Differences Between PM and Construction PM Software
Project Management Software vs. Construction PM Software: Which One Do You Need?

OK, now you understand how construction management and project management are different, but what about software? Should you choose construction management software, or do you need broader project management software? How do these types of software differ, and what features do each provide?

Construction PM and project management software overlap quite a bit, but their focus and core features are quite different. Here’s a breakdown of exactly what those differences are, and what they mean to you as a construction manager.

The basics

Software Advice defines the two different types of software as this:

**Construction PM**: “Construction management software helps contractors manage the entire build process, from scheduling to tracking worker to-dos and punch lists to client billing. These tools provide firms with the appropriate oversight and document control required to monitor requests for information (RFIs), change orders, and purchase orders so they can adhere to project budgets and timelines.”

**Project management**: “Project management software describes a range of solutions that allow individuals and teams to track the progress of complex projects from their conception to their completion and/or launch. Currently, there are hundreds of these programs on the market, ranging from basic free online task trackers all the way up to highly complex project management tools that allow the user to manage every aspect of the project from business case all the way to final payment.”
There are a few key differences here:

- Construction PM software is largely focused on managing the day-to-day of a job site, from tracking workers to monitoring change orders and requests for information.
- Project management works on a broader scale to track the entirety of a project from the business case to client relations, but also includes more minute features such as task tracking.

**Key takeaway:** If you’re focused on completing a specific construction project, project management software may be too broad for your purposes.
Common features

Both categories of software have a handful of distinct, core features that truly define the basic functionality they offer.

Common construction PM software features:

- **Project scheduling**: Assigns people, resources, and equipment to a project.
- **Project tracking**: Tracks progress on a job and ensures that it stays on target in terms of budget or timeline.
- **Document management**: Stores all documentation in one place.
- **Materials management**: Monitors and schedules material deliveries.
- **Equipment management**: Tracks equipment usage and maintenance.
- **Job costing**: Documents estimated vs. actual job costs throughout a project.

Common project management software features:

- **Project planning**: Defines the scope of the project, establishes due dates, and tracks essential tasks and deliverables.
- **Scheduling**: Provides basic calendar functionality for scheduling major milestones.
- **Document management**: Stores documents in a central location.
- **Budgeting**: Tracks time, expenses, bids, budget, and revenue.
- **Billing and invoicing**: Allows users to bill and invoice through the system.
- **Resource management**: Tracks resources including inventory and personnel.
- **Risk management**: Identifies risks or red flags in a project.
- **Customer management**: Tracks leads to improve sales.
Top software solutions

We’ve taken a detailed look at all of the software solutions offered in each category and come up with a list of the top-rated products that we call FrontRunners. FrontRunners uses real reviews from real software users to highlight the top products for small and midsize businesses. We want to help businesses make informed decisions about the right software, which is why we created FrontRunners. Learn more about the methodology we use for FrontRunners here.

We evaluated 231 construction project management products and 525 project management products to come up with the following graphics:

Construction PM

Project Management
Give a few products a test drive

There’s really only one way for sure to know if a software solution is right for your business, and that is to try it out. Fortunately, most software options allow you to at least give them a test drive before you buy.

Browse our construction PM directory or our project management directory to come up with a short list of software options that look interesting to you, and then sign up for a trial.

Or, talk to one of our experienced software advisors about your needs by calling 855-220-0523 or schedule an appointment with an advisor here. It’s quick, free, and there’s no obligation.