

Aleksander Bjaaland: The Cost of Broken Information Flow

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Part of Where Are The Savings?



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Requirements must flow before information can flow in construction

Aleksander Bjaaland of Mindshift described a paradox in construction, Norway's largest mainland industry: models, tools and data keep improving, yet productivity is still hard to improve. He traced the problem to requirements. Each actor, from client to main contractor, subcontractor and manufacturer, passes on its own requirements alongside those of the authorities. When requirements are unclear, actors interpret them differently, create the same data in several systems, move it by Excel, PDF and email, check it manually and redo work, and ambiguity gets more expensive as it moves downstream. DIBK, DFØ and clients ask for greenhouse gas reporting in different ways, causing duplicate and even triple work. Time registration and related administration alone take 6 million working hours, about NOK 3.7 billion a year. The pieces already exist; what is missing is a collective decision to use them.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Ambiguity gets more expensive as it moves downstream, from requirements through design and construction to operations.
- Every clarification of an unclear requirement has a cost in meetings, emails, waiting and checking.
- Misaligned greenhouse gas reporting requirements from DIBK, DFØ and clients lead to duplicate and triple work.
- Standardised data flow and single-entry time registration could save several billion NOK.
- Key actors with decision-making power should agree on best practice once and use it in all projects.

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