

## Different O&M Manual service levels for different budgets.

The more work we do to compile the Operation and Maintenance Manuals the more we charge. So, if our clients do some of the work for us then we charge less. Simple! There are also other factors that will reduce our costs such as increasing the time that we have to do the work, avoiding printing and issuing electronic documentation only and sticking to our standard layout.

**We offer a number of reduced price O&M Manual compilation services to assist clients who want professional O&M Manuals compiled but who haven't allowed for the costs required for the full service. However, beware that this is a partnership arrangement and that it can get nasty and messy if various parties do not live up to their side of the deal.**

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## Background info. How we compile O&M Manuals.

There's much more to it than this, but a simplified summary of the work associated with the compilation and production of O&M Manuals consists of:

1. **Gathering information** from lots of people. Typically, this is done using info-gathering templates which are a simplified version of the final manuals or sections therein and which are designed to minimise the amount of information that the various parties need to provide. This is because experience has shown that the less we ask for, the more chance there is of getting it quickly and accurately. On top of this, other information is also gathered using phone calls, emails and from the web.
2. **Checking the info received** and putting it together to form a user friendly manual. This is done by taking a second, more detailed template which forms the basis of the final O&M Manual and transferring the info gathered on the smaller templates mentioned above into it. This stage also includes issue of a draft copy and adaptation of the manual(s) to reflect comments.
3. **Burning the final manual to disc or issue in printable electronic format.** Once all the info has been gathered, we need to present it to the client in electronic and/or printed format.

Of these stages the information gathering process is the most difficult and time consuming. So, we figured that if we wanted to offer a more cost effective alternative to our standard service, it would make sense to try to pass some of this time consuming information gathering part onto our client along with the associated cost saving. So, using that idea we came up with four levels of service:

## The four levels of service with relative cost estimates:

Note: The cost proportions may vary and are only a guide.

1. We write the entire manual(s) from the job specification, the drawings, a procurement schedule or list of installed equipment and other information supplied by all parties.  
Cost: 100%
2. Standard (recommended) service. We write the manual(s) from information received back from main and subcontractors on info-gathering templates issued out to them by us. We also chase for the completed templates and check them before incorporating the info contained on them into the manual(s).  
Cost: 75%
3. As for 2 but the main contractor issues the info-gathering templates to the subcontractors and chases them for the returned info. The main contractor then performs some basic checking before passing the info to us for inclusion in the manual(s). We only have to pester the main contractor for outstanding info, not each individual subcontractor.  
Cost: 50%
4. We issue the main O&M Manual templates (not to be confused with the smaller info-gathering templates mentioned above) to our client. He/she then completes them before sending them to us for tidying up and conversion to a printable electronic copy and then burning the full electronic version to disc.  
Cost %25

## Who will benefit from the cheaper options

- Clients on a very tight budget.
- Clients with a well organised staff member who can be freed up to help with the O&M Manuals.
- Smaller clients or large clients doing smaller jobs. This is simply because the larger the job, the more organisation and time is required which are normally the things that can be problematic.

## Who should not consider the cheaper options

- Clients who are flat out busy and can't spare the time to chase and hassle subcontractors. The reason we have a successful business is because main contractors haven't got the time to do the O&M Manuals, preferring instead to do what they're trained for and what they're best at.
- Clients who have lots of clever professional personnel but no one with multitasking and organisational skills. The person who knows exactly what's happening with everyone in the office and remembers everyone's appointments is the one to organise the O&M Manuals. The Einstein-esque genius who can work out the structural loadings for The Shard in his/her head but who can't remember their own phone number or birthday is better off kept away from the O&M Manuals.

## Potential problems with reduced level service options

From our point of view, although clients are aware of what is required of them as far as gathering and checking information on our behalf is concerned, there are times when they simply do not live up to their end of the deal. Typically, this shows either by waiting way too long to issue info-gathering templates and chase for information or by not checking the info that they have received before passing it onto us.

This is where things can get awkward when we have to add additional charges for works that were outside our original scope.

## How to make these cheaper services work well

The most important things that are required to make this arrangement work are:

- Having the right kind of person for the job. A persistent, well organised individual is best suited for this work.
- Making sure that that person has the time to do the work. It doesn't take much time to send a few emails and to make a few phone calls but if the person allocated to assisting us in gathering information does not have this time then the job simply isn't going to get done.
- Ensuring that you understand what is required as your part of the deal and adhering to the agreement.

## Conclusions

- This arrangement can work well but only if the client is committed to the arrangement and is willing to provide adequate resources.
- It is better suited to smaller jobs though large projects can make the arrangement work with a bit more effort and communicating.
- Our standard service still remains the smoothest running and best option for all jobs so clients are advised to factor in costs for this at tender stage so that there are no nasty surprises later on.