

WHAT CONTRACTORS ARE SAYING ABOUT AI • 2026

WHAT'S IT ACTUALLY GOING TO DO FOR ME?

We asked 460 contractors where AI actually helps, what they will not let it near, and what it has to prove before they hand anything over. Their answers are all in here.



PROVE IT FIRST

AUGUST 2026

WHAT'S INSIDE.

Every number in here says where it came from. When it is our opinion instead of the data, the box says **OUR READ**.

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WHO THIS IS FOR

Owners and operators of contracting businesses. Written for the person who signs the software checks and answers for the work.

WHAT IT IS NOT

A product pitch. There is one page about what we build, and it is at the back where it belongs.

METHOD

HOW WE KNOW THIS.

Three sources sit behind this report. They do not carry equal weight and they do not answer the same questions. Each one is spelled out below.

THE MAIN SOURCE

WE SURVEYED 460 CONTRACTORS

WHO	460 contractors across the United States.
WHO COUNTS	Every one of them has a say in buying the software their crews use in the field.
WHEN	June 5 to 8, 2026. A short online survey, six to ten minutes.
PRECISION	Any single number here is good to about plus or minus 5 points . For the 11 to 49 group on its own, about 8.
ALSO	146 of them run shops with 11 to 49 people. We call it out wherever they answered differently.

SUPPORTING

WE POLLED 276 OF OUR USERS

Owners, project managers and crews, asked the same kind of questions back in 2025. We use it here for the questions the 2026 survey did not repeat.

EXTERNAL

EVERYBODY ELSE'S RESEARCH

Used for market size, job numbers and proven returns. The things our own survey cannot tell you.

PRECEDENCE

MCKINSEY

FORBES

YALE BUDGET LAB

HOUSECALL PRO

RICS

SCIENCEDIRECT

MDPI

KEN RESEARCH

HOW MUCH WEIGHT TO PUT ON A GAP

When we show the 11 to 49 group against everyone else, treat a gap under about 9 points as a lean, not a finding. We report the small ones anyway so you can see the whole table, but only the big gaps are solid.

WHAT WE WILL NOT DO

Mash three sources together into one number. Where our data and an outside source agree, we say so, and we still name both.

01

WHERE CONTRACTORS ACTUALLY STAND.

Nine out of ten are either shopping or willing to listen.
What is missing is one plain sentence about what it
actually does for them.



POSTURE

MORE THAN HALF ARE ALREADY SHOPPING.

57%

say they are **actively looking** for AI tools that can help them. Another 35% are curious but want to see it proven first.

8%

are skeptical or not interested, combined. That is the entire resistant end of this market.

Q: Which of these best describes how you currently think about AI tools for your business? (Select one)

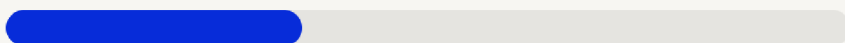
I'm actively looking for AI tools that can help me

57%



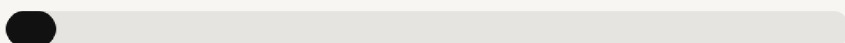
I'm curious but cautious, I want to see it proven first

35%



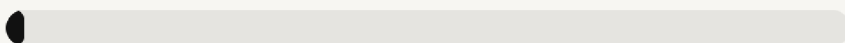
I'm skeptical, AI doesn't seem practical for what I do

6%



I'm not interested, I rely on my own judgment and experience

2%



We asked 460 contractors, June 2026. Shops with 11 to 49 people answered about the same as everybody else here.

OUR READ

If you have been waiting for the trades to warm up to AI, that already happened. The 92% who are looking or listening already take it seriously. What they want is someone to show them the part that applies to a 20 truck operation on a Tuesday.



THE BLOCKER

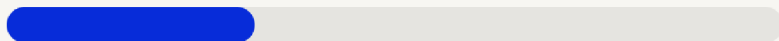
THEY ARE NOT SCARED. THEY ARE UNCONVINCED.

Cost finishes last. The thing standing between a contractor and an AI tool is a missing explanation, and the second thing is too many people offering one.

Q: What is the biggest barrier to implementing AI in your business?

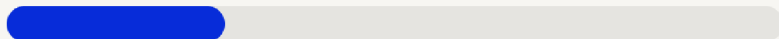
Unclear how it benefits my business

32%



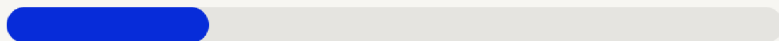
Too many options to choose from

28%



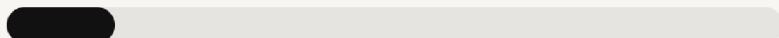
Reliability

26%



Cost

14%



29%

of non-users say they simply do not know how AI could benefit them.

Housecall Pro, from a survey of home service pros.

2,200+

contractors worldwide said AI matters to their future. Almost none of them had actually put it to work, at any size of company.

RICS survey, reported by Construction Dive.

We asked 276 CompanyCam users, 2025.

The two biggest reasons contractors have not started are "I don't know what it does" and "there are too many to pick from." That is 60% of the answers, and building more software doesn't fix either one.

OUR READ

Tell a contractor you can optimize his workflow and you get a shrug. Tell him the invoice that has been sitting unpaid for fourteen days gets flagged Monday morning without anyone remembering to look, and you have his attention. Same product both times.

