

BUILDINGENERGY BOSTON

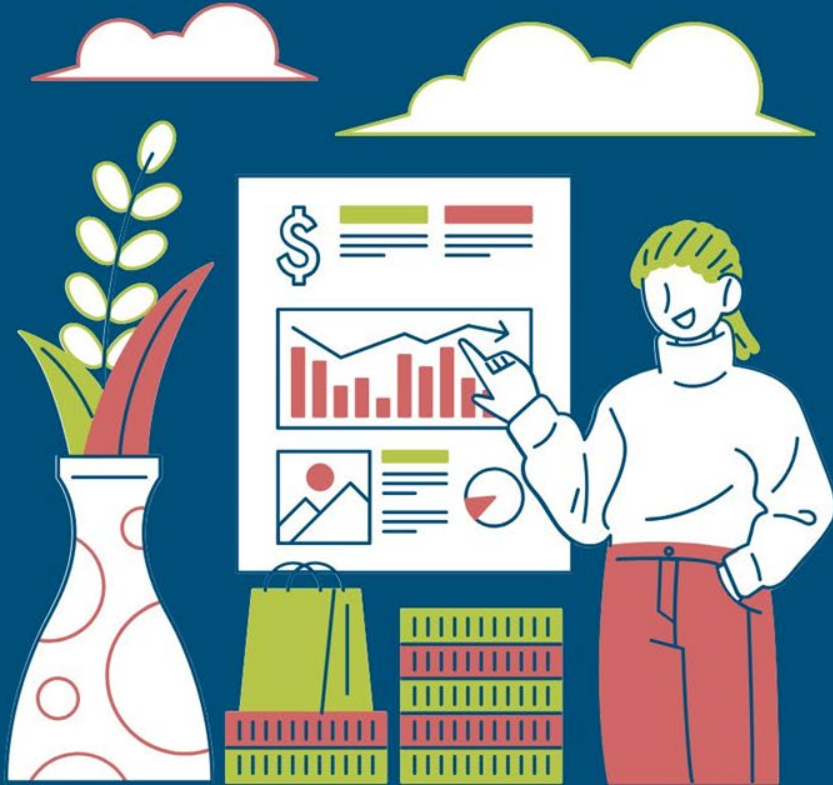
Financial Statement Storytelling: Building Accountability & Engagement

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Cooperative Fund of the Northeast**

Curated by Megan Nedzinski and Nancy Meyer

Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) | March 23, 2026

Building Energy Boston 2026



Financial Statement Storytelling

Building
Accountability &
Engagement


CFNE
FUNDING THE FUTURE



AGENDA

Respond: [Menti.com](https://www.menti.com)
Code: 7148 0330



- 
1. Icebreaker: Getting to Know You
 2. What is Financial Statement Storytelling?
 3. Tool: 6-Line Profit & Loss Statement
 4. Activity: 6-Line P&L Visualization
 5. Q&A and Closing



DISCUSSION

Imagine you are the project manager for a design -build company. One of your projects is going way over budget, and your team needs to figure out what you will say to the client at the next project meeting.

- What **levers** do you have at your disposal to control costs or bill extra?
- What **information** do you need from others on the team to develop a plan to move forward?
- What **personal factors** (role, life experience, access to information, etc.) might influence how stakeholders respond to this conversation?

A horizontal banner with a dark blue background and a light green bar at the bottom. The banner contains several stylized illustrations: a woman with a laptop and a target icon, a woman pointing to a puzzle board with letters S, W, O, T and a percentage sign, two people looking at a document with a lightbulb icon, and a woman pointing to a document with a bar chart and a pie chart. The text 'SHARE-BACK' is written in large white letters on the green bar.

SHARE-BACK

- What were some **levers** your group identified that you could use to improve your situation?
- What **information** did your group want from others on the team to develop a plan to move forward?
- What **factors** might make financial conversations and decision-making easier or harder, especially when you need to get other people on board?

A colorful illustration at the top of the slide depicts a business meeting. On the left, a woman in a red top stands next to a large document with a star icon and a target symbol. In the center, a woman in a white lab coat points to a board with letters 'S', 'W', 'O', 'T' and a bar chart. To her right, two men in white shirts are looking at a document. On the far right, a woman in a white shirt points to a large chart with a dollar sign and a bar graph. The background is dark blue with white clouds.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT STORYTELLING

What?

