

Version 12.0 - Release Notes

Synergist Web Browser Interface

Note: Synergist v12 requires 4D server v13

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Overview

The Synergist 12.0 upgrade is a major new release. It includes a new web browser interface that supports virtually all the core functionality of the desktop product. This new browser (web) interface is available to all users (subject to licencing/access rights).

The Desktop application has also seen many new developments. For further information regarding Synergist Desktop see 'Synergist v12.0 release notes - Synergist desktop.pdf'

Synergist web

Synergist Web interface was previously used primarily for entering time sheets and expenses. With the release of Synergist 12.0 this module can now be used for handling most of the day-day processing that you would normally do using the desktop application.

Synergist Web runs in your web browser. To get access to this system you simply need to enter your Synergist servers address into the browser – if you don't already know this speak to your system administrator.

Or, if you are accessing Synergist Web from within the desktop application, click 'Web time/expenses'



Feature summary

Many of the core features present in the desktop version of the product are now available on the web.

Dashboards

Synergist Web comes with 3 sets of dashboards. These are designed for management, sales staff, and standard users. Access to the appropriate dashboards is set up in user settings.

Recent items

Synergist tracks the most recent jobs, clients, and activities that you have opened. A list of these can be left open in a tab facilitate instant access to the items you are working on.

Clients & Jobs

You can create clients, prospects, opportunities and jobs and set these up to include estimates, quotes, billing plans and invoices.

Activities

Activities are fully supported including creating follow-ups and adding attachments.

Gantt charts

Synergist Web supports job level Gantt charts. From the job phases tab you can either view the phases of the job as a simple list or as a sophisticated Gantt chart.

Reporting module

A selection of key reports is available. These can be filtered in the usual way and printed to PDF or exported. The Reporting module includes the powerful Data Viewer tool.

Calendar bookings (work scheduling)

The work scheduling feature available in the desktop version has been ported to Synergist Web. All the key features are available including drag & dropping tasks into the calendar, automatic coloring of bookings, draft & tentative bookings, displaying & filtering by team.

Time & expenses

The Beta version of Time & Expenses is replaced by a new module embedded into the Synergist Web interface. Timesheet users will now have more comprehensive read-only access to all the main features of the product – as well as access to the redesign of Time & Expenses. You can also open Time & Expenses in separate tabs along with the user calendar & dashboard.

Purchasing module

Suppliers, purchase orders & purchase invoicing can all be accessed & processed from within the purchasing module.

New web interface

The web product has had a complete makeover. All the screens follow a consistent design to make the product intuitive and easy to use. The overall design adheres to concepts you will be used to in the Desktop application so no additional training will be needed. If you are already familiar with the Desktop application you will feel at home with Synergist Web. For those new to Synergist the web version is even easier to navigate.

Multi-tabbed interface

Just like the desktop application, you can open multiple jobs/clients/quotes etc. However, in the web interface this is achieved using tabs – similar to what you are used to when visiting web sites with your browser. In fact, since elements related to the job (like purchase orders, invoices, quotes etc.) all open in separate tabs, the novice will quickly become confident using the system.

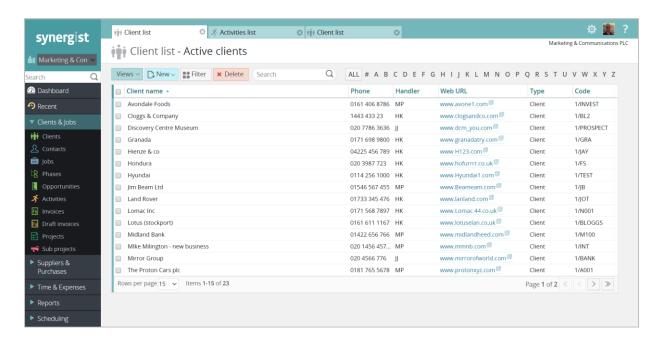
Data displayed in clear panels

When entering data into a form all the related items are shown grouped into panels. This improves readability.