WHERE THE DEMAND ALREADY POINTS

ADMIN. IT WAS ALWAYS GOING TO BE ADMIN.

Asked what they want AI to help with, contractors did not pick anything that touches the craft. Nearly half named paperwork.

46%

ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

The highest ranked answer by a wide margin. Nearly half of them named the paperwork before anything else on the list.

24%

JOB SITE
MANAGEMENT

14%

CUSTOMER
COMMUNICATION

13%

MARKETING

4%

FINANCES &
BOOKKEEPING

We asked 276 CompanyCam users, 2025. Q: What do you want AI to help with?

39%

AND WHEN WE ASKED 460 MORE CONTRACTORS A YEAR LATER

said the thing that matters most in an AI tool is that **it handles the paperwork and coordination, not the actual work.**

Two different groups of contractors, a year apart, asked different questions, drawing the same line in the same place. Nobody is asking software to pick up a tool.

KEEP IT OFF THE TOOLS

02

WHAT THEY WOULD HAND OVER FIRST.

We asked in their own words, twice. Once about the first thing they would want every morning, once about what their current tools fail to do. The answers rhyme.

WE GAVE THEM AN EMPTY BOX

THE FIRST THING THEY WOULD ASK FOR.

Q: If you had a smart assistant who knows every detail of your work, what is the first thing you would want it to do every morning? Be as specific as possible.

Nobody asked it to do the job. They asked it to tell them what the job is.

THEME		TOTAL	11-49	DIFF
Task & priority planning		29.2%	30.8%	+2.4
Scheduling & calendar		19.8%	18.5%	-1.9
Daily briefing & status updates		18.1%	23.3%	+7.6
General AI or automation desire		11.1%	12.3%	+1.8
Materials & inventory		9.8%	11.0%	+1.7
Email, communication & admin		8.7%	10.3%	+2.3
Crew & employee management		6.5%	8.2%	+2.4
Financial, billing & payroll		3.5%	5.5%	+2.9
Safety & risk assessment		3.5%	4.8%	+1.9
Bidding & lead generation		2.6%	5.5%	+4.2

We asked 460 contractors, June 2026, and let them type their own answer. We grouped the similar ones and counted the groups. The middle column is the 146 running shops with 11 to 49 people. **On a group that size, only the daily briefing gap is big enough to lean on.** The rest are under the margin of error and are here for completeness, not as findings.

OUR READ

The top three themes hold 67% of the answers between them, and all three are asking for the same thing: **tell me what matters today before I start guessing.** The 11 to 49 shops push hardest on the daily briefing, 23.3% against 18.1%. It is the one size gap on this table worth reading into, and it tracks: at that headcount you have more going on than you can hold in your head and not enough overhead to pay someone else to hold it.

PERCEIVED VALUE

DOCUMENT THE WORK. SAY WHAT'S HAPPENING.

Q: Which of the following tasks could new AI features best help you with? (Select all that apply)



1%

picked none of the above. Out of 460 contractors, essentially everyone found something on this list worth having.

THE TOP TWO ARE ONE JOB

Document the work, then tell someone about it. 60% and 56%. Both are the record of the job rather than the job itself, and both are what a crew is worst at doing at five o'clock.

NOTE THE MIDDLE

Feel confident and professional, 42%. Look trustworthy to clients, 32%. A third of this list is not about output at all. It is about how the business looks from the outside.

We asked 460 contractors, June 2026.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

THE HOLE IN THE TOOLS THEY ALREADY PAY FOR.

Q: Is there anything you would like your jobsite management tool to do that it is currently not doing to run your business better?

#1 THEME 17.3%

AI & AUTOMATION

AI built into the tool for finding and writing bids, handling tasks, running the schedule and helping them decide. Less for the owner to carry.

#2 16.0%

INVENTORY & MATERIALS

Knowing what is in stock right now, what it costs, and what they paid last time, tied to the job in front of them.

#3 10.9%

PROJECT MGMT & TRACKING

Blueprints, permits, change orders and quality control in one place. Measuring off photos came up over and over.

#4 10.2%

REPORTING & ANALYTICS

One screen showing cost, labor, materials and progress. A heads up before a problem turns into a real problem.

#5 9.4%

USABILITY & UX

Easier to find things, faster to learn, works without signal, built for a phone. Glitches and fiddly setup are the top complaints.

#6 8.4%

INTEGRATION & CONSOLIDATION

Fewer logins, and ones that actually talk to QuickBooks, Microsoft and payroll. Plenty just want one tool.

Estimating and bidding drew 8.1%. Workforce and employee management, scheduling and time management, financial and payroll, and communication and client management each drew roughly 6.6%.

"Use AI to find the bids, put the bids in and order the materials also."

"Integrate real-time material inventory tracking into daily project progress reports."

"Blueprints, project management, and financial tools all on one platform."

Answers typed by contractors, word for word. From our survey of 460, June 2026. One in five said they were happy with what they have. The other four out of five had something specific to ask for.

OUR READ

All six asks come back to the same place. **One person is running the field, the money, the schedule and the customers at once, and it is more than anybody can hold.** That is a workload problem, which is why "gets this off your plate" lands and "unlocks new capabilities" dies on the page.

WHAT THEY ARE REALLY ASKING FOR

What they want is fewer things pulling at them at once, and more of the job running without being pushed.

