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## **How to Deal w/ Difficult Customers: 9 Proven Tips:**

Dealing with difficult customers can be... well, difficult, but it doesn't have to be. With the right attitude and action steps, you can effectively navigate these tricky customer situations and emerge (hopefully) unscathed.

### **1. Have the right mental attitude**

Take a few seconds to breathe and put yourself in the right mindset before dealing with the customer. Remind yourself that the customer isn't necessarily mad at you, but rather, they're miffed about the situation.

Having the right mental attitude will help prevent your buttons from getting pushed and enable you to respond in a calm and professional manner.

### **2. Develop thick skin**

Along with having the right mental attitude is developing a thick skin and training yourself to not shrink from difficult situations.

He continues, "the most effective tip that has helped me to date is to develop thick skin. That is, to let go of fear. I started viewing difficult customers as a new challenge rather than a condemnation. Start assuming that these customers are preparing you for a better future."

**(continued on page 2)**

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**TO:**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- ❖ *Tuesday July 27<sup>th</sup> - Saturday July 31<sup>st</sup> 2021, LICA Summer Convention in Niagara Falls NY (more details TBA)*
- ❖ *August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 PALICA and Mercer County Conservation District Field Day, @ Conservation District headquarters, Mercer PA (more info to come)*
- ❖ *PALICA 2022 WINTER MEETING - March 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> @ Days Inn by Wyndham in State College PA - MORE DETAILS TO COME*

### WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBER TO PALICA!

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### INSIDE THIS EDITION

<b>How to deal with difficult customers</b>	<b>Cover - PG 4</b>
Upcoming Events & New Members	Pg 1
<b>5 Tips to Ensure Customers Pay on Time</b>	<b>Pg 5</b>
Safety Matters-Tandem Lift Tragedy	Pg 6
<b>New Associate Member Drain Tile Safety</b>	<b>Pg 3</b>
When will CONSTRUCTION START.....?	Pg 7-10
<b>Good News/Bad News in Financing Exc</b>	<b>Pg 11-13</b>
Advantages/Disadvantages in Trade Sch	Pg 14/15
<b>Associate Member Feature-BEG Group</b>	<b>Pg 16</b>
PRESS RELEASE FROM BRON	Pg 17
<b>Challenges of growing small businesses</b>	<b>Pg 18-21</b>
Safety Matters-Shock Proof Yourself	Pg 23
<b>2021 Summer National Meeting Info</b>	<b>Pg 24</b>
<b>From your Executive Director.....</b>	<b>Pg 25</b>

### ASSOCIATE ADVERTISING

HMK Insurance	PG 10
Burns & Burns Insurance	PG 13
The Big Switch – The BEG Group	PG 16
BRON	PG 17
CARRY PUMPS INC.	PG 22
EAGLE POWER & EQUIPMENT	PG 22
GILBERT'S RISK SOLUTIONS	PG 25
BOWER'S GREAT LAKES INTER-DRAIN	PG 26
PA ONE CALL	PG 26
UFG/PRINS INSURANCE	BACK COVER

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## HOW TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS – MAY SEEM COMMON SENSE BUT YOU CAN LOSE YOUR SENSIBILITY WHEN PUT UNDER THE GUN..... (con't from cover)

### 3. Hear the customer out and empathize with them

People who are upset need to be heard, so let your customers talk, and don't interrupt them. "Let the client vent about the situation if at all possible," advises Carrie Thompson, Facility Manager at Affordable Mini Storage. "Don't allow physical violence or threats (time to call the police!). Allowing a client to fully verbalize their complaint or anger is valuable. Many issues arise or escalate because the client didn't feel like they'd been heard."

**Here are a few things to keep in mind when listening to customers:**

#### Practice active listening

At this stage, it's important to engage in active listening, which is the practice of consciously assimilating what the other party has to say, instead of just standing silently in front of them. This will help make a good impression and it'll allow you to really take in what the customer is saying, so you can (if possible) resolve their issue efficiently.

Active listening also entails that you listen with your whole body. This means using positive body language such as having an open stance and nodding along to show the other person that you're listening.



#### Make them feel that they're taken seriously

Gary Johnson, a Senior Consultant at Prevention Advisors, recommends that you show customers that you're taking their concerns seriously. According to him, this can be done by maintaining eye contact and exhibiting the right non-verbal behaviors (like not smiling, excessively nodding, or rolling your eyes — more on this below).

"Call your customer by name, if possible," he adds. It makes people feel that they're being heard and could help calm them.

#### Respond with empathy

"When someone yells at us, our natural response is usually to respond with either anger or go into defense mode. Avoid these at all costs," says Fiona Adler, Founder at Actioned.com.

"Whether or not you think there's a real problem, it's real from the customer's perspective, so the appropriate emotion for you to respond with is 'empathy'. Say things like; 'I can see why you're disappointed' or 'Oh dear, that's not what you would have expected' or 'I can understand why you're upset.'"

### 4. Be mindful of your verbal and non-verbal cues

The things you say — and don't say — can significantly affect the outcome of any customer interaction. Signs of boredom, impatience, or aggression will only escalate the situation. So, be very mindful of your words and the body language you project.

## Here are a few tips to help you do just that:

### Verbal

Use “phrases of courtesy.” According to Renée Evenson, author of *Powerful Phrases for Effective Customer Service*, “Customers appreciate being treated courteously, so when you interject words and phrases of courtesy appropriately throughout your conversations, you show your customers how you respect them.”

### Non-verbal

Be careful with the non-verbal cues that you give off.

“Body language is an important tool for showing a customer you are serious about resolving the issue,” says Laurie Guest, an author, trainer and keynote speaker with a focus on customer service.

“Nodding, eye contact, and note taking are all excellent modes of silent communication. Most importantly, keep quiet. If you interrupt, the person will assume you are not listening and often feel the need to start over again. Patiently listen to the whole story.”

You should also avoid defensive or hostile gestures such as closed fists or folded arms as they could aggravate the customer.

### 5. Communicate what you can and can't to about their situation



Once you've heard what the customer has to say, you'll need to talk to them about what you can and can't do. Anne Miner of The Dunvegan Group recommends that you start by clarifying and apologizing.

“Once you have heard the story, ask questions to clarify where necessary. Then, apologize — tell the customer you are sorry they have had this experience, feel this way or whatever is appropriate.”

From there, proceed by communicating what you can and can't do about their problem. Whatever you say, though, see to it that you do something. “Never say: “There's nothing I can do.” That statement is like gasoline on a campfire. Although it may range from simply gathering facts to solving the problem, there's ALWAYS something you can do.

Miner echoes this advice. “Tell the customer what you CAN do for them — issue a refund, a credit, or a discount.”

### **Now, what happens when you can't bend to your customer's wishes?**

Here's an additional tip: if possible, let the customer know about the changes that you'll make as a result of their complaint.

“Make the customer feel like they've made a difference,” advises Adler. “The last thing customers want is to feel like their feedback is going nowhere. Make sure that you let them know that you're very grateful they alerted you to this problem. Then let them know the steps that will be taken to ensure the same thing won't happen to other customers.”

### 6. Act quickly

If you can resolve the customer's problem immediately, then, by all means, do so. This has several benefits:

For one, being able to quickly address a customer's concerns may just turn their negative experience into a positive one. If you can get on top of things and satisfy the customer, the more likely they are to refer to you friends and family members.