Multi-company

The system logs you into your default company. However, if you have more than one company set up (e.g. a training company), you can change the current company to a different one. At that point any new tabs opened open in the newly selected company.

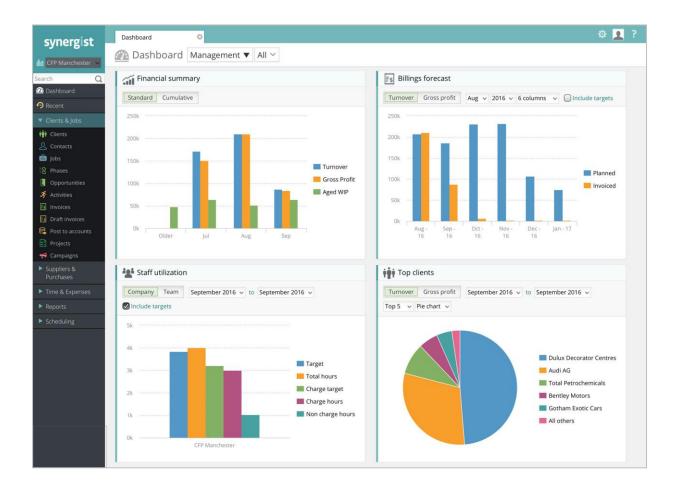
Synergist Web



Dashboards:

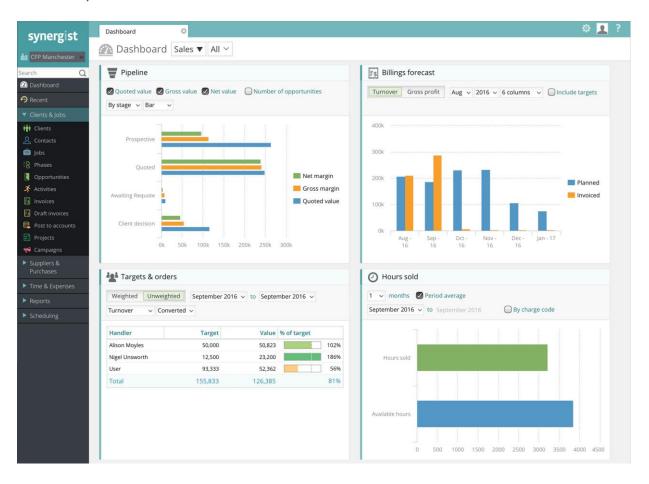
Management dashboard

This set of dashboards provide a crucial set of metrics required for running the business. This includes a financial summary displaying turnover, profit & WIP. Also included are a billings forecast – planned & actual, and a staff utilization chart.



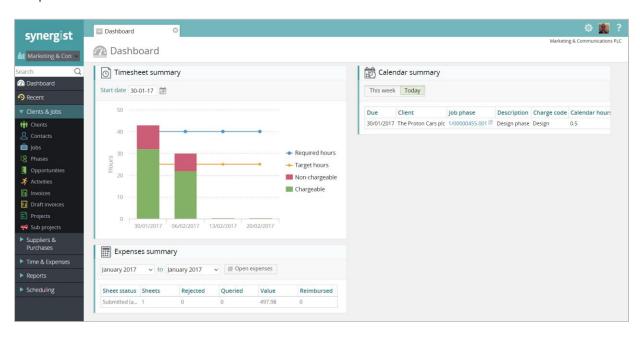
Sales dashboard

This dashboard displays the sales pipeline and billing forecasts along with other key sales related charts.