Eight out of ten had something specific to ask for. That is a lot for a question with an empty box and no prompting. People who are happy with their software do not stop and type you a paragraph.

80%

named something specific they wanted.

20%

said they were happy as is.

We asked 460 contractors, June 2026.



03

THE TRUST PROBLEM.

Wanting a thing and letting it act on your behalf are two different questions. Contractors answer the second one far more carefully.

50%

need it trained on real contractor data

39%

need it kept off the actual work

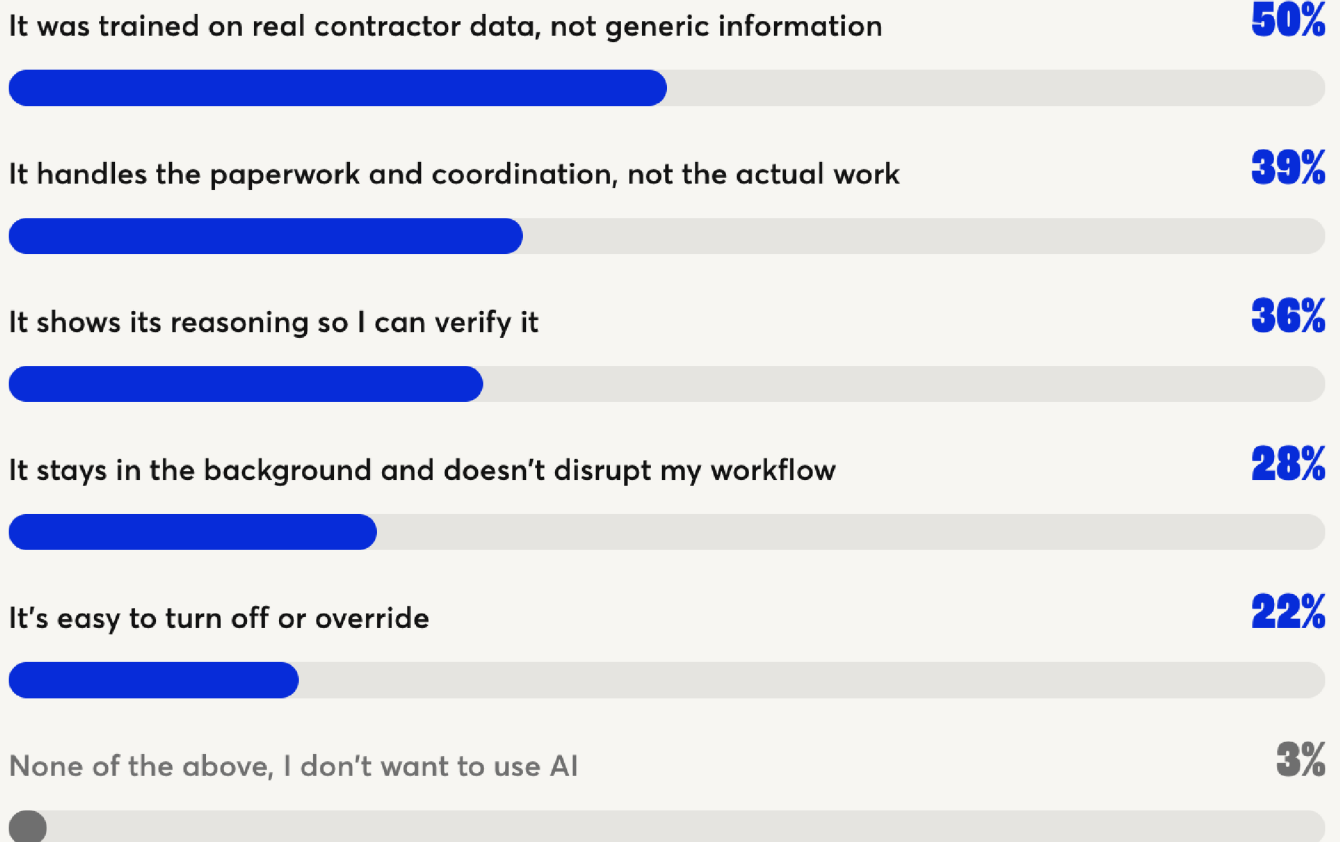
36%

need to see its reasoning to verify it

CONDITIONS

WHAT HAS TO BE TRUE BEFORE THEY'LL USE IT.

Q: When it comes to AI in jobsite management tools, what matters most to you? (Select up to 2)



We asked 460 contractors, June 2026. They could pick two, so it adds up to more than 100.

TRAINED ON OUR WORK

The only condition over half. Generic training data is a dealbreaker.

STAY OFF THE CRAFT

Contractors want AI kept in a narrow lane. Nearly four in ten put it above everything else.

SHOW YOUR MATH

More than a third want to see how it got there before they accept it.

