

briq

O'SHEA BUILDERS CASE STUDY



511 OLIVE ST,
SANTA BARBARA, CA,93101

WWW.BR.IQ

**"BRIQ HAS GIVEN US THE
CAPABILITY TO TAKE A
MEDIUM SIZED CONSTRUCTION
MANAGER AND PUT IT UP
THERE WITH THE BIG BOYS."**

HARRY SCHMIDT,

DIRECTOR, BUSINESS STRATEGIES

O'SHEA BUILDERS

O'SHEA BUILDERS CASE STUDY

A one hundred and twenty-year-old construction manager uses Briq to achieve a 61% efficiency improvement for a critical operations workflow.

Problem: O'Shea Builders was in the market for a data platform to help the company manage its strategic business goals, including to help benchmark financial and operational KPIs and to help scale the business without scaling costs or adding new full-time employees.

Solution: Briq was selected as the platform to help streamline inefficient workflows and prepare the business for a data-driven culture. In less than 6 months, O'Shea was able to improve the speed of its job cost roll-in by 61 percent and has more visibility than ever before in the performance of its business.

Products in Use: Briq Discover, Briq Automate

O'Shea Builders is one of the oldest construction companies in the United States. Founded in 1900, the business has seen two World Wars, a Great Depression, and a few economic bumps along the way. Serving your market for this long isn't about resting on one's laurels, but rather being vigilant and adapting to new realities.

Harry Schmidt, a veteran of the healthcare industry and a relative newcomer to O'Shea Builders, was tasked to help the company develop a more data-driven strategy. Hired as the Director of Business Strategies, Harry sought to understand how analytics and technology was going to play a role in the continued success of this storied business.

"Walking into the organization, I knew we wanted to build a culture of Management by Fact. We like to look at the outcomes and the results, and what are those results relative to the targets that we have set? We started a dialogue with our team to say, 'can we use insights to adjust our processes, to set our targets and use it as a feedback loop?'

Initially, the conversation was more around what data is at our fingertips? We hadn't really explored that a lot. The first three months in this position, our team started to talk about the performance of the organization in general and ask 'do we know what the actual margin is on our jobs? What is the variation of that margin over time? What is the spread? What margin can we expect when we do this type of work?'

As most construction managers know, getting answers to those questions is not straightforward. Schmidt and his team refer to this challenge as the "hunter-gatherer" problem. This means that most of the time knowledge workers in construction spend their valuable working hours digging for information; following the broken breadcrumbs of disconnected, outdated digital paper trails that end in incomplete or imperfect data. The sentence "We spend way too much of our time hunting, gathering, and collating information" is permanently written on Schmidt's office whiteboard, and is a constant

reminder for him and his team that that their time is not best spent as data scavengers, but rather as strategists and synthesizers of information. Their job is to give the data context. Kala Wells, an analyst on Schmidt's Business Strategies team, recognizes that "the biggest challenge before Briq was in collecting the data. It just seemed everything was in a different spot. You didn't know where you needed to go to pull it together. By the time you compiled everything it was outdated or hard to remember what you were doing in the first place."

More importantly for Schmidt was that his team was looking for data when they should have been using the data to help executives answer critical questions for the business. "Without giving the data a story, it's really hard to make progress. We needed to spend more time in dialogue, debating, and deciding versus all the time we spend in hunter gatherer mode," says Schmidt.

ROME WAS NOT BUILT IN A DAY

After months of effort, the team came to realize that the mantra of Management by Fact would require more lift than just the three members of the Business Strategies Team. "We started talking about what would it take for us to build this team: to be able to have the data scientists required, to have the data analysts, the network, and the engineers. As we looked at what the requirements were, we figured it was somewhere in the neighborhood of four full time employees (FTEs) to build out this infrastructure. The ability to attract, recruit, and retain that type of competency or skill is fairly limited and expensive. When I worked in healthcare, we were challenged with finding competent and qualified IT professionals, and that was at a big healthcare system, much less a medium-sized construction company," admits Schmidt.

