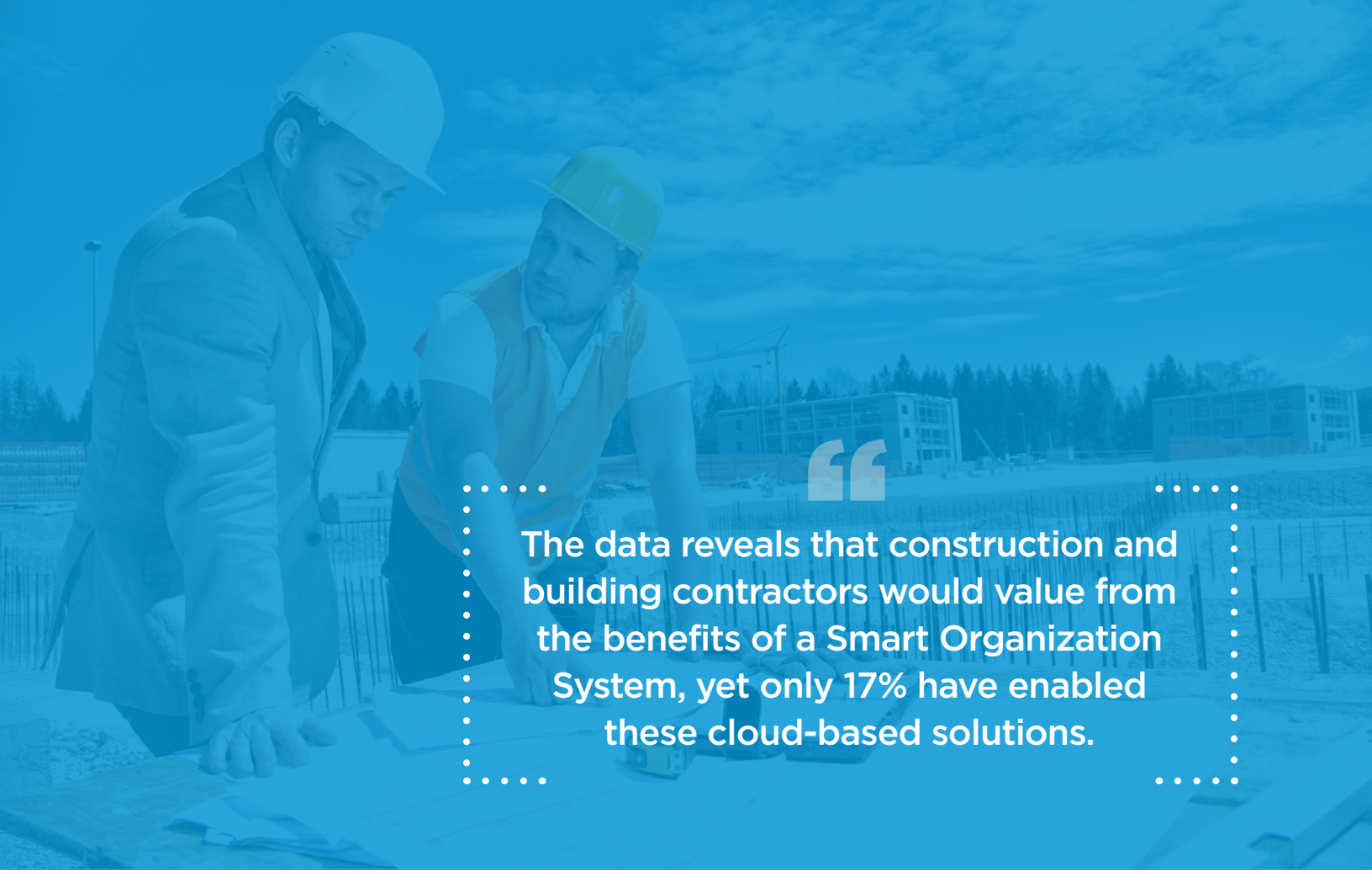




Construction Contractors' Guide to Streamlining Document and Data Management

**How a Smart Organization System Helps
You Save Time & Get to What Matters**



“The data reveals that construction and building contractors would value from the benefits of a Smart Organization System, yet only 17% have enabled these cloud-based solutions.”

Executive Summary

Smart Organization Systems allow business owners to save time on monotonous tasks, such as data entry, and get to what matters, such as managing employees, “on the job” work, and new customer acquisitions. The Neat Company, the industry leader in Smart Organization Systems, recently conducted a survey of 150 construction and building contractors from small to medium construction firms to learn more about their business-related document and data management processes.

From the survey, Neat found that the speed at which contractors file business documents indicates a priority to stay organized, but the manner in which they’re staying organized is inefficient, slow, and outdated, especially considering there is a pressing need for a single, safe location (94%) they can access anywhere (78%) and share with anyone (90%).

The data reveals that construction and building contractors would value from the benefits of a Smart Organization System, yet only 17% have enabled these cloud-based solutions.