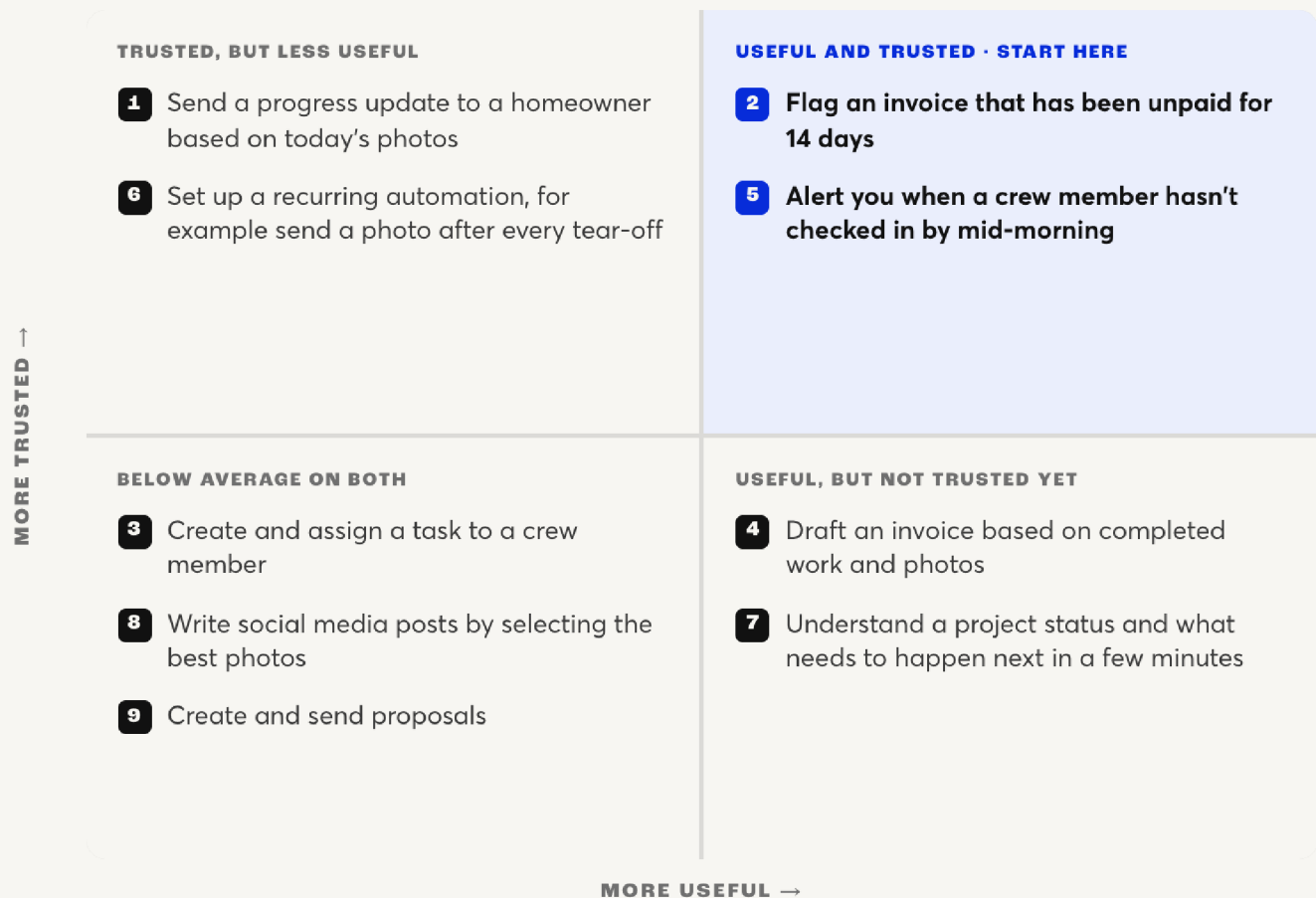
OUR READ

Only 3% said none of the above. Everyone else named a condition rather than an objection, which is the difference between a closed door and a locked one. Every one of the top three conditions is about **proof and scope**. None of them is about capability. What contractors want is a shorter leash and a receipt.

TASK BY TASK

TRUST IS NOT GENERAL. IT IS TASK BY TASK.

We named nine specific jobs and asked two things about each one: would this help, and would you trust it. The same contractor answers very differently depending on which job you name.



We asked 460 contractors to score each job from 1 to 5, twice: once on how much it would help, once on how much they would trust it. These are the share who gave it a 4 or a 5. Average help score was 70%, average trust score was 67%. Numbers 2 and 5 beat every other job on both. Numbers 1 and 6 beat the average on trust. Numbers 4 and 7 beat it on help.

OUR READ

Both winners just notice something and tell a person. Nothing leaves the building. Nobody's name ends up on a document they never read. Proposals and social posts sit dead last on both counts. Contractors will let AI raise its hand. They will not let it speak for them. Pick a first job where the worst thing that happens is a false alarm.

AUTONOMY

PROOF. NOT PROMISES.



We asked 460 contractors, June 2026, and let them type their own answer. We grouped the similar ones. The second column is the 146 running shops with 11 to 49 people. Bars are sized against the biggest group. **Only the refusal gap, 8% against 13%, is wide enough to call real.** Read the rest as two columns that broadly agree.

THE TOP THREE ADD TO 40%

Proven track record, time using it, and accuracy assurance. All three are earned over weeks of behaving correctly. None of them can be sold in a demo.

THE REFUSAL IS REAL, AND IT GROWS

8% of the market says nothing would make them comfortable letting AI act unasked. Among 11 to 49 employee firms that rises to 13%. More people to answer for, more that can go wrong in your name.

THE WORDS YOU USE

THE WORD YOU USE CHANGES THE ANSWER.