Job Costs:

\$700,000

\$800,000

\$1,200,000

Numbers in context:

Where did we think we would be?

How did we actually do?

Where are we going based on that?

An illustration at the top of the slide depicts various financial and business concepts. On the left, a woman stands next to a document with a star icon and a target symbol. In the center, a woman points to a SWOT analysis chart. To the right, two men are shown in a discussion, one holding a document with a lightbulb icon. On the far right, a man points to a bar chart with a dollar sign and a pie chart. The background is dark blue with white clouds.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT STORYTELLING

What?

Financial statement storytelling is **financial education** and **employee engagement** technique. It involves

1. focusing on a few **key numbers** ,
2. **following** those numbers at regular intervals, and
3. encouraging employees to **ask questions** about changes and trends in the numbers, to **create a shared narrative**.

A colorful illustration at the top of the slide depicts various business and financial concepts. On the left, a woman stands next to a document with a star icon and a target symbol. In the center, a woman points to a SWOT analysis chart. To the right, two men discuss documents, one holding a lightbulb icon. Further right, a man points to a bar chart with a dollar sign. The background features stylized clouds and green foliage.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT STORYTELLING

Why?

1. Increase employee engagement
2. Improve business performance
3. Achieve people, planet, and prosperity goals



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FINANCIAL STATEMENT STORYTELLING

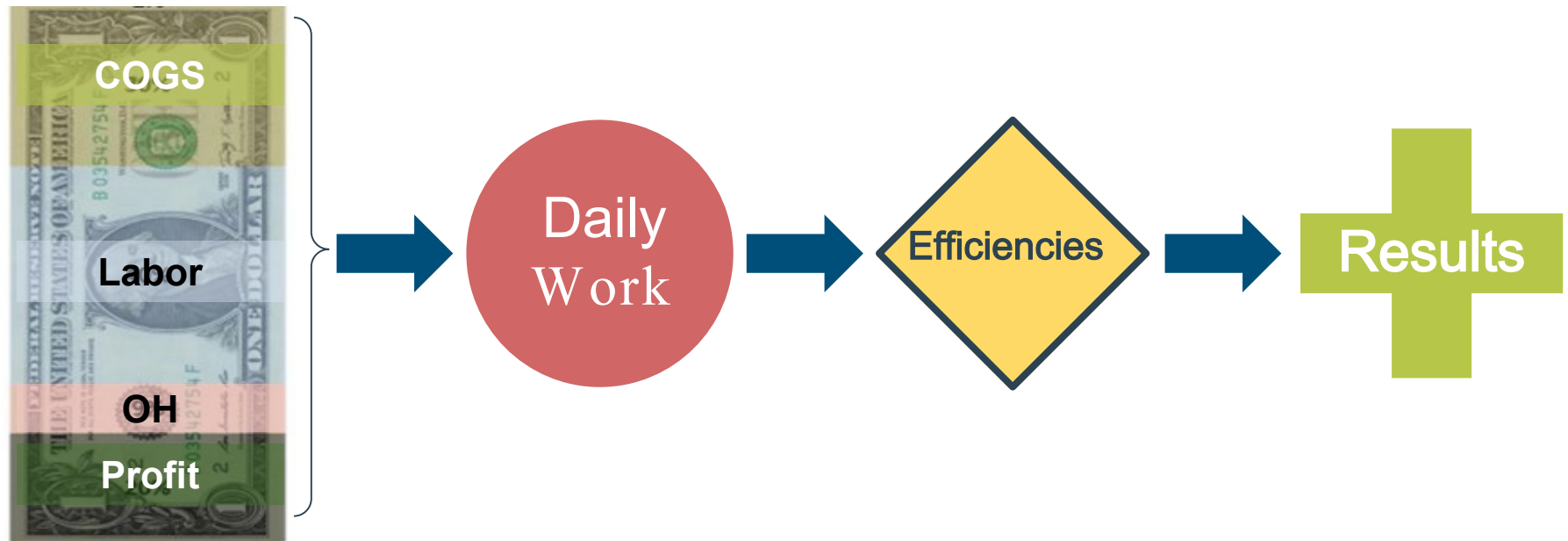
Why?

“Open-book management nearly always improves near-term financial results. In our experience, companies register as much as a **30% increase in productivity and profitability** in the first year alone, when they implement the approach properly.”

