

# The Ultimate Construction Software Buyer's Guide The Key to Purchasing the Right Software!

*STUMP THE SOFTWARE VENDORS EDITION*

The definitive guide to solving tough software problems faced by:

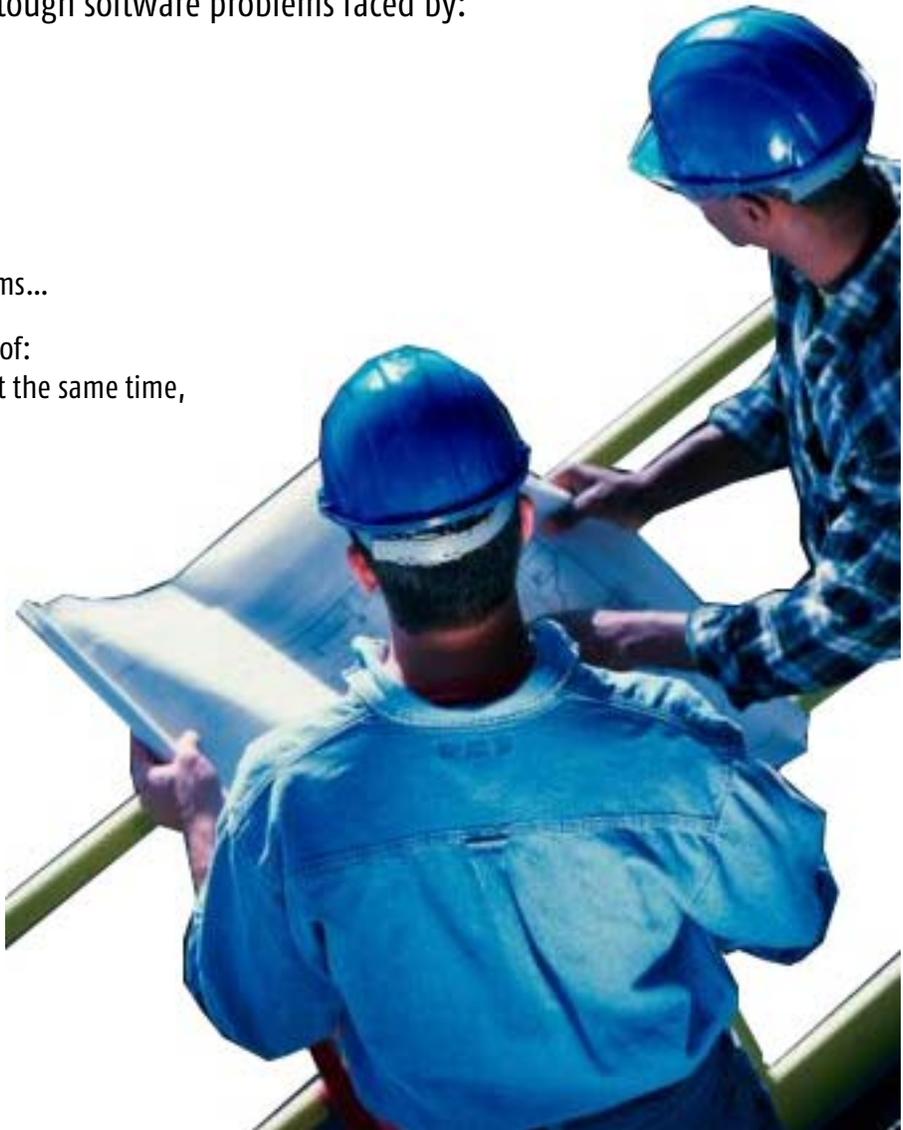
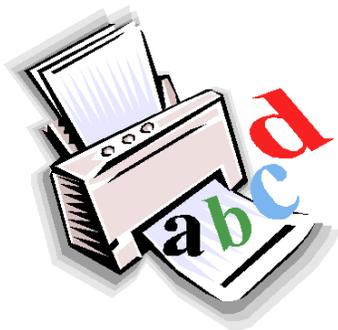
- ✓ General Contractors
- ✓ Home Builders
- ✓ Sub-Contractors

...before they become tough problems...