## 7. Compensate for their discomfort (if necessary)

Taking this step isn't always necessary and depends on the situation. For instance, if the issue is due to an error on your part, it may behoove you to do something extra for the customer.

Jason Perkins of San Diego SEO Firm suggests providing additional compensation to make up for any mistakes or issues.

"Give them something to compensate for the discomfort. When customers complain about something, either it has to do with your service or with the people who are working for you. If they feel that they are not being serviced properly, you have to give them something to make up for the mistake," he says.



## 8. Make a judgment call: Will you tolerate someone who's being downright obnoxious or unfair?

If the situation reaches a point where the customer crosses the line and becomes downright rude and unfair, you'll need to make a judgment call on giving them what they want versus "firing" them.

Yes, choosing the latter would mean that they'll never hire you to work for them again, but keeping a problematic customer can be just as bad.

**As customer service and speaker Shep Hyken puts it, "if the customer crosses the line, it may be time to fire the customer, politely sending them on their way to the competition. A bad customer can hurt morale and make the working environment uncomfortable.**

## 9. Don't forget about your employees

Make sure you have a solid team who can support your customer service efforts. Part of doing this means rewarding your employees for the hard work that they've been doing.

"Incentivizing workers to effectively handle difficult or irate customers raises the workplace's overall morale and pushes higher standards of customer service. You can do this by implementing rewards systems, increasing wages, or by simply giving praise goes a long way!"





# 5 Tips to Ensure Customers Pay You On Time--Every business runs into deadbeat customers. Here's how to make sure they don't take advantage of you.

BY HOWARD GREENSTEIN

No one likes doing work and not being paid for it. Yet let's face it: We business owners know it happens all the time. RocketLawyer.com recently released a survey of 475 members on its website: 25 percent had trouble collecting payments, and of those, 60 percent had to write off bad debt. As a bonus, the survey release included Rocket Lawyer's tips for getting paid. I thought they were worth passing on:

## **1. Perform a background check.**

Check the client and make sure they have good credit. If you can't afford the credit check services or if you're not sure about the client's ability to pay, get a portion of the project up front before you start.

## **2. Create and sign a contract.**

A contract not only protects you, but it protects the customer as well. A contract should spell out deliverables the client will get as well as the payments the client will make to you, along with a schedule. According to Vito Mazza, Senior Consultant at GreenFlag Profit Recovery, "In the current environment, people should start considering 20-day terms for payment instead of the standard 30 days."

## **3. Bill customers consistently.**

Bill on a schedule that keeps them from "forgetting" they owe you a payment. In the survey, more than 35 percent of businesses had one customer that was more than 90 days delinquent. The survey also reports that only 29 percent of businesses call customers when they're late. "Regular contact is critical," says Mazza. "Most people wait too long to get started asking for money. They don't get paid after 30 days, so they wait until 60 days and send a note, then 90 days they send another note." One of Mazza's services includes what he calls "first contact courtesy notices" which go out after a client misses the 30-day deadline.

## **4. Have your attorney send a letter.**

When I recently ran into a deadbeat in my business, my attorney chose a "take no prisoners" approach that listed possible legal actions that would arise should the client fail to respond by a certain date. This did the trick. Remember, though: This gambit may be too strong in some cases. You have to weigh such "motivational" tactics against the circumstances of the late payment and the nature of your relationship with the client.

## **5. Send them to collections.**

If you still can't get the customer to move, find a reputable debt-collection agency. You may give up a percentage of the money owed, or pay a flat fee, but you'll likely get something and you'll stop wasting your time on a deadbeat. If you work with a debt recovery firm, the industry claims a 12 to 14 percent recovery rate. Mazza claims his strategy recovers 50 percent and costs are fixed at roughly \$12 to \$14 per file.

**Don't let customers take advantage of you by making you wait for your cash.**



# Tandem lift tragedy



Illustration by Don Lomax

**T**wo excavator operators were using a tandem lift procedure to carry a 128-foot section of 16-inch gas pipeline from a staging area to the installation area at the bottom of a hill. The pipe was secured by two slings about 20 feet from each end of the pipe.

All excavator operators had completed the appropriate training and were considered experts on excavating operations. Although the victim was new to the company, he had 20 years of work experience operating heavy equipment, including excavators, and had been a member of the International Union of Operating Engineers. But according to OSHA, the employer had not established procedures for using two excavators during a lifting operation.

The two excavators lined up on one side of the pipe, picked it up using slings and proceeded to walk it toward the trench.

Once they got to the bottom of the hill, the excavator operators had to maneuver to the opposite side of the pipe to get into position to drop it in the trench. The first excavator lowered his end of

the pipe to the ground and signaled to a coworker on the ground to detach the sling. Then he crawled the machine around to the opposite side of the pipe where the ground worker reattached the sling. The operator then raised the boom and picked his end of the pipe up off the ground again.

The victim in the second excavator at the opposite end of the pipe attempted to do the same but did not lower his end of the pipe to the ground or detach the sling. At the point where he was halfway around the pipe, the end of the pipe came crashing through the windshield of the cab and struck him in the chest.

Police and emergency services rushed to the accident site, but the operator was pronounced dead at the scene.

Investigators believe the boom on the victim's excavator may have accidentally pulled back, sending the pipe crashing into the cab. The difference in elevation between the two machines may have also caused or contributed to the pipe's movement.

## How this accident could have been prevented:

- Implement a comprehensive safe work procedure for tandem lift operations. A lift plan should have been calculated and communicated, so the load could not swing directly in front of the operator's cab.
- Conduct a job hazard analysis on each worksite and procedure before work starts. Provide worker training that includes hazard recognition and avoidance of unsafe conditions. A formal, written lift plan is advisable.
- Implement an effective method of communication between excavator operators and ground workers. This should include hand signals and two-way radios.
- While excavators with chains, slings and other rigging are not considered cranes and governed by OSHA crane standards (OSHA 1970), a review of these procedures can help mitigate risks in complex tasks such as tandem lifts.

*For more information and details on this accident see:*

<http://bit.ly/safetywatch10>



Date of safety talk: \_\_\_\_\_ Leader: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Attending: \_\_\_\_\_



# Construction Starts: When Will the Post-Pandemic Road to Recovery Be Complete?

(a publication of Equipment World)

Mar 08, 2021

The overall U.S. economy is operating at 22 percent below pre-pandemic levels but should rebound by the first half of the year, says Richard Branch, chief economist for [Dodge Data & Analytics](#).

For the construction industry, however, the rebound picture is not as bright, Branch said March 5 during Dodge's first-quarter outlook. "Construction is certainly one of those industries that will take time for the recovery to really dig in and take hold and gain traction," he said.



Total construction starts rose 9% in 2020 and are expected to rise 4% in 2021. His prediction for this year, however, is still about \$46 billion shy of the industry's peak in 2019.

**Aside from the pandemic, one of the biggest stumbling blocks has been rising material prices.**

Construction costs are up 5.4% from a year ago. That includes lumber and metal prices. He noted that similar inflation was seen in 2017 and 2018, but then "the U.S. economy, and indeed the construction industry, was in much better shape than it is now."