-Forbes Magazine

FINANCIAL STATEMENT STORYTELLING

How?

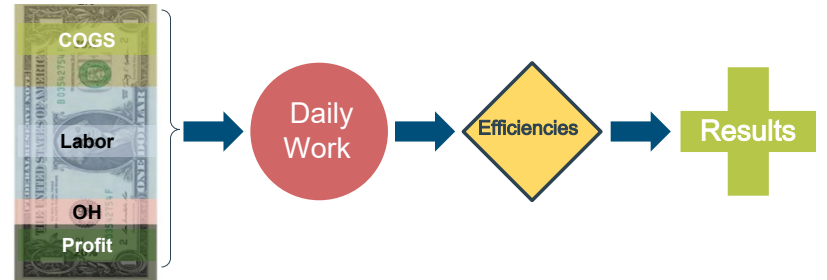


FINANCIAL STATEMENT STORYTELLING

How?

6-Line Profit & Loss:

1. Indicator of business health
2. Directly tied to operations
3. Covers a period of time





THE 6-LINE PROFIT & LOSS

Revenue & COGS	Previous Year
Revenue	\$1,100,000
Labor Expense	\$180,000
Cost of Good Sold (COGS)	\$725,000
Gross Profit	\$195,000
<i>Gross Margin</i>	18%
Expense	
Overhead Expense	\$150,000
Net Profit	\$45,000
<i>Net Margin</i>	4%

1. Revenue
2. Direct Labor
3. Other COGS
4. Gross profit
5. Overhead
6. Net Profit

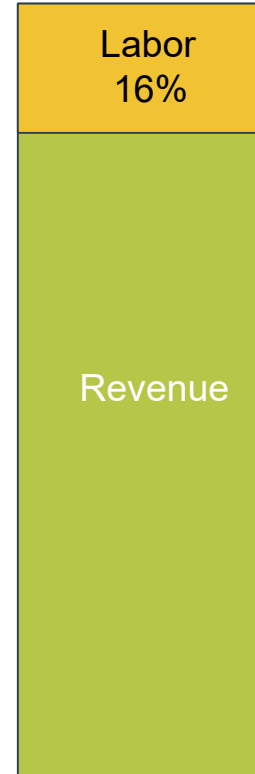
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Revenue
100%