Especially if you face the challenges of:

- managing multiple jobs/projects at the same time,
- dealing with mistakes,
- inefficiencies in communications,
- changing schedules,
- keeping organized, and
- business management issues...

**PRINT ALERT!**



**PRINT ALERT!** It's important that you get the full value from this information. It's an interactive guide!

Print it out. Get a pencil. And jot down your thoughts!

## Welcome Contractor!

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Are you concerned that selecting the right software for your business will be a LONG, difficult and painful process?

You probably work in your company in one or more ways:

### 1. YOU ARE THE BOSS

Therefore you need easy access to all information in one place, an overview of what's going on, and more.

### 2. YOU DO OFFICE MANAGEMENT WORK

You need to update schedules, change orders, manage contacts, do paperwork, keep things organized, and more.

### 3. YOU WORK IN THE FIELD

You need access to the most up to date information, change orders, schedules, files, and more.

Do you need a shortcut to CUT THROUGH all the marketing hype on the Internet today, all designed to get you hooked but not truly able to help you find the right solution for the problems you need to solve... NOW?

There is a ton of software systems on the market – that do a ton of things – and software is constantly changing and advancing in its capabilities.

But keeping up with what's going on in the world of software isn't your business is it?

## Construction is...

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Maybe you find yourself re-entering data or duplicating too much work between software systems, cobbling together generic solutions, several software programs, and even between several computers (maybe the computers are even in different locations)...

And if you are like most General Contractors, Home Builders, and Sub-Contractors, then you simply don't have the time (or the desire) to deal with the hassles and headaches of technology. You need a reliable and secure system to help manage your business. Is there even such a thing?

Well... if you CHOOSE correctly and you know what kind of questions to ask... then YOU can stump the Software Vendors, rather than being stumped by a decision you may REGRET.

Slicker than a greased salesman, cheesy marketing messages promise the world but seldom deliver. You and your team are the ones that have to make it all work. And the last thing you need is more work... especially "managing software technology".

**To make sure you are the right person reading this buyers guide, please review some of the assumptions this guide makes in who it is talking to:**

- YOU are considering whether (or not) to purchase a software system,
- YOU are tired of mistakes,
- YOU don't have time for marketing B.S. and hype. Just the facts please, and
- YOU need to have a full understanding of the criteria that relates to YOUR business goals NOT that of a software vendor!

## **Are we talking to the right person? If we are, then we will assume the following:**

You lose profits through errors, inefficiency, incomplete information, and redundancies. Mistakes from miscommunications, out-of-date documents in the field and an inability to access information from different places (when needed) makes your job harder than it should be.

If you have been experiencing even a few of the problems above, then you owe it to yourself and your business to find answers. Another cool "software tool" is NOT the answer, software that works is.

If you've been down this road before then it means your last choice didn't cut it. But for what it's worth your questions are probably a lot better. You have a better idea of what kind of "software issues" you need to avoid. ... and what problems you need your software to solve.

## **If you are still reading, then we are talking to the right person**

An introduction then...

This guide is the pooling of many years of understanding in the construction industry, the challenges of implementing software and the pressing needs of contractors... JUST LIKE YOU.

As one of the longest established companies in the area of Web Based Construction Management Systems, we understand the problems you are trying to avoid, and the problems you are aiming to solve.

To keep on the leading edge of how technology actually SOLVES problems for Contractors, rather than creating them, we have learned that the key is to "Listen" to our customers' problems. And then work with them to find solutions to the REAL world problems of managing multiple projects and a wide variety of information, all at the same time.

**Ok. So now that we've been properly introduced, let's get down to Business.**

## **Your Business**

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Although there are common problems in efficiency in the construction industry, the reality is that many businesses have very unique problems and crises that challenge efficiency, drive up costs and make relationships with customers (and employees) harder than they need be.

