

Five Things You'll Love About Connected Cloud



Construction is a complex business made up of countless independent activities that take place on project sites and in the office. To win at this highly competitive game, contractors must reduce the risk of costly mistakes and missed deadlines.

What's behind these common problems?

Disconnected systems that make it nearly impossible for stakeholders to find and analyze the latest project data. That's why more and more construction firms are embracing cloud technology to help them manage their workforces, finances, projects, and customer relationships in one online location.

When construction firms run their businesses in the connected cloud, they can easily share data between the office and field. This means that every decision made in the field can incorporate accounting data, and every back-office decision can consider what's happening in the field. The result? Smart, strategic decisions that drive the business forward towards profitable growth.

Here are five ways connected cloud can improve the productivity and profitability of any construction firm.

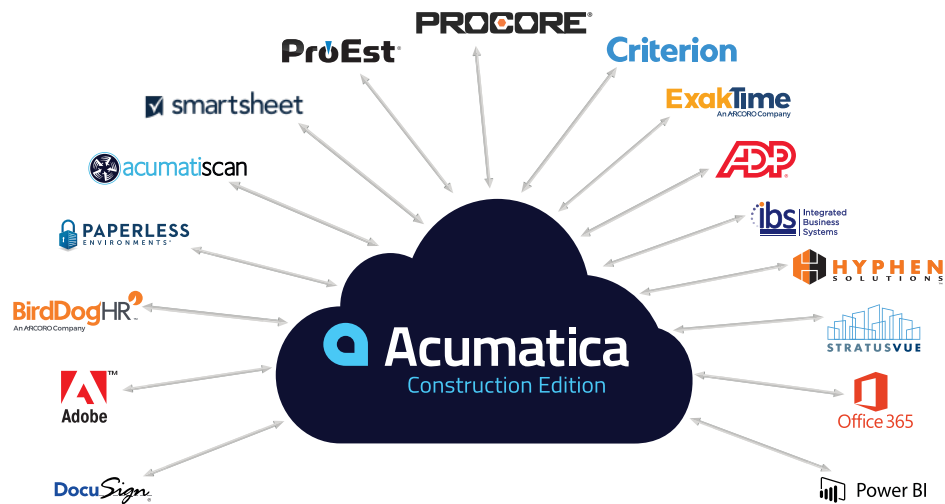
Connected cloud provides access to business-critical applications such as construction accounting software that seamlessly connects to other best-of-breed solutions. Accurate data is available consistently across your organization increasing visibility, team collaboration and profitability.

1. Connected Cloud Expands the Capabilities of Your System

Although construction teams have their specific areas of responsibility, they don't work in silos. Each member of the team needs to collaborate with multiple people involved in the project, both internal and external personnel. That's why integration between software applications is no longer just a "nice-to-have" feature—it's a business-critical function.

If a legacy system can't integrate with other software, employees must resort to unreliable workarounds or even manual data entry—which can cripple decision-making and productivity.

Connected cloud platforms easily integrate with other software solutions by using application programming interfaces (APIs) that are designed to share data between systems. Secure APIs implemented as web services allow skilled users to build agile, nimble interfaces that connect to trusted sources. They also let users read and use data across systems as part of real-time business workflows.



Seamlessly connect to other construction solutions

Cloud construction accounting software offers integrated processes that help ensure data accuracy. For example, it can merge construction accounting and customer contact management in a single system. Cloud solutions provide:

- Embedded user-defined workflow processes, such as approvals, to be routed automatically.
- Connections to Procore, ProEst, DocuSign, and other best of breed solutions.
- Global capabilities such as multi-company, multi-language, and multi-currency support.

When employees have access to complete, current information, their productivity increases, their communication improves, and the entire construction cycle runs more smoothly.

2. Connected Cloud Provides the Right Information at the Right Time

There are few things more frustrating to a busy construction professional than using software that's slow when navigating from screen to screen, takes too long to deliver the results of a data-intensive search, and can't be personalized to match specific workflows. That's why it's important to choose flexible cloud technology that gives users in different construction roles the specific tools and information they need to do their jobs.

An AP clerk will need to enter vendor invoices quickly. A CFO will need to make sure these invoices can be routed and approved in a timely manner. And the company owner will want to drill down quickly to determine how any project is performing. Only connected cloud software that's built for user productivity can meet these needs.

