



EBOOK

6 Tips to Help Specialty Contractors Win More Bids

PROCORE®

Contents

01	Choose Your Jobs Wisely	04	→
02	Do Your Homework	05	→
03	Follow Directions	07	→
04	Set Yourself Apart	08	→
05	Give Your Bid a Boost	09	→
06	Sell Your Relationship, Not Your Bid	10	→

“The Shore” at Sierra Park
Dolan Concrete Construction
Brisbane, CA

In today's market, bidding for jobs is more competitive than ever before—and that's not likely to change anytime soon.



Many specialty contractors continue to feel the effects of the labor shortage, so it's even more important that they're selective in how they use their most valuable resource.

Long gone are the days of blindly bidding for jobs. Specialty contractors now need to have a strategic approach when it comes to the quality and quantity of their bids. This means they need to consider the following factors early on in the bidding process:

- + Measurements and takeoffs
- + Site visits
- + Change orders and out of scope work
- + Equipment costs
- + Labor costs

Granted, there is no prescribed method that works for everyone. Every general contractor values different features of a bid, and their initial process can offer insight into how they will operate once the job begins. Some are all about price, while others value time and prioritize faster schedules. Some value appearance and presentation, while some select a winning bid based on previous relationships.

Although there's no formula to guarantee success, specialty contractors can take specific steps to avoid costly mistakes when it comes to bidding. Here are some guidelines to help increase your chances of winning the jobs you want.

— 01

Choose Your Jobs Wisely

Before the bidding process begins, you first need to have a clear understanding of the types of jobs you want to win. Identify your ideal bids, less-than-ideal bids, and bids to avoid to help you determine the right opportunities ahead of time. If you realize early on that the job isn't a good fit or the profit margins are too small, don't continue to bid. Set your sights—and put your energy towards—the jobs that align with your business goals.

Don't forget: when bidding for a job, make sure the expectations can be successfully met (or better yet, exceeded) by your company. Double check that all measurements and takeoffs are accurate. In order to evaluate whether or not a bid is right for you, ask yourself the following questions:

- + 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 other jobs have I committed to or already have in progress?
- + 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?





— 02

Do Your Homework

Once you decide to bid on a job, do your research. Ask questions at the pre-bid meetings to make sure you fully understand the job requirements, and don't forget to calculate other costs into your bid such as overtime and specialized equipment. Consider visiting the site and conducting a walk-through. Not only will this show the general contractor you're serious about the job, but it may also give you insight into any additional factors you need to consider.

To help set you up for success later on, you'll want to be sure to produce an accurate and up-to-date quantity takeoff at the start. Make sure you fully understand the request for proposal, request for qualification, and the work package. Although this may go through several revisions and adjustments during the estimation process, it will help ensure the price estimate reflects real-world costs.

Once you've done the initial groundwork, double and triple check any measurements for accuracy. Failing to do so can have a significant impact on the project schedule and budget—not to mention profit margins.

Most importantly, after every bid, review your win and loss rates and dive into the "why." Ask yourself what you could have done differently. This will help you finetune your process over time and will help ensure you don't make the same mistakes twice.



As [George Hedley](#), the best-selling author of [Get Your Business to Work](#), 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.”

— 03

Follow Directions

When it comes to the bidding process, be sure to follow the instructions exactly. Don't skip details, roundabout questions, or paraphrase. Failing to do so could undermine your chances of winning the bid. From the general contractor's perspective, if you can't follow directions in bid documents, how can they trust your ability to perform on the job?



Be sure to answer the questions the general contractor asks, 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 to decipher your proposal can leave a negative impression. To guarantee you're communicating as effectively as possible, make sure your bid is:

- + Complete
- + Organized
- + Accurate
- + Clear
- + Easy to read

Most of all, remember to take the time you need to prepare your bid thoroughly, ensuring all inclusions and exclusions are stated clearly. Rushing can lead to easily avoidable mistakes—or worse, lost profit margins at the end of a project.