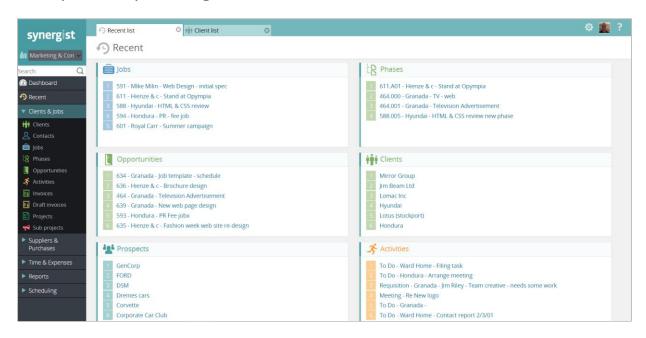
Personal dashboard

All users have access to a 'Personal' dashboard. By default this dashboard opens up automatically when a user logs in. This gives members of staff immediate visibility of time sheets, expenses, and calendar bookings. Since it's common practice to have targets for chargeable and non-chargeable hours, this dashboard is a valuable tool for ensuring timesheets are entered in a timely manner and that staff are mindful of their daily responsibilities.



The recent items feature

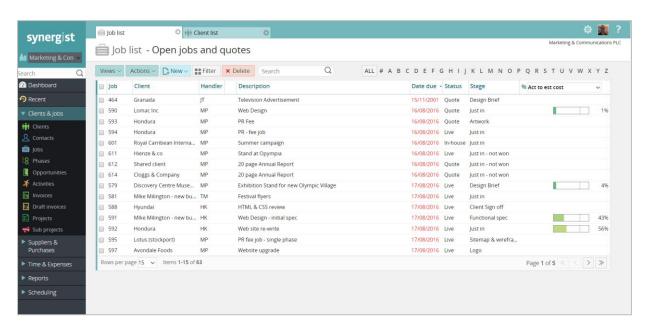
Every time you access a job / phase / client / activity etc. the system tracks your movements. A list of these items will appear in the 'Recent' section. You can have a tab of recent items constantly open if you wish. This is updated in real time and can be used to quickly find that job you were previously working on.



Lists & tables

All the main lists in Synergist have a similar look & feel. The user can access the information required by simply selecting a pre-set view, or by filtering the data, or by typing in a search term or using the convenient A-Z search feature.

Here is an example of the job list.

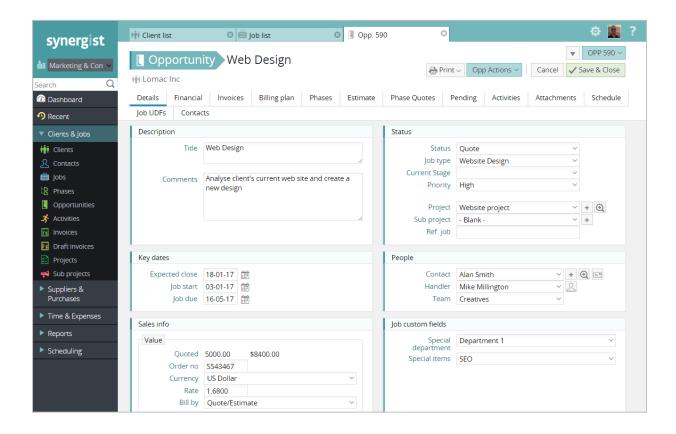


Creating jobs

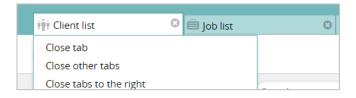
All the input forms in synergist have a similar look and feel with key information grouped into panels for ease of job creation / data entry, and to give a clear structure that is easy to read at a glance.

E.g.

The input form for jobs / opportunities is similar to what you are used to seeing in the desktop product. However, there are some differences. Some of the tabs have been re-designed for ease of use. For example, instead of replacing the job/phase UI when creating documents like purchase orders, quick estimates, quotations etc., Synergist Web will open a new tab – which keeps the interface tidy and means you can have several documents open simultaneously.