The increased prices and supply shortages could lead to project delays. He predicted material price inflation would continue through 2021.

The Associated General Contractors has called on President Joe Biden to review and rescind trade tariffs, such as for steel and Canadian lumber, that have contributed to price increases.

"Left unchecked, these rising materials prices threaten to undermine the economic recovery by inflating the cost of infrastructure and economic development projects," said AGC CEO Stephen Sandherr.

## U.S. Total Construction Starts

Total construction fell 9% in 2020, to rise 4% in 2021



Source: Dodge Data & Analytics

**DODGE DATA & ANALYTICS**  
See Ahead. Think Ahead. Stay Ahead.



## Construction Material Inflation

As for when the construction industry will fully emerge from the pandemic-induced slowdown, Branch presented a mixed picture, with some segments already exceeding 2019 construction starts, while others lagged and will not fully rebound this year.

Single-family housing starts were the bright star of the past year, having already exceeded pre-pandemic levels, Branch said. They rose 14% in 2020, and he expects a 5% increase this year.

Warehouse starts, led by Amazon distribution centers, were another bright spot. Last year was a record year for the sector, with a 6% increase. Branch expects 2021 to be another record-breaking year with an 8% increase in starts.

Highways and bridges have also fared well, rising above 2019 levels. Bridge construction starts are expected to rise 5% this year after a 12% increase last year. Street and highway construction starts rose 8% last year and are expected to rise 1% this year.

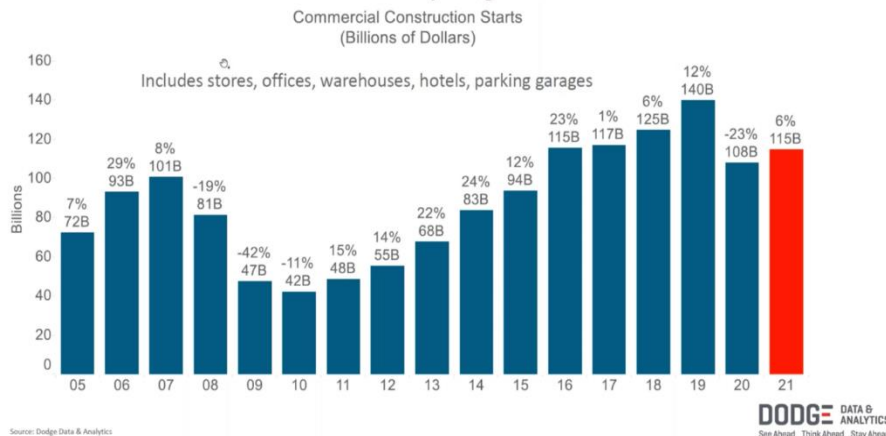
Environmental public works projects, such as dams and reservoirs, water systems and sewage systems, should all top 2019 levels this year, according to Branch. Overall, this segment should increase 6% in 2021 after falling 3% in 2020.

Health care building starts should also slightly top 2019 levels this year, rising 9% after falling 7% in 2020.

Individual segments of commercial building outside of warehouses still face longer recovery times beyond 2021.

## U.S. Commercial Building Starts

Commercial construction recovery begins in 2021



The AGC noted that February's job report showed a decline of 61,000 construction jobs in February due to severe weather and continued decline in the nonresidential sector. "Despite recovery in some parts of the economy, private nonresidential construction is still experiencing many canceled and postponed projects and few new starts," AGC Chief Economist Ken Simonson said in a news release.

**Associated Builders and Contractors'** national chief economist, Anirban Basu, however, was not as worried about the February employment drop

in nonresidential construction, saying it was mostly due to severe weather in the South. The ABC's recent backlog indicator for January showed rising contractor optimism and a slight rise in backlog. He also cited increasing vaccinations and additional Covid stimulus as boosting outlook. "All of this is consistent with ABC's long-standing forecast that the second half of 2021 will be spectacular for economic growth," Basu said in a news release.

He added there is a concern the economy could heat up too quickly, which could hurt nonresidential construction as interest rates and inflation rises. He added, though, that "such concerns are longer-term and speculative."

But not all nonresidential sectors will grow rapidly, predicts Branch. Hotels and retail starts have seen some of the biggest losses during the pandemic, according to Branch. Other sectors are slowly recovering but are still below 2019 levels. Hotel starts will be down 6% after dropping 50% in 2020. They will be about \$10 billion below 2019, he says.

Retail starts will climb 7% after they fell 27% last year. They will be about \$4 billion below 2019 levels. Office building starts will rise 8% after falling 22% in 2020. They will be about \$8 billion below their peak in 2019. The institutional sector, outside of health care and public buildings, will not fully recover this year. Sectors, such as education and recreation, will see further declines, Branch says.

The \$1.9 trillion Covid stimulus legislation that passed the U.S. Senate on March 6 and is expected to pass the House on March 9 will help stabilize the institutional sector, as it includes \$350 billion extra for state and local governments to help recover revenue drops during the pandemic, Branch said.

## U.S. Institutional Building Starts

Broad based declines in institutional sector

U.S. Institutional Building Starts  
(Billions of Dollars)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Education	\$45 16%	\$48 7%	\$53 9%	\$59 12%	\$64 9%	\$63 -1%	\$60 -5%	\$59 -2%
Healthcare	\$23 5%	\$23 2%	\$27 14%	\$29 7%	\$28 -3%	\$28 3%	\$26 -7%	\$29 9%
Public Buildings	\$8 19%	\$8 4%	\$9 11%	\$10 7%	\$10 4%	\$11 9%	\$12 6%	\$12 1%
Recreation	\$14 22%	\$14 3%	\$19 30%	\$18 -2%	\$21 14%	\$19 -10%	\$12 -38%	\$11 -5%
Transportation	\$8 18%	\$7 -5%	\$10 27%	\$22 127%	\$13 -39%	\$12 -8%	\$9 -22%	\$10 11%
Dormitories	\$6 22%	\$6 6%	\$4 -30%	\$7 50%	\$5 -18%	\$6 12%	\$4 -41%	\$3 -5%
Religious Buildings	\$2 -5%	\$2 23%	\$2 -15%	\$2 20%	\$2 -16%	\$2 27%	\$2 -24%	\$2 -2%
Total Institutional	\$105 14%	\$110 5%	\$123 11%	\$145 19%	\$143 -2%	\$142 0%	\$124 -12%	\$126 1%

Source: Dodge Data & Analytics

As for when the lagging construction sectors will bounce back to pre-pandemic levels, Branch predicts that overall institutional and commercial starts will not fully recover until at least 2024.

On the nonbuilding side, which includes power and gas plants, the recovery will occur in 2023, but could be 2022 if a large federal infrastructure package is passed this year. Biden has made this his next priority after passage of his \$1.9 trillion Covid-relief plan. His Build Back Better proposal, details of which are expected soon, calls for about \$2 trillion in infrastructure spending.

Branch did not add an infrastructure program into his forecast. But if it does come, he predicted high impact for public works, highways and bridges, transit and high-speed rail.

He also expected boosts in renovation projects due to Biden's climate initiatives. "Part of the Build Back Better program was heavily centered on climate change," he said. "So should there be dollars set aside to make buildings more energy efficient, whether that's through HVAC systems, better building envelopes ... I think that could certainly be a sleeper category in an infrastructure package."

