

UK Construction in 2022
**Addressing talent
challenges for the
future workforce**

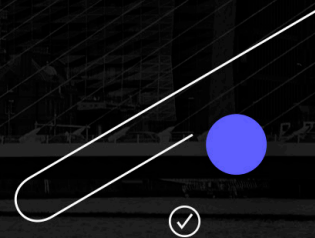
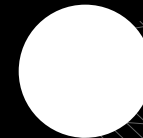
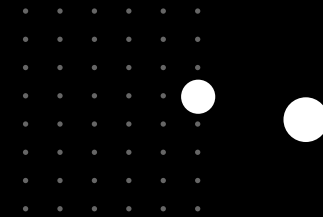




Table of Contents

03	Foreword - Autodesk
04	Foreword - Considerate Constructors
05	Executive summary
07	<u>Chapter 1</u> : The health of UK construction: An uncertain recovery
13	<u>Chapter 2</u> : The skills shortage: Industry image problems
18	<u>Chapter 3</u> : Future ways of working: Investing for tomorrow
25	<u>Chapter 4</u> : Construction policy: Meeting requirements and opportunities
30	Conclusion
34	Methodology





Foreword

Construction is central to national life in the UK. As well as contributing £117bn to the economy each year, the industry employs 2.7 million people in a whole host of roles.

But it's a transformative time for UK construction and the people that work within it – which is requiring companies of all kinds to adapt.

Some of the changes underway are very positive. At a regulatory level, government and industry bodies are working to set new standards for safety, quality and productivity.

Both the Building Safety Act and the Construction Playbook will encourage the use of construction technology to improve ways of working, deliver better outcomes and ultimately make construction more predictable – and even more profitable.

Construction is also seen as central to building back better and stimulating growth, including by the new government, whether it's the transition to a greener economy or a new Levelling Up Agenda.

But at the same time, the industry faces much less positive changes. Events in Ukraine and global uncertainty have led to materials shortages, rising prices and a rapid increase in the cost of living.

In particular, UK construction continues to grapple with talent challenges that have only intensified in the wake of the pandemic, with record vacancies across the country.

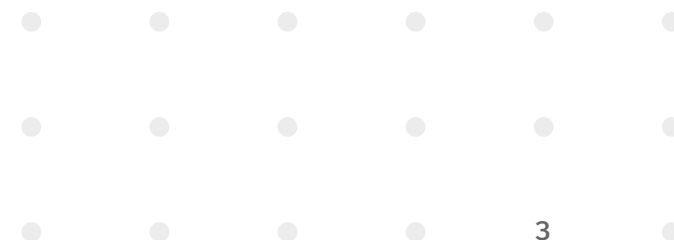
In this period of change, people are crucial for construction's success. That's why we've surveyed 200 construction professionals in the UK to understand the state of the industry today and the role talent will play in shaping the sector for the future.

It's clear that organisations are struggling with talent shortages, with the impacts being felt in many ways across businesses. Nonetheless, firms have ambitious plans that will improve how they work in the long-term and enable them to seize new opportunities.

It will be crucial for businesses to continue to make smart investments in their people and ways of working during this difficult period. That way construction can keep pace with the negative and the positive changes we're facing – and ultimately create a workforce ready for the future.

Matt Keen

Director of Construction Strategy, Autodesk Construction Solutions, October 2022





Foreword

The construction industry has a huge impact on all our lives in the UK, whether it's shaping the landscape we all share or driving economic development.

Considerate Constructors is a scheme built on encouraging construction sites, companies and suppliers of all types and size to go beyond statutory requirements to adopt best practice.

This is particularly important when it comes to how firms treat their workforce.

It's clear there are challenges in the construction talent pool today, from the ageing workforce to skills shortages. This in turn places pressure on existing staff to work longer and harder to make up the gap.

In our own research, we found that 75% of construction professionals think worker fatigue is a problem in the industry. This has a knock-on effect for worker wellbeing, as the sector has one of the highest rates of psychosocial health problems, including fatigue and burnout.

These challenging conditions in turn drive more people to leave the industry, putting yet more pressure on the remaining workforce.

It's hard to attract a broad range of people to the industry; 99% of manual workers on-site are male, while 86.3% of professionals believe having a protected characteristic – such as a non-white background or a disability – could be a barrier to working in construction.

From this report, it's clear that UK construction is going through a time of change – and this is also an opportunity for a reset in our approach to the workforce.

We need to attract new workers to the industry, whether that's entry level candidates just starting out or people switching careers. Improving equality, diversity and inclusion will help to bring new kinds of talent to construction, particularly as new technologies and methods of construction are adopted.

We also need to set new standards as employers: ensuring that organisations value the workforce and provide a workplace where everyone is respected, treated fairly, encouraged and supported.

Construction companies and sites can be the best advertisement not just for themselves, but for the industry as a whole.

With the best employer practices, we can attract more talent to the industry and ensure construction has a positive impact – not only for the people who work within it, but the UK as a whole.

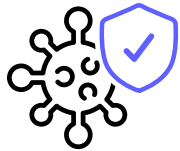
We hope you enjoy the report.

Amit Oberoi

Non Executive Chairman, Considerate Constructors Scheme, October 2022



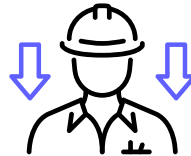
Executive summary



UK construction has recovered well from the Covid-19 pandemic, but inflation represents a serious challenge

Construction companies are optimistic about demand in the year ahead and are hiring to keep up, but are already concerned about pressure on wages and the cost of materials.