Q: When it comes to automation in jobsite management tools, what does each of the following terms mean to you? There is no wrong or right answer.

"AI"

A KIND OF
TECHNOLOGY

38%

mentioned named tools. ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Copilot and Google dominated.

Almost nobody pictured a person. Of the three words we tested, this one is the least likely to make somebody think of a human.

"Technology that analyzes data, learns patterns, and makes recommendations to improve efficiency."

"AGENT"

NOBODY AGREES
ON THIS ONE

~20%

described a real human person. Salesperson, insurance agent, field rep, or go-between.

Plenty of others did read it as software that acts on its own. That split is the problem. No other word we tested was this divided.

"I would say an agent is someone who represents you."

"ASSISTANT"

EVERYBODY GETS THIS
ONE

>50%

used "help," "assist," "aid," or "support."

People named real tools here too, but without the tech talk you get with "AI." The most consistently understood word of the three.

"Someone who helps you with things but not specific to one thing."

We gave 460 contractors each word and an empty box, June 2026, and grouped the answers that said the same thing.

WHAT THAT MEANS FOR YOU

"Agent" is the risky one. About one in five contractors hears it and pictures a salesman, not software, so you have to explain it every single time you say it. **"Assistant" lands naturally and needs no explanation at all.** "AI" is fine. Everybody knows it means technology.

DON'T SAY AGENT

04

WHAT AI IS NOT GOING TO DO.

This is the part of the conversation that usually gets handled with reassurance. We would rather handle it with the labor data.

AUTOMATION RISK

THE RISK IS AT A DESK, NOT ON A LADDER.

11M

workers are in jobs at high risk from automation. Mostly desk jobs, the kind of repeat-the-same-thinking work a computer copies easily.

5.5M

skilled trade workers are in low-risk jobs. Among the safest work in the country.

Forbes, on skilled trades and automation risk.

WHY THE WORK RESISTS

Trade work is your hands, your judgment, and figuring it out on the spot at an address you have never been to. None of that is what software is good at.

Two research reviews, in **ScienceDirect** and **MDPI**, went through 44 separate studies on AI in construction. Both landed in the same place: jobsites are too messy and too different from each other. AI needs things to be consistent. A jobsite is the opposite of consistent.

WHAT PEOPLE IN THE TRADES SAY

Tradespeople and AI researchers argue this out in public on Reddit, and the read there is consistent: almost nobody expects the trade itself to be replaced within ten years.

Treat that as sentiment, not evidence. It is an open forum, not a survey. We include it because it is the only place in this report where tradespeople speak on the subject unprompted.



OUR READ

The mess that makes AI unreliable at the physical work is what keeps it useful at the paperwork. Every job is different, so every job generates its own pile of records. Software that writes that pile down for you is worth paying for on exactly the jobs where it could never hold the tool.

THE EVIDENCE SO FAR

33 MONTHS IN, NOBODY HAS FOUND THE DISPLACEMENT.

Yale Budget Lab watched the job market for 33 months after the big AI tools launched. They found no evidence that AI has cost jobs at any real scale, in any industry. The mix of jobs in this country has stayed, in their words, **"remarkably steady."**

Yale Budget Lab, 33 month labor market analysis.

THE HIRING PICTURE

McKinsey expects AI to change how work gets done, not wipe out entry-level or skilled jobs. They are planning to hire more people, not fewer.

Among home service professionals, 73% said AI has not changed their hiring practices.

Business Insider and McKinsey; Housecall Pro.

THE SHORTAGE IS THE REAL STORY

3.8M

additional workers manufacturing alone expects to need by 2033, with nearly half of those positions potentially going unfilled.

Forbes.

The trades problem in 2026 is not too few jobs. It is too few people to do them.

OUR READ

Three years in, the mix of jobs in this country has barely moved, and the trades still cannot fill the openings they already have. That makes the honest case for AI a capacity case: **more out of the crew you managed to hire, and a new guy useful faster.**

RISKS

FOUR RISKS WORTH NAMING OUT LOUD.

Knowing where the guardrails go is how you protect the business and the customer at the same time.

01 DATA PRIVACY

Type your pricing, your contracts or your customer list into a free public AI tool and you have just handed it over. That is a problem for you and for your customers. For anything sensitive, use a tool built for business that tells you in writing what it does with your data.

02 DATA QUALITY

Any tool is only as good as what it learned from. Say your job history happens to have a few bad months from one sub. The tool can keep flagging that sub on every future bid, no matter how well they are doing now. Somebody has to look at what is going in, not just what comes out.

03 THE BLACK BOX

If you cannot see how it got there, you cannot tell who is on the hook when it is wrong. In work where safety and measurements have to be right, that matters. The tool should show its work, and a person should be able to look at it and overrule it. This is exactly what 36% of contractors asked for on page 14.

04 OVERLOAD

The Financial Times looked at what happens when people lean on AI too hard: more to read, less talking to each other, and burnout from tools that made the job more complicated instead of less. If it creates more for you to read than it saves you, you are behind, no matter how good the output looks.

The overload research is from the Financial Times. The privacy, data quality and show-your-work guidance is our position, based on the research on page 19.

GUARDRAILS

THREE PLACES A HUMAN STAYS IN THE LOOP.

Three calls that stay with a person, every time, no matter how good the software gets.