Projects for renewable energy, such as wind and solar, will experience medium impact from an infrastructure plan, he predicted. Smaller impacts would be seen for data centers and internet infrastructure, as the Build Back Better plan includes expansion of rural access to broadband. Branch also predicted a boost for health care infrastructure even though the plan doesn't specifically mention it. "But I think the one thing that the pandemic has certainly laid bare is the lack of surge capacity in terms of inpatient beds, bed counts," he said. "I wouldn't be surprised if we did see this market get some dollars through an infrastructure program to kind of beef up that infrastructure a bit."

Whether a broad infrastructure measure passes, he does believe the FAST Act transportation bill will be reauthorized at \$300 billion, providing five years of increased surface transportation funding starting October 1, the day after the current funding expires. One question would be whether this amount, which he has already factored into his forecast, would be folded into an infrastructure plan or remain separate. "So overall in terms of infrastructure, I'm hopeful that we would see this go through unaltered in terms of the massive dollar amount," he said of a \$2 trillion infrastructure plan. "I do think the political reality here would say otherwise. I do think it's realistic to project that maybe half of that goes through, a trillion dollars becoming law."

If the infrastructure package is approved at \$1 trillion and the FAST Act funding is rolled into that, it would yield an overall \$700 billion increase in federal funding to his forecast. "That's a big number. That would be certainly a positive for the sector," he said. But its effect would not likely occur this year.

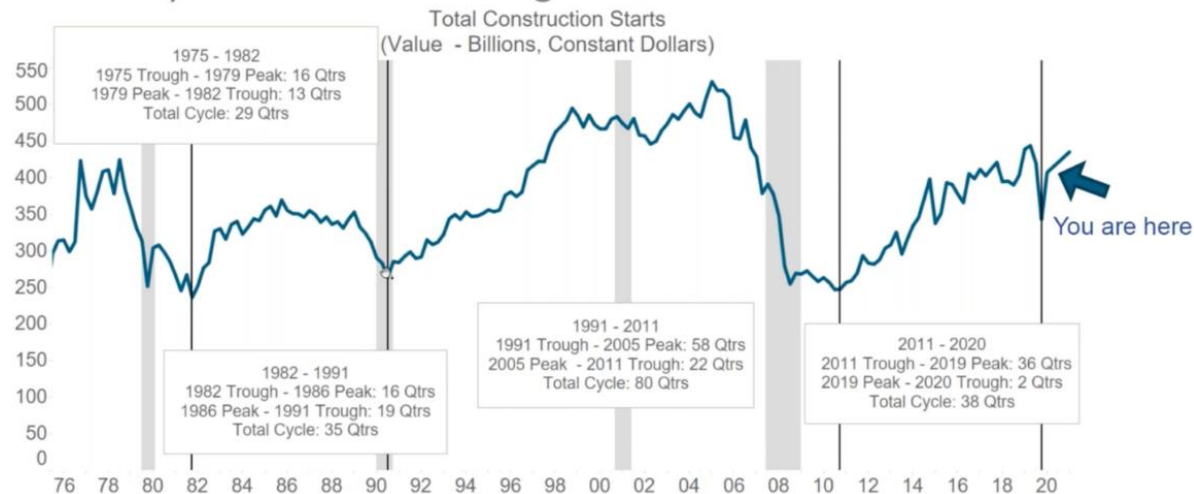
"We probably wouldn't see it this year in terms of dollars in 2021," he said. "This would probably be more 2022 and beyond." He also predicted a changed construction industry after the pandemic, but how it would look is still uncertain. It would not be a repeat of the recovery following 2009. He recommended that contractors be watchful for new opportunities.

“The construction sector might look very, very different to what it did prior to the pandemic,” he said, “... so make sure you're not buying into the fact that this is a copy-paste recovery from what you did back during the Great Recession.” “Over the course of this year, it's going to be harder and harder to find those projects, at least in the first half of this year. So you've got to make sure you stay aggressive and be very creative in terms of your business plans.”



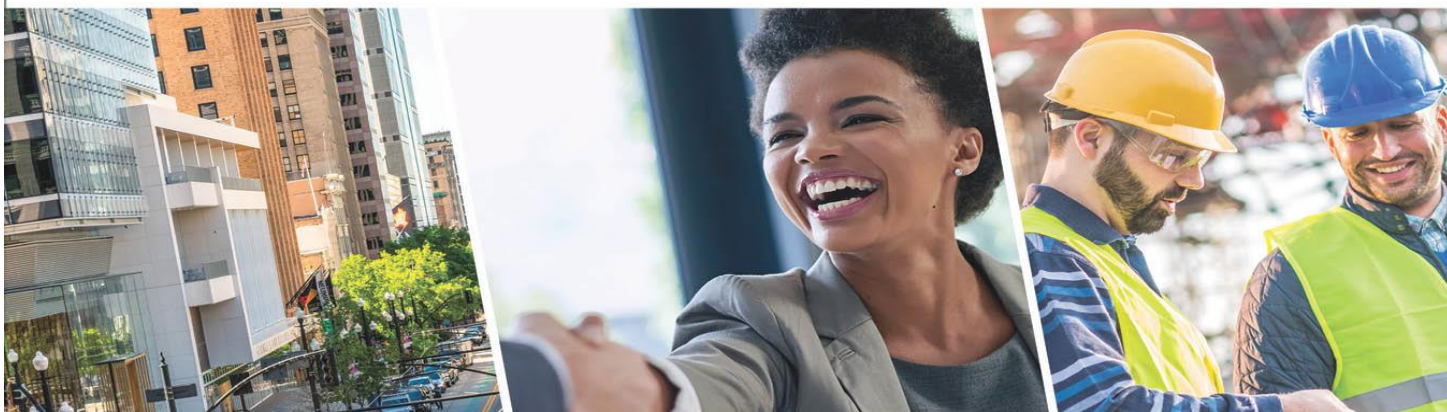
## U.S. Total Construction Starts – Cycle Chart

Current cycle outlook has changed due to COVID-19



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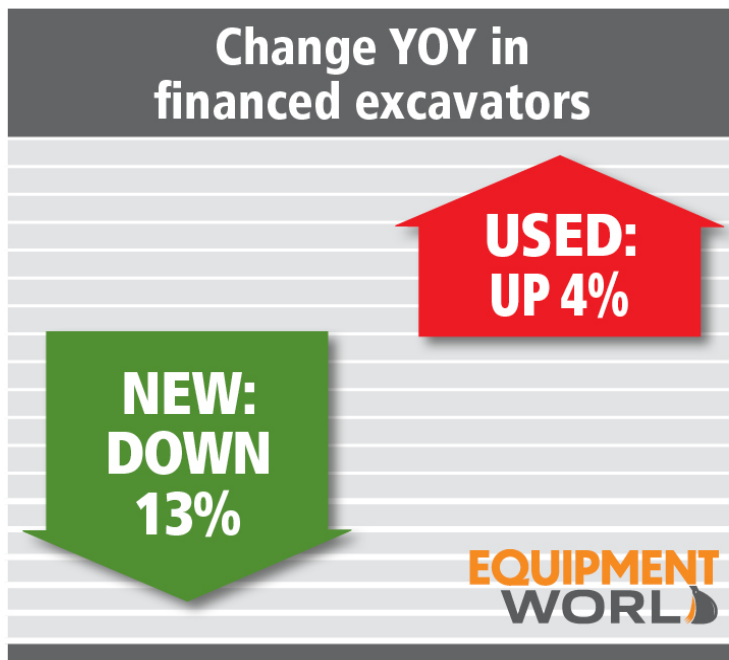


# There's Good News and Bad News for Sales of New and Used Financed Excavators

Feb 22, 2021-A publication of Equipment World

The Cat 336 excavator led financed new machine sales during 2020.