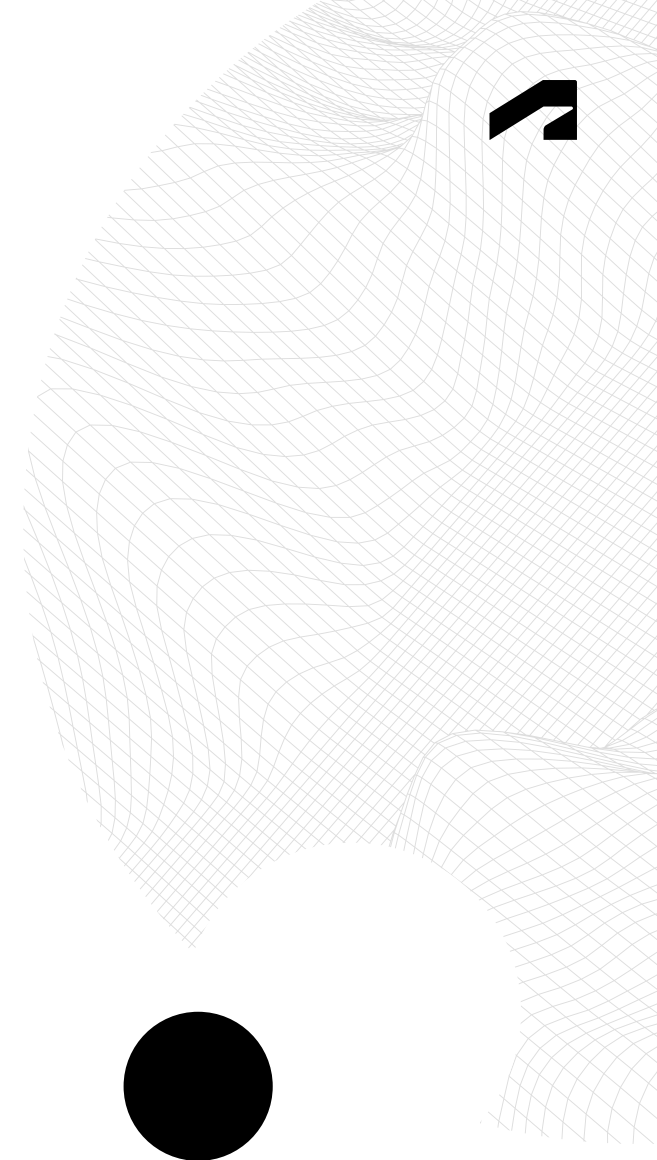
- 57% of companies expect an increase in revenue across 2022, compared to the 16% anticipating a decrease – with an average predicted growth of 27%
- Four in five businesses are currently recruiting
- However, where firms are struggling to hire 36% blame difficulties offering competitive salaries due to the increasing cost of living



Skills shortages are limiting the performance of the industry

Construction companies are facing significant recruitment challenges, which – along with inflation – are limiting their performance. There are signs of a significant industry image problem, which will need to be addressed at a national and company level for construction to thrive.

- A third of companies are finding it difficult to recruit, with 58% unable to find the skills they need
- 28% say the construction industry is less attractive than other sectors – and 26% that the industry is seen as a career of last choice

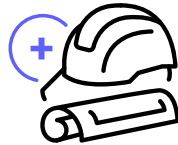




Firms have great tech ambitions to improve ways of working in the future, but investment is needed today

Many construction businesses plan to use modern methods of construction and emerging technologies to improve how they work in the future, which will complement the push for greater diversity and sustainability in the sector. However, this will require higher IT investment, even in this difficult period.

- 95% of UK construction companies plan to invest in emerging technologies, such as off-site manufacturing and 3D printing, by 2027
- However, only a quarter of businesses will prioritise investments in IT over the next two years – with 42% focusing on hiring new staff instead
- Positively, three quarters are prioritising hiring people from diverse backgrounds



Strengthening the talent pipeline will help businesses to meet new regulatory requirements and be ready for any national investment plans

Construction businesses feel generally prepared for the Building Safety Act, and can see the opportunities presented by national investment plans like the Levelling Up Agenda. However, there are signs that people shortages and knowledge gaps may make it difficult for firms to deliver in each case.

- 56% of the construction companies unprepared for the Building Safety Act blame a lack of skilled people
- Seven in ten say the UK would need a larger construction workforce to fulfil a programme like the Levelling Up Agenda

Despite today's challenges, it's vital that UK construction continues to invest in people and the digital tools to support them, laying the foundations for new ways of working to create a robust, future-facing industry.



Chapter 1

The health of UK construction:
An uncertain recovery





Construction represents a significant proportion of the UK economy, contributing 9% of GDP and £117bn each year. The industry is set to grow in the months ahead, with construction output forecast to rise by 2.5% over 2022.

But is that reflected in the experiences of companies on the ground – and how are wider economic challenges, like inflation, playing out?

Strong Covid recovery

Construction companies in the UK have faced a tough couple of years, in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic that caused delays, cancellations and job losses. But positively, many firms are optimistic about their prospects for this year.

The majority of companies (57%) expect an increase in revenue across 2022, compared to the 16% anticipating a decrease. This rises to 61% of companies with over 100 employees. On average, companies predict their income will grow by 27%, with most anticipating growth between 11 and 20%.

Many businesses have made good progress in catching up on projects delayed by the pandemic. Almost half don't have any backlog caused by Covid-19 restrictions (46%), while 35% have a backlog they expect to clear within the next year.

57% of UK companies expect revenues to increase in 2022, growing by an **average of 27%**





Demand drives recruitment

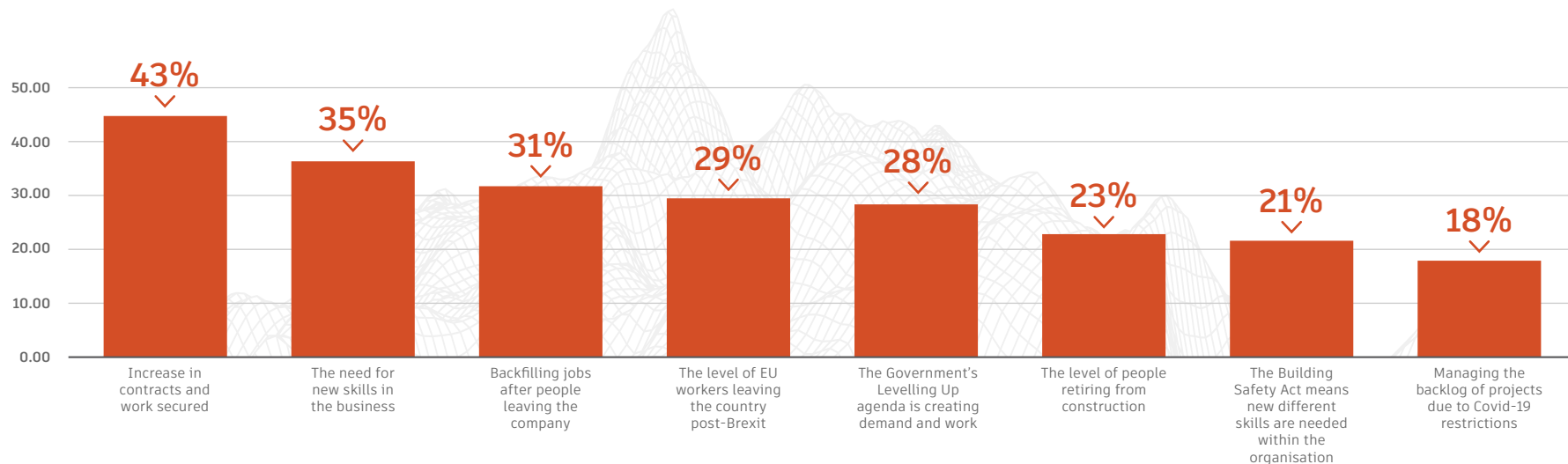
As demand returns, most UK construction companies are looking to hire. Four in five businesses (79%) are currently recruiting, with the West Midlands seeing a particular drive (91%).