01**SAFETY**

AI can flag a risk. Human judgment is required to assess and mitigate an immediate jobsite hazard. No algorithm should be the final word on a safety call.

02**CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS**

Automated communication has to be reviewed against your standards and the relationship you have with that specific customer. A draft is a starting point, not a finished product.

03**LEGAL & FINANCIAL**

Final calls on project pricing, contract terms and financial commitments get validated by a person, for legal compliance and for ethics.

"If you have real customers, they want to know that there is someone on the other side taking responsibility for what's happening. With AI, it can do things, but what's it accountable to? People are where the responsibility ultimately falls, and that's what customers will expect."

Luke Hansen, CEO, CompanyCam

We did not invent these rules. 39% of contractors told us the thing that matters most to them is that AI handles the paperwork and the coordination and stays off the actual work. The guardrails above are that answer, written down.

A PERSON SIGNS OFF

05

WHERE THE VALUE IS REAL TODAY.

Where the money is going, who is actually using it, and the five places somebody has measured a real return.



MARKET CONTEXT

THE MONEY SAYS THIS IS NOT A FAD.

You do not have to buy the hype to notice that money like this usually means the tools get better whether you are watching or not.

**NORTH AMERICA, AI IN
CONSTRUCTION**

\$424M 2024

\$7.2B BY 2034

That is about 33% growth a year, every year.
North America is 35% of the worldwide total.

Precedence Research.

20% → 32%

Builder awareness of AI being used inside their
own companies, in a single year.

Home Innovation Research Labs.

25%

of construction firms now allocate at least a
quarter of their IT budgets to AI-enabled tools.

ConstructionIndustryAI.com.

Up to 20%

more work out of the same crew, from better
planning, better use of people and materials,
and taking the repetitive stuff off their plate.

McKinsey & Company.

OUR READ

Numbers this big describe what software companies are doing. What they mean for you is smaller and more useful: the tools you already pay for are going to change under you over the next couple of years whether you go looking or not. The only question is whether you pick the terms.

ADOPTION REALITY

TOUCHED BY MANY. INTEGRATED BY FEW.

Home service pros try AI far more often than they keep it.

40%

actively use AI today.

70%+

have experimented with it
at least once.

73%

say AI has not changed
their hiring practices.

Housecall Pro, from a survey of home service pros.

**THE ONE HARD TIME NUMBER IN
THIS REPORT****3.2 hrs**

saved per week, on average, by active AI
users among home service professionals.

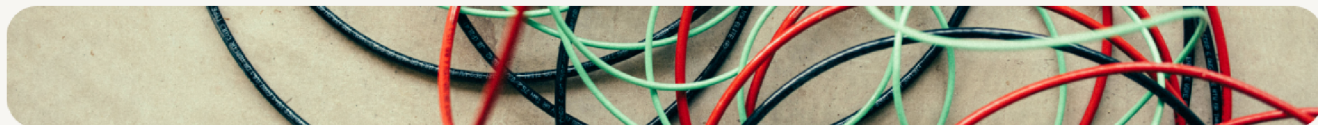
Housecall Pro.

**WHAT THEY ACTUALLY USE IT
FOR**

Writing and paperwork. That is the most
common use among home service pros.
Nothing to set up, and useful right away in
a business where everybody wears four
hats.

70% have tried it. 40% actually use it.
Thirty points of people picked it up and put
it back down.

Housecall Pro.

**OUR READ**

3.2 hours a week is not a revolution and we are not going to dress it up as one. It is about thirteen hours a month per person using it. In a 25 person shop where six people use it, that is roughly a full extra head of admin capacity a month. For the owner it is the difference between doing the Sunday paperwork and not doing the Sunday paperwork.

DOCUMENTED RETURNS

FIVE PLACES IT PAYS OFF TODAY.

Five areas where somebody has measured a real return for contractors, not a promise of one.

1 JOBSITE DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTING

This is where what contractors want and what AI can actually do line up closest. A tech takes photos, talks into the phone for ten seconds, and the report or the customer update writes itself. Tools are already pulling numbers off invoices and details out of photos so nobody is digging through files.

2 PREDICTIVE MAINTENANCE AND EQUIPMENT UPTIME

The clearest payback on this list for HVAC, plumbing and building systems work. It also changes what a service agreement is worth: you are selling fewer breakdowns and a smaller power bill, not two visits a year.

~20% fewer equipment breakdowns (Ken Research)

15-40% HVAC energy savings, 3 to 5x ROI in one to two years (FieldPromax)

3 SCHEDULING AND PRE-CONSTRUCTION INSIGHT

Tools can now read a schedule, spot where it usually goes sideways, and flag the jam before it happens on site. For estimating, it works best on the jobs you run over and over, where your own history can price the next one. (ALICE Technologies, Planera)

4 BACK OFFICE AND CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION

Home service companies already use AI to answer and route calls, sort out what the customer needs, draft estimates and send follow-ups. It books appointments and takes leads at two in the morning. Tools like Rilla and Siro listen back to sales calls so your best person is not sitting there reviewing every one. (PM Magazine)

5 GENERATIVE AI FOR EVERYDAY WORK

Cleaning up notes, drafting documents, writing marketing and customer messages. The easiest one on this list to start, and the one home service pros use most today. (Housecall Pro)

OUR READ

Four of these five are paperwork. Only predictive maintenance goes near the equipment, and there it watches and warns while a person turns the wrench. Page 14 has contractors asking for exactly that, in their own words.

