

# 10

Ways to Produce  
**Faster & More  
Accurate  
Estimates**  
for Smaller  
Electrical Projects





**As a construction professional, you know the importance of using the right tool for the job.**

But when it comes to creating an estimate to help you win that upcoming project, you may not be aware of all of the tools available to you.

Manual takeoff is generally considered inefficient and difficult to maintain as your business grows. If you're estimating by hand, you've probably experienced the challenges of trying to produce estimates quickly and accurately, while also trying to keep track of them all.

Without a more efficient way to manage this important part of your work, it can be much harder to take on more and bigger projects. And with electrical installation making up as much as 20% of the total cost of construction, even small mistakes can lead to unforeseen expenses and delays and throw your entire project off course.

**Here are 10 ways busy electrical contractors like you are producing estimates faster, more accurately, and with greater confidence.**



# 01

## Graphical Takeoff

Takeoffs are vital to every estimate, but doing them manually is a slow and tedious process. The odds that you'll end up missing or miscalculating something are high, no matter how careful and meticulous you are. Graphical takeoff replaces highlighters and paper, allowing you to quickly gather measurements, counts, and add notes electronically. Your estimate automatically updates each time you make a change so you can be confident knowing that your drawing matches your list of takeoffs.





# 02

## Digital Takeoff Sheets

Digital takeoff sheets make it easy to accurately summarize material totals just as you've always done, but without the hassle or expense of doing it with paper or even Excel. Imitating simple spreadsheets or traditional paper takeoff sheets you may be accustomed to, digital takeoffs help streamline your process by performing complex calculations automatically and with ease. You're able to be more efficient and productive without sacrificing accuracy.



# 03

## Managed Material Libraries

You don't need to spend hours researching pricing by hand or waiting for vendors to tell you material costs. Managed material item libraries give you instant, reliable access to current pricing for thousands of items from popular manufacturers. Now you can produce accurate and detailed estimates faster than ever, so you're also able to protect your profit margins.





Commercial construction costs rose approximately 4% in 2023, with labor costs making up as much as 30% of that figure. Plus, the ongoing skilled labor shortage is expected to result in a 3–6% increase in labor costs in 2024.

# 04

## Labor Units & Labor Factoring

Because labor accounts for such a significant percentage of a construction project, accurately estimating the labor required is crucial to producing an accurate estimate and protecting your profitability. Being able to use your specific crew rates allows you to more accurately estimate labor costs.

The use of industry standard labor units, such as NECA, provides another way to estimate the labor required for typical tasks and justify your labor rates should you need to. And by adding labor factors, you can automatically increase or decrease your labor to account for specific system, geographic, crew, or other conditions to arrive at the most precise labor estimate.



# 05

## Quote Management

Variety is the spice of life—and competitive bids. When you're able to get competitive quotes from several vendors and subcontractors for your projects, you'll be able to find the right resource at the right price. But keeping track of multiple bids for each project can be overwhelming. Quote management software allows you to compile quotes from vendors and subcontractors as they are coming in and keep them all organized. The software makes it easy to compare quotes side-by-side to make the right decision for your project and give you a competitive advantage.





# 06

## Automatic BOM Creation

Compiling bills of materials by hand can take hours, but it's always been a necessary evil of producing on-budget jobs. With automated BOM tools, you can produce an accurate, highly-detailed BOM from takeoff with just a couple of clicks. Spend just a few minutes reviewing it to ensure you've covered your bases, then you can hit the ground running with an accurate list of the materials you'll need to start the job.