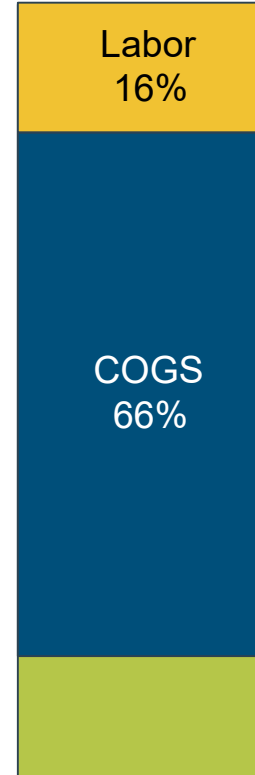
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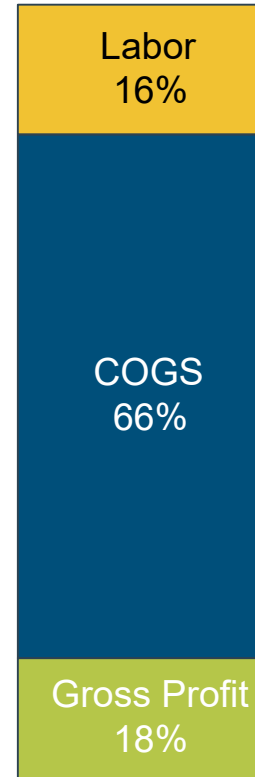
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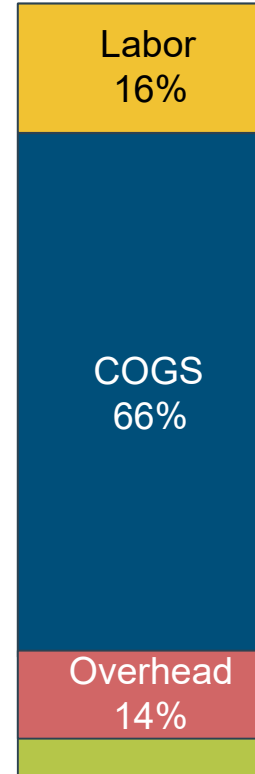
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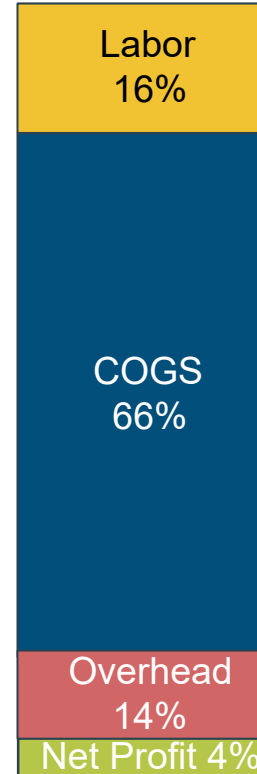
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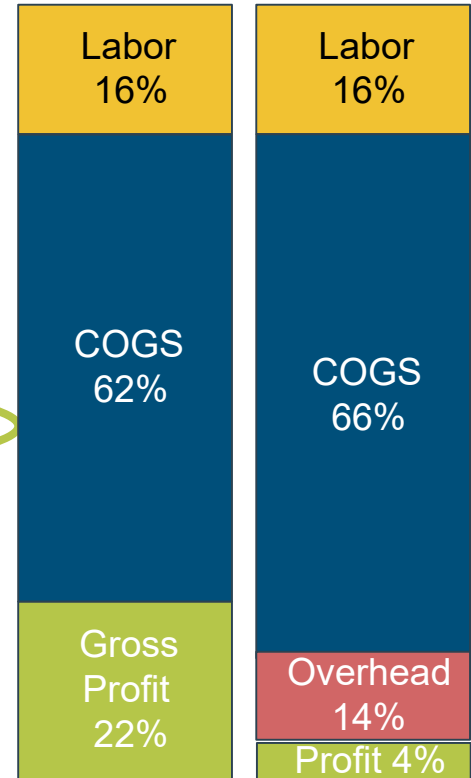
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Revenue & COGS	Previous Year
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Cost of Good Sold (COGS)	\$725,000
Gross Profit	\$195,000
<i>Gross Margin</i>	18%
Expense	
Overhead Expense	\$150,000
Net Profit	\$45,000
<i>Net Margin</i>	4%



USING THE 6-LINE PROFIT & LOSS

Revenue & COGS	Current Year	Previous Year
Revenue	\$1,250,000	\$1,100,000
Labor Expense	\$200,000	\$180,000
Cost of Good Sold (COGS)	\$775,000	\$725,000
Gross Profit	\$275,000	\$195,000
<i>Gross Margin</i>	22%	18%
Expense		
Overhead Expense	\$150,000	\$150,000
Net Profit	\$125,000	\$45,000
<i>Net Margin</i>	10%	4%



