2026 CONSTRUCTION LEADERSHIP FORECAST

THE GREAT SHIFT

Talent Risk, Succession Gaps & The Next 24 Months of Leadership Change.

"What Every Construction Leader Must Understand About The Impending Talent Collapse."

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HOMEBUILDING SALARY GUIDE.

Leadership Compensation Inflation Is Accelerating Faster Than Internal Talent Pipelines

Homebuilders are facing one of the tightest leadership labor markets in the last decade. As Baby Boomer executives retire and mid-level managers jump companies for compensation increases, salaries across nearly every operational and land-focused role have risen sharply from 2024–2026.

The data below shows significant upward pressure on compensation — with double-digit increases in multiple critical roles. For companies already struggling with internal promotions and succession planning, this creates a dangerous gap:

THE COST TO REPLACE A LEADER IN 2026 IS RISING FASTER THAN COMPANIES CAN DEVELOP THEM.

For organizations already short-staffed, this trend will directly impact:

- Project Delivery Capacity
- Leadership Bench Depth
- Retention of Mid-Level Managers
- The ability to win new community launches

Companies that fail to adapt will experience higher turnover, longer time-to-fill, and increased project risk as compensation inflation outpaces talent availability.

KEY INSIGHTS FOR EXECUTIVES

1. Land & Forward Planning salaries have jumped the fastest.

Roles like Land Acquisition Directors, Forward Planners, and Land Development leaders show **20%–30%+ increases**, reflecting severe shortages in strategic land talent.

2. Finance and back-office leadership saw unexpected spikes.

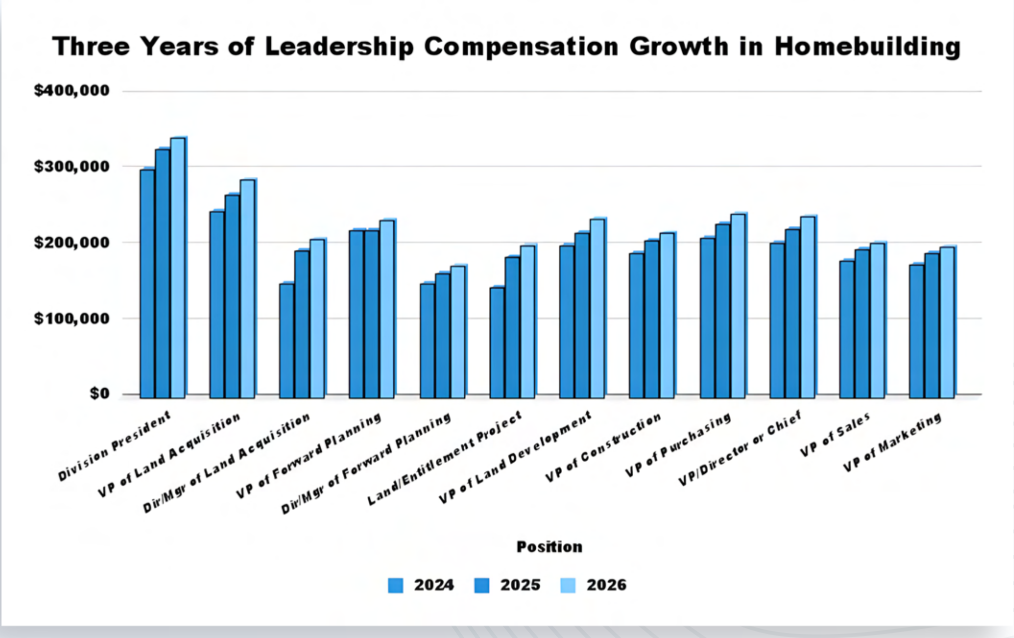
Controllers and CFO-track roles show 30%+ increases, signaling risk as older finance leaders retire with no internal replacement.

3. Construction Ops roles are tightening as Boomers exit.

Superintendents, Project Managers, and Area Construction Managers show consistent 8–15% growth, matching industry-wide field leadership shortages.

4. Entry-level & coordinator roles also inflating.

Even support roles are rising 8–25% — a sign that talent scarcity is now affecting the entire org chart, not just senior leaders.



POSITION	LOW	HIGH
Division President	$258,960	$342,300
VP/Director of Operations	$192,400	$215,250
VP of Land Acquisition	$227,850	$287,280
Director/Manager of Land Acquisition	$136,500	$208,440
VP of Forward Planning	$198,550	$233,200
Director/Manager of Forward Planning	$141,075	$172,780
Land/Entitlement Project Manager	$136,500	$155,800
Forward Planner	$113,905	$144,160
VP of Land Development	$204,750	$234,360
Director/Manager of Land Development	$148,050	$176,040
Offsite Superintendent	$113,905	$137,800
Financial Analyst/Land Analyst	$94,500	$124,200
VP of Construction	$197,600	$216,300
Director/Manager of Construction	$169,520	$187,950
Area Construction Manager / General Superintendent	$136,895	$178,080
Construction Project Manager	$113,360	$155,400
Superintendent / Construction Manager	$96,140	$127,200
Assistant Superintendent / Assistant Construction Manager	$62,400	$75,600
VP of Purchasing	$181,830	$225,680
Director/Manager of Purchasing	$135,850	$150,780
Senior/Purchasing Agent	$93,600	$120,750
Design Center Manager	$95,220	$107,635
Options Coordinator	$67,275	$78,375
Contract Administrator	$67,275	$78,375
Purchasing Coordinator	$67,275	$78,375
VP/Director or Chief Financial Officer	$171,150	$238,680
Controller	$153,000	$160,000
Assistant Controller	$96,600	$129,600
VP of Sales	$168,705	$203,775
Director/Manager of Sales	$124,200	$154,660
VP of Marketing	$168,705	$198,550
Director/Manager of Marketing	$112,750	$139,725
Escrow Manager	$75,000	$105,000
VP of Customer Service	$155,250	$182,875
Director/Manager of Customer Service	$134,550	$155,065
Warranty Representative	$62,100	$74,195
Customer Service Rep	$51,750	$62,700
Customer Coordinator	$50,715	$62,700