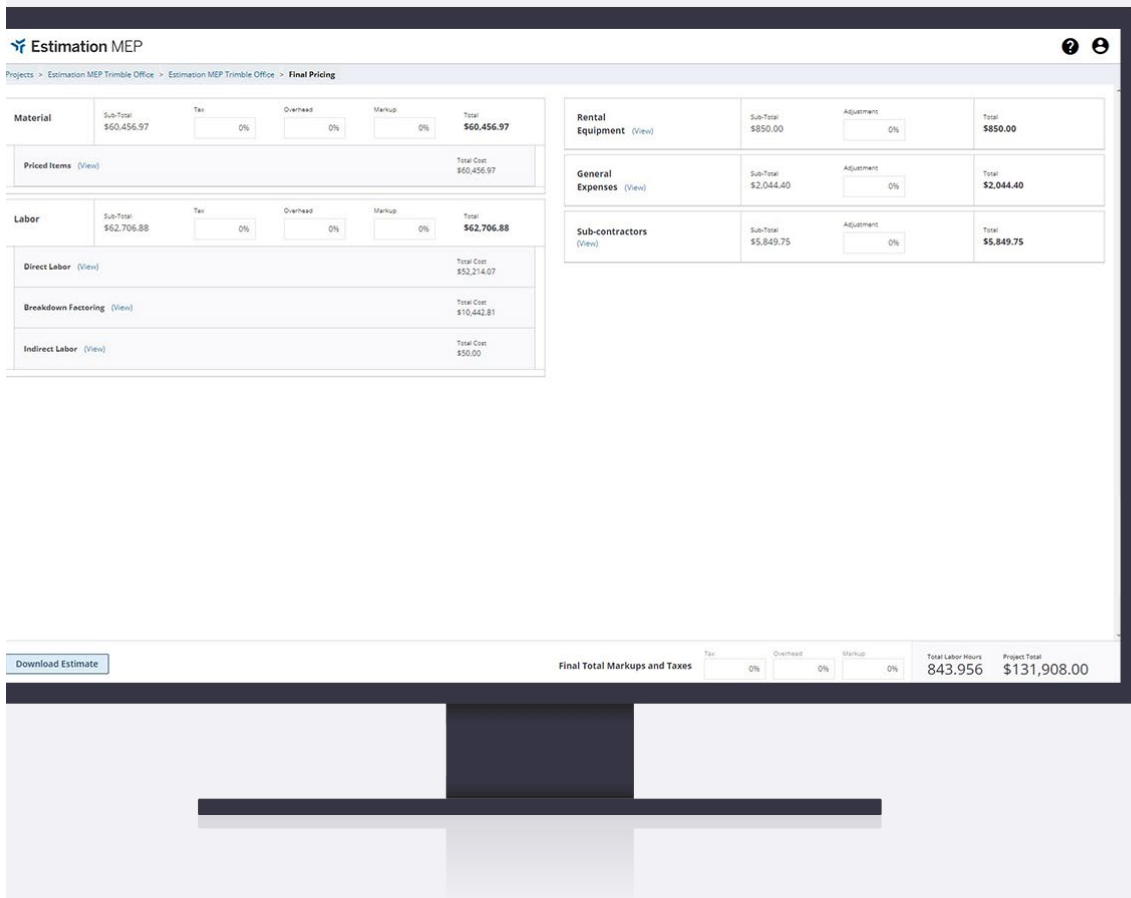




# 07

## Direct Supplier Pricing

As your bid deadline nears, you don't want to be wasting time emailing and calling your suppliers to track down last-minute prices. Digital pricing services provide up-to-date material pricing directly from your suppliers—in real time. Simply apply those prices directly to your estimate to ensure you have the best, most accurate pricing for your bid submittal.



# 08

## Bid Closeout

The little costs on a job can add up quickly and kill your profit margins. But accounting for variations in crew rates, equipment rentals, or subcontractors is time-consuming. Expense management tools like bid closeout allow you to easily manage labor and crew rates and add other incremental or variable costs to your estimate. It can even help capture those sneaky expenses like taxes, overhead, and markups that aren't top of mind to calculate your final number as accurately as possible and help to ensure you're making money instead of losing it.







# 10

## Easy-to-use Estimating Software

Using any one of the previous nine tools can provide a small tweak that will improve your estimating process. But when you're able to harness the power of each of them in an all-in-one estimating solution, you'll completely change the way you estimate, producing faster and better estimates than you could have imagined.

All-in-one estimating and takeoff software combines convenience, efficiency, and precision to give you everything you need to compile accurate and complete bids. When you can feel confident that your estimates are accurate, you can focus your energy on highlighting all of the other reasons you're the perfect company for the job and positioning yourself competitively to win the business.