The most common reason for these new hires is an increase in contracts and work secured by the business (43%). The need for new skills (35%) and backfilling jobs after people leave the company (31%) are similarly important for organisations.

There are also signs of wider industry labour trends, as professionals point to the need to replace staff due to the levels of EU workers leaving the country post-Brexit (29%) and people retiring from construction (23%).

Four in five construction companies are currently recruiting

What is currently driving your need to recruit?



Inflation challenges

Although demand is recovering, rising inflation is a serious concern. In June 2022, the [government's material price index](#) showed costs increased by 26.4% compared to the same month the previous year.

Projects are already being impacted by the rising cost of materials – and at a national level, two thirds of professionals (66%) believe this would make it difficult to fulfil large-scale programmes, such as the government's Levelling Up Agenda. The unpredictability of these overheads is also impacting recruitment. One fifth (19%) of professionals highlight recruitment challenges caused by uncertainty associated with rising cost of materials.

The wider cost of living squeeze is another issue. Where firms are struggling to hire new talent, 36% blame difficulties offering competitive salaries due to the increasing cost of living – and 26% say skills shortages across construction come down to incomes and salaries not being attractive enough.

Unfortunately, these challenges look set to continue. There are already predictions that growth in the sector will [slow to 1.6% in 2023](#) – and the sector may face some tough months ahead.

A **third** of firms are struggling to offer competitive salaries due to the rising cost of living





AUTODESK Insight

UK construction has recovered well from the pandemic, with many of the Covid-19 project delays already overcome. It's a testament to firms' resilience that many are now looking forward to better revenues and making new hires in 2022.

However, it's clear that the sector is still facing key issues, particularly inflation – which is increasing project costs and creating staffing challenges.

Although times are tough, it's critical that companies keep taking proactive steps to address the obstacles they are facing. Investing in digital construction can help to ensure that teams can build right first time. This reduces costly materials waste, as well as keeping projects on schedule and on budget.

Equally, digital tools can help to improve people's working lives by removing every day frustrations. During a period of pressure on wages, this can help support both retention and recruitment. As financial challenges continue in the months ahead, this could help to give businesses an edge and protect their recovery.





The skills shortage in construction has been a growing concern for us and is becoming more pressing by the day. One of the main reasons for the skills shortages in the UK construction industry is an ageing workforce that is not being replaced. As our current construction talent pool reach retirement age, fewer people are entering the industry to replace them. This has a knock-on effect to all corners of the industry – from creating resourcing gaps on projects to affecting costs.

It's imperative we make a career in construction seem desirable to all– whether that be young professionals at the start of their career to experienced hires toying with the possibility of a move into the industry. Changing the perceptions of an industry that has been around since the Roman era is no mean feat, and it'll require cross-collaboration across the sector.

Many young people are simply unaware of the possibilities available to them in construction today. With careers related to digital technologies becoming an increasingly popular choice for young people, it is important to showcase the opportunities that are available through modernised construction techniques. At J Coffey, we offer internships and work experience opportunities for those interested in gaining hands-on experience of what a career in construction is like. And with this, we offer training and experience with many avenues such as showcasing the value of BIM and how we apply it to our everyday working.

And for professionals looking to diversity and pivot in their careers, showing construction as an industry of deep innovation and equal opportunity should be a priority for all construction companies today. Perceptions about the industry often mean some people may feel it is not a place for them but focusing on creating a more diverse workforce will help curb these limiting ideas.

Finally, investing training and development into the current workforce is a great opportunity for construction firms to upskill their talent pool and succession plan for the future. Whilst attracting new workers in the door is vital, we mustn't overlook those already in the industry. We often struggle with resistance when it comes to change and embracing new ways of working, so working with our leadership teams and providing continual professional development on what the future will look like is more crucial than ever. By improving the training available to our existing workforce, we're able to benefit from our current knowledge base and show our commitment to offering varied and interesting roles and opportunities.

Aravindh Rajendiran

Aravindh Rajendiran
Head of BIM | J. Coffey Construction Ltd



Chapter 2

The skills shortage:
Industry image problems





People are at the core of every construction business. Nationally, the sector is a major employer, with 2.7 million people working in various roles. However, skills shortages have been a long-standing issue – and over the last twelve months there have been an average of 38,000 vacancies each quarter, the highest since records began.

What's behind these talent shortages – and how can organisations attract people to the sector in the future?

Struggles with staffing

There's huge demand for talent within UK construction – but unfortunately many organisations are struggling to actually secure staff. One in three companies are currently finding it difficult to recruit (36%).

The lack of suitable candidates is a major issue. Most professionals put the recruitment challenge down to not being able to find people with the skills needed (58%) or a shortage of skilled labour generally (51%).

The number of migrants working in construction has fallen by 15% in the last three years, which is also impacting firms. Two in five companies point to the challenge of a labour shortage due to Brexit (42%), and a further 20% cite issues securing visas for immigrant talent.

Covid-19 also impacted the talent pool available, as many workers were furloughed, made redundant or chose to retire. A third of professionals (34%) say that hiring today is hard because so many people left the construction sector during the pandemic.

