

Submission 1: Work Based Project - Research Proposal

**Evaluate the benefits of introducing operational and administrative
work flow processes**

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1. Proposed Project Title

An evaluation of the benefits and drawbacks of implementing workflow processes within the built environment.

2. Overview

The built environment sector has a varied compilation of generic service providers, with the scale of difference between different aspects of construction, there is no one single workflow process to fit all. From bricklaying to carpentry, working on different projects, with different materials, methods and tools to achieve a different purpose. and whilst all of these circumstances pertain to construction, no two are the same.

Adding to this mix the specialist niche service providers, often operating under unique circumstances, then we have an even more complex environment. To succeed in a career with such companies requires specialist knowledge and skills often over and above those that may be required for more generic built environment roles. Attracting and retaining good employees is important and whilst only time can create experience, perhaps a company can make efforts to aid this process? This raises an argument for the need of workflow processes. Would they make learning about a new profession easier? Or, would they overcomplicate the learning process by providing too much information at once?

The researcher is newly employed by a fire suppression company, moving into a niche industry with no prior knowledge of the construction industry and so has the necessary knowledge of working without these processes in place and can consider both sides of the proposed question.

3. Hypotheses to be Tested

The hypothesis of this research project is to consider if the management of fire suppression projects could be enhanced in newer workers in this niche discipline by the provision of workflow processes.

4. Aims and objectives

The aim of the project is to consult with colleagues, to review existing arrangements, to create and test a Beta version of an operational and administrative workflow process to consider and ultimately determine the impacts of introducing such, on a larger scale.

I will produce a sample document collated from internal sources. This document will be a workflow process instruction highlighting how to correctly place orders on the in-house purchase order software within the researcher's company. This will then be distributed to some new and existing staff to see if any benefits or better practices are observed, thusly highlighting firsthand the benefit of these processes.

5. Research Methodology(ies) and Justification:

Primary data will be sourced from colleagues and external partners in the form of interviews (verbal questioning) and online questionnaires.

I will also take consideration from forms of literature and research on this topic to broaden my information sources and to build upon solid groundwork towards my research project.

Ultimately the success of introducing a full suite of operational and administrative workflow processes with instructions would see; improved performance of staff with correct internal processes followed from the outset. Additionally, although not measurable in the time available, improved statistics in the hiring and retaining of good staff.

6. Chapters

The chapters are envisaged as:

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 2 – Research Review

Chapter 3 – Beta Test

Chapter 4 – Conclusion of Findings

Chapter 5 – Consideration of Conclusion

Bibliography

7. Information Sources

Information will be collated from colleagues and other industry professionals via online questionnaires and verbal discussions. This information will be stored in a secure, password protected file, as required by data protection laws.

Referenced information will be obtained from published articles & journals, as well as printed information from books.

The purpose of the different types of information would be to mix already established principles and findings and correlate them to the findings of the data obtained by the researcher from colleagues and professionals.

A mix of information retrieval from colleagues will be necessary due to the time constraints. The method to be used will allow me to present broader questions to all parties via the questionnaire, and also allow for a more direct line a questioning of specific individuals to gain more exact information.

The questionnaire will be distributed via email or other preferred electronic means so as to make the storage of the information more practical to find and sort. It will involve questions pertaining to the perceived benefits of the implementation of workflow processes and instructions in the day-to-day operations of the employee. I will engage an audience with a range of ages and abilities so as to understand any trends in terms of age, experience and ability with theoretical usefulness and need for the implementation of such aids.

As I am specifically targeting the fire suppression industry with my research, I will be selectively targeting whom the communicative research comes from, so as to gather information pertaining to the specified industry.

With regards to the beta testing data, it will be obtained from new and existing employees of the researcher's company. It will contain a workflow process on how to correctly raise an order using the inhouse purchasing software.

After a week of implementation, the participants will then be given a questionnaire containing targeted questions to determine whether or not the workflow process' guidance matches the theoretical usefulness which will be deduced from the original questionnaire.

Positives and negatives of the implementation will then be noted to offer potential improvements needed to make this a worthwhile tool should this be carried out again in the future, with conclusions drawn based upon comparison of the initial questionnaire against the questionnaire regarding physical implementation.