* Land and Purchasing salaries experienced the highest increase of all roles in the homebuilder industry.

* Compensation variance = # of units delivered, profits, surveys, product type, public or private co.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR SALARY GUIDE.

Field Leadership Shortages Are Driving Record Compensation Growth

While homebuilding is experiencing leadership inflation, General Contractors are facing an even sharper imbalance — especially in field **operations, project management,** and **executive construction leadership.**

Superintendents, Project Managers, and Operations Executives continue to be the most aggressively recruited roles in the industry. With major infrastructure, industrial, and data center projects crowding the market, GCs are competing for the same limited pool of qualified talent.

The result:

GC salary inflation is rising faster than project margins — and significantly faster than internal promotion pipelines.

The roles that traditionally stabilized the organization — Senior Supers, PMs, APMs — are now among the hardest to hire and retain. Many companies are losing mid-level talent to competitors willing to pay 12–20% above market just to secure manpower for awarded projects.
This page highlights the salary trajectory and shows why succession risk in operations-heavy organizations is accelerating.

KEY INSIGHTS FOR EXECUTIVES

1. Superintendent salaries continue to spike.

GCs consistently report that Pre-Construction are their #1 hardest role to fill, creating rapid inflation in Senior and Lead development pay.

2. Project Manager and Project Executive roles are in high bidding wars.

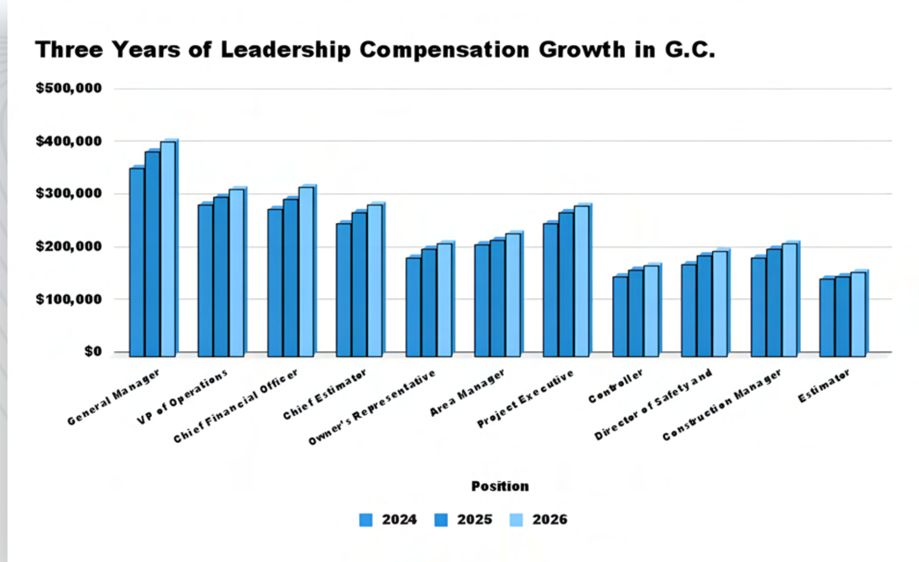
Large-scale commercial projects are aggressively pulling talent from mid-sized GCs.

3. Back-office roles remain stable — but finance & estimating roles are tightening.

Controllers, Estimating Managers, and Precon Directors show steady increases tied to demand for financial and risk oversight.

4. The cost of replacing field leadership is now a critical operational risk.

Lost PMs or Supers lead to delays, schedule slippage, and client dissatisfaction — far more costly than salary increases.



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POSITION	LOW	HIGH
General Manager	$332,800	$405,300
VP of Operations	$281,840	$315,000
Chief Financial Officer	$252,000	$319,680
Chief Estimator	$250,800	$287,260
Owner's Representative	$170,560	$212,100
Area Manager	$202,800	$231,000
Project Executive	$214,240	$284,550
Controller	$145,935	$170,335
Director of Safety and Quality Control	$165,360	$198,450
Sr. Cost Engineer - Construction	$150,800	$205,800
Construction Manager	$142,480	$213,150
Sr. Project Manager	$156,000	$208,950
Sr. Field Engineer - Construction	$125,840	$158,550
Estimator	$125,400	$159,000
Project Accountant	$67,275	$93,005
Project Engineer	$93,600	$120,750
Field Engineer - Construction	$98,800	$142,800
Senior Superintendent	$140,000	$198,550
Sr. Construction Coordinator	$67,275	$96,140
Project Administrator	$60,030	$81,510
Take Off Engineer	$55,120	$67,200
Contracts Administrator	$62,100	$94,050

A.I. DATA CENTER CONSTRUCTION

The AI Construction Boom Is Consuming the Industry's Leadership Talent

The explosion of artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and high-density data infrastructure has unleashed a historic surge in data center construction. Major tech firms are awarding multi-billion-dollar campuses at a pace the industry has never seen — and they are aggressively hiring the top construction talent to build them.

