

Construction Quotes

Estimate → Job → Payroll → Invoice

The operations system for US industrial and mechanical contractors. One quote number carries the job from the estimate to the last dollar collected — no spreadsheet, no re-keying, no lost margin.

Multi-tenant & white-label

Excel in · Excel out

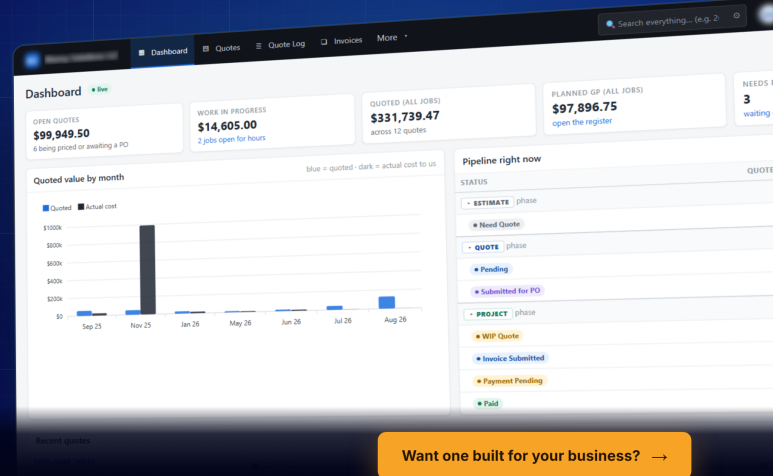
QuickBooks ready

Weekly payroll grid

Full audit trail



Designed & built by Opencollar Technologies LLC
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Want one built for your business? →

The spreadsheet that ran a contracting company, rebuilt as a system.

Construction Quotes is a browser-based operations platform for US industrial and mechanical contractors. It carries one job from the first estimate through field labor, materials, rentals and payroll to the final invoice and the cash collected — under a single quote number, with the margin visible at every step.

INDUSTRY

Specialty trade & industrial contracting

BUILT FOR

Plant maintenance, demolition, fabrication, rigging

DELIVERY

Live in production · multi-tenant · self-hosted

BUILT BY

Opencollar Technologies LLC

About the screenshots in this document. Every screen shown here is a real capture from the working application, not a mockup. Company names, staff names, customer names and contact details have been blurred to protect the client's commercial information. Layout, figures and behaviour are untouched.

124

delivered capabilities, from estimating through to collected cash

1

quote number carrying the job end to end — no re-keying between steps

Owned

source, data and hosting — a capital asset, not a per-seat subscription

WHAT'S INSIDE

- What this application is, and the industry it serves
- What the client asked for, in their own terms
- The screens that run the business
- The full feature list — 124 capabilities
- Business outcome, and the problems it resolves
- Long-term value — and how to get one built

An estimating and job-cost system for contractors who bid work, send crews, and bill for it.

Most specialty contractors in the United States run their estimating out of a single spreadsheet. It works — until the company grows past the person who built it. Construction Quotes replaces that spreadsheet with a system that does the same arithmetic, keeps the same documents, and adds the one thing a workbook can never give you: **a shared, audited record of what every job actually cost.**

The industry it serves

The target is the specialty trade contractor (NAICS 238) — the companies that manufacturers call when a line goes down, a structure needs demolishing, a platform needs fabricating, or a chiller needs replacing. They are typically 15 to 250 employees, they bid fixed-price and time-and-materials work side by side, they run rented equipment, and they carry a field crew whose hours are the largest and least-tracked cost in the business.

The same shape of work appears in mechanical and HVAC contracting, industrial services, plant maintenance, millwrighting, structural steel, rigging and equipment installation. The system was built against one such company's real workbooks and real job history.

What it actually does

Estimate

Break a job into tasks under lettered categories. Price labor, materials, equipment and rentals per task. Markups and overtime factors apply per quote. Every saved line keeps the rate it was priced with, so changing a rate tomorrow never silently reprices last month's quote.

Win the work

Print the quote as a PDF, email it from the app, and track it through the pipeline — Estimate, Quote, Project — using the company's own status names. Duplicate a quote for a new number, or freeze a revision so the paper you sent stays exactly as you sent it.

Do the job

Crews' hours are typed into a weekly grid, Friday to Thursday, regular and overtime per day. They land against the task they were worked on and become real labor cost on that job. Rental purchase orders go to the equipment vendor at internal cost.

Get paid

Invoice against ticked work or build a custom one. Bill a job in staged draws. Record payments, reverse mistakes, see what is past due, and hand QuickBooks an import file rather than re-keying thirteen invoices by hand.

Where the margin becomes visible

The quote holds what you *planned* to spend. Payroll and vendor bills record what you *actually* spent. The Quote Summary puts them on the same row, per task, and shows the gross profit and margin that resulted. That single comparison — planned against actual, at task level, on every job — is what turns a year of finished work into better bidding next year.