We’ve created this Construction Contractors’ Guide to Streamlining Document and Data Management to help you effectively navigate the waters of document and data management, and get your feet wet by dipping into a Smart Organization System.

Smart Organization Systems and The Construction Industry

An article published by InformIT states that, since the advent of e-mail and Internet, paper use in offices has increased by 40%. Considering construction and building contractors' offices are flooded with paper in the forms of invoices, expense receipts, customer contracts, and various other documents, it's fair to say the paper problem is omnipresent within the industry.

Continuously handling, organizing, and then searching to find information the moment it is needed consumes too much professional and personal time and diverts energy away from more pressing matters. And the amount of time contractors need to be in the field and away from the office further complicates this problem. In general, the average company incurs a labor cost of \$20 to file a paper document, \$120 to locate a misfiled document, and \$220 to reproduce a lost document. Those costs can easily add up.

Contractors need to reduce the amount of time and money wasted managing paper and digital documents, and streamline how they find, store, and use the information within those documents.

Clearing the Office Paper Clutter

The first challenge is to clear the office of paper clutter by learning to file documents differently.

Neat's recent survey of contractors indicated that quickly filing business-related paper and keeping it organized is especially important to the construction industry. 79% of survey respondents reported that they file their business-related documents within four weeks. By comparison, a 2012 Neat survey found that only 30% of general small businesses file their business-related documents in under four weeks.

The survey suggests that contractors file quickly to stay organized, but their means of filing are outdated. More than half (56%) of survey respondents reported that they are still filing the majority of their business paper in paper-based files, filing cabinets, and file boxes.

Now is the time to digitize paper documents for storage, which is the first step to streamlining document-related workflows.



Why Digitize Your Documents and Data?

Most contractors are not currently digitizing their business-related paper documents. Of those surveyed, only 20% said they digitize their business paper and store it on their business computer or local area network. Few contractors go the extra mile to take advantage of the benefits and efficiencies the cloud has to offer, which are unavailable to those who simply store documents on local hard drives.


Despite the obvious value that cloud-based storage systems offer the contracting industry, at the time of Neat's survey, only 17% of respondents said they were scanning their business paper and storing those files in some type of cloud-based solution.

Overall, the most prevalent use of cloud-based storage solutions is to back up files and documents. If a computer crashes, or is lost or stolen, the files live somewhere else and can be quickly recovered. In addition to securely backing-up important files, the cloud also allows multiple users to access and

share the documents they put in their cloud-based systems from wherever and whenever.

"Most contractors are just not in their offices—they're on job sites. By using cloud solutions, they can easily upload receipts, bills, and documents right away and as they are received," said Nicole Odeh, Neatologist and owner of The Small Business Accounting Solution, a full-service accounting firm in Pennsylvania. "No more lost paper, and less time in the office when the workday is done!"

While most of the public's perception of "the cloud" has evolved from a confusing homonym to a valued component of an individual's daily life, the construction industry is just beginning to take advantage of the benefits that cloud services can bring to their businesses. Contractors not using a cloud-based system are missing out on the added value that makes their workday and businesses more efficient in the present and in the future.



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Increase Efficiency by Implementing a Smart Organization System

Digitizing is key to streamlining document and data management. The next essential step is improving access and sharing information. This can be accomplished by implementing a Smart Organization System! A Smart Organization System is a cloud-based service where business-related documents are securely stored and always available.

The Benefits Include:



Seamlessly accepting documents from many different sources -- scanned paper documents (ex. invoices from the mail), digital documents (ex. email attachments), or images (ex. receipts captured by your mobile device from the road).



Keeping documents organized and giving users sophisticated in-document keyword search capabilities so information can be located quickly, whether in the office or on the road with a mobile device.



Allowing users to instantly share information with others, either through instantaneous email or through password protected access to entire files in the system.

“One of the main benefits of a Smart Organization System is the easy access to your information, no matter where you are,” said Deb Lee, a Certified Professional Organizer who helps small office and home office entrepreneurs leverage technology in their companies. “There’s no reason to lug around bulky forms and papers to client or team meetings. Instead, users just need to remember their username and password—simple, easy, and efficient.”

Neat’s survey found that contractors indicated a critical need for the benefits offered by a Smart Organization System.

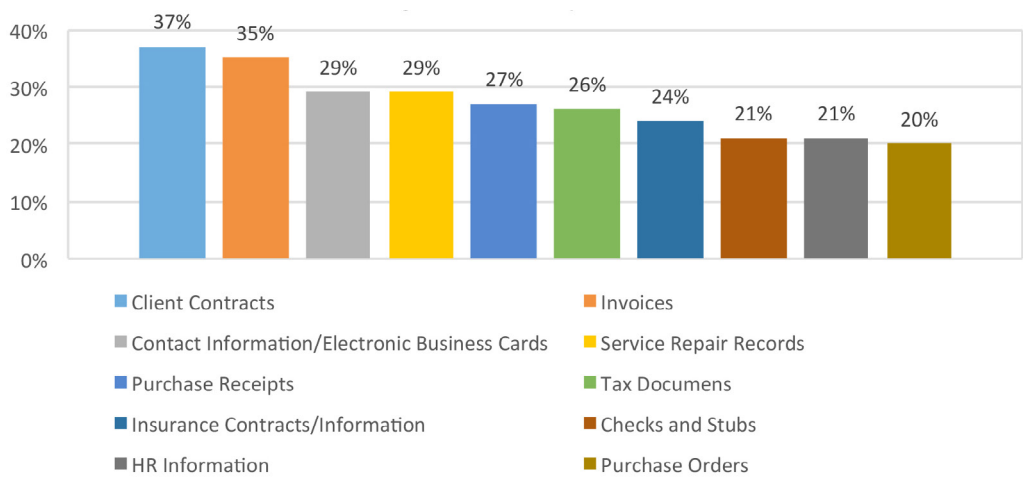
94% of respondents would value having all their important information in a single, safe, electronic location, regardless of its original format.

