

Where does the time go from tender to handover?

A practical guide for leaders in construction: six steps from tender to invoice, a checklist and a worksheet.

CONSTRUCTION AND REAL ESTATE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Why time disappears in the handovers

In construction, margins are thin and time is short. Many companies turn down jobs because there is no time to price them, and they feel too much time goes on paperwork instead of building.

Time rarely disappears in the craft itself. It disappears in the handovers: when tender documents have to be read and understood, when a quote has to be priced from scratch, when site measurements have to be typed in, and when the invoice is waiting for documentation of extra work.

This guide walks through the six steps a job typically follows. For each step we describe what happens, the signs to look for, what you can do yourselves, and where technology can help.

How to use this guide

- 1 Read the six steps and mark the ones that sound familiar.
- 2 Fill in the checklist with a colleague from another part of the process.
- 3 Use the worksheet to cost your three biggest time drains.
- 4 Choose one step to start with. Not six.

This guide is written for leaders. It requires no technical knowledge, and you can use it whether or not you work with BCT.

2. WHERE THE TIME GOES

The six steps

Here are the six steps the work typically follows. For each step: what happens, signs that time is disappearing, what you can do yourselves, and where technology can help.

01 Tender and enquiry

Tender documents, drawings and specifications arrive in many different formats. Before you can price anything, it all has to be read and understood.

SIGNS THAT TIME DISAPPEARS HERE

- Reading through tender documents takes many hours.
- You turn down tenders because there is no time.
- Important requirements are missed and cost money later.

WHAT YOU CAN DO YOURSELVES TOMORROW

- Create a fixed checklist for reviewing tenders.
- Measure how many hours it takes to review a tender.

WHERE TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP

Relay reads tender documents and drawings and pulls out the key information, so the estimator can start straight away.

02 Estimating and quoting

Quotes are often priced by hand and structured differently every time. Only a few people can price the big ones.

SIGNS THAT TIME DISAPPEARS HERE

- Only one or two people can price a quote.
- Quotes are structured differently and are hard to compare.
- It is unclear which quotes actually make money.

WHAT YOU CAN DO YOURSELVES TOMORROW

- Create a fixed quote template.
- Gather prices and benchmark figures in one place.

WHERE TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP

Quotes are built on the same basis with your own prices, so more people can price them and they can be compared across projects.

03

Planning

Crews, materials, machinery and subcontractors have to be coordinated. It often happens in spreadsheets, emails and phone calls.

SIGNS THAT TIME DISAPPEARS HERE

- People on site wait for materials or information.
- The plan exists in several versions.
- Changes do not reach everyone in time.

WHAT YOU CAN DO YOURSELVES TOMORROW

- Keep the plan in one place everyone can see.
- Measure how many hours are spent waiting.

WHERE TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP

One overview of tasks, people and deliveries that updates when something changes.

04

Execution and measurements

On site, measurements, photos and notes are taken. They often end up in folders and phones and are never used again.

SIGNS THAT TIME DISAPPEARS HERE

- Measurements and photos are hard to find afterwards.
- Lessons from one project are not used on the next.
- Errors are only discovered once they have become expensive.

WHAT YOU CAN DO YOURSELVES TOMORROW

- Agree on one place where everything from site is stored.
- Set a fixed way to name photos and measurements.

WHERE TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP

Site data is collected automatically and can be used straight away, for example to assess damage or defects with AI.

05

Quality and documentation

After every job, reports and quality assurance have to be written. It is often done by hand and looks different from person to person.

SIGNS THAT TIME DISAPPEARS HERE

- Writing a report after every job takes a long time.
- Reports look different.
- It is hard to document for the customer what has been done.

WHAT YOU CAN DO YOURSELVES TOMORROW

- Create a fixed report template.
- Find the reports that most often need correcting.

WHERE TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP

Standardised reports are produced automatically from measurements and photos. The specialist checks and approves.

06

Handover and invoice

At handover, defects, extra work and documentation have to be gathered before you can invoice.