06

START HERE. THE FIRST 90 DAYS.

Every step on the next two pages comes from something contractors told us. None of it is advice we made up. The number is right there on the step.

ONE TASK. NOT A PROGRAM.

NOT USING ANY YET → PAGE 28

You are in the largest group in this report, and nothing about that is late. 35% of contractors told us they are waiting to see it proven first. Page 28 is one task, thirty days, approval left on.

ALREADY RUNNING SOMETHING → PAGE 29

Four in ten already use AI for something, usually writing or paperwork. Your question is whether it has earned more rope. Page 29 is the test, plus the two jobs worth widening into.

DAYS 1 TO 30

PICK ONE ADMIN TASK. KEEP APPROVAL ON.

Not a rollout. One task, one person watching it, thirty days.

**Pick one of the two jobs in the top right box on page 15.**

Flag an invoice that has sat unpaid for 14 days, or tell you when a crew member has not checked in by mid-morning. These two beat the other seven on being useful and being trusted at the same time. Both are alarms, so the worst thing that happens is a false alarm.

**Keep it off anything that touches the craft.**

39% of contractors said the thing that matters most is that AI handles the paperwork and the coordination, not the actual work. Your crew will apply the same test. Do not fail it in week one.

**Leave human approval switched on, even if you do not think you need it.**

10% of contractors, and 12% of shops with 11 to 49 people, say a person has to approve it before they would trust it to run loose. Turning approval off later is your call. Turning it back on after something wrong went out the door is a different conversation.

**Do not add a platform to do it.**

28% said too many options is their single biggest holdup, and "give me fewer platforms" was the sixth most common ask. If the AI shows up inside a tool your crew already opens, using it is a setting. If it shows up as a new login, it is a project.

**Say "assistant" when you tell the crew.**

More than half of contractors hear "assistant" and think help. About one in five hear "agent" and think you mean an actual person. Say "assistant" and your crew hears a tool. Say "agent" and half of them will wonder who you hired.

**Write down what you expect it to save, before you start.**

The published number is 3.2 hours a week for home service pros who actually use it. Write down your own guess on day one so you have something to check it against on day 90.

SOURCES FOR THIS PAGE

Our survey of 460 contractors, June 2026, for the task ratings, the paperwork-not-craft preference, the approval requirement and the word association. Our 2025 poll of 276 CompanyCam users for the barriers. Housecall Pro for the hours saved.

DAYS 31 TO 90

EARN THE LEASH. THEN LENGTHEN IT.

DAYS 31 TO 60

LET IT SUGGEST. DO NOT LET IT SEND.

The three biggest things contractors said would make them comfortable are a proven track record (17%), time using it themselves (12%), and proof it is accurate (11%). That is 40% of the answers, and all three are earned by the thing behaving correctly where somebody can watch it.

Keep a running list of what it suggested and what you did about it. Another 6% asked specifically to be told what it did. You will want that list in month three when you are deciding whether to widen the job.

DAYS 61 TO 90

WIDEN ONLY WHERE THE RECORD IS CLEAN.

Add a second job only if the first one has a clean 60 day record. Two good candidates: drafting an invoice off completed work and photos, or a fast read on where a job stands and what happens next. Contractors rated both useful but did not trust them yet. Sixty clean days is how that changes.

Whatever you add, 36% of contractors need to see how it got there and 22% need it easy to shut off. If a tool cannot do both, it is not ready for a bigger job.

AND A LEGITIMATE ANSWER AT DAY 90: NO FURTHER.

8% of contractors, and 13% of shops with 11 to 49 people, say nothing would ever make them comfortable letting AI act without asking. That is a fine way to run a business, not a failed trial. If everything that leaves your shop has a person's name on it, that is a promise to your customers. Just make it on purpose instead of by accident.

All numbers on this page come from our survey of 460 contractors, June 2026, unless the page we point you to says otherwise.

HARD STOPS

THREE THINGS NOT TO DO. EVER.

01 DON'T PASTE COMPANY DATA INTO A PUBLIC MODEL

Pricing, contracts and customer records typed into a free public AI tool is a problem for you and for the customer whose information you just handed over.

02 DON'T INTRODUCE IT AS DOING MORE WITH LESS

Call it what it is: taking away the part of the job nobody likes. The numbers on page 20 say you are not replacing anybody anyway.

03 DON'T LET IT MAKE A SAFETY, PRICING OR CONTRACT CALL

Flagging is fine. Deciding is not. Page 22 has the three places a person stays in it.

WHY THAT THIRD ONE IS THE ONE THAT BITES

A combine can steer itself and tell you the soil is dry. The farmer still makes five billion judgment calls between planting and harvest.

AI is getting cheap at handling tasks. What it keeps tripping on is **the judgment call buried inside the task**, and no model has changed that yet.

Sorting job applications, changing your pricing, making a call on safety protocol: human judgment has to be the foundation of all three. Just because something looks like paperwork does not mean you take the human out of it.

Before you automate anything, ask whether it is really a task, or **a decision with paperwork wrapped around it**.

12 TO 24 MONTHS • COMPANYCAM'S VIEW

WHAT WE EXPECT NEXT, WITH OUR NAME ON IT.

Everything up to here was research. This page is our opinion, and you should weigh it accordingly.