78% of survey respondents reported interest in having a Smart Organization System to ensure that their important business information is accessible anytime, anyplace.

90% of respondents would find it valuable to automatically share information from their Smart Organization System with business partners, employees and/or clients.

Smart Organization System Documents

When asked what types of documents contractors would like to store, access, and share within their Smart Organization System, Neat received the following responses:



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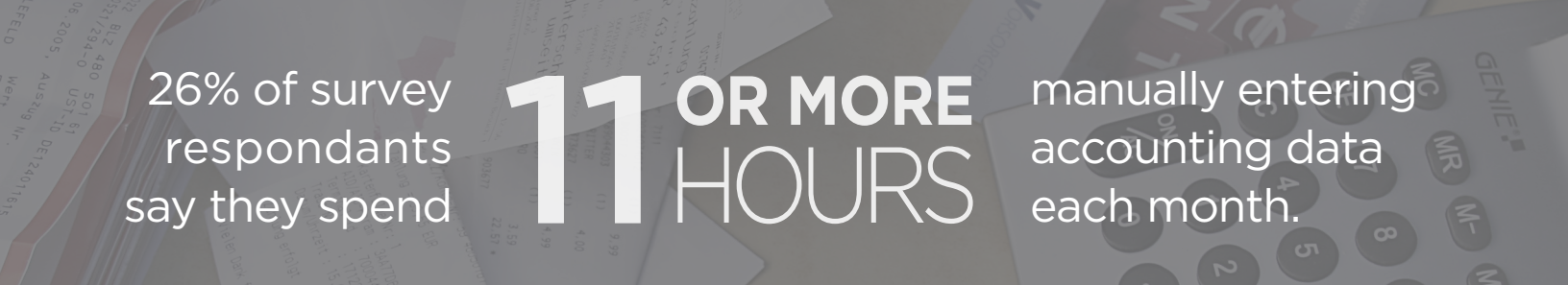
Speed-Up Accounting Workflows with Automation

Another way to take advantage of a streamlined document and data management process is to increase the speed of accounting workflows by adding automation.

The Neat survey results showed that 44% of respondents reported spending 5-10 hours each month manually entering the data from expense receipts and vendor invoices into their accounting software (such as Quickbooks) or other business systems, while 26% spend 11 hours or more manually entering accounting data each month.

Given all the time spent on these tedious tasks, it is not surprising that 95% of survey respondents reported that it would be valuable to automate the process of getting financial documents into their accounting software. Furthermore, the longer it took contractors to input this essential data, the more likely they were to say it would be very valuable to automate the process.

Fully advanced Smart Organization Systems, such as Neat, automate these tedious tasks that are critical to a company's accounting function.



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11 OR MORE HOURS

manually entering accounting data each month.

Neat's proprietary software works by identifying the type of document (a receipt, business card, etc) and automatically pulling information (such as purchase amounts, vendors, and contact info) from the scanned documents. It then adds this information to the correct fields within the system. Neat transforms the documents and receipts into expense reports and can seamlessly integrate with popular financial software such as QuickBooks Online or Excel, instantaneously transferring the extracted data—no manual entry required.

"People get into business to do what they love, and unless they are an accountant or bookkeeper, the finance side of things is not what they love," said Odeh. "People need to be excited and passionate about what they do to be successful—using a Smart Organization System can help eliminate the amount of time spent on paperwork and more simply provide the important financial information so that they can get back to what they love doing."

Conclusion and Next Steps

There is a desire among construction and building contractors to streamline document and data management and implement a Smart Organization System—and this guide is surely one way to get started. The need to eliminate data entry and minimize the time managing business documents—particularly on manual entry of financial information—will continue to be a pressing issue and a catalyst to drive more construction and building contractors to adopt a Smart Organization System in 2015.

About Neat®

Neat is the leading provider of Smart Organization Systems for the small business and home office markets. Neat's unique combination of cloud-based applications, mobile and desktop software, and hardware scanning solutions transform important documents into usable digital information. Neat helps users organize, access, and share those digital documents by simplifying everyday tasks and facilitating information workflows so small businesses have more time to get to what matters.

Read on to learn how to get started
with Neat's Smart Organization System.

