



INSIGHT CONSULTING

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Chisel

DESIGN STUDIO

“For the first time we could see, item by item, when we had to order and when we had to start. That conversation with the main contractor used to be a guess.”

Abby Hiemstra, Director, Chisel Design Studio

Use Case

Claude for Teams was rolled out across a bespoke design, manufacture and install business, with production planning as the first live use case.

Problem Statement

Chisel Design Studio manufactures and installs bespoke shopfitting and interior joinery. Items within a job finish at different times, there is no formal production plan, and when an urgent job is pushed onto the floor nobody can see what it does to the jobs already there.

Estimating suffered from the same gap. Where production times were measured at all, the timing captured only the machine cycle at each station. The time a piece of timber spent moving between stations and waiting in front of the next one was never counted, so estimates were built on a number that was structurally too small. On top of that, three parts of the business that ought to share one set of numbers - the design drawings, the quantity surveyor's pricing and the manufacturing plan - have never been connected. An earlier attempt to build a job tracking application stalled before it was finished.

The immediate pressure was a large architectural millwork package for a construction programme: doors, frames, cabinetry and joinery, cornices and mouldings, balustrades, handrails and signage across many zones of the building, with install dates fixed by the main contractor's programme and a production window that does not open until March 2027. The client needed to know, item by item, when material had to be ordered and when each production stage had to start, and it needed that answer before committing to the programme.

Solution Overview

Customer Name

Chisel Design Studio

Industry

Shopfitting - Interior Design & Bespoke Joinery

Geography

South Africa

Function

Production Planning & Forecasting

Claude Deployment

Claude for Teams, 4 licences, in production use since September 2026

Business Value Drivers

- Planning consistency and accuracy
- Agility in responding to programme changes
- Early risk detection
- Stronger commercial negotiating position

Challenges

- No formal production plan
- No visibility of how urgent jobs affect the rest
- Estimates that are too low by design
- Design, pricing and manufacturing are not connected
- A previous digital attempt failed

Solution

Insight Consulting walked a journey from AI literacy training to implementing an AI-based solution to solve the above-mentioned problems.

Results

- Staff trained on AI literacy
- Production planning for the millwork package
- Risk visibility
- Basis for estimating

At a glance

Insight Consulting implemented Claude at Chisel Design Studio end to end: AI literacy training as the gate to access, Claude for Teams with four licences, and production planning as the first live use case. Working in Claude, the team built a planning workbook that back schedules a 68 line architectural millwork package from the main contractor's installation programme, and it flagged 39 late or clashing lines at the planning stage rather than on the factory floor.

What we did

Training first

Access to Claude was gated on completing Insight's online AI Literacy course. The course is self-paced, runs to roughly 90 minutes of videos, worked examples and quizzes, and issues a Certificate of AI Literacy on passing the final assessment. It covers what AI is and is not, responsible and ethical use, writing better prompts, critically evaluating AI output, and how an individual's use fits into the organisation's wider AI journey. 4 members of the team completed the course in September 2026 before any licence was issued.

A managed Claude environment

Insight recommended and set up a Claude for Teams subscription with four licences, so that work on the business's own drawings, programmes and pricing happens inside a managed workspace rather than on individual accounts. We provided usage guidance and remain the client's first point of contact for questions about the environment.

Production planning: the first live use case

With the environment live, the first use case the team took on was planning the millwork package. Working with the client in Claude, we built a solution that takes the main contractor's installation programme and works backwards to a production and procurement plan. It has three parts:

1. An assumptions sheet holding stage durations for each of ten item categories (raw material procurement, machining, assembly, painting and finishing, packaging) alongside global allowances for shipping and climatizing on site, and the date the production window opens. Claude researched industry lead times for comparable millwork to set the starting values, and every one sits in an editable cell.
2. An item schedule of 68 programme activities, each carrying its programme ID, zone and install dates. Formulae step backwards from install start through climatizing, shipping and each production stage to arrive at a raw material order date. Each line is flagged OK, order date already in the past, or machining needed before the production window opens.
3. A category summary showing counts, date ranges and whether any line in the category is at risk.

What a tool like this does for the client

Benefit	What it means in practice
One line of sight from install date to order date	Every item's production and procurement dates are derived from the same programme, in the same way, rather than estimated one at a time from memory.
Assumptions in one place	Stage durations, shipping and climatizing allowances live in a single place. Change one number and the whole plan recalculates. When the

Benefit	What it means in practice
	main contractor issues a programme revision, the new dates are pasted in and the answer is back in minutes.
Early warning instead of late surprise	Of 68 lines, 16 already had order dates in the past and a further 23 needed machining to start before the production window opens. Those were known at the planning table, weeks before they would have shown up as missed deliveries.
Evidence for the conversation with the main contractor	The workbook gives the client a defensible basis to negotiate the production window, the programme sequence or early procurement, rather than an opinion.
The start of a job type library	Ten item categories with named stages and durations are the first version of the reusable library the business has wanted for years. The categories will be refined and the durations replaced as real measurements arrive.
Speed	The solution, including the researched durations and risk logic, was built with Claude in hours rather than the days a hand-built spreadsheet would have taken.

Results

Measure	Before	September 2026
Staff trained on AI literacy	0	4 certified
Live Claude licences	0	4 (Claude for Teams)
Production planning for the millwork package	None; dates worked out per item as they came up	68 programme activities across 10 categories, back scheduled to order dates
Risk visibility	Discovered on the floor or at delivery	39 lines flagged at planning stage (16 late orders, 23 production window clashes)
Basis for estimating	Machine cycle time only	Explicit, editable stage durations per category, ready to be replaced by measured actuals

The solution made programme risk visible early enough, and in a form clear enough, for the client to act on. It runs on industry benchmark durations and plans each line independently, so the implementation now extends onto the factory floor to replace those benchmarks with the business's own measured times.

What comes next

The implementation now extends from planning onto the factory floor, under a scope of work in three further phases. The aim is a measured baseline of how long work actually takes, including the movement and waiting time between stations that has never been counted.

Phase	What it involves	How Claude will be used
2 Floor baseline (late September to November 2026)	Insight observes the floor with the client and produces a station map, a capture template for timing work at and between stations, and one item numbering scheme. The client's staff member then captures timings for six weeks.	Floor notes are dictated or typed straight into Claude and structured into findings. Claude drafts the station map and template, and reconciles numbering across drawings, cutting lists and the old tracking application.
3 Measured durations (late November 2026)	Captured timings are rolled up into durations per item type and written into the planning solution in place of the benchmarks, with a first job type library linked to drawings.	Claude cleans and analyses the capture sheets, shows the variability, and writes the results back into the application.
4 Tracking recommendation (December 2026)	An assessment of the unfinished job tracking application and a costed recommendation for tracking actual against estimate at item level, with the build to follow in 2027.	Claude reviews the application's data model and code, where available, and drafts the recommendation.



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We don't just consult – we collaborate, problem-solve, and grow with you. Together, we turn challenges into progress, and ideas into impact.

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