One in three companies are struggling to recruit staff

An industry image problem

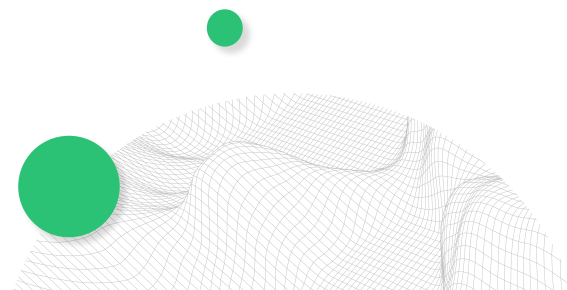
Construction companies are concerned about long-term talent shortages across the sector. Looking to the next five to ten years, a third of professionals (35%) believe a major issue will be the cost of living diverting people to other sectors – rising to 44% in London.

There are particular concerns about construction's image problem. Professionals say the construction industry is less attractive than other sectors (28%), there's limited awareness of career options (27%) and construction is seen as a career of last choice (26%).

Construction careers are also seen to provide poor working conditions (22%) and a lack of career development (20%).

Interestingly, a quarter of professionals (24%) believe long-term talent challenges will be exacerbated because college courses aren't producing graduates with the skills needed by the industry – so there might be a mismatch between new entrants to the talent pool and the skills most in demand.

26% of professionals say construction is seen as a career of last choice





The shift to digital skills

Today, companies are more worried about shortages in traditional skills than newer areas like digital technology or sustainability. The most challenging roles to fill at present are electricians (51%), bricklayers (49%), plumbers (41%) and carpenters (37%).

Far fewer businesses are struggling to recruit digital roles, such as data analysts (10%) or artificial intelligence specialists (7%). Likewise, only one in ten are struggling to recruit sustainability and ESG officers (10%).

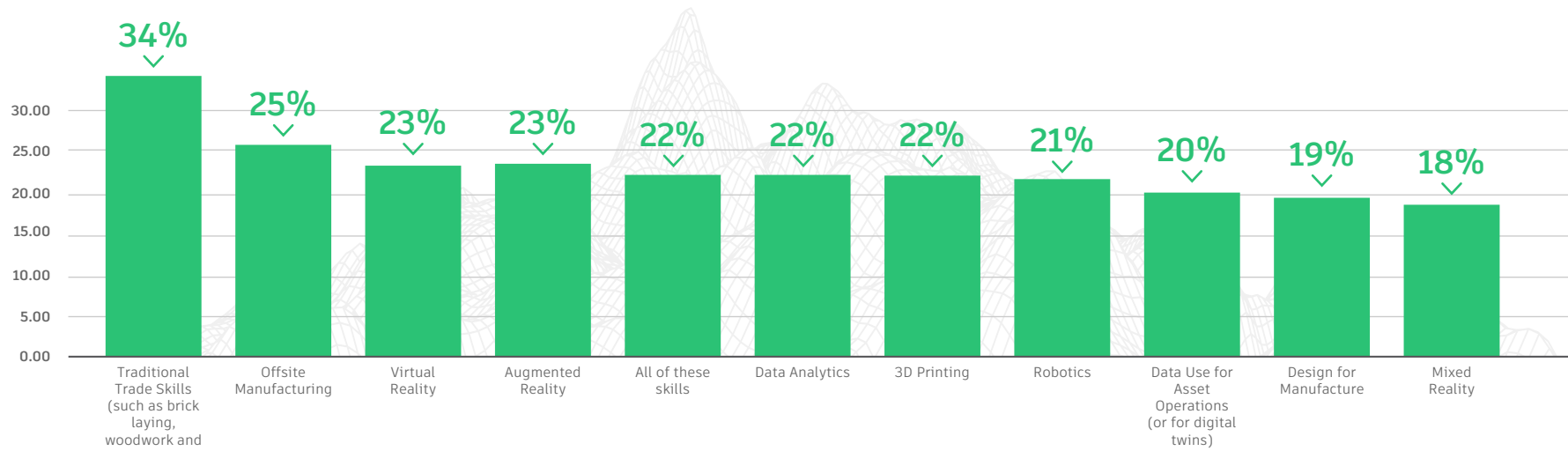
However, over the next decade professionals are aware of the growing need for technology specialists. Many highlight the need for digital skills, including virtual or augmented reality (23%), artificial intelligence (22%) and data use for digital twins (20%).

Modern methods of construction will also shift the skillsets required. Companies point to the need for people with competencies in areas including off-site manufacturing (27%) and design for manufacture (19%).

Across the board, a fifth (20%) say construction talent shortages over the next five to ten years will be caused by a shortage of digital and technology skills. It's clear that additional recruitment and training will be needed today to help employees adapt for future demand. However, 24% say a key problem for the next decade is companies not investing in the upskilling of staff now.

A **quarter** say off-site manufacturing skills will be crucial over the next decade

What skills do you think are currently rare within the construction sector that you think will be required in the next 5-10 years?





AUTODESK Insight

There have been long-standing people shortages in construction, and unfortunately with the added impacts of Brexit and the pandemic, firms are often left competing for the same limited talent pool. It's not only the lack of candidates, but the lack of people with the right skills for the job, that is causing issues.

With construction companies facing multifaceted recruitment challenges, it's important to take steps to make the industry as productive as possible to do the most with the people available. Digital tools can improve a team's efficiency on projects, as well as helping to attract new talent to the business.

At an industry level, it's clear that construction needs to address perceptions through a national campaign, focused on the growing opportunities in the sector. Emphasising the excellent career opportunities and the chance to create a better, greener environment will help to appeal to more people. This will be particularly important to secure the digitally-skilled candidates that will be in increasing demand.

As the skillsets needed by the industry shift to focus on digital and modern methods of construction, upskilling will also be critical – both by individual companies and across the industry. Links between educational institutions and construction businesses will help to ensure that new candidates have the skills most needed for the industry, and provide clear routes into employment.





Chapter 3

Future ways of working:
Investing for tomorrow





With the uncertainty currently facing construction, firms are understandably cautious about how they invest in the business. Nonetheless, professionals say that people will be a major priority for investment over the next two years, as businesses grapple with the industry-wide talent challenges.

However, there's also an understanding that the construction sector is evolving, with the growing use of technology, shifts to modern methods of construction and demand for greater sustainability – all of which will impact how companies work.

So how are construction businesses balancing these competing demands – and what are their plans for the future?