The result is unprecedented:

DATA CENTER PROJECTS ARE DRAINING THE LEADERSHIP RANKS OF GCS, DEVELOPERS, AND SPECIALTY CONTRACTORS NATIONWIDE.

Roles that once served commercial, industrial, and healthcare projects are now being pulled into large-scale data center programs with compensation packages 20–35% higher than traditional project markets. This talent migration is directly contributing to shortages in superintendents, project managers, executives, estimators, and mission-critical specialists.

The demand spike is not temporary. The AI race is accelerating — and the companies that fail to prepare will be unable to compete for the limited pool of technical and leadership talent left in the market.

KEY INSIGHTS FOR EXECUTIVES

1. Data centers are absorbing senior leadership at a record pace.

Superintendents, construction managers, and project executives are being recruited aggressively for mega-campuses with multi-phase buildouts.

2. Compensation pressure is highest for technical operations roles.

Mission-critical PMs, MEP Supers, and Commissioning Managers now command salaries **10–25% above standard GC rates.**

3. AI-driven projects require specialized talent and few professionals have the experience.

Only a small subset of the workforce has true hyperscale or mission-critical experience, creating bottlenecks in project staffing.

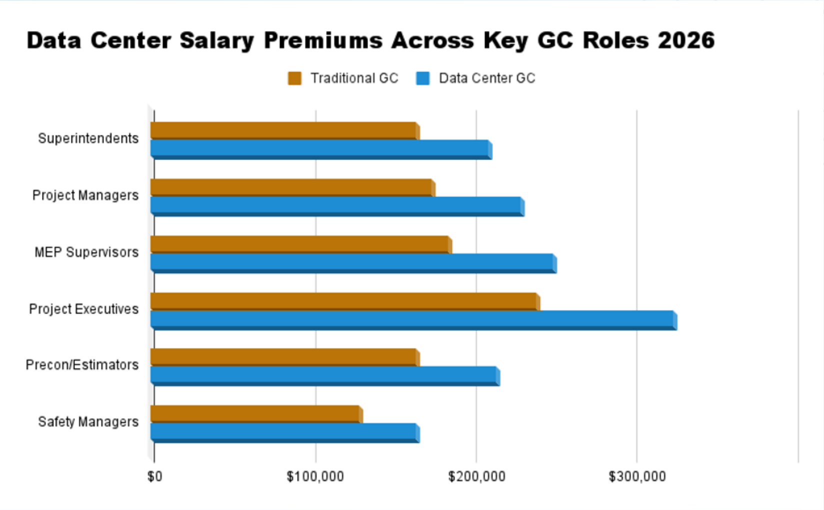
4. Traditional builders cannot match the pace or pay of tech-funded builds.

This is pulling top talent out of:

- Commercial Mid-Rise
- Corporate Interiors
- Distribution Centers
- Industrial Manufacturing
- Public Sector Projects

5. The next 24 months will determine who retains their leadership bench.

Companies without a proactive recruiting or succession plan will feel the full impact of this talent drain.



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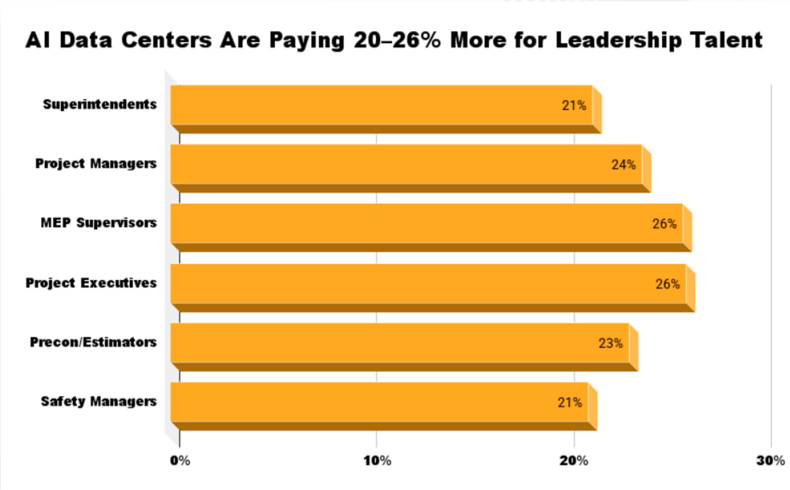
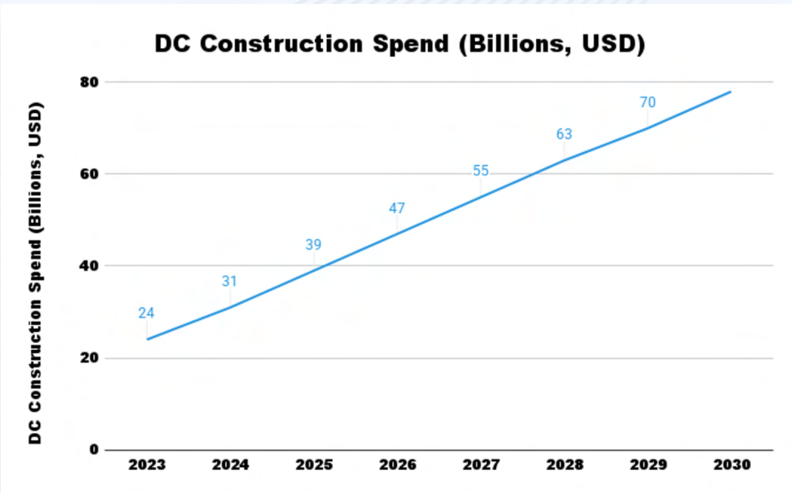