### **Yet there is no such thing as a "one-size fits all" solution**

Many construction companies do their best to implement software, but they often find themselves spending way more time managing software/systems than expected (rather than actually managing their businesses).

**In this guide you will have the following TOOLS to help you to narrow down your choices**

CHART 1: WHAT ARE YOUR NEEDS?

Scheduling, multi-user access, sharing info, security, etc.

CHART 2: WHO WILL BE USING THIS SYSTEM?

The boss, you, project manager, admin, subs, customers

CHART 3: WHAT IS THE CRITERIA FOR YOUR FINAL DECISION?

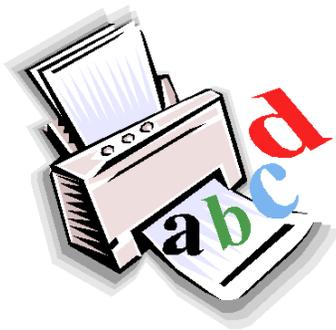
Budget, who decides, functionality, how much is it costing your business if you DON'T make any changes

CHART 4: WHAT TYPE OF SOFTWARE WILL BE PART OF MY CHOICES?

Stand-alone Software, Networked or Web-Based Systems

CHART 5: TEST OUT AND EVALUATE SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS

Take your choices and use side-by-side evaluations



**You did remember to print this guide off, right??**

Remember, it's important that you get the full value from the following information. It's an interactive guide!

So print it out. Get a pencil. And jot down your thoughts!

## Chart 1: What are your needs?

List and check the requirements you want in your construction management system. Add anything else that may need to be custom developed at the bottom.

✓	Features	Notes		
	Multiple users			
	Access from different locations			
	Ability to grow with your business			
	Track multiple jobs			
	Centralized company contact list (address book)			
	Upload, securely store, and share files	<table border="1"> <tr> <td> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> estimates  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> budgeting spreadsheets  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bidding documents  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cost control spreadsheets  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> contracts  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> specifications  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> change orders  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> purchase orders                 </td> <td> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RFP's / RFI's  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> photos  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> drawings  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spreadsheets  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDFs  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> scanned images  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other file types                 </td> </tr> </table>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> estimates <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> budgeting spreadsheets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bidding documents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cost control spreadsheets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> contracts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> specifications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> change orders <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> purchase orders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RFP's / RFI's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> photos <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> drawings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spreadsheets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDFs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> scanned images <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other file types
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> estimates <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> budgeting spreadsheets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bidding documents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cost control spreadsheets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> contracts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> specifications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> change orders <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> purchase orders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RFP's / RFI's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> photos <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> drawings <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> spreadsheets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDFs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> scanned images <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other file types			
	Notes	Track notes by job, contact		
	Make commonly used Documents	Use standardized forms/templates Automatically fill in the blanks to save time		
	Scheduling			
	Schedule tasks, appointments, and to do items			
	Use work flow templates to schedule jobs/work fast			
	Send Faxes	Without using paper/ink, or tying up the line		
	Send Text Messages			
	Email			
	Continuously backed up data			
	Computers protected in secured facility			
	Automatic virus protection			
	Custom feature development			
	Automatic free upgrades			





## Chart 4: What type of software will be part of my choices?

Standalone Software, Networked or Web-Based Systems. There are many different ways to manage your business, but which one is right for you? Here is a quick run-down of your different choices.

### Standalone Software Programs

Standalone software normally runs on one computer and require a one time purchase, usually with additional fees for upgrades.

Item	Detail
Cost	Several hundred to several thousand dollars for setup. Often requires costs for training, upgrades, outside support, backup systems, and crisis management.
Who Uses it	One person businesses, trades or small contractors who do just a few projects each year.
Advantages	Easy to get going, can be reasonably priced.
Disadvantages	Other people can't easily access it. Normally only one piece of a solution. Real costs often involve multiple or distributed management systems that are used together to try and make things work. Security issues. Upgrade requirements and if something happens to your computer... it also happens to your software. (AND WHAT ABOUT THE SAFETY AND BACK UPS OF YOUR DATA?)

