

Ten Most Common Commissioning Process Mistakes

1. **Schedule** – getting down to “crunch time” and not having sufficient time to test is a problem even when commissioning is not occurring. Don’t repeat history. As part of the Commissioning Plan, insist on a start-up/TAB/testing breakout schedule meeting. Get the start-up schedule broken out by system, or by floor. Get it organized.
2. **Poorly Written Test Procedures** – this can result in tests that are not thorough, and tests which can underwhelm or overwhelm the field team if instructions aren’t clear. If there is a test you are unclear about, get help or locate a qualified resource.
3. **Incomplete Test Forms** – when a test form asks for a value and test personnel insert a checkmark or an “Ok” instead, this may be an indication of incomplete or rushed testing. Maintain high quality by sticking to industry standards.
4. **Inconsistent Documentation** – develop solid reporting and verification that your customers identify as commissioning documentation. Don’t come up short: have a *complete* body of work to include in the Commissioning Final Report.
5. **Uninteresting Reports** – so yes, they CAN be boring. But what makes them interesting? Graphics, charts, plenty of white space, restrained use of bold and underlines, great organization and flow, consistent and readable fonts, and a solid table of contents. Don’t forget spell-checker, and be sure to summarize what you did!
6. **Too Much Paperwork** – it can be easy to get lost in the myriads of commissioning documentation. So look for a balance between documentation, reviews and field time. And don’t overburden the contracting team with paper demands; try to incorporate their own documentation whenever possible. By the way - save paper, use PDFs.
7. **Too Little Paperwork** – getting to the end of the project with a properly running building is great, but if you can’t show what you did then how can you prove you should be paid? Embrace practical tools - documentation designed to make paperwork fast and easy, not drudgery. If you visit a job write out a site visit report, not just a wave.
8. **Commissioning Police** – it’s not about enforcement and throwing rocks at the windows. The goal of the designers and contractors is the same as the goal of the Commissioning Authority: delivering the best possible product to the Owner. It is a team effort, so work to create behind-the-scenes consensus and overall good will.
9. **Cx Reviews vs. Peer Reviews** – the job of the Commissioning Authority is not to redesign the project, but rather to bring the support and insight of their experience to the design team. Help make commissioning a positive experience for everyone.
10. **Presentation** – in real estate it’s all about Location, Location, Location. In reporting, it’s all about Presentation, Presentation, Presentation. Take a little extra time to clean up and update your report cover sheets. Put your company name/logo on your documents, but be modest and don’t go overboard. Make the customer’s name and logo the center of attention, not yours.