



# Reducing Reworks to Make Construction More Sustainable

Commercial real estate construction is costly—not just in the financial sense, but also its impact on the environment. The amount of worldwide waste generated by construction can seem staggering, and these projects are not only increasing CO2 emissions, but quickly using up raw materials and water supplies, while contributing billions of tons of waste to landfills. Fortunately, there's a better way.

In the US, 29 percent of the country's waste comes from construction, and American construction companies use 30 percent of the world's raw materials, 40 percent of its energy, and 25 percent of its water, according to the [National Institute of Construction Management and Research](#).

But why does the construction industry account for such a disproportionately large amount of material waste and consumption each year, and what can be done to lessen the pressure this puts on the planet?

## The Root of Reworks



Poor planning, workmanship, and supervision, plus failed communication, result in one of the most frequent contributors to construction waste: reworks. About 20 percent of construction costs come from reworks, totaling nearly \$600 billion in annual spending. A [survey of construction executives](#) found that almost 50 percent of rework is caused by poor communication and project data.

When businesses fail to properly plan for their needs or don't communicate their specific workspace plans correctly, construction companies have to double back and redo their efforts. The alarming frequency of reworks results in businesses having to delay their move, lowered company productivity, higher consumption of raw materials and resources, increased costs and timelines, and a higher negative impact on the environment.

The problem isn't simply that rework waste is part of the commercial real estate construction process. It's that the errors that create reworks can be fixed largely with better communication, diligence, and a flexible approach that reuses materials through eco-friendly practices.

Many businesses have ineffective planning when it comes to their workspace needs, whether that's under- or overestimating their space requirements. In fact, 41 percent of real estate executives said that business unit projections of space demands are typically off by [more than 100 percent](#). That level of inaccuracy pushes projects off schedule and over budget.

Timeline and cost constraints then cause harried construction teams to haul in additional materials, pulling from the planet's resources while rapidly increasing the amount of waste.

### **Sustainability Through Flexible Thinking**



So what's the answer to this problem? One solution is adopting a flexible workspace strategy from the start, one that's both eco-friendly and sustainable in the long-term.

What if a business was able to avoid the loss in employee productivity that over 50 percent of businesses suffer during a relocation, or if it didn't have to pay between \$4.25 and \$5.75 per square foot to move employees? By more accurately assessing a company's future space needs, flexible workspace is able to deliver cost savings and

productivity benefits—while significantly reducing the need for reworks.

Instead of relocating an office, you could choose a flexible workspace, like Knotel, that helps reduce rework, waste, environmental impact, and can expand or shrink based on your company's changing needs.

The flexible model also includes buildouts that are typically quicker and more efficient, thus making them more sustainable. These flex buildouts can lower the amount of office equipment and materials sent to landfills and shorten building time by up to 50 percent. Money and energy that's normally soaked up by lengthy construction projects can be saved, and by having a flexible workspace, you have the potential to reduce your on-site waste by up to 90 percent.

With a work environment that's more modular, you're alleviating business headaches stemming from reworks and displacement, in addition to helping alleviate global problems like overflowing landfills, increased greenhouse gas emissions, and depleted raw materials and natural resources. In other words, a smarter approach to workspace is also a more responsible approach to caretaking the environment.



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