

EBOOK

6 Steps to Winning a Bid

If only there was a go-to template or formula you could follow in order to guarantee success in the bidding process.

But unfortunately, there is no prescribed method that works for everyone.

Each owner values different features of a bid. Some are all about price (although this is not very uncommon), while others value time and prioritize the quickness of job completion. Some value appearance and presentation, while some select a winning bid based on your connections with subcontractors.

Even though there's no formula to guarantee success, here are some guidelines to help increase your chances of winning a bid.





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01

Know what you need before asking what they want

Be smart and don't go bidding crazy. Find out what types of bids you would like to win before you even start looking at bidding on any actual jobs. Know your ideal bids, your less-than-ideal yet still desirable bids, and bids to avoid. This makes it easier to spot the right opportunity.

Too often, contractors bid on jobs for which they are unprepared. Think about bidding as a war—an already common analogy. You wouldn't attack an enemy that outnumbered you, so don't bid on jobs outside your ability. Only bid on jobs with expectations that can be successfully met by your company, or better yet, exceeded.

Ask yourself the following questions in order to evaluate whether or not a bid is right for you:

- + How much profit do I need to make?
- + Do I have the ability to obtain the necessary labor, materials, equipment, licenses, and insurance to complete this work?
- + What resources do I need, including materials and labor?
- + How much will these resources cost?
- + How soon can I supply these resources?
- + What is my timeframe for job completion?
- + How flexible is my work schedule? Can I accommodate any delays?
- + How much of this work will be self-performing?
- + How much will need to be subcontracted? How much will this cost?



02

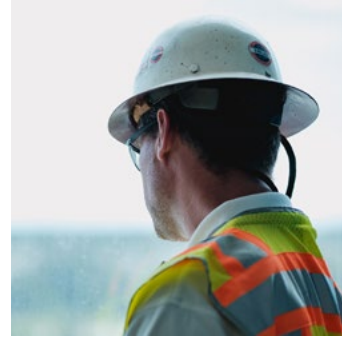
Know Your Audience

As a contractor, your clients can include homeowners, property owners, another contractor who is subcontracting work to you, or public and government agencies. Whether you deal with some or all of these types of clients, you need to conduct market research and develop micro-strategies to appeal to each one based on their personal interests, pain points, and needs.

03

Do Your Homework

Once you decide to bid on a job, do your research. Gain knowledge about your prospects—specifically what they are looking for and what they are willing to pay to have it done. Find out exactly what they want and align your bid to match their needs.



[George Hedley](#), the best selling author of [Get Your Business to Work](#), uses a fishing analogy to explain this concept. He states,

“Bid like you fish... When you go fishing and they aren’t biting, what do you do? You try different fishing techniques, change your bait, or move on to another fishing hole. This is not what contractors typically do when they don’t land enough construction contracts. Most contractors just keep bidding to the same customers over and over, using the same bait and proposal strategies as they’ve always used. Contractors often think if they bid enough jobs to the same companies or entities, the same way, eventually they’ll get their share. This effort won’t get you the positive results you want. Like in fishing, you must change your estimating and bidding strategies to get the big ones to bite more often. You have to use the right tackle, different techniques, and tastier bait to get the fish to think your bait is better than your competition, or look for better fishing holes.”

04

Follow Directions

Do what is asked of you. Follow instructions—exactly. Don't skip details, roundabout questions, or paraphrase. You may think if you don't include something, they can't hold you to it, but not doing so could make you appear sloppy or as if you are trying to sneak something by. If you can't follow directions in bid documents, the owner will question your ability to perform on the job.

Answer the questions they ask, not questions you think they might ask. If the plans don't call for it, don't add it.

By listing out all of your qualifications, you make things harder, not easier—which decreases your chances of winning the bid. Any extra effort on behalf of the employer to decipher your proposal leaves a lasting negative impression.

Make sure your bid exemplifies the following to guarantee you're communicating as directly as possible.

- + Completeness
- + Clarity
- + Clear and organized presentation
- + Ease of read
- + Accuracy



05

Set Yourself Apart

Find ways to differentiate yourself from your competition and demonstrate the value you can bring. Give your client distinctive reasons to choose you by providing them with benefits they won't find anywhere else. If you don't offer anything beyond what your competition offers, you can only sell your price—which is a war you don't want to start.

- + First and foremost, give them what they want—not accessory features and bonuses, but things they have directly requested
- + Offer answers to their problems with complete solutions rather than partial or temporary remedies
- + Reduce their risk
- + Offer guarantees
- + Provide superior customer service with personal, face-to-face contact and prompt responses to client concerns

06

Sell your relationship, not your bid

Go beyond the details and paperwork and make the effort to engage with your potential client in person. Make it your goal to sell a long-term relationship, not just a bid. The importance of establishing a personal relationship with your potential client can't be stressed enough. Try to meet soon and as much as possible. If you can't arrange personal discussions, settle for a virtual meeting. Use email as a last resort of communication.

So remember...

1. Know what you need before asking what they want
2. Know your audience
3. Do your homework
4. Follow directions
5. Set yourself apart
6. Sell your relationship, not your bid



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