Financed new and used medium-and-large **excavators** took two different paths in the December-November year-over-year time period.



By number of units, Dec. 1, 2019-Nov. 30, 2020, compared with Dec. 1, 2018-Nov. 30, 2019. Source: EDA

Graphic by Tony Brock for *Equipment World*

The number of new financed medium/large excavators decreased 13% during the December 2019-November 2020 period compared with the same period in the previous year.

Used financed excavators, however, fared much better, with the number of units increasing 4% year-over-year. (Compact excavators were not included in this report.)

## Top financed models

Cat, Deere and Komatsu dominated the top 10 model offerings in terms of number of units sold. (See chart below.) The Cat 336 was the undisputed leader of the pack, with 591 units sold; Deere's 85G came in a distant second at 389 units sold. (Note: EDA data is continually updated.)

Just looking at this top 10 model slice, Deere and Cat were in a close race in terms of number of financed new models sold during

this time period, with Deere grabbing 37% of the pie, Cat 36% and Komatsu 27%.

On the used financed side, the Deere 210G LC topped the charts, with 315 units sold, followed by the Cat 336F L at 289 units sold.



**Texas dominates**

As with most types of equipment, excavator buyers in Texas lead the way, with 615 new equipment buyers and 951 used equipment buyers in the state during December-to-November time period. New financed excavator buyers were also prevalent in Florida (456 buyers) and North Carolina (367 buyers).

After Texas, the top states for those financing used excavators was Georgia (579 buyers) and North Carolina (442 buyers).

Top New, Used Financed Excavators			
New	Units	Used	Units
Cat 336	591	Deere 210G LC	315
Deere 85G	389	Cat 336F L	289
Deere 210G LC	387	Deere 350G LC	247
Cat 320	372	Cat 320E L	235
Komatsu PC138USLC-11	321	Cat 336E L	224
Komatsu PC360LC-11	319	Komatsu PC360LC-11	220
Komatsu PC210LC-11	314	Cat 323F L	204
Cat 323	310	Cat 349F L	187
Deere 135G	270	Cat 316E L	168
Deere 350G LC	252	Komatsu PC210LC-11	165
<b>Total Top 10 models</b>	<b>3,525</b>	<b>Total Top 10 models</b>	<b>2,254</b>

EDA data compiled week of Feb. 15th.

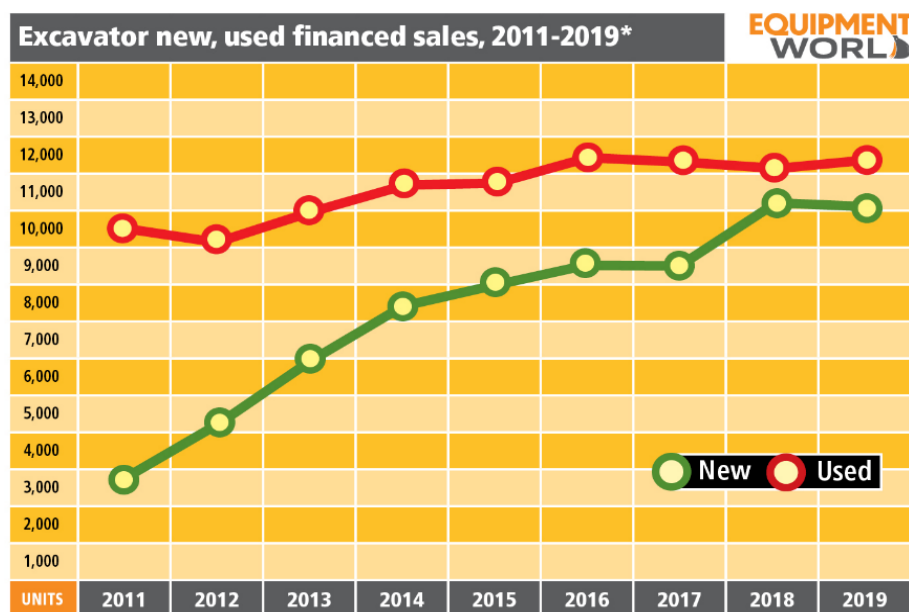
Graphic by Tony Brock for Equipment World

**A look back at financed excavator sales**

Looking at the extended 2011 -2019 trend line for number of units financed, new excavator unit sales peaked in 2018 with 10,823 units sold. Not surprisingly, the low point in this extended look was 2011, when 3,238 new financed units were sold.

On the used side, the number of units financed ranged from a high of 11,893 units in 2017 to a low of 9,863 units in 2012. (Note: Total 2020 financed sales data are still being processed.)

EDA data is compiled from state UCC-1 filings on financed construction equipment. Because there is a usual 40- to 50-day reporting lag from the states – exacerbated in 2020 because of the impacts of Covid-19 – we are using a Nov. 30th cut off in this report. Also note that EDA continually updates this data as information comes in. This report was compiled the week of Feb. 15th.



\*Number of units sold by financed sale or lease. Source: EDA, [edadata.com](http://edadata.com)

Graphic by Tony Brock for Equipment World

**At auction**

As reported by the TopBid auction price guide, 821 full-size excavators were sold at auction from Feb. 1, 2020 to Jan. 31, 2021.

The top full-size excavator sold during this time was a 2017 Cat 390F with 5,606 hours, which went for \$520,000 in a May 15th Ritchie Bros. auction in Phoenix. Also topping the chart was a 2019 Hitachi ZX490LCH-6, which sold for \$325,000 at an Alex Lyon & Sons July 23rd sale in Canastota, New York.

It's interesting to note that four under-50-hour machines made the top auction price list, three of them sold at the pre-pandemic February 2020 Ritchie sale in Orlando: a Volvo EC200 EL, a 2019 machine with 23 hours that went for \$290,000; a Cat 336GC, a 2018 Cat value-priced model with 10 hours on the meter that went for \$280,000; and a 2018 Cat 336F L with 6 hours that received a high bid of \$270,000.

Rounding off the low-hour list was another 2018 Cat 336F L with 31 hours, which sold for \$270,000 on Mar. 12 at a Ritchie sale in Las Vegas.