The infrastructure where O'Shea's executive leadership could ask a question of their business strategies team and receive a timely and relevant insight is not something built over night.

Answering critical questions takes strategic alignment, but more importantly it takes technology to help accelerate the process. When Schmidt and his team committed to investing in a data analytics platform to support their strategy, it was clear they needed it not only to help them better understand the business, but also to help them work more efficiently and freeze precious overhead dollars.

"One thing that was super attractive to us about Briq was the automation piece," says Schmidt. In addition to Briq Discover, which provides data visualization and analytics tools, O'Shea saw a massive opportunity to alleviate some of the administrative burden using the automation capabilities of Briq Automate. "If there is a task that is repeatable that we can have a computer do versus a human, we want to scale our company that way versus through FTEs."

"The estimator enjoys his Fridays a lot more these days."

One such repeatable workflow that had plagued the business for "as long as anyone could remember" was the job roll-in process. Getting job cost information from estimating to the field in a timely fashion was a workflow that consumed considerable administrative time.

According to O'Shea data, field teams were working on average 20 days without the budget information they needed in the field, and it took the estimating team on average nearly 40 days to get the detail-level estimates into the field. Some projects even exceeded 60 days of work in the field without budget or estimate data. In the worst cases, some jobs were completed even before the job costs rolled in. "From a cost perspective this just creates a ton of rework on the accounting side," says Schmidt. "There was a ton of waste buried here." Briq was able to help the O'Shea team breakdown the workflow, from accessing data from the multiple disparate

systems, to converting the detail-level estimate into actionable operational data. Most importantly, Briq was able to help them do it fast. In four months, Briq’s automation technology improved the roll-in process from 40 days on average to 9 days, a 61 percent improvement. This meant that project teams in the field went from waiting 20 days on average for data to waiting 0.3 days. It also meant that the estimator was no longer spending 20 percent of his valuable time managing this process. “Briq isn’t the silver bullet that solves all of your problems,” admits Schmidt, “but it was the vehicle that helped us have the conversation and solve the problem.”

In addition to now having this workflow automated, Briq Discover enables the project team to see the analytics behind the estimate and better understand what the estimator was thinking in how the project was priced. These details,

according to Nate Rohr, one of the key analysts on the business strategies team, also de-risk their projects in a fundamental way. “From a risk factor, we were working on a job for nearly a month and the field didn’t have any data on what they were supposed to be doing,” says Rohr. “As a construction manager, when we know what’s going on, *but really, we don’t know what’s going on*, that’s a big risk that we would like to eliminate. I think that was the key. “*Once any data hits operations, the number of people affected by the data increases drastically. We have a core school of thought that it costs a lot less to change anything at the beginning of a construction job as opposed to in the middle of a job.*” In other words, it’s better to know sooner rather than later if something’s going wrong on a project. Also, the estimator “enjoys his Fridays a lot more these days,” according to Rohr.