The brief, in the client's own terms

The engagement did not begin with a specification. It began with the company's live estimating workbook, a quote log going back years, and one sentence: **make it at least as functional as the Excel file we use now**. Everything below was asked for by the client, in writing or in review sessions, and every item was built and delivered.

The original ask

- **Match the workbook, don't simplify it.** The pricing arithmetic, the markups, the overtime factor and the task lettering all had to behave exactly as the spreadsheet did.
- **Keep the paperwork.** Quote PDF, estimate document, purchase order and invoice all had to keep printing, and keep looking like the company's own documents.
- **Laymen must be able to edit the lists.** Customers, materials, rentals and rates maintained by office staff, not by a developer.
- **Sensitive numbers stay hidden.** Pay rates, margins, SSN and date of birth visible only to the people who should see them — which became the designation permission grid.
- **Excel stays in the loop.** History comes in from workbooks; reports go back out to them. Nothing syncs behind anyone's back.

What they asked for after seeing it working

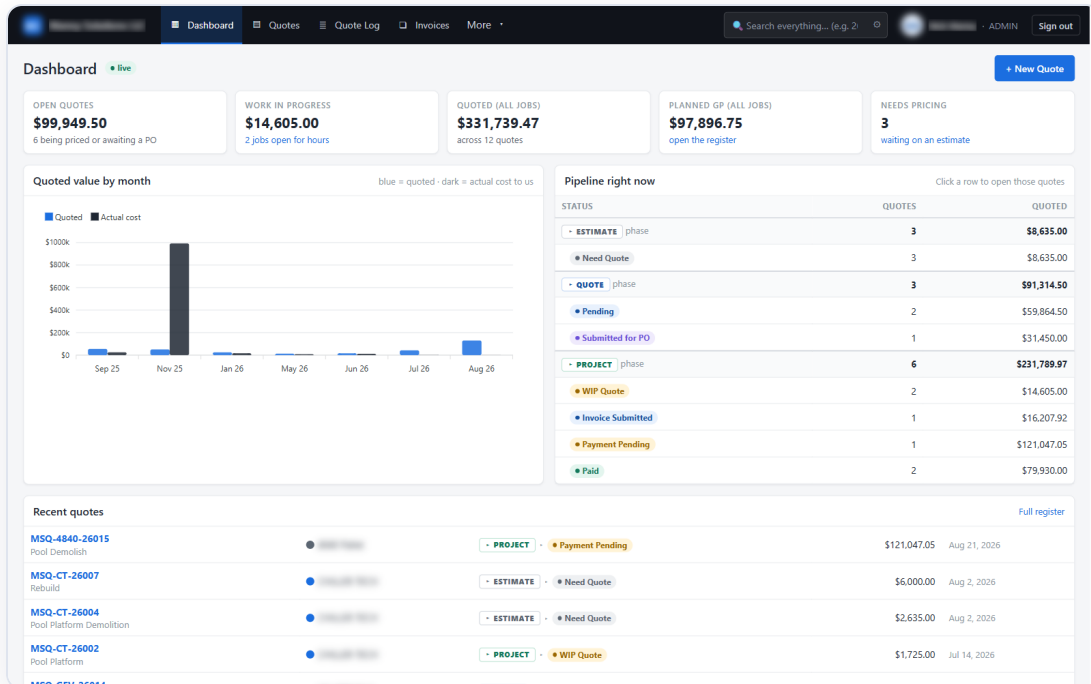
- **A task-breakdown export** laid out the way their own estimators read it.
- **A weekly labor grid** running Friday to Thursday, usable on a phone held sideways, because that is how the office actually collects hours.
- **Per-customer quote numbering** — their own log proved they pre-allocate blocks of numbers per customer, which a single shared sequence could not express.
- **An invoice file for QuickBooks**, so the bookkeeper stops re-typing invoices.
- **Email the documents from the app** — quotes, invoices and POs, as PDFs, with a record of what was sent.
- **Bill a job in draws** against agreed payment terms rather than one invoice at the end.
- **Find old drawings and quotes by name**, including links into supplier portals.
- **Payroll changes:** pick the workers first and then what they worked on, let an administrator define new kinds of cost code without a developer, allow a pay figure to be overridden when the hours don't come to it, and record regular and overtime as a pair on every day.

Where we pushed back — and why that mattered

Two asks were challenged before they were built. "Anyone can edit any list" collided with "pay rates must stay private", and the honest answer was a permission grid rather than a blanket yes. Per-customer numbering was questioned on the grounds that the customer code already sits inside the number — until their own quote log showed reserved blocks per company, at which point it was recommended and built. **The client got a system that reflects how they really work, not how a brief described it.**

The screens that run the business

Real captures from the live system. Identifying names and contact details blurred; everything else as built.