SIGNS THAT TIME DISAPPEARS HERE

- It takes a long time from handover to final invoice.
- Extra work is not invoiced because documentation is missing.
- Finance has to chase information from the people on site.

WHAT YOU CAN DO YOURSELVES TOMORROW

- Set up a fixed routine for extra work.
- Measure the number of days from handover to invoice.

WHERE TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP

Documentation is ready when the job is finished, so the invoice can go out straight away.

3. FIND YOUR TIME DRAINS

Checklist

Tick the questions where the answer is “too long”, “too many times” or “we don’t know”. Each tick is a place where time and money are probably disappearing. Ideally, do it with a colleague from another part of the process.

01 Tender and enquiry

- ☐ How long do you spend reading through tender documents?
- ☐ How many tenders do you turn down because there is no time?

02 Estimating and quoting

- ☐ How many people can price a quote?
- ☐ Can you compare your own quotes across projects?

03 Planning

- ☐ Where are crews, materials and subcontractors coordinated today?
- ☐ How often do people on site wait for materials or information?

04 Execution and measurements

- ☐ Where do site measurements and photos end up?
- ☐ Are they used again on the next project?

05 Quality and documentation

- ☐ How long does it take to write a report after a job?
- ☐ Do reports look the same regardless of who wrote them?

06 Handover and invoice

- ☐ How long does it take from handover to final invoice?
- ☐ How often is extra work not invoiced because documentation is missing?

Three ticks or more? Then there is usually something to gain, and it is worth taking a closer look.

4. WHAT DOES IT COST YOU TODAY?

Do the maths

It is easier to prioritise when there is a number on it. Use the table to cost your three biggest time drains. The figures do not need to be precise. A good estimate is enough to see where there is most to gain.

$$\text{Hours per week} \times \text{number of people} \times \text{hourly rate} \times 46 \text{ weeks} = \text{EUR per year}$$

Task	Hours/week	People	Rate (EUR)	EUR/year
Example: Quotes and estimating	6	2	75	41,400 EUR
1.				
2.				
3.				
Total				

The example is for illustration only. Use your own figures. Remember that time is not the only cost: lost orders, errors and delays often cost more than the hours.

GOOD QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN YOU DO THE MATHS

- Who does the task, and how often?
- What would they spend the time on if the task disappeared?
- What does an error or a delay cost when it happens?
- What happens when the person who knows the task is ill or leaves?

5. NEXT STEPS

How to get started

Once you have found your time drains, it is tempting to fix them all at once. That is rarely the best approach. Here are five tips from the projects we have been part of.

1. Start with one step

Choose the step that costs the most and solve it first. It delivers results quickly and experience for the next ones.

2. Measure before you build

Write down how many hours, errors and days are involved today. Then you can see whether it works.

3. Talk to the people who do the work

They know where it hurts. Solutions built together with them get used.

4. Build on what you have

You rarely need a new system. Often it is about getting the systems you have to work together.

5. Agree price and extent up front

A fixed price and a clear plan make it easy to decide and easy to follow up.

A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE**MoistLab – Danish Institute for Moisture Technology**

Moisture damage in buildings was assessed from simple measurements and the expert's experience. BCT built MoistLab together with Institut for Fugttechnik. The platform combines moisture readings, thermal images and salt analyses, uses AI to identify the type and cause of moisture, and produces the report automatically.

Result: Over 80% accuracy in moisture diagnoses.

6. NEXT STEP

Let's have a no-obligation chat

This guide gives you a good starting point. If you would like help taking the next step, the easiest way is to call or email us. It is free and without obligation, and you will get an honest answer about whether there is something to gain.

1 Call us for a chat

A conversation of about 20 minutes where we listen to where your time goes and share how others have approached it. No sales pitch.

2 Book a Shadow Walk

We follow the work at your company for ½–2 days and put numbers on where the time and money go.

3 Get a concrete plan

About a week later you receive a report of typically 50–75 pages with an action plan and a financial overview. Fixed price, and you own what we build.



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Book a Shadow Walk: blackcapitaltechnology.com/en/the-shadow-walk/booking/

You set the pace. Many start with a short chat and come back when the timing is right.