Prioritising people

Construction companies are considering a wide range of investments over the next two years, from new equipment and facilities to sustainability strategies. But it's clear that investing in people is seen as extremely important.

This investment will cover both new candidates and current employees. Two fifths of businesses (42%) will prioritise hiring new staff. Another two fifths (39%) will put money into training and upskilling existing employees, with one third prioritising investments in apprenticeships (33%).

By contrast, only around a quarter of businesses will prioritise investments in IT (27%) or new facilities for the business (25%). Size has an impact; investing in technology is more likely to be a priority for companies with more than 100 employees (36%) than their smaller counterparts (24%).

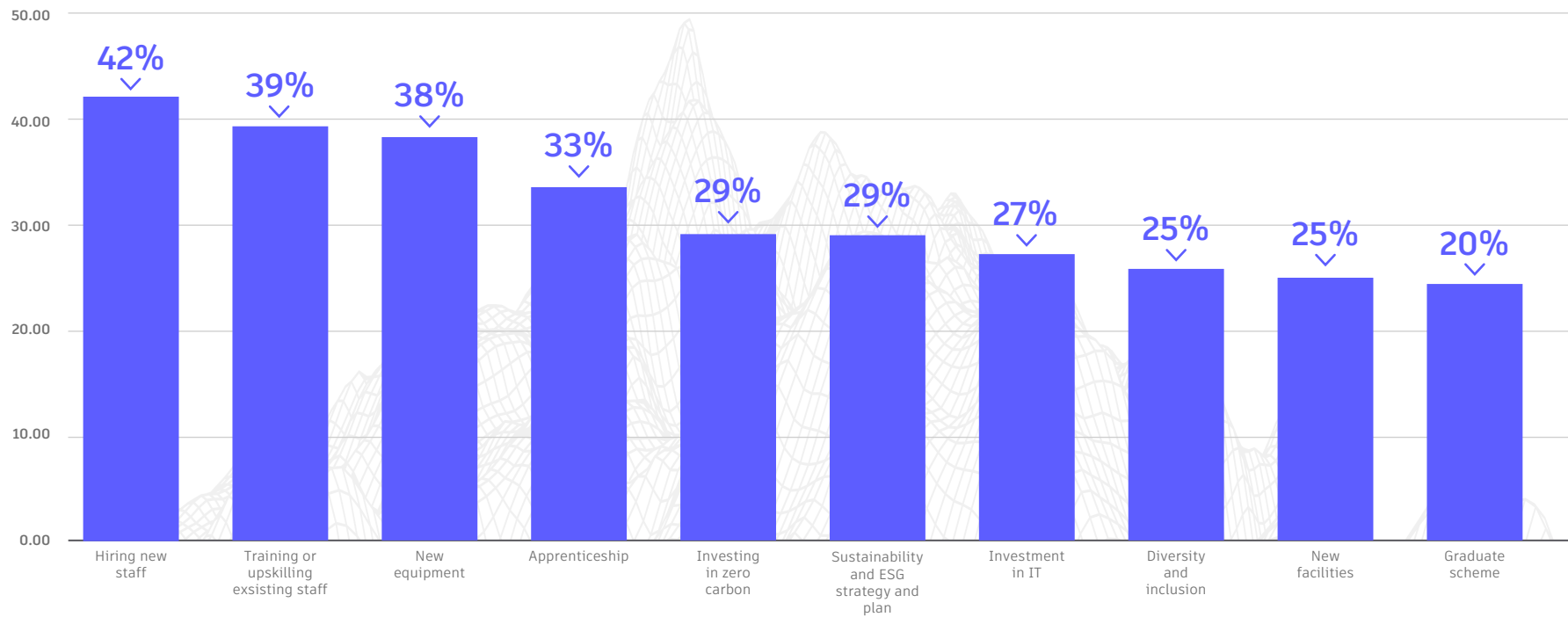
Some businesses also appear to be responding to growing client demands for sustainable construction. Three in ten are planning to invest in zero carbon (29%) and their sustainability and ESG strategy (29%) over the next two years.

Only **27%** of business will prioritise investments in construction technology



Only **27%** of business will prioritise investments in construction technology

Which areas of the business will you prioritise the most in terms of investment in the next two years?





Growing diversity

The construction workforce has historically lacked diversity in many areas, including gender, sexuality, race and ability. For example women represent only 13% of the industry and just 1% of tradespeople.

However, many businesses on the ground are taking steps to change that. Three quarters of construction professionals say their business is prioritising hiring people from diverse backgrounds – with 51% doing so somewhat and 24% very much.

Across the board, a quarter of businesses will prioritise putting money into diversity and inclusion over the next two years (26%).

Nonetheless, there are clearly parts of the industry where diversity is seen to lack importance. At the companies not prioritising this area, professionals say it's because diversity isn't seen as important in the business (29%), there is a lack of people from diverse backgrounds entering the industry (24%) and the fact that if clients aren't demanding diversity, they won't prioritise it (24%).

Prioritising greater diversity in construction will help to open up roles to new candidates and start to provide the 266,000 additional workers the industry will need by 2026. Companies with more diverse workforces have also been shown to be more profitable – making this a worthwhile investment for individual businesses.

75% of construction businesses are prioritising hiring people from diverse backgrounds





Technology ambitions

Looking further to the future, UK companies have ambitious plans to improve how they work through significant technology investments. More than two in five companies are exploring investing in modern methods of construction like off-site manufacturing over the next five years (43%).

