

## The Project Master Guide

The Project Management documentation provided by “ theprojectmaster.com “ is specifically designed as an easily understood tool to enable the competent management of a construction project. It is not designed as a substitute for, nor be an alternative to a detailed specification, Bill of Quantities or detailed Drawings. Detailed drawings should be prepared and submitted for Planning permission ( if required ) and Building Control approval and no works should be commenced until these approvals are in place.

Any or all of the above documents can be used in conjunction with the PM documentation to form a complete Project Plan. As a minimum we recommend the approved Building Control Drawings are included as these provide the minimum standards required by law. There is the facility to upload drawings and specifications to your plan and we encourage this, as it will form part of the complete Project Management Package.

Theprojectmaster will lead you through the steps in the program, using dropdown lists and checkboxes. Along the way, you will build up a detailed specification of the works you want to be done. This will form the basis for any quotes you receive.

All of this is achieved by using the templates provided and without any specialized knowledge on your part. All you need to know is what job you want doing.

Theprojectmaster.com does all the work for you. It is fully templated so you can use it straight “ out of the box” if you want, but at the same time, is fully editable so you can amend, modify or adjust all or any of the documents.

N.B. We strongly recommend that you edit the documents to provide the most accurate description of the works required. The more accurate the description is the easier it is for a contractor to accurately price it. Please do not worry about editing. Feel free to play around with the text so you understand how it works – if you make a mistake or decide you don’t want the changes you have made there is a “Reset Text “ button which will safely undo the changes and restore the text to the original version.

**The Basic Package** contains everything you need to create your project and get it started.

**The Project Mission Statement** is an editable document which explains very briefly what the Project is and how it will be carried out. Please use this to express your wishes.

**The Definitions** document defines and clarifies some common construction terminology, to avoid misunderstandings and is the only document that is non-editable. Please ensure you understand the definitions before using the terminology.

N.B. Where PC sums are to be used, include the amount of each PC Sum in the Custom Options box. i.e Allow £30 per m2 for supply of tiles.

**Preliminaries, Roles & Responsibilities** outlines those things which will cost, but are not part of the Scope of Works, ( such as scaffolding, welfare ) and defines who does what. You will need to check this and edit each section as it will impact on how the project is priced.

**Site setup and General Conditions** explains how you want the site to be looked after and managed. Please ensure this is as you want.

All these are editable ( except Definitions ) so you can have them as you want. If you do not want to edit them, their default is valid, although we do recommend you take the time to check them out before you use them.

For each element of the construction process there is a **Scope of Works** which contains a brief general specification and a checklist. Please edit the specification to give as much information as possible to the contractor. You then click on the items you want the contractor to price and a dropdown list appears with all the options. When you tick the option you want, this tells the contractor to insert the price he is quoting for the work.

You do this step by step through all the elements of work until there is a complete **Scope of Works**. This is what the contractors will use to prepare their quotes. If you don't tick a box the element won't be priced so if it is something that you might do yourself or want a specialist installer to do, leave the box unticked. And when you approach the specialists for their quotes, use the **Scope of Works** documents that apply to them.

At each step, there is an option to tick if that element is not required at all, so if you tick this, the contractor will not see the item at all.

When you are ready, and the Scope of Works is complete, you can save or print all the documents and use them to invite your chosen contractors to quote.

**The Pro Package** contains the documents and functions which are the powerful tools you need to manage the project through to successful completion.

The **Contractors** button is used to invite your selected contractors to quote. This is done simply by entering their names and emails into the program. The Project Master will automatically send them an email explaining that you have invited them to quote. ( We recommend you follow this up a day or so later with a telephone call, just to ensure they have received the request ).

They are invited to log in to the site to see the project and Scope of Works. They only see the elements that are necessary for pricing purposes and when they open the documents there is a price box for each of the elements, where they insert their price. These are totaled automatically and become their quotation. This is a secure area and no Contractor can see any other quotes, or even who has been asked to quote.

N.B Each of the contractors you invite to quote, should contact you to arrange a site visit so they can familiarize themselves with the site and assess what they will need to allow for when preparing their quote.

When they are happy with their quote, they click SUBMIT and are then locked out of the system. The quote is locked in so they cannot change anything.

Once all the elements have been priced by the invited contractors, the Project Master will total them and insert the totals into the **Tender Comparison**. This is a very clever piece of kit that will help identify if any of the quoting contractors has omitted anything or is wildly different with the pricing for individual elements. For example Contractor A has priced the brickwork at double any of the others. You should then investigate – it is likely that someone has made a mistake –better to find out before you commit.

