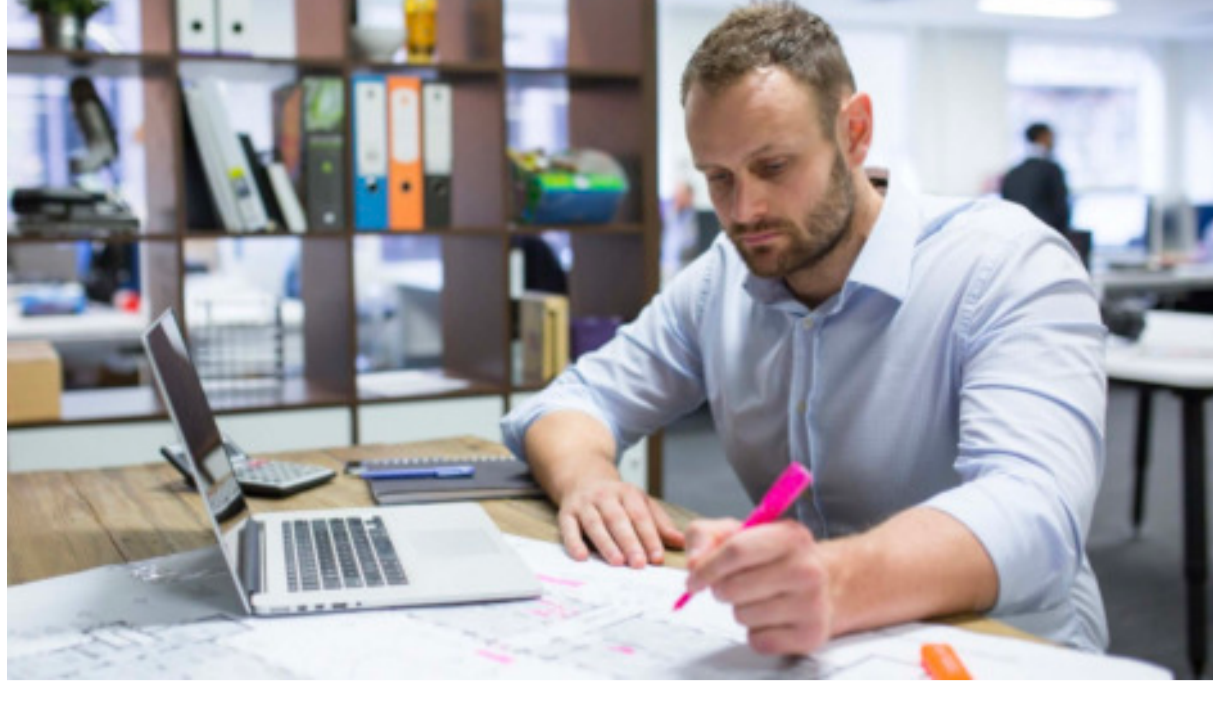


How To Quote a Building Job: A Best Practice Guide

EstimateOne



It's time for you to win some new work.

You're on the EstimateOne portal. You've found a project you want to work on for a Builder with a solid pipeline of projects. Now how do you get your foot in the door?

Tendering is a competitive and time constraining process for Builders and trades alike. If your quote is going to take the Estimator too long to understand, your hard work goes in the "too hard" basket. The chance of working with them will decrease significantly.

How do I know this? I was an Estimator for many years. Trust me. This guide will help you tailor your quotes to increase your chances of winning new projects. The attached PDF is a sample quote to provide a real example.

Your price

Total price

Front and centre. An Estimator needs to know your final figure. Whether you're toe-to-toe with the other trades or lurking in the shadows, an Estimator first checks your price. This needs to take pride of place.

Itemised bill of quantities (or scope of works)

For a second, put yourself in the Estimator's chair. A Subbie quote arrives cheaper than the others, but it's a one-liner with no description. She has 30 trades to review, each with five subcontractors. And the tender closes in 2 days. She is stressed, panicked, and doesn't have the time to double check all quotes. This one goes by the wayside.

To get the Estimators attention, you should include a description of works and bill of quantities which quickly shows what your quote includes. No more confusion!

An Estimator's example:

John's Timber Floors priced the supply and install of engineered floorboard for four townhouses. John's quote is the most expensive of the four the Builder received.

However, his quote includes the brand of floorboards and install allowance as two separate line items. Unbeknownst to John, the other Subbies have priced an alternative non-conforming timber.

Once the Builder swaps John's supply with their own, you're now the most competitive. John's Timber Floors has now caught the Estimators attention!

Your understanding of the project

Clarifications & exclusions (also known as "the things I didn't price")

So we have your final price and your scope of works. Now you need to list any items that you haven't made an allowance for.

This section doesn't need to be a 20-page document detailing the type of nail you're going to use to fix architraves to the frame. It should be a short list of any variations to the documents provided. A good set of clarifications allows an Estimator to see what sort of costs they need to add or subtract from you.

Below are some examples of good and bad clarifications.

Concrete Structure [Good]: Allowance for charcoal concrete to driveway in lieu of exposed aggregate

Concrete Structure [Bad]: Allowance for concrete to driveway

Steel structure [Good]: Allowance to install steel, assume craneage by Builder

Steel structure [Bad]: No allowance for placement

Carpentry [Good]: Allowance for 62mm MDF skirting in lieu of 100mm specified

Carpentry [Bad]: Allowance for skirting

Electrical Services [Good]: Allowance for equivalent alternative lighting, subject to Builder approval (value \$10,000)

Electrical Services [Bad]: Allowance for alternative lighting

Carpet [Good]: Allowance for alternative wool blend carpet, equivalent colour, subject to Builder approval

Carpet [Bad]: Allowance for alternative carpet

Timber Flooring [Good]: Allowance for equivalent 190x19mm timber board, floating install in lieu of direct stuck.

Timber Flooring [Bad]: Allowance for alternative timber

Seems simple enough. Still, it's a common pitfall many subcontractors face as they also run out of time to price a tender. Spending the extra 10 minutes to CLARIFY what you have or have not allowed could save an hour of emails and calls trying to figure it out.

And there is always one bug that pops its head out. What if the architectural drawings say one thing, and the specifications say another?

In general, it's safe to assume that the specs are a copy-paste, and the drawings are completed later and take precedence. It is always wise to leave a clarification to that effect. Eg; "Assume architectural drawings take precedence over specifications" or vice versa!

Methodology

In most cases, your clarifications and exclusions will be enough to cover you. For structural trades such as concrete, steel, scaffolding, and craneage, including a brief methodology shows the Builder that you understand the project and are in line with their expectations.

An Estimator's example:

Tate is preparing his methodology for his tender submission. Some trades have not received the scope of works documents, and the quotes are now rolling in.

In Tate's methodology, he has assumed that the concreter will construct the capping beam and shotcrete retaining walls. He has instructed his piling contractors to only price the piles, not a full basement package.

All of his concreters have included a scope of works/methodology that specifically excludes capping and shotcrete walls since he had never informed them of it!

But since Tate is informed of this in advance, he can either ask the concreters to price it or get the piling companies to provide a full basement price.

Without these methodologies, he could have assumed the concreters included it which would have caused a headache for everyone involved if he was successful in the tender!

A nice conclusion

Any other points or comments you think relevant to the job should be included either at the end of your quote or on the cover page. It could be anything ranging from similar projects you have worked on to show your expertise, to references from similar construction companies that will further your credibility with a new Builder.

In summary

Your quote needs three things to get an Estimators attention.

1. A cover page with your total price.
2. A scope of works/bill of quantities.
3. A methodology statement.

Include these in your quote, and see your success increase!