

[← Back to blog](#)[Table of Contents](#)[The Root Problem: Systems That Don't Work Together](#)[What Builders Are Struggling With \(And Why It Matters\)](#)[The First Fix: Clean Up the Financial Foundation](#)[What Makes Data Mule's Approach Different](#)[A Real Example of What Change Looks Like](#)[Advice for Builders Who Are Hesitant to Make a Change](#)

# Why Builders Struggle With Disconnected Systems and How to Bring Order to the Chaos



Ressio Staff December 12, 2025



Most builders don't realize how much time they lose (or how many decisions they make blindly) because their business systems don't talk to each other. Jobs get built, customers get served, and

projects move forward, but behind the scenes, the operational foundation is shaky.

According to Shawn Van Dyke from Data Mule, this is the situation for most construction businesses long before they reach out for help.

Below, we break down some of the core issues builders face, why they happen, and what steps can bring clarity back into the business.

## **The Root Problem: Systems That Don't Work Together**

Contractors, home builders, and remodelers tend to grow fast, and their internal systems don't always grow with them. As a result, companies end up using:

- One system for accounting
- Another for scheduling and selections
- Time tracking that's not connected to anything
- Out-dated and manual entry spreadsheets for job costing

None of it is integrated.

When your financial and operational data live in different places, you're constantly piecing together the story of your business instead of seeing the whole picture in real time.

**This is the operational gap Data Mule was created to solve.**

After nearly a decade of coaching builders, they saw the same pattern: highly capable business

owners drowning in chaos because the data they needed wasn't accessible or wasn't accurate.

## **What Builders Are Struggling With (And Why It Matters)**

Most of Data Mule's clients fall within the \$1M-\$10M revenue range. What they all share is the same underlying frustration:

**Their internal systems are scattered and an operational workflow doesn't exist.**

When a builder reaches this stage of growth, the problems become unavoidable:

- Job costs don't match what's in the books
- Project managers and accounting use different structures
- QuickBooks is being used "out of the box" instead of configured for construction
- Approvals, payroll, AP, and expenses all follow different processes
- Owners spend too much time searching for information

The real impact is builders don't know where they stand financially until it's too late. They're tired of guessing and they want clarity.

## **The First Fix: Clean Up the Financial Foundation**

Data Mule starts every engagement with the same critical step:

## **Fix the bookkeeping mess.**

Because without accurate, real-time financial data, no amount of process improvement will matter.

This early cleanup includes:

- Rebuilding the chart of accounts properly for construction
- Integrating project management systems with the books
- Syncing cost codes so accounting matches the field
- Installing the right tools for AP, payroll, and expense tracking
- Standardizing workflows so every transaction has a clear path

Once the foundation is repaired, builders finally get something they've never had before: a consistent, reliable flow of information from field → system → financials.

That's when decision-making creates predictable results.

## **What Makes Data Mule's Approach Different**

Here's the key distinction in their philosophy:

**They're not CPAs, and they're not trying to be fractional CFOs.**

If anything, they function like a **fractional COO** — a partner who understands how the entire business

runs, not just the accounting.

Why does this matter?

Because their experience isn't theoretical.

They've *run* construction businesses.

They've *sold* construction businesses.

They've lived the day-to-day challenges builders face.

That's why their perspective is grounded in:

- Practical, real-world problem solving
- Systems that transform how builders operate
- Coaching, not just number-crunching
- Tools built from firsthand experience

## **A Real Example of What Change Looks Like**

One mid-sized remodeler came to Data Mule with exactly the setup described above:

- Books in disarray
- No connection between their project management tools and QuickBooks
- No reliable job costing

Within a few months, everything changed.

After integrating their systems and cleaning up their financial foundation:

- The builder could see job costs in real time
- They could trust their numbers

- They understood which jobs were driving profit
- Their margins improved significantly

This wasn't because they worked more hours or took on more projects, it's because the business finally had a clear system behind it.

## **Advice for Builders Who Are Hesitant to Make a Change**

Shawn's advice is simple:

**You'd never hesitate to buy the right tool for a job in the field. Treat your business operations the same way.**

Investing in the right systems and support provides leverage.

It saves time.

It prevents expensive mistakes.

It creates clarity.

And most importantly, it allows builders to focus on what they do best.

If your systems feel scattered, your financials feel unclear, or you're constantly stitching together information just to understand the health of your business, you're not alone and the problems are solvable.

Data Mule exists because builders deserve more than guesswork. They deserve a business that runs with clarity.

## Discover the Future of Building with Ressio

See why modern builders are ditching legacy platforms for Ressio. Book a demo and discover AI-powered automation that actually saves time and protects margins.

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