95% of UK construction companies plan to invest in emerging technologies by 2027

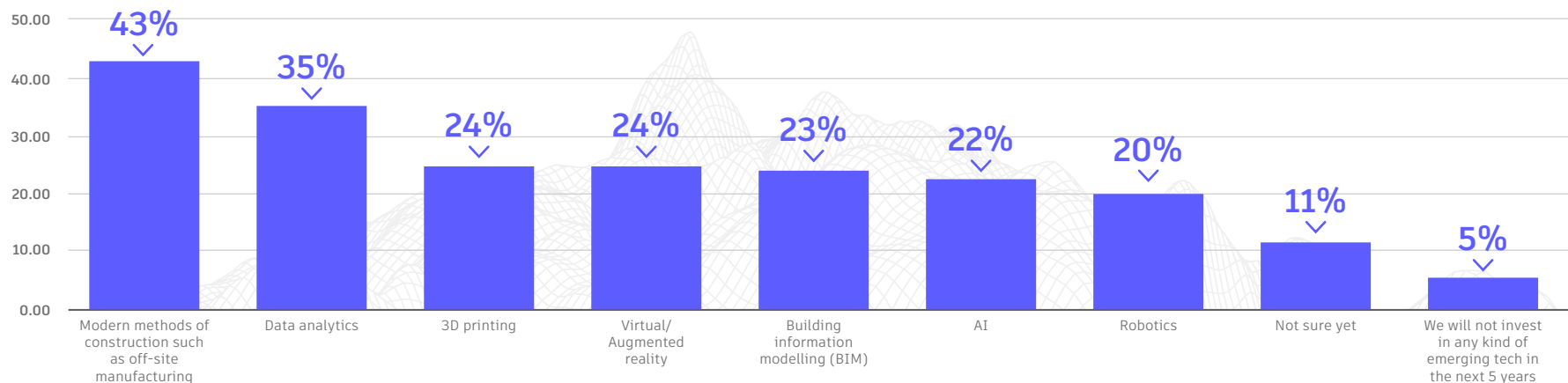
Businesses are exploring a wide range of emerging technologies. Data analytics will be the most popular focus for investment (35%), with a further quarter interested in areas like 3D printing (24%), virtual and augmented reality (24%) and artificial intelligence (22%).

However, plans vary between companies of different size and type. There is a gap between larger and smaller companies, with businesses with over 100 employees more likely to be investing in technologies like modern methods of construction (49% vs 39%) and data analytics (41% vs 31%).

Likewise, contractors are more likely than subcontractors to be investing in these areas. On the other hand, robotics is an interesting exception, with 29% of subcontractors planning to invest compared to 20% of contractors.

Across the board, only 5% of UK companies aren't planning to invest in any of these emerging technology areas – rising to 10% of subcontractors. While this is very positive, it will be important for companies to lay the foundations for these plans today, to ensure they are achievable for the future.

What kind of emerging technology are you investing in in the next five years?



AUTODESK Insight

It's understandable that right now, skills shortages may seem more pressing than technology investments that look as though they can be delayed to the future. Many organisations are putting money into upskilling, graduate programmes and apprenticeships – all of which will help to strengthen the overall talent pool in construction, as well as benefitting the individual business.

But it's important to remember that digital tools can help to maximise productivity today; by improving efficiency and helping teams to build right first time, construction technology can enable businesses to do more with fewer people – delivering a clear return on investment.

This will also lay the foundations for future technology ambitions, which will depend on establishing good quality data and digital skills in the business.

Positively, most UK firms are planning to invest in modern methods of construction or emerging technologies over the next five years. This will help to make construction much more productive, safe and high quality. Off-site manufacturing, for example, is based in a factory-setting and often more predictable and efficient – so this will support the industry's wider drive to incorporate more diverse talent and improve sustainability.





RLB case study

RLB Harnesses Construction Data and Increases Preconstruction

Because Rider Levett Bucknall's (RLB) global projects involve multidisciplinary teams and a number of stakeholders, informational accuracy in digital workflows is of the utmost importance. And so, when the company realised that there was room for improvement in its information-sharing practices—specifically on projects rooted in the preconstruction phase—a seed was planted, foreshadowing changes to come. Solving this issue was no simple task, however. For RLB, achieving it meant a mindset shift across the entire organisation.

“We needed to reimagine the design and preconstruction phase across the industry to improve collaboration and share data,” says Allan Trotter, Digital Lead for Cost Management at RLB.

With over 4,000 staff across 40 countries worldwide, RLB provides clients with cost management and quantity surveying, project and programme management, asset advisory and specialist consultancy. Committed to creating value for its clients, RLB knew that by transitioning to a single source of truth, it could extract real-time data to improve design coordination and review, quantity-take-off, and mark-ups.

Slashing Inefficiencies and Duplication with Shared Data

Working without updated information had created a domino effect of inefficiencies for RLB's team. Some would abandon new technology in favor of familiar processes, and projects became more time-consuming and manual.

“Colleagues would revert to 2D ways of working because they didn't have access to all of the information they needed to work in 3D. Sometimes tasks were repeated that had already been done earlier in the process,” Allan recalls.

While the team recognised the need to correct this acute issue, the idea of utilising a digital roadmap seemed to be a more fruitful approach. RLB believed that a digital roadmap would help heighten process standardization and cross-team connectivity, both of which would improve outcomes for its clients and the overall industry.

Seeking a connected environment that would better support cross-team and industry collaboration, RLB invested in Assemble, an Autodesk Construction Cloud™ solution.

“We saw the ability to connect BIM data between design and construction, which would provide significant support with estimating, change management, scheduling, tracking and design review processes,” Allan says.



Piloting For Proof

RLB's UK team was the first to pilot the new technology. When a large power plant asked RLB to carry out cost verification and quantity check exercises during the project's construction design stage, RLB utilised its new Assemble workflow.

Pairing Assemble with other Autodesk solutions like Revit and Navisworks, RLB was able to cross-check the information model and condition the model for quants takeoff and further costing. All of these steps complimented the team's typical quality take-off process, integrating Autodesk's solutions into RLB's own in-house cost estimating software.

"Once the information model is checked and conditioned, we import the information into our ROSS 5D cost estimating software using the extended properties. This means we can utilise and standardise the model mapping process for our team," Allan shares.

By improving the model checking and conditioning process, RLB identified errors and gaps quicker. This led to a more accurate and detailed cost estimate in the required output format to improve the comparison and verification process.

"The user experience was excellent; everyone in the team could collaborate and work more effectively using Assemble," Allan says. "And now that our business has now adopted hybrid working arrangements, Assemble allows everyone to work together remotely."

Shifting the Mindset with Preconstruction Models

Using Assemble to create a central source of truth on this project cut down on task repetition and fostered collaboration within the team. Allan says: "Before this, information could be fragmented and held in silos. While we still experience this when working with multiple stakeholders, our focus is to change the mindset of the industry because we can see how this technology allows us to collaborate better."

Ultimately though, RLB benefited most from the visualisation functionalities and the enhanced reporting features. "The Power BI add-in and report templates will help us gain more insight from project activities and dive into further analysis," Allan shares.

