

TOP

3

Overheard at IBS

# BUILDER CHALLENGES FOR 2019

For many business owners, there is comfort in knowing that you're not the only one waking up in the middle of the night worried about certain business challenges. At the International Builders' Show in January, we heard a few common themes around the challenges of running a custom home building or remodeling business in 2019. Here we will discuss what business process changes you can make to tackle them head on, and how **CoConstruct** can help.

#1

## AFTER-HOURS TEXTS FROM CLIENTS

How do you manage your communication with your clients? As your business grows and you get more and more clients, the volume (and complexity) of your communication grows exponentially. If you have inefficiencies in how you communicate today, your business can't grow without making those issues even more complex.

**Most of the builders that we spoke with had three main communication issues:**

1. Receiving too many after-hours text messages
2. Getting the husband and wife to sync up on selection decisions
3. Clients requesting constant status checks on progress

For many builders, their communication challenges start with the selections process. With selections, there are so many questions that you personally need to field from both clients and subs. You probably answer one question for the wife today, then get the same question from the husband tomorrow. This can lead to late selection decisions and costly project delays.

### HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE YOUR CLIENT IS ACTUALLY RESISTANT TO MAKING DECISIONS?

And you wonder, "They've hired me to build them their dream home, so why are they now refusing to make their decisions?". In their book *Switch*, Chip & Dan Heath reveal what happens in your clients' brains during the decision making process. While it often may seem like resistance, it's actually just a lack of clarity. Your clients may not have enough information to make the right decision, and then they become paralyzed by the options. The more analytical and data-driven your clients are, the more information they will need in order to feel confident in their decision. The key to solving this is to get all of the information that your clients need into one place.

If you look at a typical selection decision, there are a variety of things that come in to play:

1. **Choices**
2. **Supporting Information** (like links to websites and education material)
3. **Financial Details**
4. **Files & Photos**
5. **Communication about these items and comments back and forth** (various disorganized information about selections throughout your phone and email)

When your clients have information in a variety of different places, does it sound like they have enough clarity to make an informed, confident decision? It's no wonder that they're resistant to making one.

To complicate the issue, we now have text messaging. While it's often the fastest and easiest way to communicate, it can be a nightmare for you to manage as part of your business. Ever try to search or share text communication? It's almost impossible.

When we talk to builders on CoConstruct, they revel in the fact that everything is in one place, automatically organized by topic, and logged chronologically. When you have CoConstruct, not only will you have a portal where you can set up your projects for your clients, but your clients will have their own separate dashboard as well. On the dashboard, they get high-level information on their project, such as a schedule overview, alerts and updates about upcoming decisions and high-level financial information.

The Specs & Selections page is the main hub for your clients. This is where you want them to go to do most of their work: make decisions, see the specs, and post comments. In the comments area, recent comments will be logged to show the full history on a certain selection. With CoConstruct, there's no more wondering who said what, when, and on what project. You will have a solid digital trail of the entire decision process from start to finish.

Your clients will even get email alerts or push notifications from the mobile app when a new, important comment is posted. Those push notifications have the look and feel of a text message, but without the chaos and headache for you and your team. And there's no need for you or your clients to log in to the system to respond. You can just reply directly to the email or push notification and everything is automatically logged within the communication portal.

**SAY GOODBYE TO AFTER-HOURS TEXTS.**

# #2

## GETTING SUBS TO USE TECHNOLOGY

Most builders choose to sub out at least part of their work, so they're reliant on subs to get their projects completed on time. But if not managed properly, subs can also be a bottleneck to business growth.

**There are TWO MAIN CONCERNS with subs in 2019:**

- 1. Resistance to Technology:** Sometimes it feels like pushing a string to get your trades on board with new technology.
- 2. Shortage of Subcontractors:** Since everyone is going after the same small pool of subs, it's harder to push your own personal initiative. In 2019, subs are in the driver's seat, and they're calling the shots on what they'd like to do - or not like to do - in terms of technology.

### SO, HOW DO YOU CONVINCe YOUR SUBS TO USE TECHNOLOGY LIKE COCONSTRUCT?

What it comes down to is old school salesmanship and onboarding. If you can show them how the improved operations will help them financially, it's a pretty great argument to getting them on board. Subs are busy and want to maximize their time, so showing them how they're going to make more money in less time is a good pitch, especially when all they need to do is check their email.

**There are a few ways that CoConstruct will make life easier for your subs:**

- 1. Bidding:** In CoConstruct, it's incredibly simple for your subs to accept an invitation to bid on a job. There's no need for them to log in - all they do is reply to an email with their pricing, files and photos, and everything will be automatically logged in the system.
- 2. Purchase Orders:** With CoConstruct, there is less paperwork, and sign-offs are a breeze. Subs can see notifications, send messages, and give secure approval on POs over email, without the hassle of logging in.
- 3. Scheduling:** When the market is tight, CoConstruct scheduling can help you get ahead of your competition. By using scheduling in CoConstruct, you can book jobs 4-6 weeks out and beat out your competitors. You get first pick of subs and your subs get much appreciated stability in their businesses.

# QUICKBOOKS... DESKTOP OR ONLINE?

Financial control is a huge pain point for builders, and many wonder if they are on the right accounting software. Once they've locked in on QuickBooks, they have another decision: Desktop or Online? Seventy-five percent of the builders that we talk to are using QuickBooks Desktop, but we're starting to see that number shift towards the online version.

Our full end-to-end QuickBooks integration with both QuickBooks Desktop and QuickBooks Online is the most robust integration on the market today. So the good news is that regardless of which version you choose, CoConstruct helps to fill in the gap of the inefficiencies of both.

With that being said, let's break down the differences between the two versions:

- **Desktop:** QuickBooks Desktop has been around for a long time, so for many, it feels more familiar. It probably feels like the safer bet, but the downside is that your data is locked in your computer at your office. In our digital, cloud-based world, that limitation feels increasingly bizarre.
- **Online:** QuickBooks Online has the benefit of being accessible anywhere — whether in the office or at the job site, and has an overall cleaner look and feel. Where it falls short, particularly for custom builders and remodelers, is that the reporting is not quite as good as it is with QuickBooks Desktop. QuickBooks Online also does not have progress invoicing from an estimate.

While we don't know enough about your unique business to suggest one or the other, the nice thing is that CoConstruct's QuickBooks integration makes it a much more level playing field between the two options. With CoConstruct, you can access your QuickBooks Desktop information through our cloud-based interface, outside of the confines of your office. If you go with QuickBooks Online, you can leverage the reporting within CoConstruct to fill in the holes of the reporting that may be missing.

Want to learn more about how **CoConstruct** can help you overcome your unique business challenges?

Call us at **(800) 213-3392** today or visit us at [www.co-construct.com](http://www.co-construct.com).