Top excavator models sold at auction				EQUIPMENT WORLD
Model	Year	Hours	Price	Month sold
Cat 390F L	2017	5,606	\$520,000	May-20
Hitachi ZX490LCH-6	2019	--	\$325,000	Jul-20
Cat 390F L	2018	1,639	\$294,000	Jun-20
Volvo EC200EL	2019	23	\$290,000	Feb-20
Cat 336GC	2019	10	\$280,000	Feb-20
Cat 335F L CR	2019	--	\$277,500	Jul-20
Cat 349F L	2018	1,888	\$276,000	Nov-20
Cat 336F L	2018	6	\$270,000	Feb-20
Cat 336F L	2018	31	\$270,000	Mar-20

TopBid data Feb. 1, 2020 - Jan. 31, 2021

Graphic by Tony Brock for Equipment World

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## WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES OF TRADE SCHOOL OVER A FOUR YEAR COLLEGE? THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR THOSE WITH KIDS AND GRANDKIDS STRUGGLING WITH JUST THIS ISSUE:

Trade schools are commonly referred to as vocational schools and career centers. It is defined as the type of educational institution designed to provide the technical skills required to perform specific jobs.

They differ from academic high school which prepares students for tertiary education rather than creating a workforce for a certain company or organization which is done by the trade school.

Trade schools provide job-specific training for students for one of the skilled trades whereas academic school produces students in professional discipline. From 1990s trade school started to shift towards a broader academic as well as technical skills of their students.

Trade schools were called “Technical Colleges” in Australia, sometimes called “colleges” in Canada and vocational colleges or schools in central and eastern Europe. Currently, about 47% of Finnish students at the age of 16 attend a technical school which creates a workforce for different sectors.

### Advantages and Disadvantages of Trade School



Although trade schools have advantages over the academic institution to some extent, they have drawbacks too. Below are some of the important pros and cons of a trade school.

#### Learn applicable(relevant) skills:

Trade school helps the student to learn the subject of their choice. They are examined on the basis of what they are going to be in their future. For example, if they want to be a chef, the questions in the test only arise from relevant topics. Trade school is producing a skillful workforce for various industries since its establishment.

#### Trade school saves your money and time.

The content of the study material is less in comparison to academic schools and colleges. As content is smaller in size, the time required to complete your course will be faster and cost reduces sharply. Moreover, the skills provided by a trade school are customized. As we know to learn specific skills is achieved by less content than in normal schools and colleges and hence saves time.

#### Reduced class size

Trade schools are smaller in size both in terms of students and area than a normal school or colleges. As the class size is small students are more active and flexible towards their study. They can have direct and repeated communication with teachers to solve their queries instantaneously.

#### High demand for jobs

The courses that are taught in trade schools are of high demand and the employers also want to recruit skillful and trained personnel. So you should not worry about job placement as you are already skillful personnel. In case, you could start your business of your own.



### **Hands-on experience:**

Students of the trade school will get an opportunity of hands-on experience in workshops whereas normal school doesn't.

As a student attends a vocational school, more practical knowledge is shared among students rather than theory which in turn makes them a skilled employee. Hands-on experience means learning through doing instead of reading and seeing.

### **Get admission when you prefer**

To get admission to the trade school there are no fixed timetables. You can join the trade school at any time after the completion of high school with the right qualification.

## **Disadvantages of Trade School**

### **The job opportunity is limited**

As trade school focuses on developing technical skills in students the courses are redefined for a specific field. So one can only be skillful in certain fields hence reducing the opportunity in finding jobs. Also, the workstations may be occupied with skills earned in these colleges or schools.



### **Trade school can be expensive**

The cost of the trade school may vary because of the modified or customized nature of the teaching in these schools. Thus careful study about fees should be done before admitting in trade school.

### **Knowledge sharing is impossible**

After graduating from trade school your knowledge is limited to a specific field. You may master in your area of interest but lack the opportunity to get knowledge like in traditional school. Thus, reducing the possibility of sharing knowledge among others about the different fields.



### **Prevents diversity**

Trade school admits students with the same profession interest discouraging a variety of learning activities. Once you admit in the trade school your main focus will be on mastering on one particular field.

### **Limited flexibility**

Trade school provides limited flexibility if you won't change your mind moving to business or other fields since you invested a lot of money for your previous trade school. For this reason, it is also known as a concentrated education system. In the case of a career-focused bachelor's degree array of classes and experiences prepare you for a diverse career option.

### **Limited choice of schools**

There is a limited number of trade schools across the world. For that reason, your demand for more schools is confined to a few preventing you from having diverse options. As you are limited to make choices the quality of such an institution is low. Also, there is no competition among trade school which eventually weakens the competitive nature of humans.





# ASSOCIATE JOE GRECO FROM THE BEG GROUP HAS SOME EXCITING CHANGES AND INFO TO SHARE WITH YOU!

## Rolling Out Biopreferred Erosion Controls

Erosion control is the practice of preventing or controlling wind or water erosion in agriculture, land development, coastal areas, stream banks and construction. Effective erosion controls handle surface runoff and are important techniques in preventing water pollution, soil loss, wildlife habitat loss and human property loss. Rolled biopreferred erosion control products are an emerging technology. These type products can either be temporary and biodegradable or long-term non-degradable materials that are manufactured into rolls designed to reduce soil erosion, and assist in the establishment, protection, and growth of vegetation.

BEG Group offers a highly qualified/exceptionally valued switchgrass-based erosion/filtration socked medium named The Big Switch. Our product is the original switchgrass sock to be nationally certified as a 100% biobased/biopreferred erosion/filtration medium by the USDA.

Since becoming a PALICA Associate Member in 2019 from Ohio, BEG Group has now moved its home office to Shelocta, Pa to best handle the overwhelming response we have had from being approved statewide by Pa DEP and Penn DOT back in March of 2017.

For more information on BEG Group product, please contact Joe Greco at (724) 681-4414 or [JOE@GRECO.TC](mailto:JOE@GRECO.TC).



Contact Joe Greco  
for product info

**(724) 681-4414**

[joe@greco.tc](mailto:joe@greco.tc)



## PRESS RELEASE -- New BRON Mid-West Facility Open for Business



It is with great pleasure that BRON, of Woodstock Ontario, announces the opening of a new facility in Midwestern USA. BRON Midwest Inc. is NOW OPEN! Our 24,000 sq/ft facility, strategically located at 610 Main St West, in Le Roy MN, will operate as a full sales & rental, parts & service dealership. Our new facility also houses an 1,800 sq/ft showroom to showcase BRON products and merchandise. All BRON products and services will be available in Le Roy. Justin Kowal, who has been a large part of our utility business growth, has assumed Branch Manager duties at BRON Midwest Inc. Along with our knowledgeable sales team and parts personnel, we have on staff two service technicians and fully equipped vehicles available for shop and field service. Our large inventory of parts includes all major drive and hydraulic components, undercarriage, ground engaging and wear parts for all BRON drainage & utility equipment. BRON equipment reconditioning services, will also be offered. We are very excited to continue to provide quality service and products to our existing customers and look forward to earning the business of new customers as well. We would also like to extend a big thanks to the community of Le Roy for their hospitality, as we begin a new chapter here, at BRON Midwest Inc. For more information on BRON products and services, please visit our website at [www.rwfbbron.com](http://www.rwfbbron.com)



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# Challenges for growing small businesses—

## When should you hire an accountant?



There are good reasons for hiring an accountant at different stages of your company's growth. From a business plan to company formation, loan application to tax investigation, an accountant can make life easier for you at each step.

That doesn't mean you always need to employ an accountant full-time or hire one on a retainer basis. Sometimes just a couple of hours of their time will be enough.