Whilst implementation has been "intuitive and easy without lengthy training," Allan's team has set up company-wide learning programmes and enlisted "technology champions" to support adoption.

Now the team's confidence and capability in Assemble has grown, RLB looks to replicate the benefits achieved on the UK power plant project in the design development stages of future projects.

For RLB, flawless execution today means a better tomorrow. By integrating digital workflows, RLB strives to create a more productive way of working, so they can achieve better outcomes for both clients and the construction industry as a whole.



Chapter 4

Construction policy:
**Meeting requirements
and opportunities**

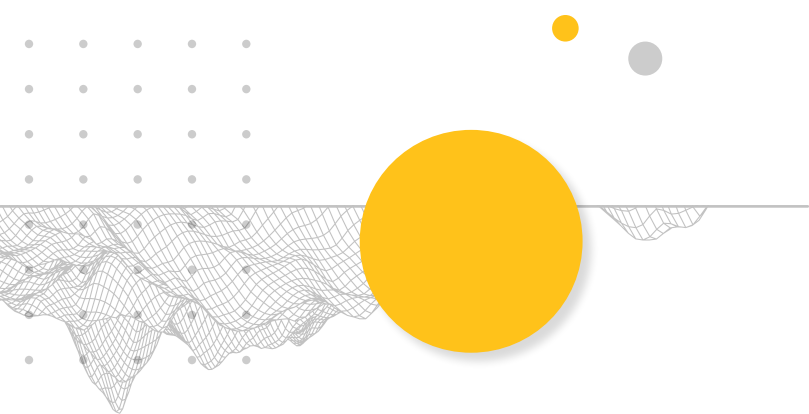




UK construction is currently going through a period of significant regulatory change. The Building Safety Act aims to improve the quality and safety of high-risk buildings, setting new responsibilities for builders including a golden thread of building safety information, maintained in a digital format.

At the same time, there's the potential for large scale public investment to fuel construction activities. For example, the Levelling Up Agenda, scoped by the previous government, planned investment in social housing and regeneration, particularly outside London.

Do construction businesses have the skills and knowledge to meet these new requirements – and the talent needed to seize new opportunities?



The Building Safety Act

The Building Safety Act aims to give the construction industry “a clear framework to deliver more high-quality, safe homes.” While the legislation currently only applies to new high-risk buildings at 18 meters or more in height, discussions are ongoing about extending it.

Key changes include:

Building owners will need to demonstrate that they have effective, proportionate measures in place to manage safety risks and ensure **clear lines of responsibility** for safety during design, construction, completion and occupation.

A golden thread of building safety information must be maintained to track key activity and decision making from planning and construction to completion and occupation of each high-risk building project. This golden thread must be maintained in a digital format.

Building owners that don't meet their obligations may face **criminal charges**. Homeowners can also **claim compensation** for substandard construction work for up to 15 years, which will be applied retrospectively.



Preparing for change

The Building Safety Act came into force in April 2022. Although many of the provisions will take 18 months to come into effect, the regulations will apply to both new and existing buildings – making it vital for owners, contractors and subcontractors to understand their obligations.

Positively, most construction professionals are aware of the new requirements. Seven in ten (72%) believe their company is well equipped to meet the changes in the Building Safety Act – although this falls slightly to 62% of subcontractors.

However, some organisations are struggling with a lack of knowledge and expertise in the business. Of the companies that don't feel well prepared, 56% highlight that they don't have people with the necessary skills and expertise and 31% don't know who is responsible for which area of compliance.

Data management will be key for meeting the new requirements – and this is a concern for some businesses. A quarter (25%) don't have the technology or digital tools needed and 19% don't have a common data environment in place to store the necessary information. Revisiting how the business collects and stores information will help companies meet the new law, as well as potentially improving quality and efficiency.

56% of the construction companies unprepared for the Building Safety Act blame a lack of skilled people





The Building Safety Bill: Seven steps for getting prepared

1. Understand your organisation's obligations at each Gateway stage
2. Review your digital infrastructure and get the basics in place
3. Focus on getting your information management right
4. Think about the interoperability of your digital tools
5. Don't discount the wider benefits of technology investments
6. Have a plan for your people
7. Learn from organisations that have been there

Read the white paper, [How to prepare for the Building Safety Act](#), for guidance on meeting the new regulations.

People may limit policy

The Levelling Up Agenda was a flagship policy for UK construction, and although the agenda of the new government is still being decided, many construction professionals could see the potential for these kinds of measures to drive the local industry.

Six in ten professionals (59%) believe the Levelling Up Agenda could result in greater infrastructure and housing development in their area, with those based in the East of England (78%), South West (73%) and West Midlands (64%) most likely to agree.

However, many warn that ongoing talent challenges would make it difficult to deliver this kind of large-scale programme. Seven in ten professionals (72%) believe the UK would require a larger workforce to fulfil the Levelling Up Agenda; 72% point to the need for more people with traditional skills such as surveyors and engineers, while 58% highlight shortages in digital skills.

At the same time, inflation is already forcing some companies to pause or renegotiate public sector contracts – and businesses warn this would also be an issue for widescale projects. Two thirds (66%) say the rising cost of materials would make it difficult to fulfil the Levelling Up Agenda.

Seven in ten say the UK would need a larger construction workforce to fulfil the Levelling Up Agenda



AUTODESK Insight

The Building Safety Act is set to transform the construction industry, reshaping the way that construction is planned and executed to reset safety standards. Everybody will have a responsibility to collect, store and share more data, to create a golden thread of information. That means every organisation – from owners to sole traders – will need to look at how they can use technology to meet the new requirements.

The regulations will require firms to implement the right digital tools and processes, which can be daunting, especially in times of talent shortages. Positively, there are tried and tested workflows, and businesses just starting out on their digital journeys can learn from those that have been there before. In turn, using technology can improve outcomes like quality, productivity and sustainability.

At the same time, at a national level, it's important to recognise the impact of talent challenges in construction on wider plans. Whatever the policies of our new government cabinet, it will be important to consider a national skills strategy to ensure that any construction programmes are deliverable – and support the future of the industry.





Conclusion





Conclusion

Once again, construction firms are facing challenging times. But having come through the difficulties of the pandemic, there are signs that businesses are prepared to adapt once again, seize opportunities as they come and even look to the future.