Projected Data Center Construction Volume (2023–2030)

Data center construction demand will more than triple between 2023 and 2030, creating sustained, long-term leadership shortages that the industry is not prepared for.



The future of construction leadership is being shaped by forces outside the traditional industry. AI and data center expansion are accelerating demand for high-caliber leaders faster than companies can develop them internally.

For most builders and GCs, this means:

- Increased competition for PMs, Supers, and Executives
- Faster turnover
- Rising compensation pressure
- Stalled succession pipelines
- Project delivery risks
- Operational slowdowns
- Lost bids and delayed revenue

Those who invest early in leadership recruitment, development, and succession strategies will dominate the next decade. Those who wait will compete for the same shrinking pool of qualified leaders — and pay exponentially more for them.

This concludes the 2026 Construction Leadership Forecast — and the warning is clear:

The next 24–36 months will determine who leads the industry in 2030.

WHAT THE CHARTS ARE SAYING

- Total data center construction volume more than triples from 2023 to 2030.
- The steepest part of the curve likely sits in the 2025–2028 band — exactly when most Boomers are exiting.

The projection curve shows data center construction volume more than tripling by 2030, with the steepest growth hitting between 2025 and 2028 — the exact window when many of today's construction leaders plan to retire. In other words, demand for experienced leadership will spike at the same time the industry's most experienced leaders are leaving.

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POSITION	CA - LOW	CA - HIGH	NON-CA LOW	NON-CA HIGH
Regional Director of Data Center Delivery	$260,000	$330,000	$210,000	$270,000
VP of Data Center Construction	$250,000	$320,000	$200,000	$250,000
Vice President of Preconstruction	$240,000	$310,000	$190,000	$245,000
Chief Estimator	$200,000	$280,000	$165,000	$230,000
Director of Preconstruction (MC)	$190,000	$260,000	$155,000	$210,000
Senior Estimator (MC)	$135,000	$190,000	$110,000	$150,000
Electrical Estimator (DC)	$125,000	$170,000	$95,000	$135,000
Civil Estimator	$100,000	$145,000	$80,000	$115,000
Director of Mission Critical Projects	$230,000	$290,000	$180,000	$240,000
Senior Project Executive	$205,000	$260,000	$160,000	$220,000
Project Executive – (MC)	$185,000	$245,000	$150,000	$200,000
Program Manager (multi-site)	$150,000	$200,000	$115,000	$160,000
Senior Project Manager (MC)	$170,000	$215,000	$135,000	$180,000
Project Manager – (MC)	$140,000	$185,000	$110,000	$150,000
Assistant Project Manager	$90,000	$125,000	$75,000	$100,000
Senior Project Engineer	$110,000	$150,000	$85,000	$125,000
Project Engineer	$80,000	$120,000	$65,000	$95,000
Field Engineer	$70,000	$110,000	$60,000	$85,000
General Superintendent – (MC)	$180,000	$250,000	$145,000	$200,000
Senior Superintendent	$160,000	$210,000	$125,000	$175,000
Superintendent	$130,000	$185,000	$100,000	$150,000
Assistant Superintendent	$90,000	$135,000	$70,000	$110,000
Design Manager – (MC)	$160,000	$210,000	$125,000	$170,000
MEP Design Manager	$125,000	$180,000	$95,000	$140,000
HVAC Controls Manager	$140,000	$185,000	$110,000	$150,000
VDC/BIM Manager (Precon)	$85,000	$125,000	$70,000	$100,000

***Note**: MC = Mission Critical | DC = Data Center*

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SUCCESSION RISK INDICATORS

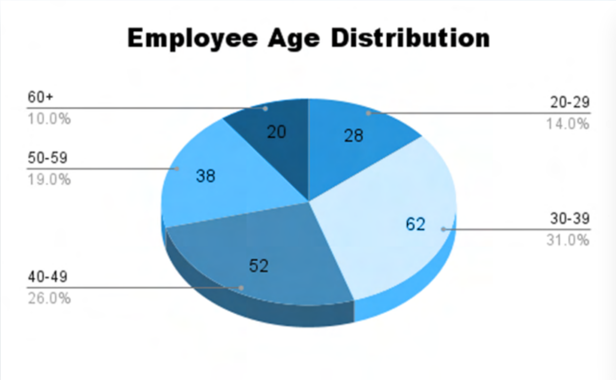
"A LEADERSHIP CLIFF IS APPROACHING SOONER THAN COMPANIES EXPECT"