There is the option if you want, to invite any of the contractors back in to adjust or amend any of the elements, if they have made a mistake or wish to be more competitive, and resubmit.

Once this is complete you can select the quote you want to accept. All the others are permanently locked out.

You then invite the chosen builder back into the Project Master site so you can run the entire job through the program. Alternatively it can all be done on paper if you prefer – the choice is yours.

**The Program of Works** lets you track progress and is a really useful tool for understanding how and when payments should be made. Once you have selected the contractor, you should ask them to prepare the Program immediately. **N.B. It is very important that the contractor includes timings in the Program of Works for any part of the work that you, the client, have taken responsibility for. For example, if you are using another electrician, you will need to know when he should be on site to avoid undue delays in the program. You should double check this with the contractor as, if there are delays to his work schedule, due to elements outside his control, he may incur extra costs which he will pass on to you.** The program is flexible enough to be altered if circumstances change and should be reviewed on a regular basis, preferably weekly with the contractor.

## Valuations and Invoices

It is important to establish the Payment Schedule as part of the contract documentation, before any work is started. The recommended schedule is monthly ( usually in practice this means every 4 weeks ), but this can be varied depending on the expected duration of the work.

Any up front payment should be clawed back as a percentage of each periodic payment.

The amount of each payment should be based on actual work done. This is simple to calculate using the Valuation template, which should be completed by the contractor and agreed by the client before each payment is made.

Completion of the Valuation template is simple. Each priced element is listed and there are columns for each valuation. The contractor should insert the percentage of the work completed and the due amount will be calculated automatically.

The Valuation should be submitted to the Client a few days before payment is due. Suggested timing would be to submit the Valuation on Friday at the end of the day, for payment the following Friday. This gives time for any amendments to be made. Once the figures have been agreed the contractor should issue his invoice accordingly.

N.B. The Project Master recommends that only work actually completed is included in the Valuation. We do not recommend that any allowance should be made for any work that may be done in the period between submission of the Valuation and the date for payment.

Please note, the Valuation is simply to record and value the work done. Any other calculations, retentions and clawback should be shown on the Payment Schedule.

Retentions can be contentious and the cause of disagreements. It is quite common for clients to withhold retentions during the work for release on completion. A simple example is to withhold 5% from each payment during the work, release half of that on completion and retain 2.5% for six months against any defects.

If an up front payment has been made, this retention process is very reasonable and we would recommend it. The contractor should have no objection.

If no up front payment has been made and the Valuation / Payment process is followed properly, there should be no need for retentions to be held for that purpose, as any payment made is justified by works completed.

A small retention, held for a few months against defects, is not unreasonable, although a common sense approach should be followed. For smaller projects a 2.5% retention will effectively be a very small amount of money and I am not convinced of its

usefulness. For larger projects there may be more justification. I will be happy to advise on an individual basis if you email me.

**The Payment Sheet** keeps a record of all payments, retentions and extras so you always know exactly what you have paid, what for and how much is outstanding. It helps you stay on budget

**The Variation Order** should be used for every change in the Scope of Works, however minor and even for negative changes or a reduction in the scope of work. It is a tool for logging the change and registering the effect the change will have both on the Program and the overall cost, so you can see exactly what you are committing to, before you agree to it. This eliminates any potential for unexpected cost increases. A **Variation Order** can only be issued by the contractor. Any discussions or requests for variations may commence from either party and should be conducted on record via the **Information Store**. Once agreement on the Variation has been reached the Contractor will cost the variation ( N.B this may be an increase or a reduction in costs ) and submit the **Variation Order** for approval. No work should be carried out until the **Variation Order** has been issued and accepted.

**The Information Store** is used to ask and answer any questions or issues, record changes, amendments and updates and generally keep a record of the project. There is the facility to upload revised drawings, sketches and photos.

It helps to avoid misunderstandings and keeps the project moving. Please do not rely on verbal questions / answers. Use the **Information Store** to maintain a record of any questions or clarifications you have provided to, or requested from the contractor. Anything recorded here which has a financial impact on the project should then form the basis of a **Variation Order**.

In all cases, whenever a request or query is logged, or an answer given, an email will be generated and sent. That way there is no possibility of missing something.

The **Information Store** is used by both you and the contractor and nothing recorded or uploaded here can be deleted.

This will protect both parties in the event of any dispute.

The total projectmaster package is everything you need to ensure your project is a success. All you have to do is follow it exactly.