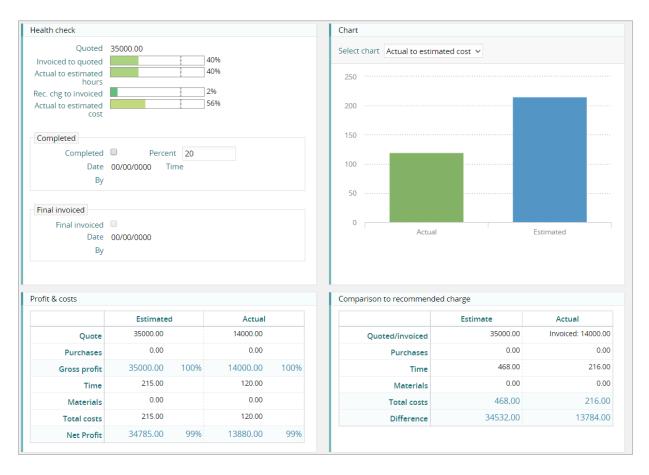


Hint: if you are finding you have too many tabs open it is easy to close a selection of them. Just right click one of the tabs and select an action.



Job financial status

The financial tab gives you everything you need, at a glance, to see how a job or phase of a job is performing. Several charts are now provided, with bar charts showing job progress metrics and a large column chart which defaults to showing actual costs against estimated costs.



Creating a schedule – Gantt charts

Gantt charts

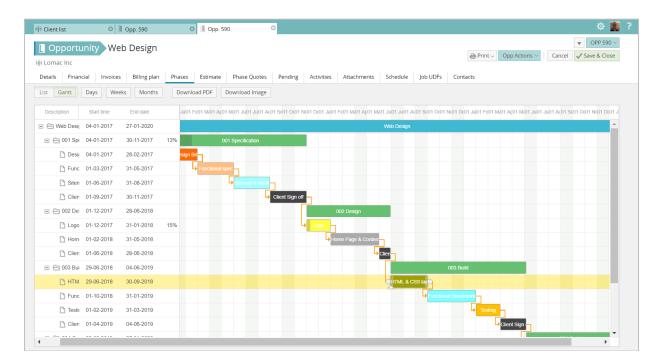
Synergist Web supports job level Gantt charts. From the job phases tab you can either view the phases of the job as a simple list or as a sophisticated Gantt chart.

If you are using stages as well as phases, and have your system set up to be 'Stage driven' you can create detailed project plans for each job.

Dependencies are also supported – allowing the user to automatically adjust the future plan by moving / resizing preceding tasks.*

Three different Gantt views are available – Day, Week, & Month and Gantt charts can be downloaded for printing.