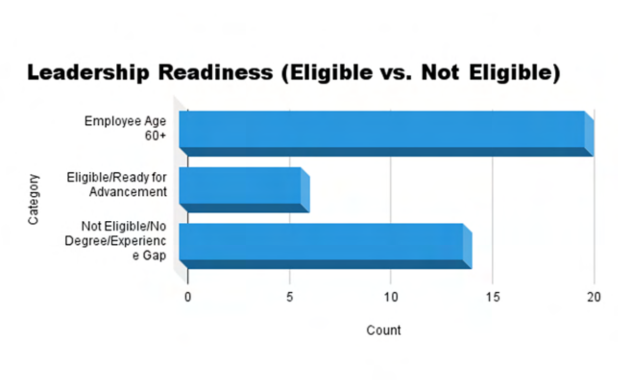
The following is a case study of a company with 200 employees. The age distribution chart shows a workforce heavily concentrated in the 40–59 range, with 18 employees aged 60+. This is the group carrying decades of project, operational, and financial expertise — and they are nearing retirement.

This means a significant portion of institutional knowledge will disappear in the next 3–7 years.

Without a prepared bench, this represents a critical leadership cliff.

CASE STUDY OF 200 EMPLOYEES





"Most Retirement-Age Staff Cannot Step Into Higher Roles"

Mission-critical PMs, MEP The second chart reveals an even more pressing issue: only 6 of the 18 retirement-age employees are qualified to fill future senior roles.

The remaining two-thirds lack the technical background, certifications, or leadership experience to move upward.

This gap ensures that when leaders retire, their roles will not be backfilled internally — triggering emergency external searches and operational instability.

CASE STUDY OF 200 EMPLOYEES

"Internal Leadership Pipelines Are Not Being Built"

A healthy construction organization promotes 20–30% of its staff annually into expanded responsibilities. This company is promoting just 7%, which signals a stalled leadership pipeline.

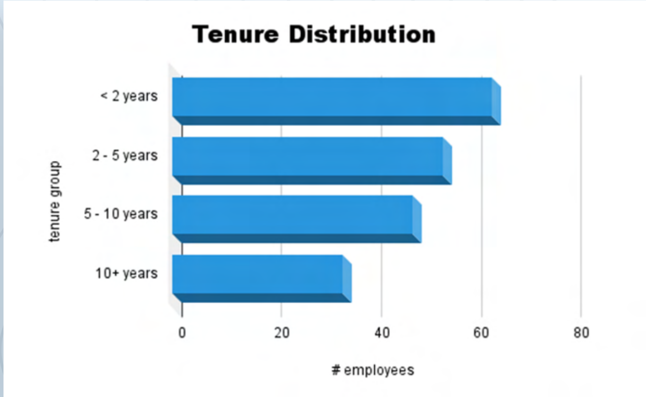
This stands out as one of the most telling succession-risk indicators:

if employees are not being developed and promoted, then future leaders are not being created.

Companies with low promotion rates inevitably face higher turnover, weaker culture, and reduced continuity.

Out of 200 employees only 14 were ready for internal promotion.

CASE STUDY OF 200 EMPLOYEES



"High Turnover Is Eroding the Future Leadership Bench"

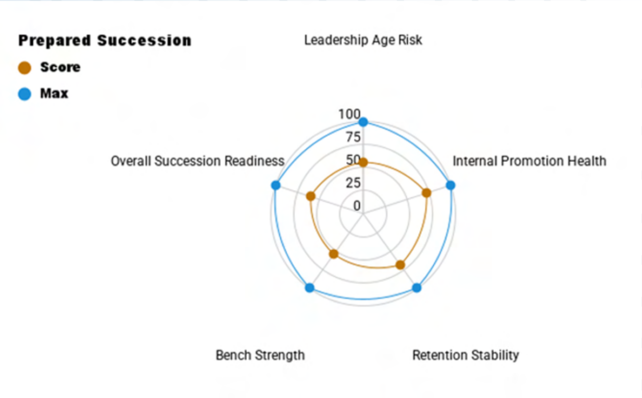
Mission-critical PMs, MEP The second chart reveals an even more pressing issue: only 6 of the 18 retirement-age employees are qualified to fill future senior roles.

The turnover chart shows ***21% of employees left the company in the past year*** — a damaging drain on any attempt to build future leadership.

Your tenure distribution then reveals why succession is failing:

- **58 employees have been with the company less than 2 years**
- **Only 34 have been there more than 10 years**

The people who should be ascending into leadership roles are leaving faster than the company can stabilize them.
This is the "quiet collapse" of leadership continuity.



"Succession Readiness Is Weak Across Every Category — Not Just One"

The radar chart provides a holistic view of leadership risk. With scores ranging from 22 to 32, every succession metric falls into the "high-risk" zone:

- Aging workforce risk: High
- Promotions: Insufficient
- Retention: Weak
- Bench strength: Fragile
- Overall readiness: Poor (28/100)

The shape of the radar chart visually communicates the problem: a shrinking, fragile core with no stability.