01 Owner's dashboard. Open quotes, work in progress, total quoted, planned gross profit and what is still waiting on a price — with quoted value against actual cost by month, and the whole pipeline broken down by status and phase. Every row is a link into the quotes behind it.

Quotes & Estimates • Live

Quote Log Export XLSX + New Quote

Customer: All Status: All Phase: All Kind: All Prepared date: Any time Quoted total \$: min - max Margin %: min - max Show revised Clear filters

Search...

QUOTE NO	PROJECT	CUSTOMER	FFP/T&M	STATUS	PHASE	QUOTED	INTERNAL	GP	MARGIN	PREPARED
MSQ-4840-26015	Pool Demolish	4840	FFP	Payment Pending	PROJECT	\$121,047.05	\$100,664.46	\$20,382.59	16.84%	Aug 21, 2026
MSQ-CT-26007	Rebuild	CT	FFP	Need Quote	ESTIMATE	\$6,000.00	\$300.00	\$5,700.00	95.00%	Aug 2, 2026
MSQ-CT-26004	Pool Platform Demolition	CT	FFP	Need Quote	ESTIMATE	\$2,635.00	\$630.00	\$2,005.00	76.09%	Aug 2, 2026
MSQ-CT-26002	Pool Platform	CT	FFP	WIP Quote	PROJECT	\$1,725.00	\$575.00	\$1,150.00	66.67%	Jul 14, 2026
MSQ-CCL-25037	Pipe Rack Painting	CCL	FFP	Paid	PROJECT	\$55,200.00	\$31,900.00	\$23,300.00	42.21%	Sep 9, 2025
MSQ-GEV-26010	Conveyor Repair	GEV	FFP	Need Quote	ESTIMATE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	-	-
MSQ-RLCO-26012	Structural Steel Repair, Line 2	RLCO	FFP	WIP Quote	PROJECT	\$12,880.00	\$8,620.00	\$4,260.00	33.07%	May 27, 2026
MSQ-GEV-26014	Pump Skid Install	GEV	FFP	Pending	QUOTE	\$9,340.00	\$6,710.00	\$2,630.00	28.16%	Jul 10, 2026
MSQ-CT-26008	Cooling Tower Fill Replacement	CT	FFP	Submitted for PO	QUOTE	\$31,450.00	\$22,400.00	\$9,050.00	28.78%	Jul 7, 2026
MSQ-CCL-25002	Tank Farm Repairs (Estimate)	CCL	T&M	Pending	QUOTE	\$50,524.50	\$33,827.50	\$16,697.00	33.05%	Nov 10, 2025
MSQ-CCL-26001	Mobilization & Site Prep	CCL	FFP	Paid	PROJECT	\$24,730.00	\$17,105.00	\$7,625.00	30.83%	Jan 19, 2026
MSQ-CT-26006	Pool Platform Demolition & Rebuild	CT	FFP	Invoice Submitted	PROJECT	\$16,207.92	\$11,110.77	\$5,097.15	31.45%	Jun 24, 2026
						\$331,739.47	\$233,842.73	\$97,896.75		

1-12 of 12 Per page: 25 1

02 Quote register. Every quote and estimate in one filterable table — customer, fixed-price or T&M, status, phase, quoted total, internal cost, gross profit and margin, with running totals at the foot. Filter by customer, status, phase, date, value or margin band, then export the result.

Dashboard

Quotes

Quote Log

Invoices

More

Search everything... (e.g. 2)

ADMIN

Sign out

MSQ-CT-26006

PROJECT

Invoice Submitted

FFP

+ New revision

Duplicate...

Pool Platform Demolition & Rebuild

CT Plant 2

TX

QUOTED

\$16,207.92

INTERNAL COST

\$11,110.77

PLANNED GP

\$5,097.15 (31.45%)

REAL COST SO FAR

\$11,712.77

INVOICED / PAID

\$16,287.92 / \$0.00

Header

Tasks

Labor

Materials & Equipment

Quote Summary

Invoices & Payments

Rental POs

Notes & Files

Estimate Doc

Tasks - grouped by category

Edits save on change. Tick rows to remove several at once. Headers sort within each category.