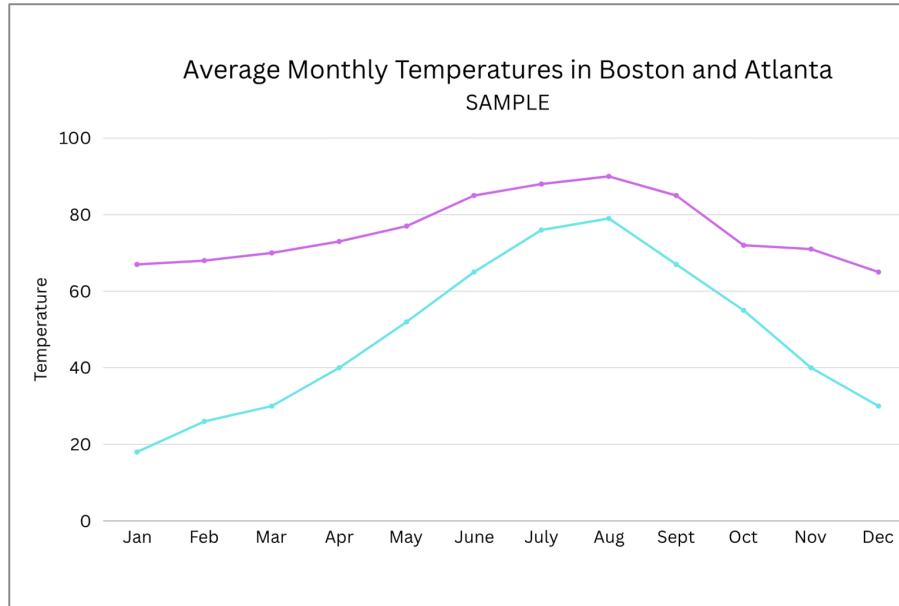
USING THE 6-LINE PROFIT & LOSS

Revenue & COGS	Current Year	Previous Year		
Revenue	\$1,250,000	\$1,100,000		
Labor Expense	\$200,000	\$180,000		
Cost of Good Sold (COGS)	\$775,000	\$725,000		
Gross Profit	\$275,000	\$195,000		
<i>Gross Margin</i>	22%	18%		
Expense				
Overhead Expense	\$150,000	\$150,000		
Net Profit	\$125,000	\$45,000		
<i>Net Margin</i>	10%	4%		

Labor 16%	Labor 16%
COGS 62%	COGS 66%
Overhead 12%	Overhead 14%
Profit 10%	Profit 4%

MAKE YOUR STORY A PICTURE BOOK

What?



Illustrate the story:

- Minimal numbers
- Charts and graphs
- Brief narrative

A colorful illustration at the top of the slide depicts several people interacting with various data visualizations. On the left, a woman points to a document with a star icon. In the center, a woman points to a grid with letters S, W, O, T and a bar chart. To the right, two people discuss a chart with a question mark icon. On the far right, a man points to a chart with a dollar sign and a bar chart. The background is dark blue with white clouds.

MAKE YOUR STORY A PICTURE BOOK

Why?

Dartmouth professor Brendan Nyhan and colleagues found that **presenting information visually** increased the accuracy of people's beliefs about charged issues -- including the change in global temperatures over the past 30 years.

- *as reported by The Nieman Journalism Lab*

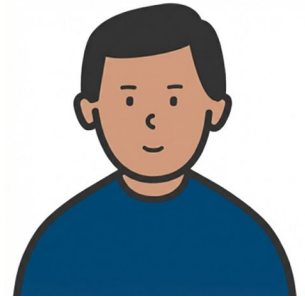
MAKE YOUR STORY A PICTURE BOOK

Labor cost % of Income



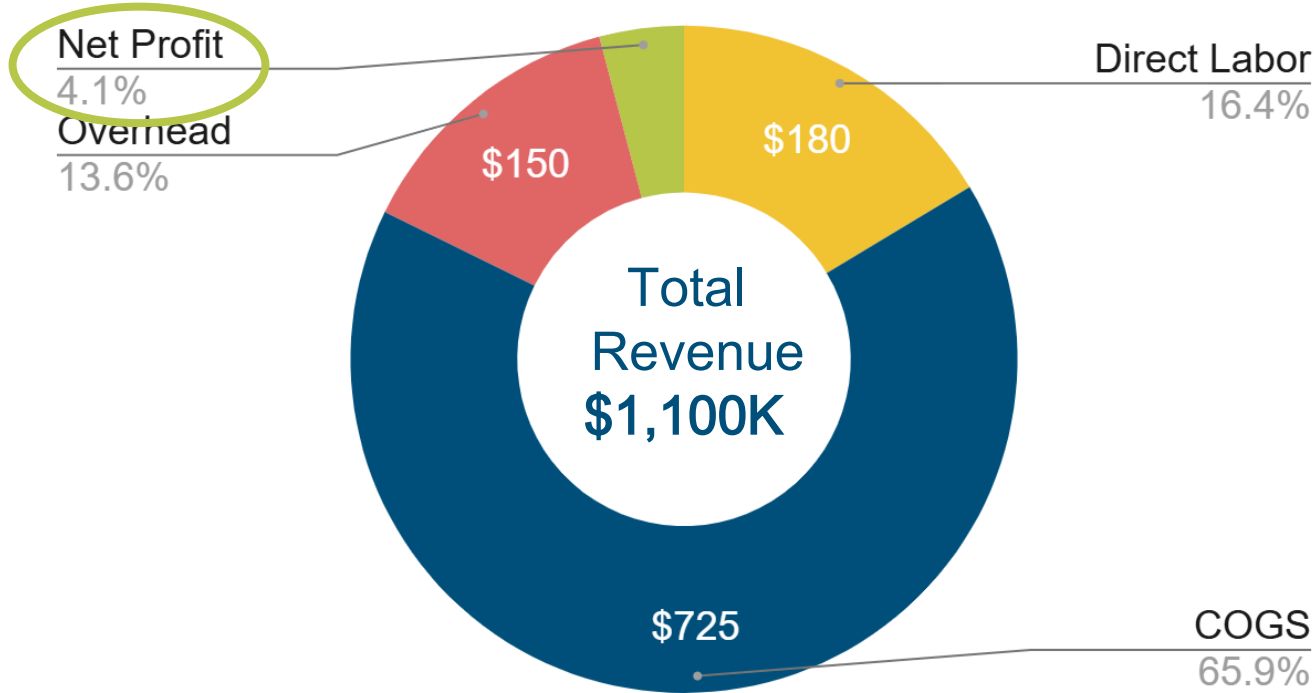
Why did our labor vs. income jump so much in May?