In other words, the organization is exposed from every direction.

The combined data points to one unavoidable reality:

This company is on the verge of a leadership void.

Without immediate investment in leadership development, succession planning, and proactive recruitment, the organization will experience:

- Increased project risk
- Higher turnover
- Emergency executive searches
- Rising labor costs
- Loss of operational continuity
- Strained client relationships

Succession planning is no longer a future concern — it is a present risk. Companies that act today will control the talent market. Companies that wait will find themselves reacting to a crisis that is already unfolding.

WHAT THE CHARTS ARE SAYING

TOGETHER, THOSE 5 CHARTS BASICALLY SCREAM:

- Your workforce is top-heavy and aging (big bulge in the 40–59 band, 18 people 60+).
- Of those 18 close to retirement, only 6 are actually promotable into bigger roles.
- You're only promoting ~7% a year (vs a healthy 20–30%), so the "bench" isn't being built.
- You lost 21% of staff in a year, and most of your people have low tenure (58 are <2 years).
- The radar chart says your overall succession readiness is in the "high-risk" zone across every dimension.

Net: this is not just a gradual shortage — it's a leadership cliff.

Age Distribution

The workforce is heavily concentrated in the 40–59 band, with 18 employees aged 60+. This group holds most of the project, financial, and operational knowledge — and a large share of them will exit in the next 3–7 years.

Retirement-Ready vs Promotion-Ready

Only 6 of those 18 retirement-age employees are truly ready to step into higher roles. The rest are experienced, but not promotable. That means succession isn't just about replacing retirees — it's about filling gaps above them that no one is currently ready to take.

Promotion Rate

A healthy construction company promotes 20–30% of staff into expanded responsibility each year. Here, only 7% are moving up. That's a stalled pipeline — and stalled pipelines don't magically fix themselves.

Turnover + Tenure

Turnover at 21% with 58 people under 2 years' tenure means your future leaders are walking out faster than you can develop them. Only 34 employees have 10+ years with the company — the "loyal core" is finite and shrinking.

Succession Readiness Index

Every dimension on the radar chart — aging risk, promotions, retention, bench strength, overall readiness — sits in the high-risk zone. This isn't one weak spot. It's an across-the-board exposure.

Bottom line: *This company isn't just facing retirements — it's on track for a **leadership void** unless it invests immediately in development, retention, and external executive search.*

BABY BOOMER METRICS

The Construction Industry Is Losing Its Most Experienced Leaders Faster Than It Can Replace Them

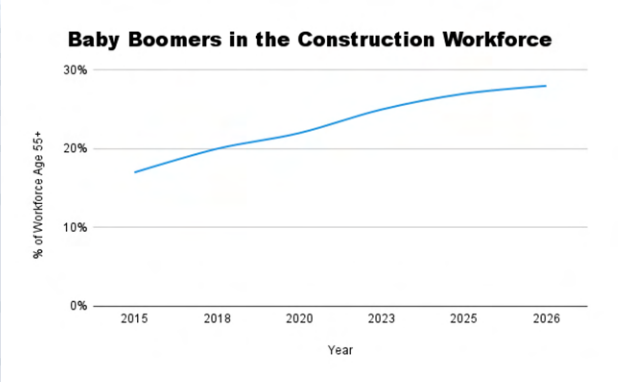
The leadership challenges highlighted on Page 6 are not isolated to a single company — they are happening across the entire construction industry. The Baby Boomer generation, which built and led the industry for 40+ years, is now entering retirement at the fastest pace in U.S. history.

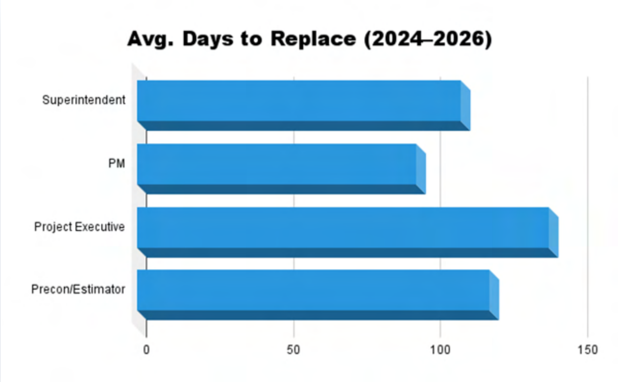
Construction has long relied on this generation for:

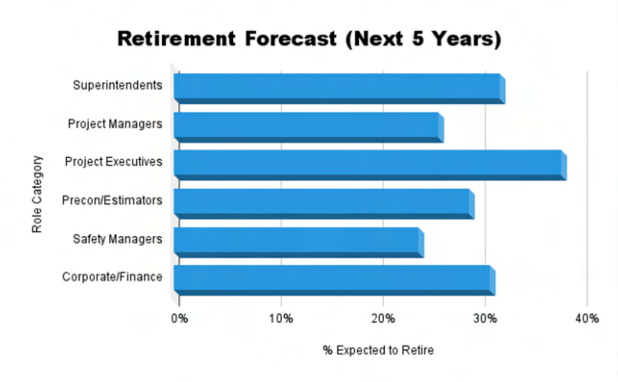
- Field Leadership
- Operational Expertise
- Project Delivery
- Client Relationships
- Executive Decision-Making

As Boomers exit the workforce, companies are discovering they lack the internal bench strength, promotable mid-level staff, or retention stability needed to maintain continuity.
The data on this page represents industry-wide metrics — and the message is clear:

A NATIONAL LEADERSHIP VACUUM IS FORMING, AND MOST COMPANIES ARE UNPREPARED.