TASK CODE	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	STATUS	SCHEDULED	QUOTED
A. ADMIN & SUPERVISION (1 task)					
CT-26006-A1	A. Admin & Supervision	Site supervision & permits	ONGOING	07/06/2026 07/24/2026	\$375.00 complete remove
B. FABRICATION (1 task)					
CT-26006-B1	B. Fabrication	Fabricate platform rails	UPCOMING	07/16/2026 07/18/2026	\$0.00 complete remove
C. CONSTRUCT (1 task)					
CT-26006-C1	C. Construct	Construct new platform	ONGOING	07/13/2026 07/22/2026	\$1,500.00 complete remove
D. DEMOLITION & DISPOSAL (2 tasks)					
CT-26006-D1	D. Demolition & Disposal	Demolish existing platform	ONGOING	07/06/2026 07/15/2026	\$11,760.92 complete remove
CT-26006-D2	D. Demolition & Disposal	Haul-off & disposal of debris	UPCOMING	07/15/2026 07/16/2026	\$0.00 complete remove
E. ENGINEERING ASSESSMENT & DESIGN (1 task)					
CT-26006-E1	E. Engineering Assessment & Design	Engineering assessment of anchors	COMPLETED	07/06/2026 07/07/2026	\$0.00 reopen remove
G. CLEAN & DISPOSE (1 task)					
CT-26006-G1	G. Clean & Dispose	Clean & dispose work area	UPCOMING	07/22/2026 07/24/2026	\$1,072.00 complete remove
M. MATERIAL HANDLING (1 task)					
CT-26006-H1	M. Material Handling	Material handling & staging	ONGOING	07/08/2026 07/22/2026	\$1,500.00 complete remove

Category

Description

Start

End

+ Add task

03 Task breakdown. A job split into tasks under lettered categories — admin, fabrication, construct, demolition, engineering, clean-up, material handling. Each task carries its own code, schedule, status and quoted value, and every labor, material and rental line hangs off it.

Dashboard

Quotes

Quote Log

Invoices

More

Search everything... (e.g. 2)

ADMIN

Sign out

MSQ-CT-26006

PROJECT

Invoice Submitted

FFP

+ New revision

Duplicate...

Pool Platform Demolition & Rebuild

CT Plant 2

TX

QUOTED

\$16,207.92

INTERNAL COST

\$11,110.77

PLANNED GP

\$5,097.15 (31.45%)

REAL COST SO FAR

\$11,712.77

INVOICED / PAID

\$16,287.92 / \$0.00

Header

Tasks

Labor

Materials & Equipment

Quote Summary

Invoices & Payments

Rental POs

Notes & Files

Estimate Doc

Print / PDF

Task breakdown XLSX

Per-task profit on this job: quoted vs cost vs invoiced.

TASK	DESCRIPTION	QUOTED	QUOTED LABOR	QUOTED MATERIAL	INTERNAL COST	PAYROLL ACTUAL	VENDOR BILLS	REAL COST	GP (QUOTED)	MARGIN
CT-26006-A1	Site supervision & permits	\$375.00	\$375.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$450.00	\$550.00	+\$275.00	73.33%
CT-26006-B1	Fabricate platform rails	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	-
CT-26006-C1	Construct new platform	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	+\$1,000.00	66.67%
CT-26006-D1	Demolish existing platform	\$11,760.92	\$1,500.00	\$10,260.92	\$9,050.77	\$725.00	\$8,550.77	\$9,275.77	+\$2,710.15	23.04%
CT-26006-D2	Haul-off & disposal of debris	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	-
CT-26006-E1	Engineering assessment of anchors	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	-
CT-26006-G1	Clean & dispose work area	\$1,072.00	\$0.00	\$1,072.00	\$960.00	\$0.00	\$937.00	\$937.00	+\$112.00	10.45%
CT-26006-H1	Material handling & staging	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$450.00	\$0.00	\$450.00	+\$1,000.00	66.67%
JOB TOTALS		\$16,207.92			\$11,110.77	\$1,775.00	\$9,937.77	\$11,712.77	+\$5,097.15	31.45%

INVOICED

\$16,287.92

PAID

\$0.00

REAL GP (INVOICED - REAL COST)

+\$4,575.15

RFQ & reference documents

Ref RFQ # RFQ-2231

No RFQ document or link filed yet. Everything else uploaded against this job lives on the Notes & Files tab.

Attach the RFQ

Choose File

No file chosen

Attach

04 Planned against actual, per task. Quoted labor and material on the left, internal cost, real payroll spent, vendor bills and true cost on the right — with gross profit and margin per task and for the job. This is the screen that tells an owner where a bid was wrong while there is still time to act on it.

Dashboard
Quotes
Quote Log
Invoices
More

Search everything... (e.g. 2)
ADMIN
Sign out

Payroll
Week of Fri Aug 21 - Thu Aug 27, 2026
+ open
All changes saved
Employees +
Cost code(s) +
Save now
Submit week
Preview PDF
Download PDF
Export Excel

Email - setup required
Print

Type each worker's hours per day. They save as you go and land on each job as real labor cost.