Like all small business owners who are looking to save money, you may think you can't afford an accountant. But look at how long it would take you to do certain tasks (such as taxes), and ask yourself, is that a good use of your time?

For example, let's say it takes you 10 hours to do your taxes, and your time is worth \$100 an hour. That's a cost of \$1,000 to do your taxes yourself. And there's always the risk you've made errors – especially if you're multi-tasking like most business owners.

However, if you get an accountant to take care of time-consuming tasks like taxes, it's quite likely they will cost less per hour than you would pay yourself. You'll not only have extra time to free you up to generate revenue, but you'll have peace of mind that an expert is taking care of the details.

### **So what other moments during the life of a typical small business, might you want to hire an accountant to help you?**

You'll need advice when you write a business plan. If you involve an accountant while you're writing your business plan, they will be able to use accounting software to add financial projections and other reports to it. This will help you create a business plan that's realistic, professional and more likely to succeed.

Hiring a professional at this early stage will mean you get the benefit of their financial knowledge and advice right from the start. That could save you time and money compared with hiring one later.

### **You'll need advice about your company's legal structure**

Not all businesses have the same legal structure – there are different types that are determined by a number of factors. Some might be called limited companies, limited liability partnerships or corporations, others could be sole traders or proprietors. These vary from one country to another.



You should carefully consider each type before deciding which one best suits you. For example, you may do business as a sole trader or sole proprietor, working on a self-employed basis and invoicing under your own name. If this is the case, you might be able to offset some of your living expenses against tax.



However, this also means you could be held personally liable for any business-related obligations. If your business fails to pay a supplier, defaults on a debt or loses a lawsuit, the creditor could legally come after your house or other possessions.

With a limited liability company structure, it's different. As the name suggests, the liability of the business is limited to the assets owned by the business, not you personally (though there may be exceptions in some circumstances). An accountant can explain the legal business structures available and help you choose the one that best suits you.

## **You'll need an accountant to help with the finances**

Small business accounting can quickly become complex if you do it on your own. If you feel you're losing control of who owes you money and how much, an accountant can help you get back on track.

You may also want to measure key business metrics, such as the ratio of salaries and other employee payments to total revenue. An accountant can help here by managing your payroll and producing graphs so you can see how the ratio changes over time.

If your accountant uses cloud-based accounting software, they'll be able to share your business accounts with you quickly and easily. And they can produce tables and charts that will help you understand your company's current financial situation at a glance. This will help you monitor the pulse of your business and keep track of important things like cashflow.



## **Hire an accountant when you're ready to delegate**

As a small business owner, no doubt one of the things you like best is that you have control. You can set your own working hours, craft your business strategy, regulate your workload (at least to some extent) and determine your own finances. And being the master of all of these things is a wonderful and liberating feeling.

But sometimes it can stop you from delegating. Business owners can feel overworked, partly due to a reluctance to allow other people to help out. You might feel that no one can possibly know your business as well as you do, therefore nobody can handle any part of your business as well as you can.



Inability to delegate can mean you're left feeling overworked and stressed. At some point you will have to let go, and learn to trust other people to handle some parts of your business so that you can look after the rest.

Delegating your company's financial affairs is a good start. You need to choose the right accountant and make sure you trust them with your company's financial information. Once you've handed over your company's finances to someone more experienced in accountancy than you are, you will have more time to concentrate on other aspects of your business.

# **! DELEGATE !**

Some of the most successful business owners in the world are experts at delegating work to the right people – so try to learn from them.



## Hire an accountant when you have to deal with the government

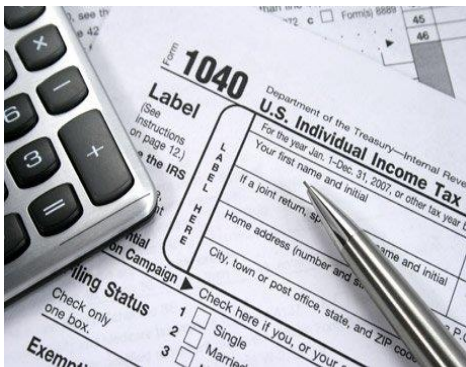
It can be daunting dealing with government paperwork when you run your own business. This is why so many small business owners hire an accountant when the first tax filing is due. But they can also help you cope with more than just tax returns. They can help your company interact with the government in other ways.



### A good accountant will be able to:

- Complete and file the required legal and compliance documents for your business
- Keep your company up to date with the latest tax laws
- Prepare statutory accounts
- Keep your company's status updated in the government's company register
- Maintain records of directors and other administrative personnel
- Organize and record share/stock allocation, such as when the business is formed, when a business partner leaves or a new partner joins
- Handle your payroll and ensuring that all employees' tax codes and payments are recorded correctly.
- Preparing your tax documents correctly could save you money – perhaps more money than your accountant charges you. And a good accountant will use their knowledge of tax laws and legislation to suggest ways you can free up cash flow, save money and raise capital for expansion.

### Hire an accountant in case you have a tax investigation



It's statistically unlikely that your company will be investigated, because there are so many small businesses and relatively few tax inspectors. But if it does happen to you it can be expensive, stressful and time-consuming.

If you don't already have an accountant at this point, it's a good time to hire one. They can give you advice on how to work within the investigation process. They can also help ensure you don't violate any tax laws afterwards – because the HMRC will almost certainly be watching.

But it's better to hire an accountant before an investigation ever happens, especially if you can find one who will offer tax investigation insurance.

Tax investigation insurance covers the fees you would have had to pay if your business needed to respond to an official enquiry, review, or investigation by a tax department. An accountant who offers tax investigation insurance means they won't charge any extra for the considerable amount of work they'll have to carry out during the investigation process.

Good accounting software incorporates an audit trail. This makes it easier for you and the tax office to see exactly what transactions have taken place over time – and who authorized them.

**You'll need an accountant when you apply for a business loan or overdraft** Banks like to know they'll get back the money they lend out. Since the credit crunch, lending to small businesses has dropped in most countries. This makes it all the more important that you have a sound business case when you apply for a loan or overdraft.

An accountant can help improve your chances. Even the fact that you have an accountant might sway the bank in your favor, as it implies you're serious about your business. With good accounting software, your accountant can present facts and figures that back up your application for funding. They'll also be able to answer any questions your bank might have about revenue projections and expenses.



Your accountant can also help you choose which loan to go for, and tell you whether your bank's terms and conditions and interest rate are favorable to you.

## **When your company is growing, hire an accountant**

Companies don't always grow at a steady rate. A new client or a big project can mean you need to grow your business more quickly than expected.

An accountant can help you handle growth transitions, such as hiring employees or taking on more office space. They'll look after the detail (payroll, employee tax management, property tax, utility payments and so on), leaving you free to look at the bigger picture of the way your business is growing.

An accountant can also use accounting software to analyse your cash flow, stock management and pricing. They can also provide insight into how to properly grow the business through financial analysis. They could even help determine when is the best time to introduce a new product or service offering to your range.

## **Get an accountant's advice before you buy a business**



Some people start their new business from scratch, others prefer to buy one that's already up and running. You should always consult an accountant before buying an existing business. They will be able to look into the company's accounts in detail and find out if anything looks wrong.