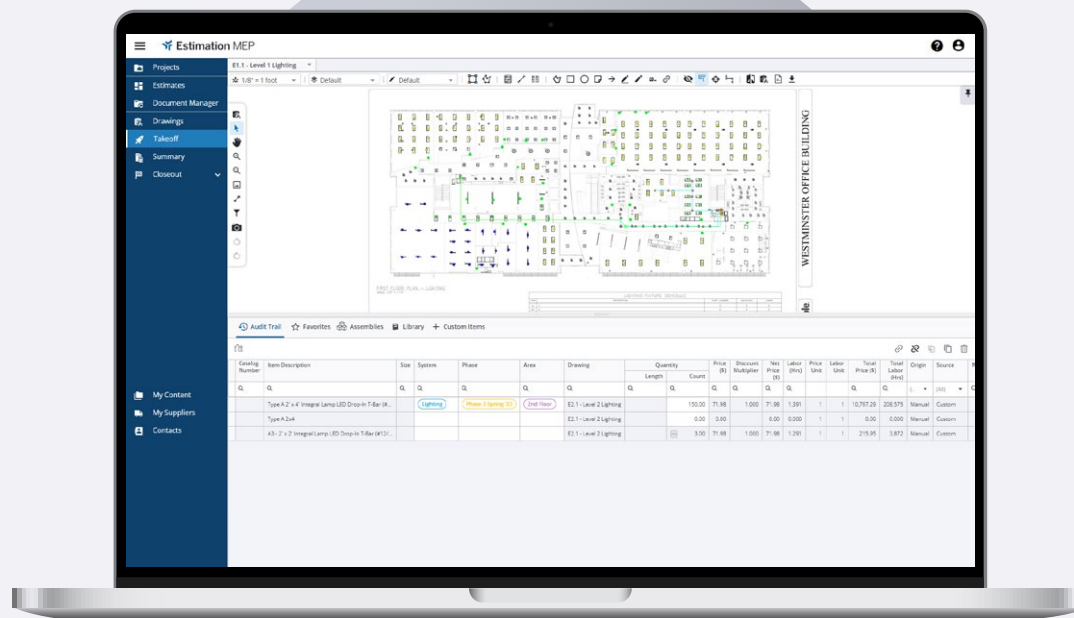
## Learning new software can be a little intimidating. Unless that software is Estimation MEP.

Estimation MEP is a surprisingly easy-to-use, web-based estimating software designed specifically for the workflows of MEP contractors.

By providing a step-by-step process to guide the creation of estimates, the software makes it fast for anyone to get up to speed. In fact, Estimation MEP is so intuitive, you can even delegate some of your estimating tasks to your office manager or another team member, freeing you up to focus on other priorities.

With Estimation MEP, you don't just get powerful estimating tools, you also get document storage, graphical takeoff, material pricing and labor, and real-time distributor pricing in one, fully-integrated solution, so you can

complete your estimates faster and with more confidence—straight from your web browser. Plus, collaboration and connected workflow capabilities offer added value and streamline processes for greater return on your investment.





## What you need

- Laptop or desktop computer, Mac or PC
- Internet connection (we suggest 10 Mbps or faster)
- Desire to work faster, smarter, and more efficiently
- Zero special training required



