort, Director of Operations for The Boldt Company. "What happens if a project superintendent's job ends two days early? What do you do with that superintendent and their crews?"



Those are questions Ver Voort's operations team now answers with the help of workforce intelligence.

Workforce intelligence also supports Joe Jenkyn of Morrow Construction. Jenkyn is the Chief People Officer at the Georgia-based multifamily housing builder. The construction industry veteran understands why some businesses stick with old-school planning methods.



“Some may think, ‘Why change? Excel works just fine.’ For us, a digital workforce planning tool means our people know they can walk up to their boss and ask, ‘Where am I going next?’ ‘What’s the next project?’ and expect an informed answer,” Jenkyn says.

You’ll often hear the words trust, confidence, and reliability in speaking with workforce intelligence users. **Companies with automated workforce planning have all but eliminated the uncertainty and frustrations of plugging holes in project allocations.** Company decision-makers are free to move on to larger questions of improving margins and building better, on time and on budget.

“The biggest milestone for a new user is always the first workforce planning meeting using the tool,” explains Emily Richler, Head of the Customer Team at Bridgit. Today, Bridgit Bench is the leading workforce intelligence solution, and is **used by 30% of 2023 ENR 400 companies across North America**, and top contractors in both Australia and New Zealand.

“It’s an ‘aha!’ moment. They probably just had the most productive workforce planning meeting of their career. No arguments over data. No quarrels over accuracy. The meeting conversation turns, as it should, to strategy and big-picture stuff.”

Emily Richler, Head of the Customer Team, Bridgit

Just how big a picture you can create is another pleasant surprise.

5 ways workforce intelligence goes beyond labor coordination

The time required for a cloud-based service like Bridgit Bench to morph from a humble operations tool to a robust enterprise-wide solution is frequently short. Call it the power of unintended consequences and the fact that the online service redefines ease of use, according to Jamie Miller, Director of Engineering Development at Seattle-based Sellen Construction. “Bridgit Bench is insanely easy to use. People are up to speed in less than a week,” Miller says.

That ease of use helps Bridgit Bench win swift acceptance by HR, business development, and marketing – areas that might seem unexpected by service initiators in operations and senior leadership.

Here are five ways in which workforce intelligence opens a new dimension in people-first insight, collaboration, and understanding:

1. HUMAN RESOURCES

HR is a natural next link in a workforce intelligence chain. “We have [Bridgit Bench] tied to ADP, our HR software,” explains Jenkyn. “ADP adds new hires into Bridgit Bench, and my payroll employees use it to allocate people to the jobs instead of sending out an email. With more than 400 employees, it’s expecting too much for everyone to reply, ‘Is this person still at this project? Did they move to another one?’”

In Florida, DeAngelis Diamond Construction’s (#262, 2023 ENR 285) Chief Administrative Officer, Brett Diamond, singles out the HR value of workforce intelligence.

“We went in thinking this is going to cure our workforce planning problem. What we got out of it supports HR and talent recruiting,” Diamond says. “Our recruiters will look to see what needs are coming up. We cross-reference job openings with Bench. The insights are beyond what we thought.”

Filtering functionality makes it easy to identify workers with specialized skill sets, volunteer service, certifications, previous projects, family size and names, home location, willingness to travel, and more.

2. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Three years ago, Bridgit Bench's technology was largely a problem-solver for workforce coordination, Richler says. All that's changed.

"The scope of workforce intelligence is far more comprehensive today," she says. "Today, it helps shape the workflow of how companies should approach workforce planning."

A good example is business development. **Business development teams can now summon a quick heads-up on when and where the company needs to fill project pipelines.** It might be expanding an existing market or launching initiatives into new markets. Business development pros can now apply workforce intelligence to identify existing company talent and skills, the types of projects, and any in-house local connections to leverage.



3. PRECONSTRUCTION

Like a stage performer frantically manipulating many spinning plates, keeping the quantity and velocity of preconstruction activity in check can be a challenge.