WORKERS
3
3 rows

JOBS
1
open for hours

REGULAR HRS
28.00

OVERTIME HRS
2.00

TOTAL HRS
30.00

JOB COST
\$680.00
at the rates in force

By job
By worker

Check overtime
Delete week

JOB / WORKER	COST CODE	FRI 8/21		SAT 8/22		SUN 8/23		MON 8/24		TUE 8/25		WED 8/26		THU 8/27		TOTAL	REG	OT	PAY
		REG	OT	REG	OT	REG	OT	REG	OT	REG	OT	REG	OT						
MSQ-CT-26002 Pool Platform		22						8								30.00	28.00	2.00	\$680.00
Left at noon Friday	whole job ⚠ not on the Labor tab	8														8.00	8.00	0.00	\$200.00
Rebuild	whole job ⚠ not on the Labor tab	8	2					8								18.00	16.00	2.00	\$380.00
Rebuild	whole job ⚠ not on the Labor tab	4														4.00	4.00	0.00	\$100.00
Week totals		22						8								30.00	28.00	2.00	\$680.00

Note for payroll (goes with the week when it is emailed)
Anything payroll should know about this week...

05 The weekly payroll grid. Friday to Thursday, every worker against the job and cost code they worked on, regular and overtime typed side by side for each day. Hours save as they are typed, total into pay at the rates in force, and land on the job as real labor cost.