People will be central to this process. It's very clear that skilled employees are core to the success of every construction project, company and national programme – but right now, there are warning signs about the availability of crucial talent.

The workforce has to be at the heart of planning across the industry. That means strengthening the talent pipeline by attracting new recruits, upskilling workers and giving employees the digital tools that can improve their productivity and satisfaction.

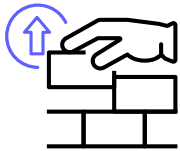
In the longer term, it's very positive that firms are exploring new ways of working, like off-site manufacturing, that can make construction more accessible to all kinds of people – as well as delivering more sustainable projects and higher quality outcomes.

But that means continuing to lay technology foundations today with IT investments even in difficult periods.



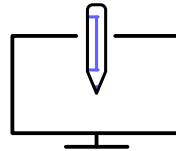


We have three recommendations for companies and the wider industry to strengthen construction's prospects:



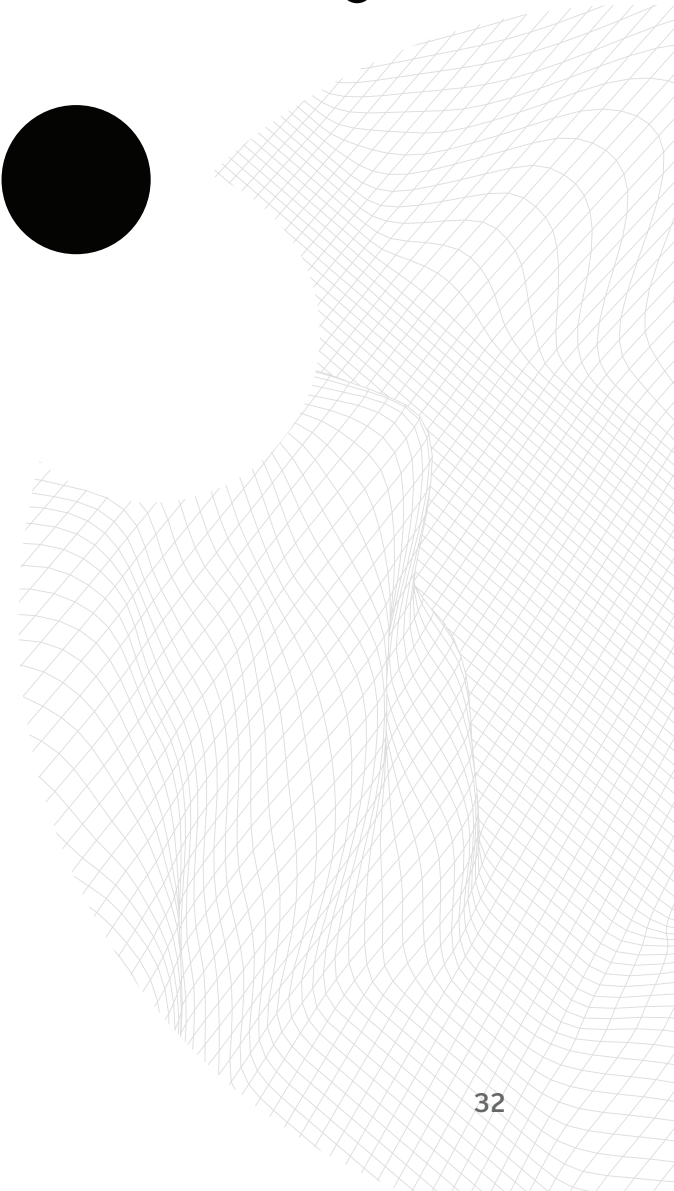
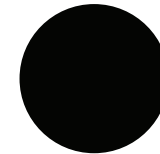
Launch a national campaign to promote the value of careers in construction:

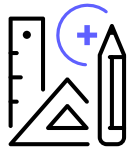
Tackle the industry's image problem by raising awareness of the opportunities in the sector and the new kinds of roles being enabled by digital technology and sustainability initiatives. Create links with schools and colleges to ensure students are gaining the skills valued by companies and will quickly find employment after leaving. Altogether, make construction a career to be proud of.



Continue to prioritise investments in digital construction to improve people's productivity:

Introduce digital tools that can enable employees to build right first time, reducing errors and cutting admin time for higher productivity. Use case studies from other construction businesses to choose technologies that will deliver the highest return on investment, as well as meeting regulatory requirements. Through technology, it's possible to remove obstacles and frustrations for employees – while making the business more appealing to younger candidates.





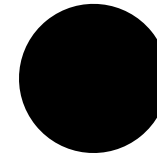
Lay the foundations for new ways of working with tools and upskilling:

Consider the innovative ways of working that you would like to see in the business in five years' time, whether it's off-site manufacturing or robotics. Then think about getting fundamentals right today – whether it's consistent data management, upskilling employees or establishing interoperable digital tools. Remember, modern methods of construction can open up roles to new diverse talent, provide greater sustainability and deliver better project outcomes – so it's well the worth time and thought to get ahead.

It is a transformational time for UK construction and that can be difficult for people in many ways. But construction firms have shown they have the resilience to cope with uncertainty and come through.

For now, it's important to continue to plan ahead and make the investments in people, technology and innovation that an create a more robust, future-facing industry.

This will ensure that construction can overcome the talent challenges of today and create a workforce ready for the future.





Methodology

This research was carried out by Censuswide in August through an online survey of 207 construction professionals in the UK.





Autodesk is changing how the world is designed and made. Our technology spans architecture, engineering, construction, product design, manufacturing, media, and entertainment, empowering innovators everywhere to solve challenges big and small. From greener buildings to smarter products to more mesmerizing blockbusters, Autodesk software helps our customers to design and make a better world for all. For more information visit [autodesk.com/construction](https://www.autodesk.com/construction).

Connect with ACS



© 2022 Autodesk. All Rights Reserved.

United States
+1 (866) 475-3802
[construction.autodesk.com](https://www.construction.autodesk.com)

Australia & APAC
AUS +61 1800 314 435
acs.apac@autodesk.com
[construction.autodesk.com.au](https://www.construction.autodesk.com.au)

UK & EMEA
+44 808 1892 253
acs.emea@autodesk.com
[construction.autodesk.co.uk](https://www.construction.autodesk.co.uk)