— 04

Set Yourself Apart

Find ways to demonstrate your value and differentiate yourself from the competition. Whether its offering a bigger crew to get the job done faster or having a proven safety record, know what sets you apart from your competitors and be able to clearly communicate this to the general contractor. Do you offer a unique specialization? If so, be sure to highlight any specific training, expertise, tools, and techniques within your trade that sets your business apart.

If you don't offer anything beyond what the competition offers, you can only sell your price—a dangerous game to play when you're trying to maintain quality and keep profit margins high. Instead, consider the following to help ensure your bid stands out from the pack:

- + 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
- + When possible, offer guarantees
- + Provide superior customer service with personal, face-to-face contact and prompt responses to any concerns that arise

If you win a job, consider offering materials the general contractor can give to the owners that speaks to your value. You may choose to include project pictures and descriptions, customer references and quotes, or a list of awards your company has won. If the general contractor sees you contributing to their success, they're likely to remember you for future jobs.



— 05

Give Your Bid a Boost

One way to set yourself apart from the competition is to demonstrate how your firm will go above and beyond in quality and service. Leveraging a construction management platform will not only show the general contractor you are committed to efficiency and accuracy, but it will also help ensure success from start to finish. Plus, if you are already using a leading tech solution (let alone the same one as the general contractor), it saves the general contractor time—enabling both parties to spend more time on the most important tasks.

Instead of relying on written notes scattered on the jobsite or double entry into multiple systems, a centralized software solution provides all project collaborators with one source of truth. That means less rework—and ultimately, lower costs and a more accurate bid.

While being able to market yourself in the bidding process is important, so too is backing it up with tangible evidence of the value you can bring to a project. Leveraging a streamlined software solution offers value to both your business and the general contractor's by maximizing profits and reducing risk—giving general contractors one more reason to keep you top of mind for the future jobs.



— 06

Sell Your Relationship, Not Your Bid



Even when specialty contractors deliver the most accurate cost estimate and the lowest possible bid, they still only win on average about 1 in 7 bids. The truth is, winning a job often comes down to more than just numbers—it's also about the relationships you build and maintain.

To help your business stand out from the rest, go beyond the paperwork and make an effort to engage with the general contractor in person. Consider identifying the top general contractors

Make it your goal to build a long-term relationship, not just a bid.

your business works with and spend time with them on a regular basis in relationship-building settings; this may include meals or social events. If you can't arrange personal discussions, settle for a virtual meeting. Use email as a last resort for communication.

Once you complete a job, remain in touch with the general contractor and be sure to send them any useful leads—they'll likely return the favor when other job opportunities arise. You may also want to consider leveraging references from general contractors for future bids or showcasing them on your website.

And remember, don't forget about the power of networking. Staying active with industry associations, community organizations, or serving on boards of directors can help expand your network of contacts and connect you to the right people. Plus, it will help keep your business top of mind and may lead to future referrals down the road.



Get Ahead of the Competition

While there's no silver bullet to win a bid, businesses can take steps to set themselves up for success—that is, strategic planning and access to the right tools. Implementing a construction management platform will not only set you apart during the bidding process, it will also help ensure a job well done. To see how Procore can help streamline your project from bidding to closeout, visit procore.com/specialtycontractors.

Produced by
PROCORE TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

Procore manages your projects, resources and financials from project planning to closeout. Our platform connects every project contributor to solutions we've built specifically for this industry—for the owner, for the GC, and for the specialty contractor. Our App Marketplace has over 150 partner solutions that integrate seamlessly with our platform, giving you the freedom to connect with what works best for you, even if we don't build it. The ability to easily communicate across disparate teams makes it easier to work together by eliminating silos and establishing a single source of truth. It's how Procore gives your team access to everything they need to know to get their job done.

If you have any questions, give
us a call at 866 477 6267

Or email us:
sales@procore.com

Talk with an Expert



VISIT THE JOBSITE >

Procore's Hub for
Original Content



WATCH PROCORE TV >

Procore's Official
YouTube Channel



MORE RESOURCES >

Free eBooks &
Downloads