WHAT THE CHARTS ARE SAYING

EVEN WITHOUT THE SPECIFIC NUMBERS, THE GRAPHICS ARE CLEARLY REINFORCING:

- Boomers still represent a **disproportionate share of leadership**, even as their share of the overall workforce shrinks.
- Retirement-age headcount is **peaking while mid-career leadership depth is thin.**
- The "exit wave" is **front-loaded in the next 3–7 years,** not 10–15.

THE CHARTS ON THIS PAGE SHOW THE MISMATCH CLEARLY:

Baby Boomers make up a shrinking share of the workforce but still hold a large share of leadership roles. Their retirement curve is steep and front-loaded, while the mid-career band behind them is too thin to backfill executive, operations, and field leadership at the same pace. That's the definition of a national leadership vacuum.

OFFER & ACCEPTANCE TIMELINES

Slow Hiring Is Costing Construction Firms Millions in Delayed Projects and Lost Talent

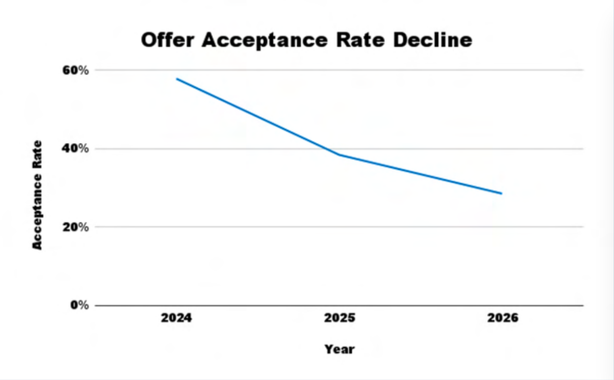
The construction labor market has never moved faster — and companies that fail to hire at the pace of the market are losing top candidates, delaying projects, and increasing operational risk. In a time where talent scarcity is at an all-time high, speed has become a competitive advantage.

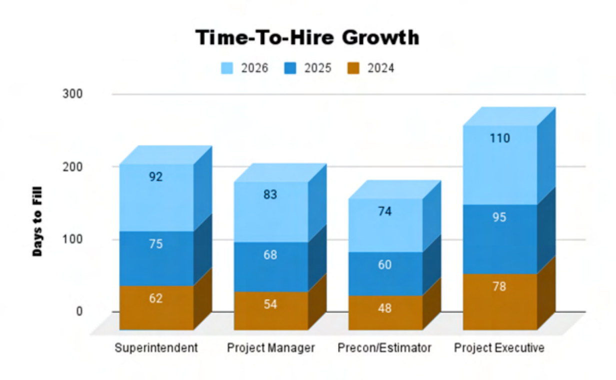
This page illustrates how offer acceptance rates, hiring timelines, and opportunity cost have deteriorated between 2024 and 2026. The data shows a clear trend:

Companies that cannot hire quickly will lose projects. Companies that cannot secure acceptance will lose leaders.

Offer Acceptance Rate

"Candidates are accepting fewer offers than ever before — dropping from 58% to just 20% in two years. The talent market is choosing speed."





Time-to-Hire

"Every key role is taking significantly longer to fill. In 2026, Project Executives now require 110 days — nearly four months — creating crippling leadership gaps on active projects."

Opportunity Cost

"Open leadership roles now create multimillion-dollar revenue risks. One unfilled PM role delayed $10.8M in project revenue."

Opportunity Cost of Open Seats
The opportunity-cost chart shows how expensive slow hiring really is. In one case, a single unfilled Project Manager role delayed $10.8M in project revenue. At typical construction margins, that's the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of dollars in profit at risk — from just one critical vacancy. Multiply that across multiple open leadership roles, and the financial impact dwarfs the cost of moving faster or paying a premium to close top candidates.

The data is undeniable:

The companies that win talent are the companies that move quickly. Slow internal processes, delayed decision-making, and inefficient interview loops are directly costing contractors millions in lost opportunities. As acceptance rates fall and time-to-hire continues to rise, hiring velocity has become a strategic priority — not an HR activity.

To compete in the 2026 market, construction organizations must streamline, simplify, and accelerate their hiring processes, or risk being left behind.

WHAT THE CHARTS ARE SAYING

- **Offer acceptance** drops from **58% → 20%** in two years.
- **Time-to-hire** stretches dramatically; Project Executives now take **~110 days** to land.
- **Opportunity cost:** one unfilled PM role sitting open created **$10.8M in delayed revenue.**

TOGETHER, THESE CHARTS MAKE ONE POINT CLEAR:
The companies that win talent are the ones that move quickly. Slow internal approvals, drawn-out interview loops, and indecision aren't "being careful" — they are silently taxing your P&L in the form of lost leaders and delayed revenue.