VOICE BECOMES THE DEFAULT

Contractors spend their day on ladders, in crawl spaces, driving between jobs. Typing was always the wrong way in. Talking closes the gap between doing the work and writing it down.

PHOTOS THROUGH TO PAYMENT

You stop retyping the same information into four places. Photos feed the proposal, the approval kicks off the invoice, finishing the job kicks off the follow-up. You still read it before it goes out, but the typing and formatting stop eating your evening.

TROUBLESHOOTING ON THE TRUCK

Point the phone at the unit, get the steps for that exact model. The newer tech gets an answer, your best tech does not get called, and the customer does not wait.

AI STOPS BEING A DESTINATION

Nobody is going to open the AI app. The software you already use will just get quieter and faster, and most contractors will never call that "adopting AI."

"The future of software, including CompanyCam, is about less typing, more talking. AI will run in the background like a super-smart teammate, so tradespeople can focus on what they do best: doing the actual work and building trust with customers."

Luke Hansen, CEO, CompanyCam

The gap opens up quietly. That 20% from McKinsey stacks year over year, in how fast your proposal goes out and how quick somebody answers the phone. By late 2026 the difference will not be who uses AI. It will be who set it up well enough that the customer only notices a faster answer.

WHO PUT THIS TOGETHER

WHERE COMPANYCAM FITS.

We build for contractors. Not for tech companies, not for enterprise software buyers. Everything we ship is shaped by what people in the trades need on actual jobsites.

AI is part of that now, because our customers keep asking for the same thing this research found: less time on paperwork, more time on the work. Documentation, communication and reporting are where the value shows up first, and that is the job we have always done.

We will keep publishing what we find, including the parts that are inconvenient for us. Not one of the 460 contractors was asked a question designed to make us look good, and 8% of them told us they will never let software act on their behalf. That number is in here too.

If a tool adds a step, it is the wrong tool. That test does not change because the step is called AI.

**OUR STAKE IN THIS**

CompanyCam sells software to contractors, so we have a commercial interest in this subject. Read our findings with that in mind. The questions, the sample and the field dates are on page 3 so you can judge the method yourself.

"We went from writing notes down on paper to figuring out spreadsheets with formulas. AI continues to take all of that work and handle it so it can yet again open up more time to do the things that we are experts at. For those that are experts in the trades: it allows people to go home and spend time with their family."

JOHN TALMAN Senior Content Marketing Manager, CompanyCam

AI IS NOT HERE TO REPLACE CONTRACTORS.

It is here to replace the busywork that keeps contractors from doing what they are good at. That is the finding, and we did not have to stretch a single number to reach it.



APPENDIX

SOURCES.

PRIMARY RESEARCH

Our own survey. 460 contractors across the United States, online, June 5 to 8, 2026. Everybody who took it has a say in buying the field software their business runs on. 146 of them run shops with 11 to 49 people.

Our 2025 poll. 276 active CompanyCam users: owners, project managers and field crews.

CompanyCam leadership and podcast. Luke Hansen, CEO. John Talman, Senior Content Marketing Manager and podcast co-host.

MARKET AND ADOPTION

Precedence Research. North America AI in construction market.

Home Innovation Research Labs. AI adoption among US home builders.

ConstructionIndustryAI.com. IT budget allocation trends.

RICS, via Construction Dive. Global survey of 2,200+ construction professionals.

McKinsey & Company. AI as a construction productivity lever.

Housecall Pro. AI adoption among home service professionals.

A NOTE ON WHAT IS MISSING

Where we did not ask a question, we do not give an answer. Some pages show one number instead of two because shops with 11 to 49 people answered about the same as everybody else. We did not cut this wave by trade, so nothing here claims that roofers and HVAC contractors answered differently. This is the first wave. Running it again is how it becomes a trend instead of a snapshot.

AUTOMATION RISK AND WORKFORCE

Forbes. Skilled trades and automation risk.

Yale Budget Lab. 33 month labor market analysis.

Reddit r/agi. Public sentiment on replacement timelines.

Business Insider and McKinsey. AI and workforce strategy.

USE CASES AND ROI

Ken Research. Predictive maintenance in construction.

FieldPromax. HVAC AI ROI data.

Trane, Arch / GetArch. Predictive HVAC optimization.

ALICE Technologies. Schedule risk and AI.

Planera. AI scheduling assistant.

PM Magazine. AI for HVAC and plumbing contractors.

Mastt, The Digital Project Manager. AI tool landscape reviews.

ACADEMIC AND RISK

ScienceDirect. Review of 44 construction AI studies.

MDPI. Systematic review, AI in construction.

Financial Times. Overreliance on AI and worker wellbeing.

HOW TO CITE THIS

CompanyCam. *What's It Actually Going to Do for Me? What Contractors Are Saying About AI.* August 2026. Survey of 460 US contractors, June 2026.

Quote any of it with that credit. Find a mistake, tell us, and we will publish the correction.

AI IS COMING FOR THE PAPERWORK.

Not the trade. 460 contractors, a 2025 user poll, and twenty published sources all point the same way. The work stays yours. The busywork does not have to.

57%

are actively looking

32%

can't see what it does for them

17%

just want to see it work first

PUBLISHED

August 2026. Fieldwork June 2026.

CITATION

Free to quote with credit. Format on page 33.

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