



* A FIELD GUIDE FOR CONTRACTORS

The Contractor's Financial *Visibility* Guide

Five disciplines that turn job-cost chaos into clarity — so you know which jobs make money, see cash before it gets tight, and make the big calls on real numbers instead of gut feel.

Grow the business. *Bank the profit.*

COASTAL CFO ADVISORS • FRACTIONAL CFOS FOR CONTRACTORS

info@coastalcfo.io

coastalcfo.io

[@jobsitecfo](https://www.instagram.com/jobsitecfo)

Revenue \neq Profit \neq Cash.

Most contractors grow revenue without growing take-home profit. You bid for profit — but are you banking it? **Visibility is what closes the gap** between a full schedule and a bigger bottom line. It starts with four numbers, tracked together.

THE FOUR NUMBERS

01

Revenue

The work you bring in. **More revenue won't fix a broken business.**

02

Gross Profit

What your jobs produce. **Won or lost in the field.**

03

Net Profit

What's actually left over. **Busy doesn't mean profitable.**

04

Cash

What's in the bank. **Profit is not the same as cash.**

Track all four together — never one in isolation. We review all four monthly, and cash weekly.



Where visibility *actually comes from.*

01 Know your most profitable jobs — and your riskiest.

You should see clearly which jobs make money and which quietly drain cash, time, or margin. Without that, you're flying without instruments.

HOW TO TACKLE IT

- **Track job-level profitability** — break labor, materials, and overhead down by project.
- **Run a monthly project review** — actual costs vs. budget, every job.
- **Rank by gross margin** to surface your best and worst performers.

02 Catch underbilling before it wrecks your runway.

Underbilling means you've done more work than you've invoiced. It starves cash flow and hides how much you're really owed.

HOW TO TACKLE IT

- **Compare billing to percent complete** — invoices should match real progress.
- **Review WIP monthly** to spot over- and under-billings early.
- **Tie invoicing triggers** to completion milestones or phases.

03 Forecast cost and cash — kill the surprises.

Look ahead at what you'll spend, and when, across every job and the business — so a tight month never blindsides you.

HOW TO TACKLE IT

- **Build a rolling 13-week cash forecast** — map money in and out, update weekly.
- **Forecast final job costs** from real data, not the original bid.
- **Track committed costs** — signed subcontracts and POs already promised.

04 Operate with confidence, backed by real numbers.

Stop guessing. Make decisions on current, accurate financials — not gut feel and last quarter's memory.

HOW TO TACKLE IT

- **Keep the books current** — monthly close and reconciliations are non-negotiable.
- **Track the KPIs that matter** — gross margin, backlog, overhead ratio.
- **Run a monthly CFO rhythm** — review financials, forecasts, and job performance.

05 Get expert insight to plan what's next.

Numbers only matter if they point to the next right decision — hiring, bidding, buying equipment, growing. Clarity isn't a report; it's a bigger bottom line.

HOW TO TACKLE IT

- **Translate financials into a forward plan** — the next move, not just the score.
- **Name your biggest risks and opportunities** before they force your hand.
- **Build guardrails** so growth never outruns cash.

● THE REAL PROBLEM

You're not bad at this. *You're flying without instruments.*

Run these five disciplines and you go from managing on intuition to managing by data — cash, margin, and risk visible months ahead, so the big calls feel like strategy, not a gamble.

How much can you *actually* see?

Tick every statement that's true in your business *today*. Be honest — the gaps are where the money is, and they're exactly what the five disciplines fix.

I can see gross margin by job, updated monthly.

I know my best and worst jobs right now.

I review WIP (work-in-progress) every month.

My billing tracks to percent complete on every job.

I keep a rolling 13-week cash forecast — and update it.

I forecast final job costs from real data, not the bid.

I track committed costs — signed subs and POs.

My books are closed and reconciled within 15 days.

I track gross margin, backlog and overhead ratio monthly.

I hold a set monthly financial review on the calendar.

I know my biggest financial risk and opportunity this quarter.

Big decisions start from the numbers, not a hunch.

0 / 12

YOUR VISIBILITY SCORE

Flying without instruments. Visibility is the first thing to fix.

• WHAT THIS TAKES

Doing this well is a *part-time job.*

Visibility isn't a one-time project — it's a rhythm. Here's the cadence the five disciplines actually run on, week to week and month to month.

EVERY WEEK

- Update the rolling 13-week cash forecast
- Review cash in vs. cash out
- Chase slow-paying receivables before they age

EVERY MONTH

- Close & reconcile the books
- Review WIP & billing vs. percent complete
- Job-cost review with your PMs
- Update the KPI scorecard
- Forecast review & a forward game plan

THE COST OF FLYING BLIND

On **\$10M** in revenue, a **20%** margin you bid for that banks at just **14%** is roughly **\$600K** slipping through the cracks every year — through billing gaps, cost overruns and cash timing.

Margin you bid for

\$2M

Margin you bank

\$1.4M

Leaking each year

\$600K

Illustrative. Real recovery depends on your jobs, billing and cash timing — exactly what visibility is built to fix.

17.7% net profit — *beating best-in-class.*

A fast-growing industrial & nonresidential building contractor came to us in 2024 with strong revenue but tightening cash, aging receivables, and uneven margins — no real-time view of profitability. Here's what visibility changed.

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Net profit | 12.1% → 17.7% |
| Gross profit | 22.8% → 27.5% |
| Labor rate (lower is better) | 11.0% → 6.8% |

CFMA 2025 BENCHMARK — NET PROFIT



Industrial & nonresidential contractor, engaged 2024. Net profit is full-year 2024 vs. currently projected; gross profit vs. 2024-25 trailing average. Client name withheld for privacy; figures actual and projected as noted.

• READY TO PUT THIS INTO ACTION?

A financial quarterback, *built for the field.*

Everything in this guide — the four numbers, the five disciplines, the weekly and monthly rhythm — *is the job we do for you.*

A fractional CFO watches the money side of your business so you're not guessing — *fractional* just means part-time, a few days a month instead of a full-time salary. In plain terms:

Keeps an eye on your cash — so you stop guessing and start planning.

Shows which jobs make money — and which quietly lose it.

Heads-up before a tight month — weeks ahead, not after.

Helps you think through big calls — hiring, equipment, growth.

Grow the business. *Bank the profit.*

We work alongside your CPA, banker, bonding agent and bookkeeper — the financial quarterback who keeps everyone aligned around one game plan. Reach out and we'll show you where the gaps are, and what closing them is worth.

[Book a strategy call →](#)

info@coastalcfo.io
coastalcfo.io
@jobsitecfo