



PROJECT CONTROLS AT UNITED GROUP SERVICES

**THE POWER OF DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING WITH
A CONSTRUCTION-MINDED APPROACH**

Insights from Tyler Jones, Director of Project Controls

INTRODUCTION

In industrial construction, where timelines are tight and margins are razor-thin, the difference between a good project and a great one often comes down to control. Not just in the field—but in the numbers, the process, and the visibility into what’s really happening.

At United Group Services, project controls are more than reporting tools. They are a deeply integrated system for driving performance, accountability, and operational foresight—grounded in real-time data and backed by a boots-on-the-ground understanding of how construction works.

This white paper explores the methodology, technology, and impact of UGS’s Project Controls division, as shared by Tyler Jones, who helped build and scale the system from scratch.

WHAT PROJECT CONTROLS MEANS AT UGS

Project Controls at United is a comprehensive framework that includes:

- Cost Tracking
- Schedule Tracking
- Performance Tracking
- Earned Value Management (EVM)
- Production Forecasting
- Variance Analysis
- Data-Driven Project Reviews

The team manages this process through proprietary tools developed internally—refined over years through trial, error, and iteration. While currently built around a proprietary Excel-based tracker, UGS is transitioning to an integrated ERP system using Viewpoint and ProjectSight, scheduled to launch company-wide in Fall 2025.

HOW IT WORKS: FROM PRECON TO COMPLETION

Project Controls isn't an afterthought—it starts at the estimate phase, where historic cost and productivity data influence bid development. Once a project is awarded, the tracker is built, and if the job is large or complex, a dedicated controller is assigned to work alongside site leadership from day one through completion.

Field leaders submit daily claims, which controllers verify and enter into the tracker. This continuous loop fuels a weekly performance review process where project managers proactively use real-time data to forecast outcomes, adjust expectations, and bring insights to cost review meetings.

THE EARNED VALUE MODEL: UGS STYLE

UGS follows a proven **Earned Value Management** model using three essential metrics:

- **Planned Value** – What was scheduled or budgeted
- **Actual Cost** – What it actually took (time, labor, material)
- **Earned Value** – What work was truly accomplished

But what sets UGS apart is the precision of how these values are captured and validated. Units are tracked daily. Claims are verified by trained controllers. Cost codes (soon to be called phases) are aligned with units of measure—from linear footage to diameter to tonnage. Every data point is mapped back to performance.

Accuracy of earned vs. actual—across phases—is the core metric.

FROM REACTIVE TO PROACTIVE

Before 2020, data was sporadically used in cost meetings—after the fact. Since then, UGS has shifted to a proactive model:

- **Field leaders now review and adjust forecasts weekly.**
- **Controllers support and verify unit claims daily.**
- **Project managers use real-time dashboards to manage productivity, not just report it.**

The cultural shift is clear: project controls are not just compliance—they're leadership tools.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THINGS GO OFF TRACK

Red flags aren't ignored—they're dissected. If a schedule dip or cost spike appears, the team investigates. It starts with "why," followed by comparison to other jobs, and results in collaborative problem-solving—never blame. The goal is to **mitigate issues early**, not write down projects late.

WHY IT WORKS AT UNITED

What makes UGS's approach different isn't the concept—it's the execution.

"We didn't invent earned value. But the way we implement it—how we build it into daily behavior, how we use it to drive communication—that's what sets us apart."

— Tyler Jones

Key differentiators include:

- **Controllers embedded with field teams**
- **Verified daily data—not assumptions**
- **Weekly visibility to KPIs for every job**
- **Open, transparent performance reviews**
- **System-level support from leadership down**

THE FUTURE OF PROJECT CONTROLS AT UGS

With upcoming implementation of **Viewpoint and ProjectSight**, UGS will scale its project controls platform beyond spreadsheets—providing:

- Real-time dashboards for project managers
- Interactive forms for foremen to input data directly
- System-wide integration for earned vs. actual comparisons
- Historical benchmarking across jobs

This next phase of growth brings Project Controls and QA/QC into even tighter alignment—connecting data verification with quality assurance at the point of installation. Together, the teams are rolling out a proactive punchlist process through ProjectSight, designed to flag quality and execution issues earlier. Currently being piloted on a major capital project, the process aims to reduce rework, streamline closeout, and strengthen the link between planning, performance, and final delivery.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OUR CLIENTS

At the end of the day, our Project Controls system isn't just about managing internal performance—it's about delivering better outcomes for our clients.

With daily data validation, weekly forecasting, and earned value tracking built into every job, our clients benefit from:

- **Fewer surprises** – Issues are identified early, not after the fact
- **Clearer cost visibility** – Real-time projections tied to actual work in place
- **Greater schedule confidence** – Forecasts are backed by verified progress
- **Stronger collaboration** – Everyone is aligned on performance, in real time
- **Defensible documentation** – Progress is tracked with clarity and accuracy

You get a partner who's not just executing the work—but actively managing it, communicating openly, and focused on delivering results that meet your expectations.

IN TYLER'S WORDS

"It's data-driven decision-making with a construction-minded approach. The numbers tell a story, but you need people who understand the job to interpret what it means, ask the right questions, and move forward as a team."