

# How One Construction Company Freed Up 75% of Their Bookkeeper's Time



When the lone bookkeeper at [Cook Bonner Ebeling Construction](#) decided to leave the company after her 26 years of service, the leadership team decided to take a fresh approach to the problem of [manual accounts payable](#) (AP). “We just felt like there had to be a better way than how we’ve always done accounts payable,” says Tray McCune, Principal at Cook Bonner Ebeling Construction.

As one of the least-digitized sectors, construction is ripe for technology disruption.

“The construction industry has predominantly been a late adopter of automation,” says McCune.

And by automating their AP, this 46-year-old construction company specializing in custom homes in South Carolina, USA, is showing us it’s possible to teach an old dozer new tricks.



*Over 90% of Cook Bonner Ebeling's team works from different sites, making it challenging to process invoices on time*

Situated in Charleston, home to over [2,500](#) historic buildings in the downtown area alone, the construction company has built itself a legacy with more than 500 projects completed since 1976. Their expansion created opportunities to connect with new vendors and businesses. But to meet their expectations, Cook Bonner Ebeling knew they had to evolve their payments structure. Getting invoices processed in time was becoming increasingly difficult and the team realized that they were missing out on monitoring and tracking their AP progress.

**“I’ve been in the construction industry for 25 years. And we just thought to ourselves that there’s got to be a better solution for our accounts payable.”**

***Tray McCune, Principal, Cook Bonner Ebeling Construction***

Previously, an invoice would come into the office via mail/email. Then it was stamped before being passed on to the first approver. “It would be coded to a specific line item and to a specific job, then the second approver looked at it and signed it off,” describes McCune. Finally, the invoice came to the bookkeeper who [manually entered data](#) into their financial system. After writing a check, the invoice went into a file cabinet for storage.



With Beanworks [AP automation](#), Cook Bonner Ebeling has eliminated 90% of that manual work. “Our AP process is still the same, it’s just electronic where invoices come in, and they are electronically coded with one or two levels of electronic approval,” McCune highlights.

Unlike before when a vendor would accidentally send the same invoice twice and it would go unnoticed, now they have a system that flags such activities in real-time. “Beanworks has caught a few things and we’ve had to audit later to find out, so it’s certainly been helpful,” he adds.

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The biggest benefit for the leadership team has been the ease of use and access to AP, no matter where they are working from. A majority of their staff works from different sites almost 90% of their time. McCune says that managers would mostly go to the office to code invoices. Now, they can just do it on their iPad.

“Our former bookkeeper spent 75% of her time manually entering invoices, making payments, checking old invoices and things like that. Being able to eliminate 75% of what our bookkeeper did, while freeing up our office manager’s time makes a huge difference in the other things that they can be working on,” explains McCune.

**“Implementing Beanworks has streamlined our invoice approval process allowing us to allocate more time towards details on the job site, rather than staying in the office to code invoices.”**

***David Ebeling, Principal, Cook Bonner Ebeling Construction***

Too many of the key processes involved in managing construction projects are carried out on spreadsheets and paper. The lack of tech contributes to delays, missed budgets and increased risk. Miscommunication and poor project data accounts for 48% of all rework on American construction job sites, costing the industry over USD \$31 billion annually, according to [FMI](#) research.

“I’ve been in the construction industry for 25 years. And we just thought to ourselves that there’s got to be a better solution for our accounts payable,” McCune notes. “Beanworks just made a lot of sense. I think it’s a really, really good platform.”



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