Jenkyn knows what it's like to oversee the abrupt stop-and-start nature of precon. "At my previous company, we would do a lot of estimating and preconstruction on projects that never came to fruition," he recalls. "When sorting through our staff roster, we didn't want the view muddied with a score of projects we may or may not win."

But with an automated platform, you can quickly clean up that muddied view. "Applying workforce planning intelligence to precon makes so much sense," Jenkyn says. "Precon estimating teams need to know as much as operations what Billy and Susie are working on. Having that dual insight available on demand from a single service is a major decision-support tool."

A unified approach, tying precon and project operations together, provides a level of allocation and capacity clarity that's not possible with conventional, analog planning methods.

4. FORECASTING

Projecting talent needs 60 days out strains any spreadsheet analysis. Doing it six months, a year, or even two or more years out can push analog planning methods beyond the practical. That slender timeline not only puts operations in a bind, but also HR and business development.

You want a running start on long-term business planning. But will the resources you need be available 18 to 24 months from now?

Is manually entered and updated data reliable enough to inform what-if scenarios? Betting on a well-intended yet rickety spreadsheet may not be the wisest business move — a concern Jenkyn understands all too well.

“I’m meeting our vice president of construction to run through scenarios for the rest of this year and Q1 of next year. What are the potential staffing impacts?” Jenkyn asks. “Who do we need to talk to about moving? What about hiring? Reskilling? What happens if a project slides from January to March?”

Using workforce intelligence from Bridgit Bench’s forecasting toolset helps anticipate issues and likely workarounds. Bench’s forecasting dashboard makes it fast and easy to visualize the impact of time, weather, people, materials, and other variables. The result? **Fewer surprises and improved business performance.**





5. RECRUITING AND RETENTION

HR takes the lead in hiring, allocations, professional development, engagement, and backfilling staff positions. But today's labor market compels all staff to help keep the company's business engine in high gear.

"We work hard to build a culture of trust throughout our workforce. It's the Boldt Way," Ver Voort explains. "The organization does the best it can to tap the underrepresented in construction, like women, minorities, and veterans. When we enter a market, we ask, 'What is the competition? What are other jobs that might pull workers out of the employment pool? What talent acquisition strategies do we need to implement?'"

Both Jenkyn and Ver Voort know that establishing a culture of trust addresses many recruitment and retention issues, from workplace safety and staff engagement to family and lifestyle. Building trust requires playing fair with people in a trade that can quickly humble the best practitioners.

Workforce intelligence can empower leaders looking to inspire others through clarity of vision and purpose. Making sound project bets in preconstruction, striving for operational excellence with wise allocations, demonstrating fairness and compassion, and serving the best interests of staff and customers alike go a long way in supercharging the company's mission and values.

Can a spreadsheet help deliver that? Perhaps. What Jenkyn and Ver Voort know beyond dispute is that workforce intelligence fulfills that promise like nothing else they've experienced.



Investing in people

Confidence. Trust. Conviction. They're leadership qualities at every level of construction, from an apprentice and journeyman to superintendent and senior leader. These unsung heroes often go beyond their job description to safeguard the company in all economic conditions. They're key to everything your organization aims to accomplish.

Supporting your people, your highest-value asset, is no light matter. It's imperative for any profit-minded GC, self-performing contractor, or specialty contractor.

Investing in their success — and yours — through workforce intelligence is key to exceptional operational planning, cross-functional collaboration, and forecasting insight.

As you weigh your workforce planning options, keep Bridgit in mind as your partner. No company can thrive for long by holding fast to self-limiting business practices. Consider the surprising scope, authority, and simplicity of workforce intelligence from Bridgit.

Bridgit

Bridgit Bench helps contractors put the people with the right skills, on the right projects, at the right time and is the first and only end-to-end workforce planning platform with functionality to support operations, field ops, and preconstruction respectively.

Bench is easy-to-use, flexible to your planning process, and offers in-app communications, pursuit management, and labor forecasting capabilities. Contractors like Ryan Companies, Balfour Beatty, and The Boldt Company use Bridgit Bench to create a more efficient planning process and a more effective workforce strategy.

[Learn more](#)

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