



Behind the Lens: What Drones Do Beyond Images



Frequently used to capture images and video to show clients and use in marketing materials, drones are becoming more commonplace on jobsites, with 57% of respondents to a recent JBKnowledge 2018 ConTech survey indicating their firms use the technology. Beyond capturing images and video footage, however, drones have tremendous data-collecting capability.

According to DroneDeploy, construction is the fastest-growing commercial industry adopting drones, with use surging 239% in the past year, with project and technology managers and superintendents reaping the most benefit from drone data.

Jordan Olson, virtual design coordinator for Brasfield & Gorrie in Birmingham, Alabama, recently indicated in a Construction Dive survey that the firm flies drones over sites to compile a database of pictures that then are processed into a 3D site model. "We can then use that site model for a variety of purposes, such as project rendering, cut/fill analysis or simple owner communication," Olson wrote. Hensel Phelps thinks drones are a valuable tool in its construction business. Its initial drone launch in 2015 began as a way replace costly helicopter flights to capture

marketing site footage. The program since has expanded to include drones with LiDAR sensors, which improve surveying efficiency and accuracy, as well as infrared thermal sensors to find HVAC energy-efficiency opportunities, capture cloud points that then incorporate into BIM and photogrammetry capabilities to monitor sites and provide information about job progress. Other perks of drones, according to BigRentz, which rents equipment to a variety of industries, include the automation and tracking of equipment, security surveillance capabilities and monitoring the safety of onsite personnel.

How drone data boosts business

In a recent webinar titled "How to Win More Business with Drone Data," Hugh McFall, product marketing manager for drone software company 3DR, outlined four ways drone data can help business:

1. Provide more accurate, transparent estimates

Drones can help create accurate pre-construction topographic surveys so companies need not rely on satellite imagery or bring in a third-party surveyor and then have to wait for the results. This information also can help subcontractors better prepare their estimates. Liam Kirk, a business director at Arcadis, in Amsterdam, told 3DR, "We're realizing that drone surveys can be done 10 times faster than traditional topographic surveys."

To read more: <https://www.constructiondive.com/news/behind-the-lens-what-drones-do-beyond-images/541090/>



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About The Program

The Construction Estimating Institute (CEI) works with West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) as the statewide provider of the federally funded Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Supportive Services Program.

We want to increase the number of certified DBEs participating in highway and bridge construction, as well as assist DBEs in growing and eventually becoming self-sufficient. Additionally, CEI provides supportive services by assisting prime contractors and consultants with identifying DBEs for subcontracting opportunities on priority projects.

How to Position Your Business for Future Growth

Set yourself up for higher profitability & greater success



Uncovering opportunities for growing any business, no matter the industry, requires that leadership be open to the idea of change. Technological advancements, a changing economic climate and movement within the industry

are all contributing factors that can alter the outlook of any business.

When searching for ways to increase business volume and capabilities, the ability to embrace technological parity and effectively planning for it are critical. This is particularly true for the construction industry, as new technologies routinely change the type of equipment and machinery used for any one job.

Further, as urban landscape and planning evolve and more innovative designs are proposed for developments, construction companies often find themselves faced with having to expand their capabilities to meet changing project needs.

Planning & Financing

Business planning in construction can be highly volatile. The industry is often held hostage by trends, such as unpredictability in skilled labor, especially because construction businesses often employ part-time or contract workers to satisfy project demands. Coupled with changing project timelines and budgets, financial and business planning can become challenging. The uniqueness of each project often results in shifting deadlines or additional measures that must be taken before completion. When project start dates are pushed back, planning for and accepting new business projects increases risk. As a result, a company may be forced to reject other projects, negatively impacting the business's cash flow. Additionally, large increases in under-contract work and due cash still being processed can severely mitigate a business's ability to plan for

the future, making it vital to have a process in place to account for changes and have the capacity to react quickly.

One way to navigate through the risks and challenges associated with the industry is to build a strong relationship with a financial advisor who can provide support to companies and business owners by developing an ongoing review of the strategic business plan.

An annually reviewed plan with flexible solutions can provide a guide to understanding ever-changing budgets. Establishing a process for adapting the annual business plan in accordance with changing factors provides business owners with better insight into what portion of the budget they can truly use to invest in technological advancements and other solutions.

Valuation & Your Future

Determining the company's greatest pain points and concerns, as well as its greatest strengths, is key in determining existing and potential business opportunities. A true valuation of the company provides a scale from which business opportunities can grow.

A number of different methods and strategies should be considered when valuing a business, all of which depend on the particular circumstances of each business and its owners.

Two common methods of valuation are evaluating discounted cash flows or taking a market approach. With either method, the balance sheet should be cleaned up as much as possible to arrive at a fair and accurate enterprise value. For these valuations, the business owner can lean on his/her financial advisor's professional advice and assurance of accurate information. The financial advisor should either be credentialed for business valuations or willing to lead the effort in seeking assistance from other professionals.

Another critical strategy for defining the future of a construction business is exploring the hopes and fears of the owners and other parties holding equity in the company.

To read more, see excerpt: <https://www.constructionbusinessowner.com/setting-yourself-success>

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CEI is an educational organization providing the highest quality construction training in the industry. Over 100,000 owners, estimators, project managers, field supervisors, office support staff, foremen, laborers, and key management personnel have attended courses that are offered nationwide. The courses provide students with construction skills training and the critical information needed to be effective within their companies and organizations.

CEI DBE Supportive Services

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