Line graph : Trends over time



MAKE YOUR STORY A PICTURE BOOK

Previous Year Expense & Profit (in thousands)



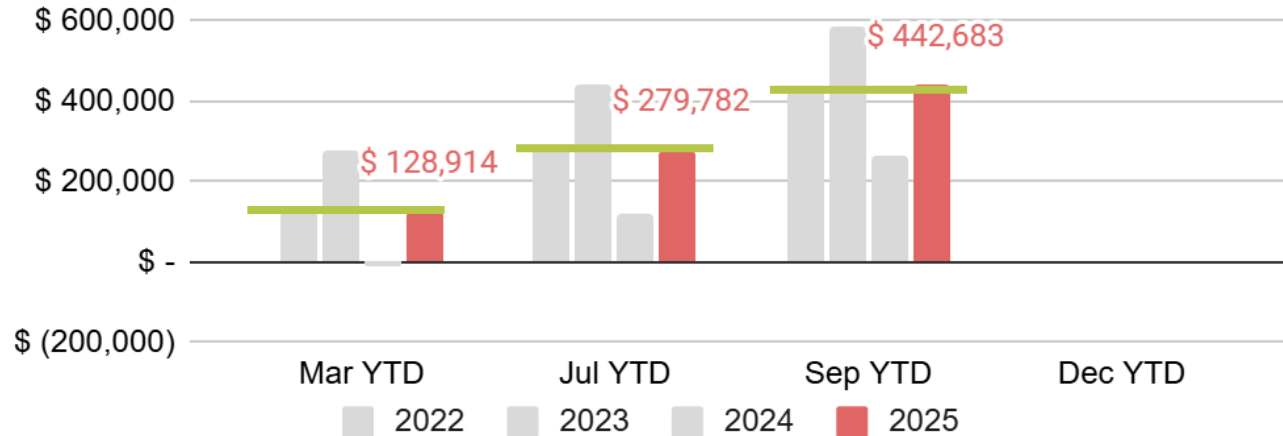
Profit is a really small slice! What could we do to make it bigger this year?



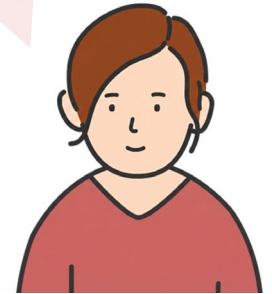
Pie chart : Proportional parts of a whole

