



Interview met Groothuisbouw: The value of company-specific data

Willem Flier is technical director at Groothuisbouw in Emmeloord. Flier has been working at the firm since completing his training. A lot has happened in the more than 20 years since then; the company has grown from three employees to more than 100. 'Since 2007, we produce a large part of the elements ourselves, this used to be done externally. We always say: if you can manage the roof of a building, then you can really manage the entire construction. That is the most difficult thing for a contractor to get under control. We now produce everything related to the top floor – roof elements, dormer windows, gutters, loft floors, storey walls – in our own production hall in Emmeloord.'

'The crisis started immediately after the construction of our own production hall, those were exciting years. Yet Groothuisbouw was reasonably stable. In the crisis years too, customers came from all over the country to Emmeloord. This was reassuring, considering a significant investment had been made. In those years, Groothuisbouw made good use of market forces. Thanks to the shrinking market there was simply a lot more on offer than was needed. We sometimes received messages from subcontractors about price increases. Then we wondered: 'What is that based on? Is that a feeling, or is that substantiated?' As we only build modular, detached houses, we use only a select quantity of materials. We did not have much use for standard index figures, they apply to the whole building project. We

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Groothuisbouw Emmeloord is specialised in the modular construction of detached houses. With modular construction, elements are pre-built in the factory, and then they are transported to the building site for assembly. This means that external factors, such as weather conditions, have very little influence. Potential customers can compose their own home on the Groothuisbouw website.

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'The figures we now receive make it more transparent for us, because they are more company-specific. Now these figures enable us to focus better on individual subcontractors. We also use the BDB calculations as reference material for making honest price agreements with our permanent suppliers. Those agreements are for a year, six months or a quarter. We always try to take a long-term average, otherwise you have constantly fluctuating prices. As a result, we are able to indicate very directly to our customers: you can obtain this house for that amount.'

'As we are still growing, we also hire extra personnel. Groothuisbouw is an interesting party for subcontractors to work with, because we offer certainty and a guarantee for a longer period. Based on all the data that we have available, we are able to define the price for which that needs to be done.'

'The advantage of the BDB data is that we do not need to calculate things ourselves. Neither have we had the feeling yet that things are incorrect. The data appears to be sound. The credibility of these figures is many times greater than it would be if a purchaser were to present them. We simply want to have comprehensive and substantive argumentation. That is what BDB gives us.' •