Dashboard
Quotes
Quote Log
Invoices
More

Search everything... (e.g. 2)
ADMIN
Sign out

Invoices
+ live
no company payment link
All states

OUTSTANDING
\$148,914.89
9 open invoices

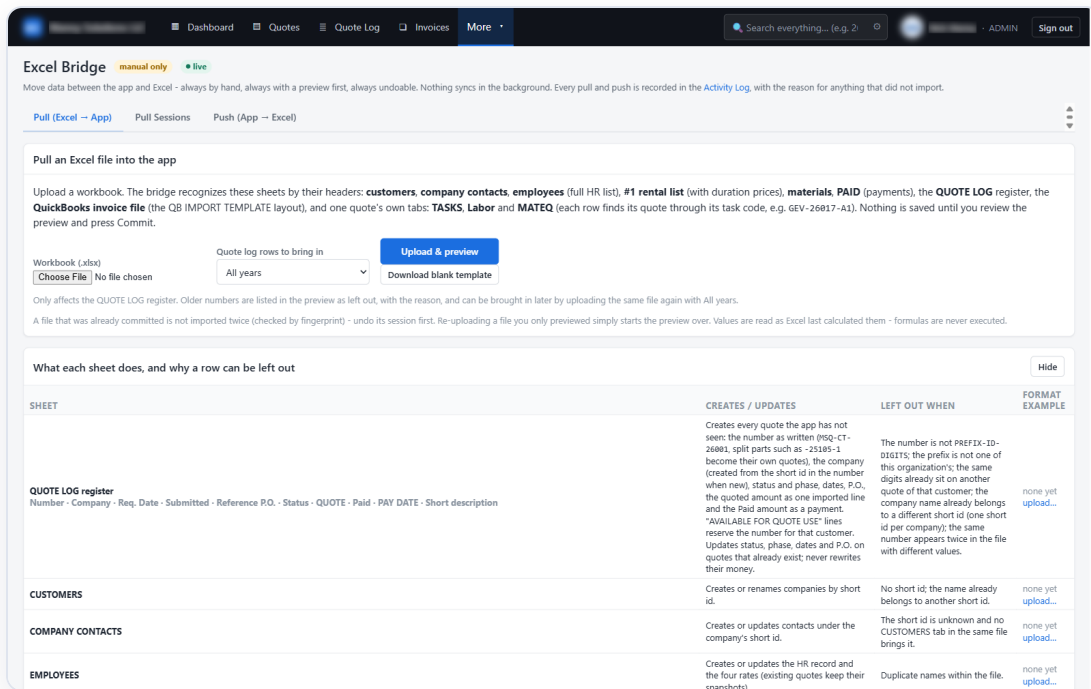
PAST DUE
\$57,911.97
2 invoices

INVOICES
12
all time

Search...
Export CSV

INVOICE NO	CUSTOMER	PROJECT	ISSUED	AMOUNT	OWED	STATUS	QUICKBOOKS	EMAILED
HSI-CCL-25002		MSE-CCL-25002 Tank Farm Repairs (Estimate)	Aug 21, 2026 due Sep 20, 2026	\$48,911.97	\$48,911.97	Past due	-	- payment notes edit pdf email void
HSI-CT-26106-2		MSQ-CT-26007 Rebuild	Aug 20, 2026 due Sep 19, 2026	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	Past due	-	- payment notes edit pdf email void
HSI-CT-26106		MSQ-CT-26007 Rebuild	Aug 2, 2026	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	Unpaid	-	- payment notes edit pdf email void
HSI-CT-258000-3		MSQ-CT-26004 Pool Platform Demolition	Aug 2, 2026	\$2,635.00	\$2,635.00	Unpaid	-	- payment notes edit pdf email void
HSI-CT-258000-2		MSQ-CT-26004 Pool Platform Demolition	Aug 2, 2026	\$1,700.00	\$1,700.00	Void	-	- notes edit pdf
HSI-CT-258000		MSQ-CT-26004 Pool Platform Demolition	Aug 2, 2026	\$935.00	\$935.00	Void	-	- notes edit pdf
HSI-CCL-25037-3		MSQ-CCL-25037 Pipe Rack Painting	Dec 19, 2025	\$15,200.00	\$15,200.00	Unpaid	sent Dec 19, 2025	- payment notes edit pdf email
HSI-CCL-25037-2		MSQ-CCL-25037 Pipe Rack Painting	Nov 28, 2025	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	Unpaid	sent Nov 28, 2025	- payment notes edit pdf email
HSI-CCL-25037		MSQ-CCL-25037 Pipe Rack Painting	Oct 31, 2025	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	Unpaid	sent Oct 31, 2025	- payment notes edit pdf email
HSI-RLCO-26012		MSQ-RLCO-26012 Structural Steel Repair, Line 2	Jul 1, 2026	\$12,880.00	\$12,880.00	Unpaid	sent Jul 1, 2026	- payment notes edit pdf email void
HSI-CCL-26001		MSQ-CCL-26001 Mobilization & Site Prep	Feb 24, 2026	\$24,730.00	-	Paid	sent Feb 24, 2026	- payment payments notes edit pdf email
HSI-CT-26006		MSQ-CT-26006 Pool Platform Demolition & Rebuild	Jul 10, 2026	\$16,287.92	\$16,287.92	Unpaid	sent Jul 10, 2026	- payment notes edit pdf email void
				\$176,279.89	\$151,549.89			

06 Money owed, at a glance. Every invoice with what is outstanding, what is past due and what has already gone to QuickBooks. Record a payment, add a note, reprint the PDF, email it to the customer, or void it — each action recorded against the person who took it.



07 The Excel Bridge. Years of history move in from the company's own workbooks and reports move back out — always by hand, always previewed before anything is written, always undoable. Every row that did not import is explained in a plain sentence naming its sheet and line.

7

screens shown here, of a far larger application

40+

server-side modules behind the interface

1

number that carries a job from estimate to cash

Not shown here

The seven screens above are the ones an owner sees most. Behind them sit the quote log, the global search, customer and employee records, the vendor and materials catalogues, rental purchase orders, payment links, staged billing plans, the company file library, the permission grid, the activity log, database backups and the platform owner's panel — together with the printed quote, estimate, invoice, purchase order and payroll documents the company sends out. The full list is on the next page.

How it was built

The stack

PHP 8.2 on CodeIgniter 4.7 with a MySQL database. The interface is a single-page application with real clean URLs, so every screen — down to an individual job — is a link that can be bookmarked, emailed or opened directly.

Documents are generated server-side as true PDFs. Excel is read and written natively, so workbooks move in and out without a conversion step or a third-party service.

The engineering decisions that matter

Numbers never break relations. Every record has an internal identity and a separate business number, so renaming or re-issuing a quote number can never orphan the work attached to it.

Saved lines keep their own rates. Changing a rate or a markup today does not silently reprice a quote sent last month — a rule that protects the company in a dispute.

Nothing syncs behind anyone's back. Every Excel transfer is triggered by a person, previewed before it writes, and undoable afterwards.

Everything the system does

One hundred and twenty-four delivered capabilities, grouped by the part of the business they serve.

QUOTING & ESTIMATING

- Quote register
- New quote builder
- Tasks by category
- Task codes per job
- Labor lines
- Material lines
- Equipment lines
- Rental lines
- Duration pricing
- Markup per quote
- Overtime factor
- Rate snapshots
- Live totals
- Fixed price or T&M
- Contractor breakout
- Duplicate a quote
- Frozen revisions
- Auto-supersede

NUMBERING & STATUS

- Per-customer numbers
- Reserved number pool
- Void a number
- Release a number
- Restore a number
- Bulk number actions
- Custom status list
- Estimate / Quote / Project
- Phase chips
- Stats exclusions

JOB COSTING

- Planned vs actual
- Cost per task
- Real cost so far
- Gross profit
- Margin percentage
- Variance view
- Vendor bill capture
- Job cost from hours

PAYROLL

- Weekly hours grid
- Friday to Thursday
- Regular and OT pairs
- By job or by worker
- Cost code book
- Admin-defined code kinds
- Non-job time codes
- Pay override
- Overtime check
- Week notes
- Submit a week
- Payroll PDF

- Payroll Excel
- Email the week
- Phone landscape use

INVOICING & CASH

- Invoice ticked work
- Custom invoice builder
- Staged billing plans
- Progress draws
- Derived invoice status
- Read-only invoice numbers
- Void an invoice
- Invoice number recovery
- Record a payment
- Reverse a payment
- Outstanding total
- Past due total
- Payment links register
- Invoice notes
- Invoice attachments