### Enterprise or Networked Systems

Generally, enterprise software runs off a central server in an office and multiple employees access it for a number of job functions.

Item	Detail
Cost	Often \$25-50,000+ just to get going, plus on-site training, maintenance, and support.
Who Uses it	Large companies who have dozens or hundreds of employees.
Advantages	For large companies with in house technical staff or long-term support contracts, they can customize and grow these systems according to their unique business requirements. Often have many projects on the go.
Disadvantages	Without a doubt: cost. These are complex systems. They always require specialized training. Often very expensive training. A system that is not properly planned, maintained, and managed is susceptible to breakdowns, data loss, and user fatigue if there is not a good fit.

### Web Based Construction Systems

Web-Based construction systems allow central access to files, documents and vital business information such as scheduling, project lists, job descriptions, contact management, communications and more from any Internet connected computer.

Item	Detail
Cost	Costs are often deferred over the long term and structured as a service. I.E. \$50 per month and up.
Who Uses it	Small to mid sized General Contractors, Home Builders and Sub-Contractors who have multiple jobs/projects on the go.

Advantages	Access from anywhere. The company that provides the service does the work for you. Their staff takes care of upgrades and makes sure information is secure, backed up, and properly protected. Construction professionals who use this type of system have less technical headaches allowing them to focus on other areas.
Disadvantages	Requires internet access. Be aware of web-based solutions priced in the many thousands per year: you're paying commissions to their sales department, not for the software. Also, be aware of web based solutions that charge based on number of projects you do. They make way more \$ and it can get pricey very fast.

Want more information? Checkout this article:  
<http://www.builditsystems.com/Articles/1796.html>

## Chart 5: Test out and evaluate competing software solutions

Some suggested search combinations to get you started. Make sure that the companies you are working with have online videos, product tours and FREE evaluations of the software so you can try it before talking to a sales person. Jot down the candidates below:

*"General Contractor Software"*  
*"Best Construction Management System"*  
*"Web Based Construction Scheduling Software"*

Company	System 1	System 2	System 3	System 4	System 5
Name:					
Website:					
Phone:					
In Business Since:					
Sales Email Address:					
Free test drive (Y/N):					
Software Type (from Chart 4):					
Cost:					
Put your criteria from Chart 1 below and mark Yes or No (Y/N) in the columns provided.					
e.g. Scheduling					
e.g. Multi user capable					



Interested in finding out more about problems that construction companies like YOURS face and what they are doing to solve them? Take 10 minutes to learn more by visiting the following articles:

Killer problems faced by contracting businesses (and how you can reduce and eliminate them)  
<http://www.builditsystems.com/Articles/1786.html>

How much efficiency can be gained using construction software systems?  
<http://www.builditsystems.com/Articles/1805.html>

Why most software doesn't fit contracting businesses (and key things to look for when buying)  
<http://www.builditsystems.com/Articles/1802.html>

The many kinds of construction software (and what to consider when buying)  
<http://www.builditsystems.com/Articles/1810.html>

The three types of construction software (and the gap)  
<http://www.builditsystems.com/Articles/1804.html>

Why most construction software systems come with headaches (and how to avoid the pain)  
<http://www.builditsystems.com/Articles/1807.html>

Why web based construction software beats regular software  
<http://www.builditsystems.com/Articles/1796.html>

How software systems help construction businesses sell faster (and for more money)  
<http://www.builditsystems.com/Articles/1795.html>

More information about BuildIT Systems:



**schedule · organize · communicate**

[www.builditsystems.com](http://www.builditsystems.com)

Web-based construction software since 2000

FREE TEST DRIVE: <http://www.builditsystems.com/Trial>

HELP VIDEOS: [http://www.builditsystems.com/Support/Video\\_Training.aspx](http://www.builditsystems.com/Support/Video_Training.aspx)

TOUR: <http://www.builditsystems.com/Tour>

PRICING: <http://www.builditsystems.com/Pricing.aspx>

QUESTIONS? [info@builditsystems.com](mailto:info@builditsystems.com) or 1-866-585-5050