For example, they can check whether the company's assets (like equipment), are fully owned or leased or part-paid for, and whether the company has any outstanding debt.

It's a good idea to consult a lawyer too. Working together, your accountant and lawyer should discover all there is to know about the company you intend to buy and run. This will give you peace of mind that you're getting everything you're paying for.

## **Get advice from an accountant before you sell your business**

It's unlikely that you'll have run your business for years without employing the services of an accountant. But if you have, you should seriously consider hiring one before you sell up.


An accountant will put your company's financial records in order and produce statements of accounts that you can show to prospective buyers. Using high quality accounting software they can create useful charts and tables to show your company in a good light. They can also talk to any potential buyers' accountants during the due diligence process, which is often a legal requirement when a business is being taken over.

And, perhaps most importantly, an accountant can help you structure your financial affairs so that you get the most money from selling your business. Depending on how the sale is structured, the amount of money you receive after tax can vary considerably. For example, a lump sum might be less tax-efficient than monthly payments over a period of years.

Every company sale is different, and a good accountant will help you get the best result when you sell up.

## **Accountants can help you every step of the way**

As you can see, accountants can help you out during every stage of your company's development. That doesn't mean you have to hire one, but the right accountant should make life easier for you, so you can concentrate on what you love doing.

**Your specialty is running your business. Leave the financial details to an accountant. If you and your accountant use cloud-based accounting software, you'll be able to keep track of what your accountant does, and always be able to see your company's financial situation at a glance.** 

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# Shock-proof yourself

## Know the dangers of working around electricity

**The accident:** A crew was setting anchors in preparation for utility pole placement, using a boom truck with auger. Each anchor was attached to the auger using a coupling, which then used the auger motor to rotate the anchor and screw it into the ground. An anchor began to wobble during the setting process, and a crew member reached out to steady the anchor, unaware the extended boom had touched a 7,200-volt overhead power line. The anchor was energized, electrocuting the worker. He was pronounced dead from electrocution at the hospital.

**The bottom line:** A post-accident investigation found the crew member was not a regular employee, but part of a work release program and had no formal training in the utility construction industry. The training was provided on the job, but as a member of the work release program, the worker was unavailable for regularly scheduled safety training meetings. Additionally, the anchor was a replacement anchor that was more than 2 feet longer than the other anchors used on the project. When the crew tried to set the anchor, the additional length caused it to enter the ground at a difficult angle, creating the wobble that prompted the employee to try steadying the anchor, as well as creating a clearance issue with the overhead power line.

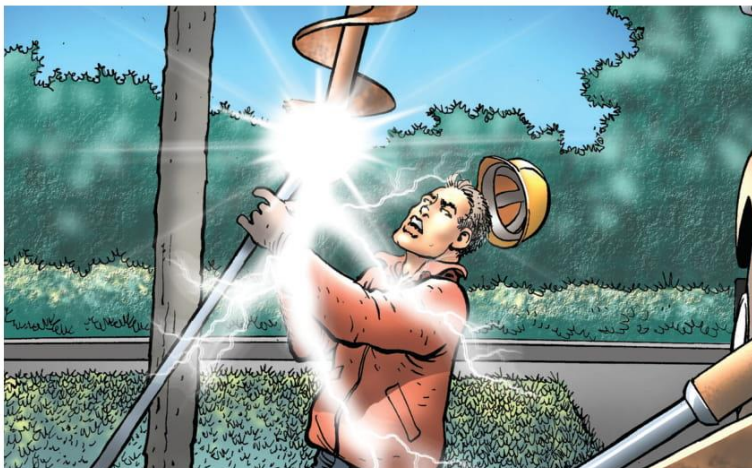


Illustration by Don Lomax

### Unnecessary errors

Working around electricity without the proper training, as this crew member did, can be a fatal mistake. Without the proper training, you won't have the necessary tools to recognize jobsite hazards. The error was compounded by using the longer anchor – material that a jobsite survey would not have accounted for. Although the 6-foot anchors would have been approved by the competent person conducting the survey, once the 8-foot anchor was substituted, the survey would no longer have been applicable to this jobsite.

### Safe steps

- Training – Attend all training sessions and tailgate talks to make sure you're ready to begin work.
- Awareness – Ask what particular hazards the jobsite survey found, and what steps have

been taken to mitigate the hazard. You should remain in a safe area while power is disconnected to the lines.

- Assessment – Before you begin work, walk the site and look for electrical hazards such as overhead power lines. Even if power has been disconnected from the line, stay away. If you're going to be working around them, always keep an eye on how far your equipment is from these lines, particularly when the boom is extended.

If substitute material is brought onto the jobsite, stop and assess what changes need to be made before continuing work. If there are clearance issues or other hazards created, don't continue work until the danger is mitigated.

For detailed information on controlling electrical hazards, visit [osha.gov/Publications/3075.html](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/3075.html).

Information for this Safety Watch came from an accident report and the Center for Disease Control's NIOSH Fatality Assessment

and Control Evaluation Program. It is designed for general information only.

Date of safety talk: \_\_\_\_\_ Leader: \_\_\_\_\_  
Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

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**NIAGARA FALLS PRE-TOURS AND OPTIONS**  
**JULY 27 - 31, 2021**  
PLEASE REMEMBER THESE TOURS ARE TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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- Historic East Aurora, NY
- The Martin House Tour
- Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park
- Five Star, Orchard Park, NY – John Deere Dealership
- The Buffalo Transportation Pierce-Arrow Museum
- Modern Landfill
- The Medina Railroad Museum
- Spring Lake Winery
- Grand Lady - Afternoon Happy Hour Cruise in Buffalo

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## FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...(worth repeating)



### **BOARD MEMBERS WANTED:**

If you are interested in sitting on the PALICA Board of Directors, submit your name to Joanie ASAP. Elections for officers and seating of new members will then take place at the Annual Membership Meeting in March. Even if you can't make the meeting, you can still submit your name to be added to the ballot. The By-Laws are on the website and you can contact Joanie for info on board member obligations.

IF YOU WORK FOR A MAN, for Heaven's sake, WORK for him. If he pays you wages which supply you bread and butter, work for him; speak well of him; stand by him and by the institution he represents. If put to a pinch, an ounce of loyalty is worth a pound of pride. If you must vilify, condemn and eternally disparage him—resign your position, and when you are outside, damn to, quietly to your heart's content, but as long as you are part of the institution, do not condemn. If you do that, you are loosening the tendrils that are holding you to the institution. There will be many jobs lost to you throughout your years, for various reasons, but staying true to yourself and your principles will be made up for 10-fold in this life and the next.

*Author Unknown*

### **HOW TO ACCESS SAFETY INFO IN THIS PUBLICATION**

Several of the articles within this newsletter have come from ZYWAVE which is an online site set up for your use and is another benefit you all have access to as PALICA members. It has many useful resources for running your business from OSHA forms to ToolBox Talks to DOT updates and forms etc. Please utilize it! It can be something you pull up on your office computer each morning and use throughout the day.

Simply visit our national office @ [www.LICANational.org](http://www.LICANational.org) for details and/or call them @ (630) 548-1984 to get a log in set up for your company. They'll ask you for your PALICA Member ID or they can contact me for that if you don't have it handy and you'll be all set to go!



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