PURCHASING

- Rental purchase orders
- Vendor picked per PO
- Lines at internal cost
- Delivery charge
- PO PDF
- PO status
- Buy list export

DOCUMENTS

- Quote PDF
- Estimate document
- Invoice PDF
- Quote summary PDF
- Email quotes
- Email invoices
- Email POs
- Email delivery log
- Notes on any record
- File attachments
- Links to portals
- Company file library

MASTER DATA

- Customers
- Company contacts
- Vendors
- Employees, full HR
- Pay rate history
- Materials catalog
- Rental catalog
- Categories
- Durations

EXCEL & QUICKBOOKS

- Pull from Excel
- Preview before commit
- Undo a session
- Redo a session
- Push to Excel
- QuickBooks import file
- Blank template
- Per-row skip reasons

CONTROL & SECURITY

- Custom designations
- Permission grid
- Pay visibility control
- SSN locked to admin
- Login lockout
- Activity log
- Process run log
- Database backups
- Data cleanup preview
- Bulk delete guard

PLATFORM

- Multi-tenant
- White-label per client
- Company logo upload
- Platform owner panel
- Request access signup
- Per-org reporting
- Mail server test
- Global search
- Search down to tasks
- Clean deep links
- Quote log register
- Self-hosted

What changes for the company that runs it

The day-to-day outcome

- **Quoting stops being one person's job.** The pricing rules live in the system, so a second estimator can produce the same quality of quote without inheriting a workbook.
- **Labor cost lands on the job the week it happens** — not at month end, not in a separate payroll file, and not as a guess.
- **Invoices go out faster** because the work is already itemised and priced. Shorter time from finishing a job to sending the bill is the single most direct improvement to cash flow.
- **The bookkeeper stops re-keying.** Invoices reach QuickBooks as a file, not as thirteen manual entries with thirteen chances to fat-finger a figure.
- **Nothing is lost between steps.** One number carries the estimate, the PO, the hours, the invoice and the payment, so no one reconciles four documents to answer one question.
- **Every action has a name and a time against it**, which settles internal disputes and customer disputes with a record rather than a recollection.

The measurable outcome

Faster

quote-to-cash cycle, because billing starts from work already priced and recorded

Visible

margin per task, per job, while the job is still open and can still be corrected

Lower

administrative hours per job — the office scales without adding office staff

The strategic outcome

A contracting business lives or dies on whether it bids accurately. Accuracy comes from knowing what the last hundred jobs actually cost — not what they were quoted at. Before this system, that information existed only as scattered spreadsheets and the owner's memory. After it, every finished job deposits a complete, comparable cost record into the company's own database.

That accumulating record is the real return. The software pays for itself on administrative time alone; the compounding value is a bid book that gets sharper every quarter, and a company that no longer depends on one person's recall to price work correctly.

What the outcome depends on — said plainly

No system delivers this on its own. The returns above arrive when hours are entered every week rather than every month, when vendor bills are filed against the job that incurred them, and when the office stops keeping a private spreadsheet alongside the application. Those are habits, not features.

The software was designed to make the right habit the easy one — hours save as they are typed, a purchase order is one click from the rental lines, and the margin is on screen while the job is still open. **But a company that does not enter its hours will learn nothing from any system, including this one.** That was said to the client before a line was written, and it is worth saying to anyone considering the same investment.

The problems US contractors keep running into

Each of these is a well-documented failure mode in American specialty contracting. The right-hand column is what this system does about it.

THE PROBLEM The company runs on one spreadsheet that one person built and only that person fully understands.	RESOLVED BY Pricing rules, markups and task structure live in a shared system that any trained estimator can use.
THE PROBLEM Field labor is the biggest cost and the least tracked. Hours arrive on paper, late, and never reach the job.	RESOLVED BY A weekly grid that ties every hour to a job and a cost code, and posts it as real labor cost that week.
THE PROBLEM Margin erosion is invisible until the job closes — and by then nothing can be done about it.	RESOLVED BY Planned against actual, per task, updated as costs land. Problems surface while the job is still open.
THE PROBLEM Slow billing strangles cash flow. Work finishes in week one and the invoice goes out in week five.	RESOLVED BY Invoices raised from work already itemised and priced, including staged draws against agreed terms.
THE PROBLEM Receivables age quietly. Nobody can say on a Monday morning what is overdue and by how much.	RESOLVED BY Outstanding and past-due totals on the invoice screen, with per-invoice status and payment history.
THE PROBLEM The same data is typed three times — into the estimate, into payroll, and again into the accounting package.	RESOLVED BY One record throughout, with a QuickBooks import file and Excel transfer in both directions.
THE PROBLEM Overtime is calculated by hand, inconsistently, creating wage-and-hour exposure the owner cannot see.	RESOLVED BY Regular and overtime recorded as a pair on every day, with an overtime check across the week.
THE PROBLEM Change orders happen verbally on site and are never billed, or are billed and then disputed.	RESOLVED BY Frozen revisions keep every version of the paper that was sent, alongside notes, files and an audit trail.
THE PROBLEM Quote numbers collide or go missing when several people issue them from the same workbook.	RESOLVED BY A controlled number pool per customer — numbers reserved, issued, voided and released on the record.
THE PROBLEM Everyone can see everything, including pay rates, margins and employee personal data.	RESOLVED BY Designations with a permission grid; pay and margin hidden by role, personal data restricted to admins.
THE PROBLEM Skilled-labor shortage meets admin overhead. Growth adds office staff faster than it adds crews.	RESOLVED BY Removing the re-keying, chasing and reconciling that consumed most of the administrative day.
THE PROBLEM Years of job history are unusable — locked in old workbooks, so the same bidding mistakes repeat.	RESOLVED BY History imported through the Excel Bridge and every new job recorded comparably from then on.