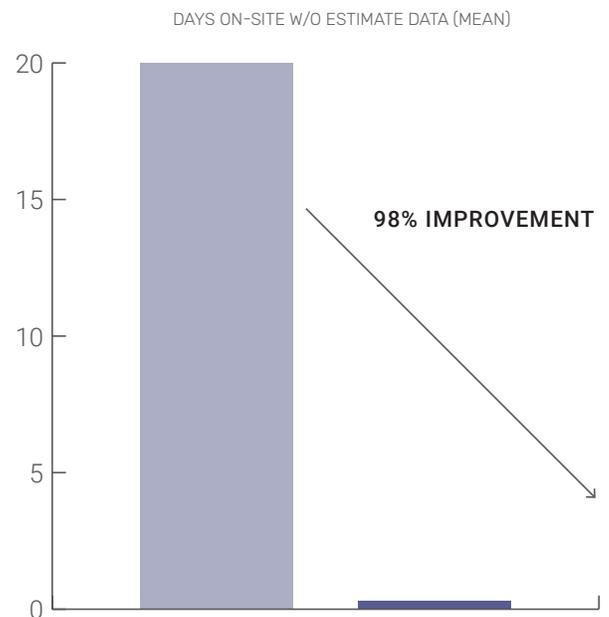
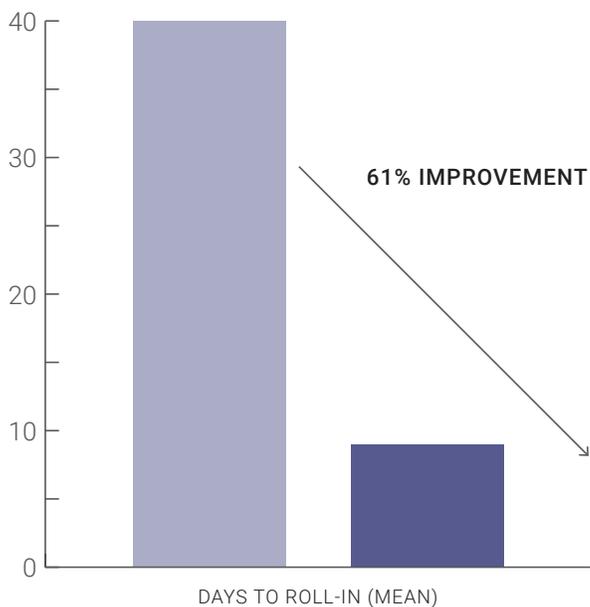
FIG 1.0: IMPROVEMENT WITH BRIQ AUTOMATE

61%
IMPROVEMENT

BRIQ’S AUTOMATION TECHNOLOGY IMPROVED THE ROLL-IN PROCESS FROM 40 DAYS ON AVERAGE TO 9 DAYS

98%
IMPROVEMENT

PROJECT TEAMS IN THE FIELD WENT FROM WAITING 20 DAYS ON AVERAGE FOR DATA TO WAITING 0.3 DAYS



JOURNEY ON THE ANALYTICS HIGHWAY

The time savings and insights provided by Briq Automate and Briq Discover have helped to create a foundation on which the business strategies team could start to look at the business holistically, and break workflows down into their components in the effort to improve them. Where can I shave off time? Where can I understand the bottlenecks that exist around Excel? And like the *butterfly effect*, a slight improvement in one area of the business echoes through other departments. For example, four months prior to Briq, half a dozen projects each financial period required accounting reworks after project completion because of this delay. In a matter of a single quarter, there were now zero projects that needed re-work attention from accounting.

“It has created flow through our organization. It has set us up for success. Now that we have the estimates and productivity expectations everything is much more visible for everyone and much more detailed. It enables us to speed up our debrief process, helps build on our lessons-learned and allows for continuous improvement. We have a lot of things we want to do with Briq in the future as far as the automation and predictive analytics pieces. What is really nice and attractive about Briq is we didn't have to change how we input information at all, but we're able to give our project managers or accountants access to everything in Briq. It's allowing them to be mindful and allows them to have more visibility on the overall goal as they're going through their day-to-day,” says Schmidt.

This project is only the beginning of O'Shea's journey with Briq. “Putting performance-based information into the hands of decision makers is one of the most gratifying experiences,” according to Schmidt. “We're now going to use Briq to build financial models based on the history of our jobs and look at where we are in comparison to our historical performance. We're going to be

able to tell earlier when we have issues we need to address. It looks under the hood and says, 'this is the problem, and this is how you fix it.' Briq is bringing some of that knowledge to the table and mentoring through the stages of our data analytics journey. Briq has given us the capability to take a medium sized construction manager and put it up there with the big boys.”

At the end of the day, construction management is all about risk. Taking risk, understanding risk, managing risk. The patterns and trends a contractor can identify with a platform like Briq are going to help to understand risk in order to better manage it. “You can never eliminate risk, but you can mitigate it. From a productivity standpoint, Briq gives us real-time meaningful feedback that's going to propel us forward in the industry.”



Want to learn more?

Check out www.briq.io