

Quotation System Case Studies

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Introduction

Many financial systems allow you set up a quotation or estimate, and convert it into an order, job, or invoice.

Generally, though, this provision is quite basic – normally allowing you to enter a range of pre-defined products and services, or to enter a 'free-form' value. What these systems don't generally support is the ability to generate a quote from a more complex set of criteria, so businesses that are accustomed to time-consuming manual calculations in order to arrive at an estimate find little advantage in these systems.

The value you need to provide still has to be worked out externally through a complex range of spreadsheets and error-prone manual calculations.

We specialise in creating bespoke quoting systems that allow you to assemble the quote in the way that you need to do it, and that you are used to. We can incorporate as much automation, or as much flexibility, as you need – there is no 'one-size-fits-all' although obviously many businesses find that they need similar processes.

This paper includes three case-studies; one for a simple quotation system that carries on into a sales order and invoicing process, and two other more complex systems allowing several layers of component parts to make up a final price.

In all cases, the quotation document is automatically generated with as little manual intervention as possible, and the quote data can generally be exported into an accounting system automatically, depending on the system being used.

The systems can also track the progress of a quote, setting reminders for follow-ups at appropriate intervals.



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Garden loam and topsoil supplier

This is a simple product-based system that allows the user to select from a pre-defined product menu, or alternatively to type in details of their own choosing.

Selecting a product from the drop-down in the detail section will populate the line with the description, cost and selling prices, and margin. All the user has to do is enter the required quantity and, in the case of this business, a haulage cost.

The screenshot shows a web-based quotation system interface. On the left, there are buttons for 'New Quote', 'New Order', 'Copy to Order', 'Preview/Print', 'Email PDF', 'Cancel', and 'Save and Exit'. The main form area is divided into several sections: 'Find Quotation' with a search dropdown, 'Quotation Net Total' with a text input, 'Delivery Name' with a text input, 'Address' with a text input, 'Town' with a text input, 'County' with a text input, 'Postcode' with a text input, 'Telephone' with a text input, and 'Cost Basis' with a dropdown menu set to 'Trade'. Below these are fields for 'Opportunity', 'Company Name', 'PO Date', 'Delivery Date', 'Internal Note', and 'Customer Note'. At the bottom, there is a table with the following columns: 'Product Description', 'Product Code', 'Unit of supply', 'Cost', 'Haulage', 'Margin', 'Selling', 'Quantity', and 'Total Price'. The table contains one row with values: £0.00, £0.00, £0.00, £0.00, 0, and £0.00. There are also radio buttons for 'Key' and 'All' next to the table.

On the right, below the delivery address, the option to select a cost basis has been included. In this case, the business supplies both trade and retail customers, so there is a need to switch between the two selling prices – this can be done by this simple drop-down.

Unit of supply	Cost	Haulage	Margin	Selling	Quantity	Total Price
<input type="text"/>	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	0	£0.00

Next to the product drop-down, the option also exists to filter the product list to a defined set of key products, or to show everything. This saves time scrolling up and down the list to find a certain product, as many orders contain only a small subset of the total product range.

The buttons on the left allow the user to convert the quote into an order, or to email it, or print it out.



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When generated, the (anonymised) document follows the company branding:

QUOTATION
Always quote this reference number in full
TEST2

Code	Description	Unit	Quantity	Price	Total
		Tonne	1.5	£47.10	£70.65
			1.25	£54.50	£68.13
			1	£17.50	£17.50
			Net Total		£156.28
			VAT		£31.26
			Gross Total		£187.53

*All prices are subject to VAT at the current rate.
This quotation is subject to our standard terms and conditions, copies of which are available on request.*

Screen colours and designs can, of course, be adapted to suit any specific requirement. We tend to favour clean and clear user interfaces, but clients are able to have whatever style of 'look-and-feel' they want.



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Metal fabricator

This system is considerably more complex and flexible, and is multi-layered. The general logic is that of a unit made up of a series of components, and those components are in turn made up from other elements.

As a simplified example, a simple wrought-iron balcony might consist of a base, a number of uprights and a handrail around the top. This can be created in a similar way to a 'bill of materials', and costed accordingly, as each of the three key elements (the base, uprights and railing) consist of a number of elements in themselves – materials, galvanising, painting, and so on.

Reload Enquiry ▼

Job Number

Client

Client Contact

Owner

Status ▼

ShortDescription

LongDescription

Pipeline

Lead Source ▼

Close Date

Value

Priority ▼

Probability % ▼

Reference	Description	Cost Total	Sale Total
Balcony 1	First floor office balcony	£2,700.00	£3,375.00

MCD% ▼

£2,700.00 £3,375.00
20.00%

This anonymised test example shows a simple balcony, and a total cost, selling price and margin for the entire project. There can be as many items on a quote as required.

Selecting one of the items pops up a detail screen as below, where the two elements that make up this item are shown – in this case, the balcony in its entirety, and the installation of it.

Selecting one of the elements displays the details – this is the lowest level of materials and services that make up the elements.