This is not a subscription. It is an asset on the company's own books.

Software a company rents disappears the day it stops paying. Software a company owns is capital: it appears in due diligence, it transfers in a sale, it carries no per-seat penalty for growth, and it holds data that belongs to the business rather than to a vendor. **Every year it runs, it is worth more, not less.**

What compounds over time

- **The cost history becomes a bidding advantage.** Each completed job adds a comparable record of what that kind of work really costs. Competitors bidding from memory cannot match that.
- **Growth stops costing administration.** Doubling the crew does not double the office, because the work of reconciling and re-keying was removed rather than distributed.
- **Key-person risk falls away.** The knowledge that lived in one estimator's workbook now lives in a system the company owns and staff can be trained on.
- **No per-seat tax on hiring.** Adding a user costs nothing. Commercial job-cost platforms charge per seat per month, forever, and that bill rises exactly as the company succeeds.
- **The data stays portable.** Excel in and Excel out by design, so the company is never held hostage to a format it cannot read.
- **It is already multi-tenant.** The same platform can carry additional entities, divisions or acquisitions under one roof — or be white-labelled entirely.

What it is worth at the point of sale

When a contracting business is valued, buyers discount heavily for anything that looks like it lives in the owner's head. Documented, systematised operations do the opposite: they demonstrate that the company's ability to price and deliver work survives the founder leaving the room.

A proprietary operations platform, with years of clean job-cost history inside it, is a line item in that conversation. **It is the difference between selling a book of relationships and selling a business that runs.**

Owning it against renting it

RENTING A PLATFORM Cost rises with every user you hire, every year, whether or not you use more of it.	OWNING THIS ONE Adding a user costs nothing. Growth is free at the licence line.
RENTING A PLATFORM You fit your process to the product, and pay to change what does not fit — if it can be changed at all.	OWNING THIS ONE The product fits your process, because it was built from your workbooks and your week.
RENTING A PLATFORM Your history sits in a vendor's database, exportable on their terms, readable in their format.	OWNING THIS ONE The database is yours, hosted where you choose, with Excel in and out by design.
RENTING A PLATFORM It is an operating expense that leaves nothing behind the day you stop paying it.	OWNING THIS ONE It is an asset that appears in diligence and transfers with the company in a sale.

BUILD ONE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Your operation is not identical. Neither should your software be.

Construction Quotes was built for one company's way of working, from their own workbooks, their own numbering and their own week. We build the same class of system for yours — estimating, job costing, field labor, purchasing, invoicing and reporting, shaped around how your business actually runs.

How an engagement usually goes

- **We start from what you already use.** Your spreadsheet, your quote log, your documents — not a generic template.
- **You get a working phase early,** not a twelve-month wait. The first delivery is a complete workflow you can run the business on.
- **You own the result.** The source code, the database and the data are yours, hosted where you choose.
- **It keeps growing with you.** New requirements become the next phase, priced and built on the same foundation.

Whether you are a contractor, a manufacturer, a distributor or a service business, the pattern is the same: the spreadsheet that got you here will not get you where you are going. We replace it with something you own.



OpenCollar Technologies LLC
info@opencollartech.com

Let's talk about your system →

The kind of work this is

Estimating & job costing

Pricing engines that match how your estimators already work, with planned-against-actual reporting once the job is running.

Field & workforce

Timekeeping, scheduling and cost-code capture that survives contact with a job site — and lands as real cost on the right job.

Billing & bridges

Invoicing, staged draws, receivables, and clean transfer into the accounting package you already keep your books in.

Three questions worth answering before you commission anything

- **What breaks first if your key person leaves?** That is usually the part to systematise first.
- **Where is the same number typed twice?** Every duplicate entry is a standing cost and a standing risk.
- **Can you say today what last quarter's jobs actually cost?** If the answer takes a week to assemble, you are bidding on memory.

Send us the spreadsheet you run on today and we will tell you, plainly, what it would take to replace it — info@opencollartech.com.