MAKE YOUR STORY A PICTURE BOOK

YTD Expense by quarter

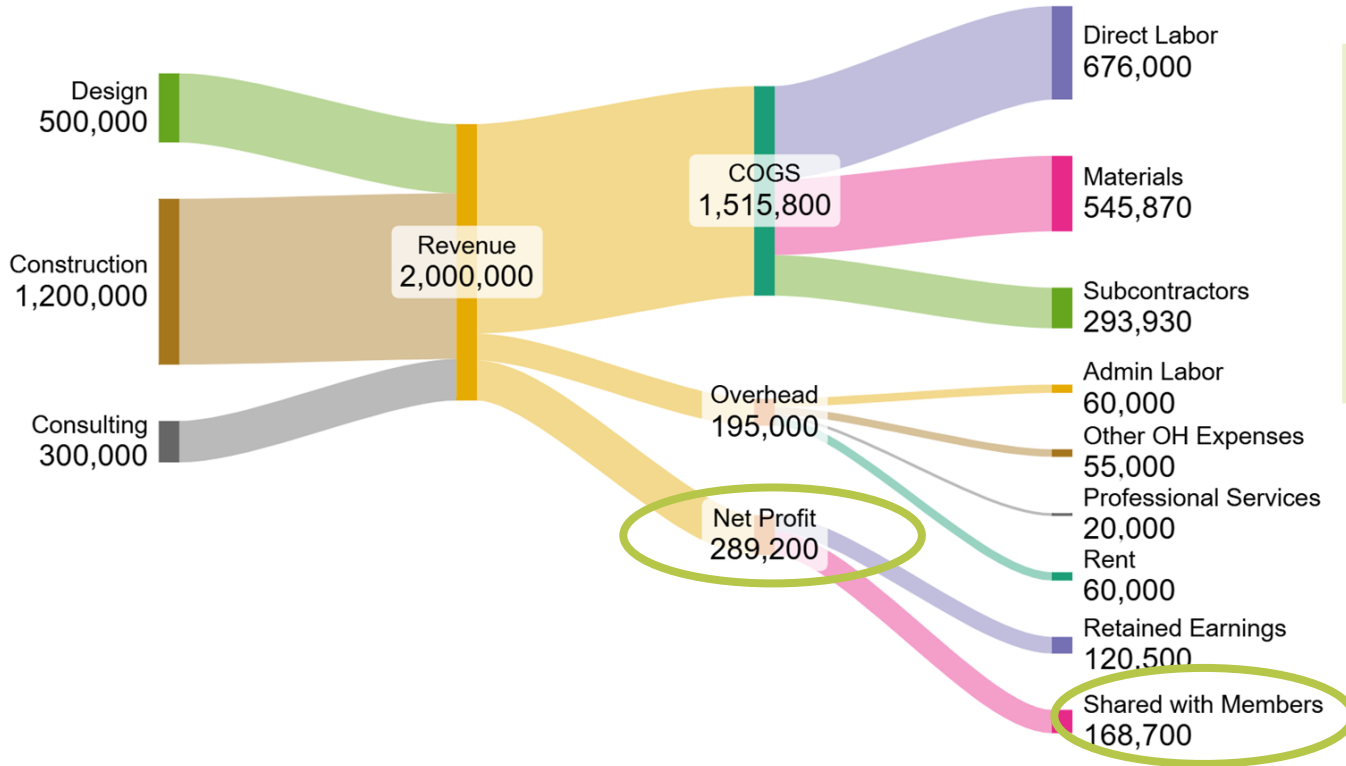


This year is really similar to 2022. Let's look back to see what we might expect for December!



Bar graph : Comparison of 2+ series over time

MAKE YOUR STORY A PICTURE BOOK



If we increase our net profit, we'll have more to share with worker-owners!



Sankey diagram : Flows of resources

The top of the slide features a dark blue background with white clouds. Below the clouds are several stylized illustrations: a woman with a target icon, a woman pointing to a puzzle diagram with letters S, W, O, T, a man and woman with a lightbulb icon, and a woman pointing to a financial chart with a dollar sign and a bar graph. A green horizontal bar spans the width of the slide, containing the word 'ACTIVITY' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

ACTIVITY

Use the H3P case study and sample financials to answer the questions with a partner or small group.

- Work through the case study one question at a time.
- Discuss and answer each question *before* going on to the next one.
- Each question builds on your previous answers!

A horizontal banner with a dark blue background and a light green bar at the bottom. The banner contains several illustrations: a woman with a laptop and a target icon, a woman pointing to a puzzle with letters S, W, O, T and a bar chart, two people looking at a lightbulb and a document, and a woman pointing to a large data dashboard with a bar chart, a line graph, and a pie chart. The text 'SHARE-BACK' is written in large white letters on the green bar.

SHARE-BACK

- What did you notice about the process of working through the case study?
- What made it easier or harder? Were certain types of questions more challenging?
- Did anything surprise you about working with the charts and graphs?



WRAP UP / Q & A

Resource

- *The Great Game of Business* by Jack Stack & Bo Burlingame
- *Get in the Game* by Rich Armstrong & Steve Baker
- Zingtrain's "Intro to Open-Book Management" courses
- Worker-owned or considering it? Stay in touch!

Building Energy Boston 2026



Thank you

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Please fill out an evaluation for this session



or: nesea.org/eval

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