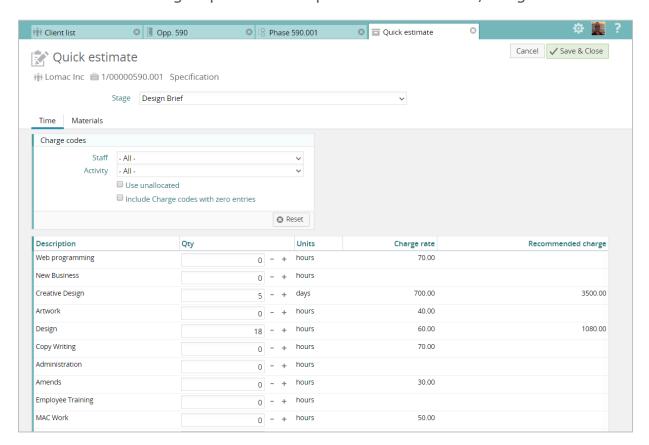
Selecting the Gantt view



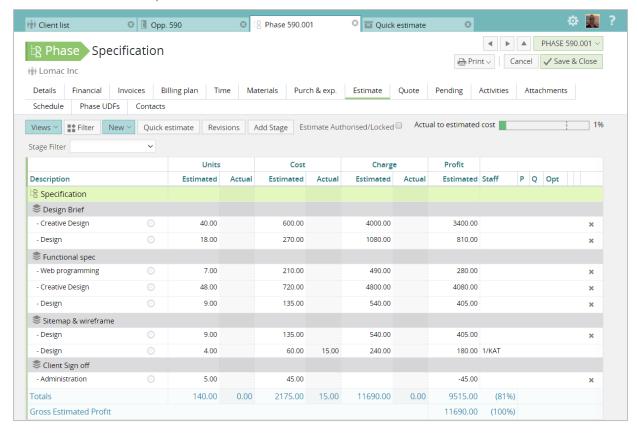
^{*}Note. Dependencies are not supported in the Desktop version of Synergist

Estimating

Estimating has never been easier. If you are using the 2 tier option (breaking your estimate into stages), you can now create these directly from the estimate tab. Typically you will then use the 'Quick estimate' feature to create a group of tasks required for the Phase / stage.



Estimate summary

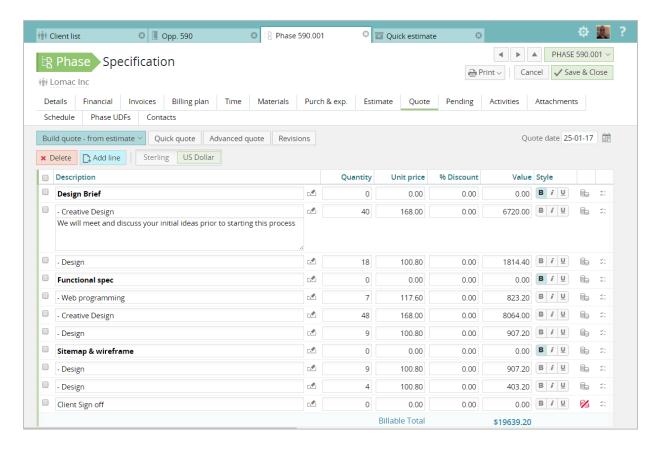


Quoting

Once you have set up a budget by creating an estimate to track costs, you will be ready to generate a quotation for your customer.

Synergist Web supports many of the advanced quoting features that we see in the desktop version of the product, e.g. line formatting, quote options, quote discounts and the ability to build different versions of the quote defined by pre-set quote views.

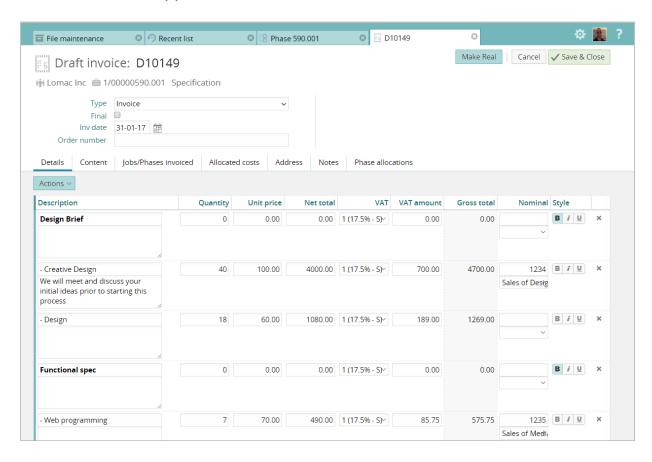
Each quote line can be expanded to add additional notes, and you can drag and drop the quote lines to easily reorder the document.



Invoicing

Invoices can be generated based on a quotation, billing plans, job descriptions or just typed in manually. If you have several jobs that need billing on a single invoice this is also possible.