## Why you need it

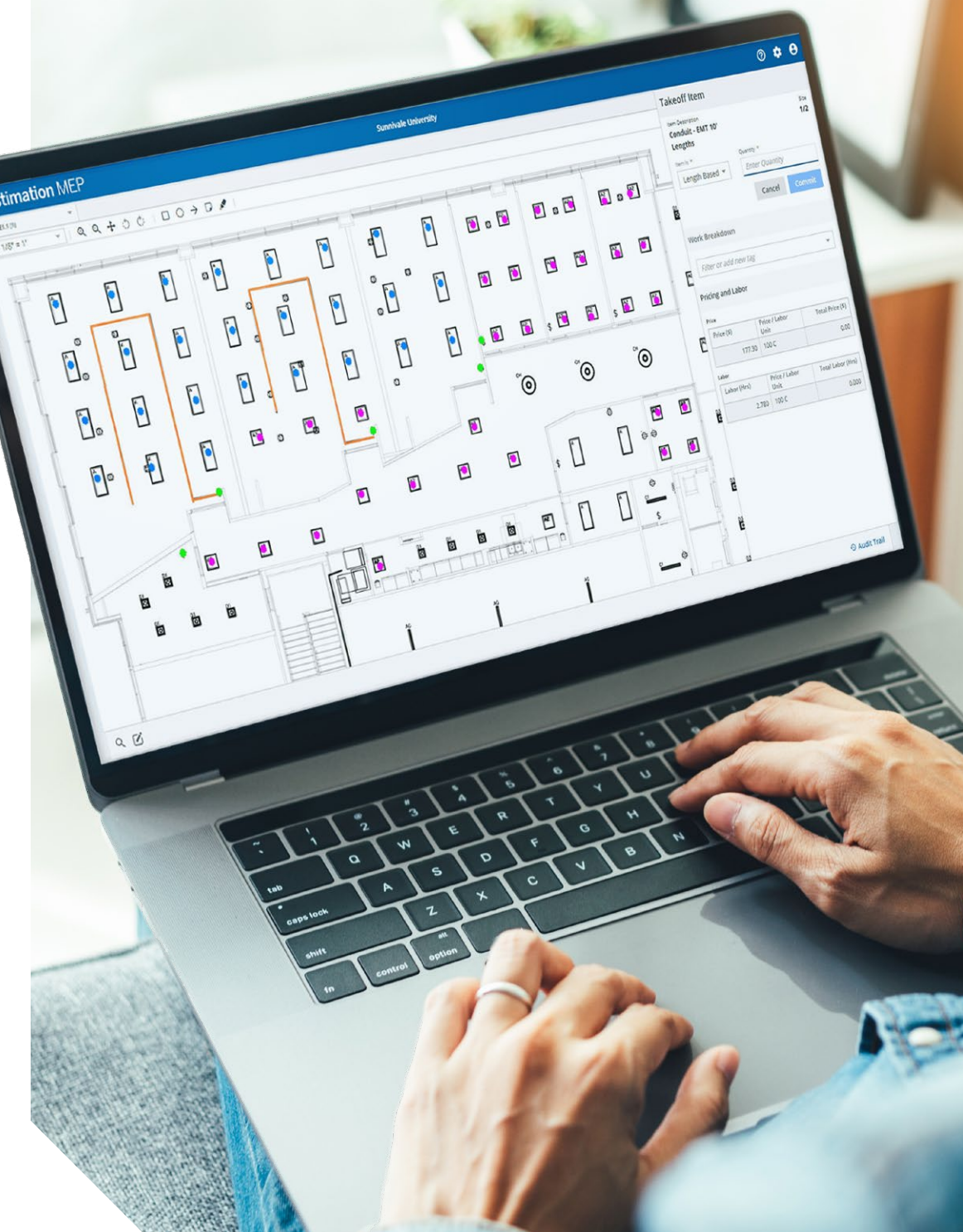
- Perform faster, with more accurate takeoffs
- Produce complete and competitive estimates
- Protect and preserve your profit margins
- Create easy-to-manage digital bids—accessible from wherever you are working
- Save time by delegating estimating tasks to others



Even if you've never produced a digital estimate before, with Estimation MEP you can quickly compile bids in a fraction of the time and with greater confidence in their completeness, accuracy, and competitiveness.







# Meet Estimation MEP

Just because you're used to the way you've always done estimates doesn't mean there isn't a better way. Estimation MEP is a simple web-based estimating solution with just the right features you need to put together accurate, complete, and competitive estimates for your projects.

[LEARN MORE](#)

© 2024, Trimble Inc. All rights reserved. Trimble, the Globe & Triangle logo, are trademarks of Trimble Inc., registered in the United States and in other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. PN 022610-002 (04/24)