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Quotation System Case Studies

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Job Detail

ItemReference:
Short Description:
Item Quantity: The number of this item required for the job
Group Margin: The default margin to apply to elements for this item

Element

Reference	Description
Balcony	Balcony in its entirety
Installation	Installation

Detail

Reference	Service	Description	Supplier	Unit	Quantity	Cost Price	Sale Price	Margin
1	Survey	Survey	A Plant	Hour	4	£200.00	£250.00	20.00%
2	Material	Metalwork	A Plant	Each	1	£500.00	£625.00	20.00%
3	Crane Hire	Access hire	A Plant	Each	1	£1,000.00	£1,250.00	20.00%

£1,700.00 £2,125.00
20.00%

Selecting one of the details will pop up another screen allowing the user to define the specific make-up of the detail:

Job Detail

Detail Number:
Service:
Category:
Short Description:
Long Description:

Supplier: Note:

Unit:
Unit Quantity: Men:

Unit Cost	£500.00
Total Cost	£500.00
Unit Sale Price	£625.00
Total Sale Price	£625.00

Margin:

Supplier Invoice

Actual Cost	£0.00
Invoice No	<input type="text"/>

In this case, the Metalwork detail allows the selection of a supplier, and control of the margin for this particular function. The user is also able to automatically



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email the selected supplier for a price, if required. This can then be entered once received, and the quote completed.

Once the pricing is done, the document can be generated. In this more complex system, there are different options, allowing the user to choose specific contacts and addresses at a large client business, as well as choose clauses and notes that can be added to the quotation document as appropriate.

Quote Ref **Q5008**

Select Contact

Select Address

Text

Note
Access requirements
Removal of waste
Safety considerations
Site clearance

Detail Section
 No detail - letter only
 Letter and detail

Signatory

Output
 Preview for Print
 PDF email attachment

Additionally, this version supports a detailed quotation, giving breakdowns of all the costs and elements, or a less detailed letter that summarises the job and gives a single price.



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Door and window supplier and fitter

This system is similar in logic to the one above, but a little more straightforward. It supports the preparation of more than one option for a single job, which is a common requirement in this sector, where customers may wish to choose from a premium or standard product, for example.

Reload Quote

Customer

Reference Status

Job Number Owner

Short Description

Long Description

Quote Options No. Fitters
 Half Days
 Equip Hire

Detail	Location	Description	Total Cost	Total Gross
<input type="button" value="Add Detail"/>	Living Room	Deluxe Bay	£1,930.00	£3,282.00
	Dining Room	Main Window	£598.65	£895.00
	Kitchen	Window 1	£350.60	£545.00
	Kitchen	Window 2	£350.60	£535.00
<input type="button" value="Quotation"/>	Kitchen	Window 3	£325.00	£498.00

Total Gross Sales Value	<input type="text" value="£5,755.00"/>	Survey Fee	<input type="text" value="£143.87"/>
Total Cost	<input type="text" value="£3,554.85"/>	Guarantee	<input type="text" value="£12.00"/>
Net Profit	<input type="text" value="£1,240.96"/>	Rubbish Clearance	<input type="text" value="£47.96"/>
Net Profit / Half Day	<input type="text" value="£620.48"/>	Equipment Hire	<input type="text" value="£250.00"/>
Margin Percentage	<input type="text" value="25.8760"/>	Pocket Profit	<input type="text" value="£787.13"/>

Whichever option is selected, the relevant details and prices are displayed – certain elements, such as rubbish clearance, the guarantee costs and the survey fee, are all related to the job cost, so can be calculated automatically.

This system also rounds the selling price (including VAT) to whole pounds, which is more convenient for the customer, and all VAT costs and margins are recalculated after this rounding has taken place.



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As with the system for the metal fabricator, the user can click a detail to obtain the full information:

Quote Detail

Reference:

Location:

Description:

Supplier:

Notes:

Fit Type:

Bay Panels:

	Cost Price	Margin%	Net Sale Price	Gross Sale Price
Frame	£1,500.00	33.750	£2,264.17	£2,717.00
Fitting	£400.00	4.950	£420.83	£505.00
Consumables	£30.00	40.000	£50.00	£60.00
Extras	£0.00	0.000	£0.00	£0.00
TOTALS	£1,930.00	29.433	£2,735.00	£3,282.00

The user simply enters the costs, which are derived from supplier price lists, and everything else is calculated and automatic.

In the case of this system, once the customer has chosen an option, the system allows the user to select the options chosen, and generate a job budget, which is passed over to the accounting system and then compared with actual costs and timesheets to help monitor the profitability of particular jobs, and also the general accuracy of some of the assumptions made by the system.

The system is driven by parameters that are easily adjusted, so none of the constant or default values used are 'hard-coded'. Everything is configurable by the user, to give the maximum amount of control and flexibility.



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In summary, then, we can build a database-driven quotation system that can make the process of building and issuing estimates as straightforward as possible, while giving the business owner the flexibility that they may require to determine margins and control and monitor costs.

Once the data is in a database, it can be reused as needed, so can be pushed forward to orders, job sheets, purchase orders, stock requisitions or whatever else a particular business might require.

These particular examples have been created using Microsoft Access, so are easily maintainable by anyone with the relevant knowledge. Clients are supplied with all source material, and uncompiled code, and nothing is held back and no copyright is retained in anything built and paid for.

We do not believe in holding clients to ransom, so you are in complete control of what you do after we deliver the system – you can continue to work with us, or you can take it over yourself or pass it to a third party – the choice is yours, although we hope that you will continue to want to work with us!

For more information, and a no-cost, no-obligation initial conversation or visit, please contact:

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