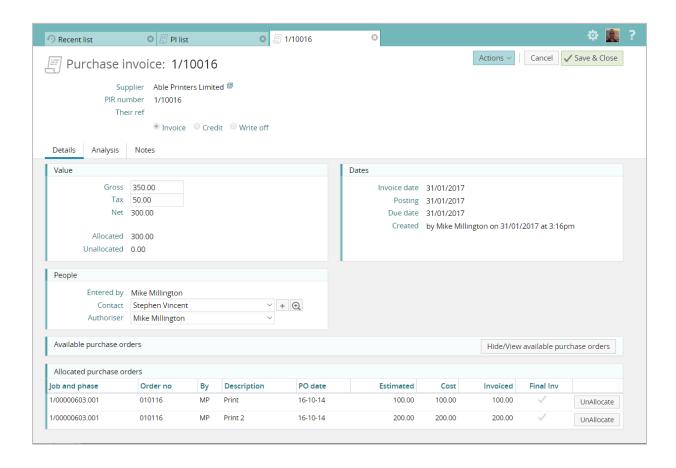
Invoice approval is also available in Synergist Web, with the approval status clearly displayed at the top of the invoice. An invoice remains a draft until it has been approved and 'made real'.



Purchasing

From within a job phase you can create purchase estimates and purchase orders. Once the supplier submits a purchase invoice, it can be entered into the system via the 'Purchase invoices' Interface.

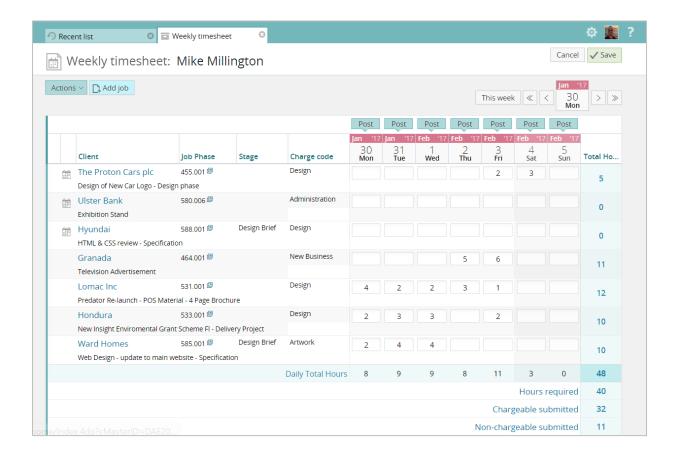
Enhancements have been made to this screen in the Synergist Web version. The unallocated purchase orders now appear directly under the invoice details section. To allocate one or more purchase orders to the invoice just click the 'Allocate' button. The allocated purchase orders then appear below. Once the invoice is fully allocated the list of unallocated purchase orders is automatically hidden. Allocating nominal codes and posting is the same process as is used in the Desktop version.



Weekly timesheet

The weekly timesheet provides an efficient interface to entering timesheets. The user's job list appears on the left had side of the screen. If work has been allocated to the user via the Calendar Bookings module, the jobs automatically appear in the weekly timesheet at the top of the list. The job, phase & charge code are automatically filled in. All the user needs to do is enter the hours in the table to the right.

There is also a timer feature available that accumulates time automatically while the user is working on a job. This can be paused and restarted so it's a useful tool for staff working on multiple tasks simultaneously.

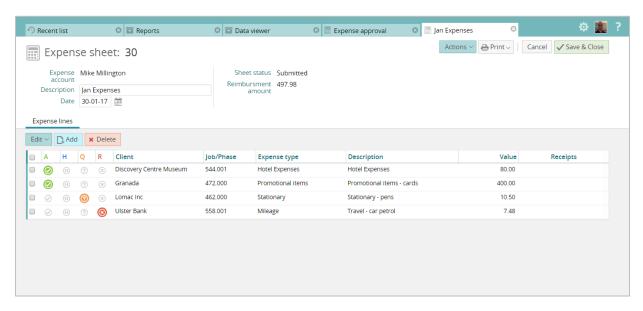


Note: If you wish to continue to use the older 'Beta' version of the Time and Expenses module you should not upgrade to v12. This module is no longer available once you have upgraded from v11.

