

Contract Workflow

This is the workflow which is a familiar part of the workings of any construction company. At any one time construction companies may have multiple projects at each stage.

The process starts with **business development** which is more than simply playing golf! While this is not likely a field that many quality professionals will get involved in directly, as quality professionals are engaged in delivering and improving the customer experience and protecting and enhancing the corporate image what quality professionals do directly impacts on the company success in this phase. With the advent of BS 11000 and PAS 99 quality managers are increasingly being asked to apply their process analysis capabilities to helping management decide who to court and who to ally / joint venture with to best effect.

Once the target clients and projects have been selected the next stage is generally a **prequalification** of some sort. Apart from Quality staff getting involved in helping the bid team write quality submissions there is also a need to ensure that processes are in place to ensure only the best quality or best fit for the business objectives schemes are pursued.

Assuming companies are selected to tender or bid for the opportunity the next phase might be some **tendering** or other method of engagement with the client over a specific opportunity. While getting involved in producing the actual tender and ensuring that it is of the highest quality possible, as serious money is often being spent now, the quality manager may also need to help design processes to ensure that regular bid reviews are held and that money is being spent on the right opportunities.

As the tender is submitted and **negotiations** commence or the company asked to proceed as preferred contractor a quality professional might find themselves allocated as a dedicated resource to the project and involved in forming plans for execution.

Finally a contract will be **awarded**. The client is often likely to ask for some key documentation very quickly and this is likely to include quality documentation.

Award though quickly turns into **mobilisation** this phase is characterised by a high workload for the quality professional as a number of key plans and procedures need to be put in place as soon as possible, often while commuting between sites and with limited resources as the site is still being set up. It is useful at this stage for the quality professional to help the project delivery team set targets and goals and help understand the project drivers.

Eventually the frenetic pace of mobilisation will settle down into **administration**. This phase is characterised by steady workflow and delivery of the project. Construction professionals from client, contractor and sub-contractor will all be familiar with this phase as it is where everything comes together.

The final topics cover the closure of the project through project **completion** and handover to the client along with leading additional activities such as **operation manual production and training**.

The aim here is to effect project **close out** as fast as possible so that the final account can be settled and cashflow for the business maintained. Quality professionals on a project in this phase will find their analytic abilities tested to the limit as the loose ends that were overlooked previously are tied up and closed.

Finally the quality professional can help the business learn from the experience whether or not it was successful by helping to facilitate **performance review and lessons learnt** activities with both the client and the contractors.