Connected cloud technology delivers:

- *Usability – role-based software that's intuitive, efficient, and effective.*
- *Mobility – anywhere, anytime access that best suits the job at hand.*
- *Extensibility – more options for integration with other key business systems.*

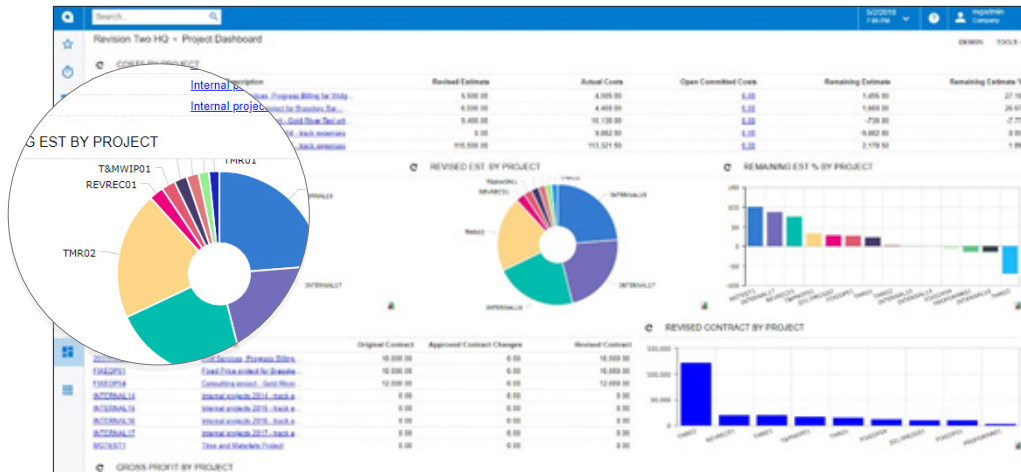
Connected cloud applications can streamline the exchange of information between your teams in the office and out on job sites. When someone uses a mobile app to make changes to items such as RFIs, project issues, and timecards, the system will automatically update and sync this data in the cloud construction accounting application. When your entire workforce has access to the same information at the same time, you can ensure that important issues will be addressed immediately before they cause costly delays.

3. Connected Cloud Increases Visibility

When systems are disconnected, business processes become more complex than they should be. For example, if you must pull reports from multiple systems to collate them into one report, you're not only wasting time but also leaving your business vulnerable to errors.

Cloud technology—especially construction accounting in the cloud—gives you total visibility into your business. Real-time dashboards give you the ability to keep projects on track and on budget from anywhere at any time. As a result, your firm can achieve greater profitability.

Using a dashboard with drill-down capabilities, you can identify and share changes in project costs. By defining key project metrics, making them visible to your entire team, and measuring them as each project progresses, your firm can reduce risk, increase productivity, and improve customer satisfaction.



Easily track activities, documents, and costs from one central area

Connected cloud construction accounting software can make accurate data available consistently across your organization – whether pulling data from other systems or excel spreadsheets. With drill-down dashboards, you gain the visibility you need to run your business more smoothly.

4. Connected Cloud Eliminates Redundant Data Entry

Construction firms typically use six to ten software applications in tandem with their main accounting system. If these applications are legacy systems, they probably aren't very well integrated—if they're integrated at all. As a result, the entire staff will have to spend a great deal of time jumping between applications just to perform routine tasks. For example, employees may be using a series of spreadsheets or standalone applications to complete common workflows such as estimating, accounting, project management, bid management, and project scheduling. These spreadsheets and applications may be well suited to individual tasks, but they also generate siloes of data that are hard for other employees to access.

With minimal integration across their systems, employees will be forced to re-enter data in multiple applications—an error-prone, time-wasting task that often leads to inaccuracies that cause major issues for construction firms. This is true even in companies that are using mobile apps to save time for their teams in the field. Here's an example: a project manager is using a mobile app to update the completion percentage of a project, but the app doesn't connect to the company's job cost accounting system. When the team in the back office tries to analyze the profitability of the project, they won't know that a change has occurred and will be unable to provide any meaningful analysis.

In the connected cloud, construction firms can use end-to-end construction management systems with modules that are designed to exchange data. This not only increases everyone's visibility into business processes, but also reduces tedious data entry work.

5. Connected Cloud Lets You Work Smarter and Faster

When you're using disparate systems to run your business, tracking down the right information can be a time-consuming process. In many cases, the answers you seek will be buried in a complex spreadsheet or database that isn't easily searchable. You know the details are there—but finding them takes time out of your day and causes you frustration.

With a connected cloud system, field staff and office workers will have the tools they need to communicate properly. Your operations and accounting staff will be able to make sure that both groups have the information they need to make smart decisions.

Connected cloud enables faster, better work by offering:

- Intuitive user interfaces that speed time to productivity for all your employees.
- Anywhere, anytime access to information by employees, customers, and partners, which means you can access information on your smart phone or tablet, without having to be in the office.
- Maintenance and upgrades are performed automatically, eliminating the need for your staff to spend time on these activities as your company grows.
- The highest levels of security currently available. Cloud technology providers know their businesses depend on providing stringent security, so they take it far more seriously than even most in-house IT teams.
- Safe data backups and comprehensive disaster recovery plans.

See Connected Cloud in Action

Connected cloud holds great promise for today's construction firms. We've shared some of the leading benefits of using a cloud-based construction management solution, but it can be difficult to understand its full impact on your business until you see it for yourself.

With more than 5,200 customers, Acumatica is trusted by companies across many different industries. Acumatica's easy-to-use cloud construction accounting software is full-featured with accounting, project management, field management, CRM and mobile for construction firms including off-site fabrication and assembly of pre-fabricated buildings. You'll have a real-time view of your business anytime, anywhere so you can build better wherever you are.

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