Expense entry & approval

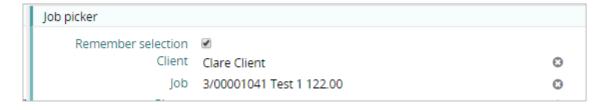
Users can enter expenses and attach receipts as required. Once ready an expense sheet is submitted for approval. Approvers can quickly approve or query expense lines by clicking the color coded icons to the right of each line.

Expense sheets can then either be returned to the submitter (in the case of a query) or posted on the respective jobs.



Materials entry

Materials are no longer entered using the Weekly Timesheet. Use the daily timesheet for this task. The Daily timesheet feature includes a 'remember selection' option to make it easy to efficiently enter multiple material sheets against a job.

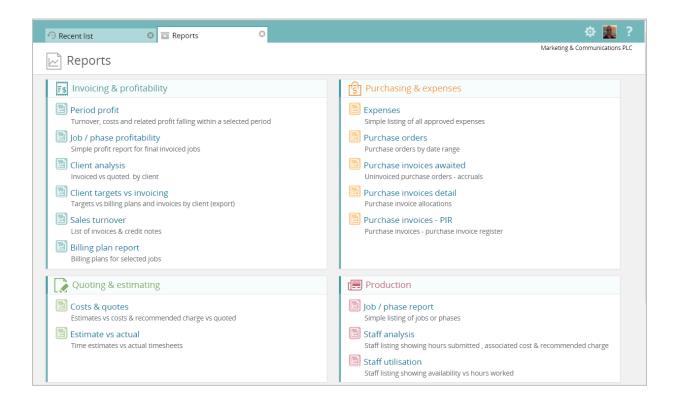


Reporting

Standard reports

A selection of key reports is available. These are presented in panels and are grouped together in a similar fashion to the desktop application.

Using this simple interface it is easy to quickly identify a report you wish to run. Once you had selected the report you have options to print (to PDF) or export to csv (Excel), and advanced filtering is available if you require it.

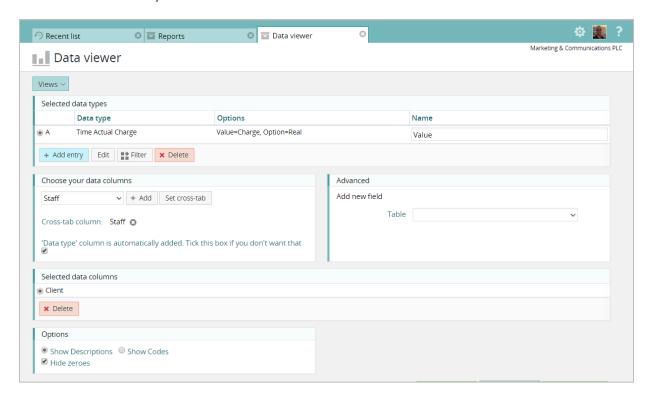


Data viewer

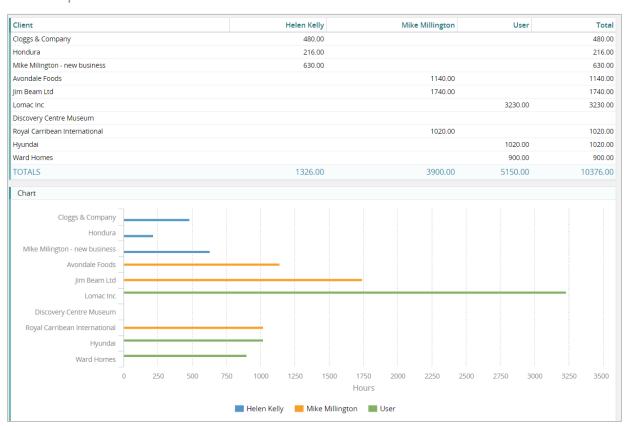
The Data viewer is now also available on the web. This powerful tool has been enhanced to support all key fields in the database (including user defined fields), and now supports multiple data types using separate filters. This means complex data views can be created and saved. There are various output options including 'on screen table', 'chart' & 'export'.