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LEADERSHIP TURNOVER PATTERNS

How Losing Key Leaders Creates Project Delays and Internal Instability

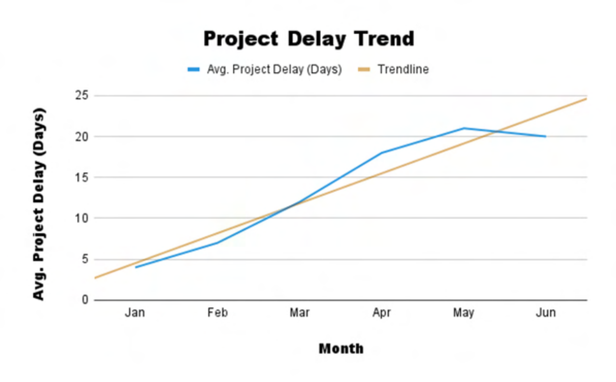
Leadership turnover doesn't just leave empty offices — it disrupts operations at every level of a construction company. When senior leaders exit, project delivery slows, communication breaks down, decision-making bottlenecks form, and employees lose clarity and confidence.

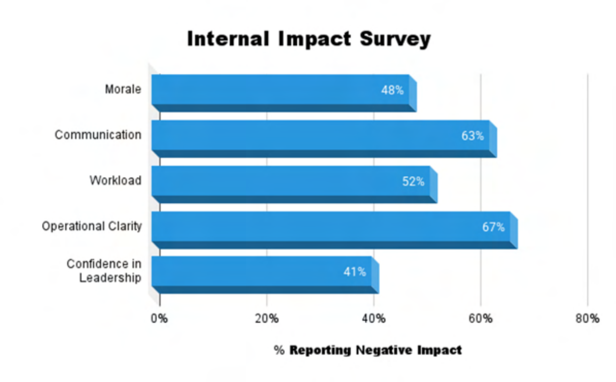
The following case study illustrates how one mid-sized construction company experienced operational disruption after losing two critical leaders. Although the example is fictional, the patterns reflect what we routinely see across the industry.

CASE STUDY:
Employee Count: 180
Annual Revenue: $280M

Leadership Turnover Event (2025):
The company lost its CFO and VP of Operations within the same year.
Both roles took ~90 days to replace.

The operational impact was immediate and severe.
"Construction Delays Spiked While Leadership Roles Were Vacant"





"Over Half the Company Felt Disrupted by Leadership Vacancies"

When senior leaders depart, decisions stall, priorities shift, and responsibilities get redistributed — often without structure.

This erodes culture, increases burnout, and pushes high performers toward the exit.

The internal damage of leadership turnover is often greater and longer-lasting than the vacancy itself.

This case study highlights a pattern we see across the construction industry:

Leadership turnover slows projects, fractures communication, and destabilizes teams.

Even a short vacancy in roles like CFO, VP of Operations, or Project Executive can disrupt schedules, create uncertainty, and cost companies millions in lost productivity.

For contractors competing in an already tight labor market, leadership continuity is essential to maintaining operational stability, employee confidence, and client satisfaction.

WHAT THE CHARTS ARE SAYING

EVEN THOUGH THE NUMBERS AREN'T SPELLED OUT IN TEXT, THE VISUALS SUPPORT:

- A visible **spike in project delays** during the 90-day vacancies for CFO and VP Ops.
- **Over half the company** reporting disruption from those leadership vacancies.

THE DELAY CHART SHOWS A CLEAR PATTERN:
Project milestones start slipping almost immediately once the CFO and VP of Operations roles go vacant. Critical decisions slow down, approvals pile up, and field teams lose a clear escalation path — all of which show up as schedule slippage. The impact doesn't fully recover the day replacements start; it lingers for months.

Turnover in one or two senior seats is not an isolated HR issue — it's an operational event that hits revenue, margin, and retention.

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LETTER FROM THE CEO

ANGEL AHUMADA - SBR JOBS

As you reach the end of this forecast, the overall message is clear: construction is undergoing a profound shift in leadership, talent expectations, and industry direction. The changes we once saw coming in the distance are now directly shaping how companies operate, grow, and compete.

Across homebuilding, general contracting, and data center construction, the theme is consistent — ***the way we find, develop, and retain leaders must evolve.***

Experienced talent is exiting faster than new leaders are being built. Competition for skilled managers has intensified. And with AI-driven data center expansion reshaping the landscape, the demand for technical and operational leadership has never been higher.

This report highlights the trends that matter most: tightening leadership pipelines, increased mobility among mid-career professionals, and a market where hiring speed and clarity have become strategic advantages. It also underscores a reality many organizations are now recognizing — ***leadership continuity can no longer be assumed; it must be intentionally planned.***

The companies that move forward successfully will be those that invest early in their people, strengthen succession paths, and stay proactive rather than reactive in a rapidly shifting talent market.

Thank you for taking the time to review this guide. I hope it brings clarity and direction as you prepare your organization for the years ahead. The industry is changing quickly — but with the right strategy and leadership focus, this next era can be one of your greatest opportunities.

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