Example data viewer table & chart

Here is a simple chart listing time (in value) booked to clients over a 3 month period, broken down by staff member. Charts like this can be created in literally seconds.



The output ...

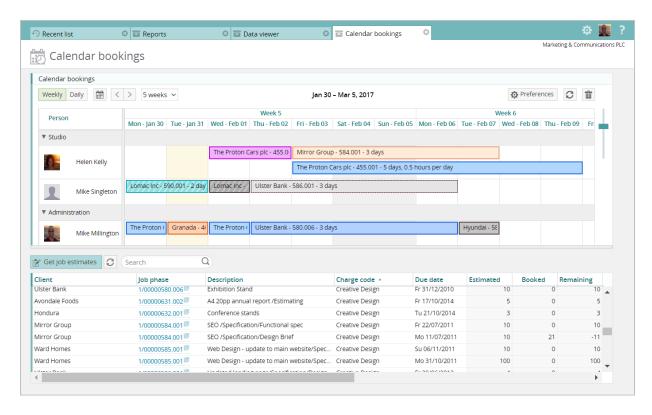


Scheduling

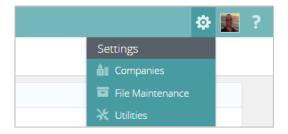
Calendar bookings

The scheduling module is a comprehensive work allocation tool. Tasks that are created during the estimating process can be allocated to staff in the master calendar. Tasks are simply drag & dropped into the schedule and can be automatically color-coded. Real, draft & tentative bookings can be made, and the display filtered by team / resource.

Items allocated in the Calendar bookings scheduler will then appear in the user's personal Synergist calendar. These bookings will also appear automatically at the top of a user's weekly timesheet form – for ease of creating timesheets.

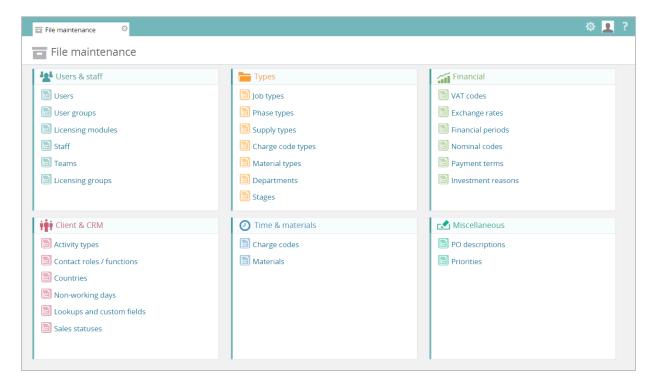


Access to Company settings, File maintenance & utilities is found in the right top corner of the screen (subject to access rights)



File maintenance

New users can be created and changes made to validation tables in this section. See synergist help for more information about this section of the product.



External access to Synergist

Since Synergist Web runs in a browser it is possible to access your Synergist system from anywhere in the world. However, this is only possible if your server is configured to allow access from outside of your local network. In order to set this up have a word with your IT manager or Synergist system administrator.

Feature set of Synergist Web

Although Synergist web supports the core Synergist features, it is not as comprehensive in its functionality as the desktop application. Here is a link to a document that outlines the main differences:

https://synergist.co.uk/synergist-v120-comparison-of-desktop-vs-browser-interface-functionality

Synergist Cloud

This is a service we are providing which will allow you to relocate your Synergist server from your local infrastructure to an externally hosted environment that we maintain (The Synergist Cloud). Synergist customers with on premise systems who wish to transfer into the cloud will be able to do so. However, the first step in this process is to upgrade to Synergist v12 and establish that the new browser interface provides all the functionality required, as migrating to our cloud offering involves relinquishing the desktop interface. We will be providing further details of the migration option following the roll out of v12.