

## Fine Tune Your Bidding

There's no question that bidding is one of the biggest challenges any construction company faces, particularly when competition is high and jobs are few. So why do more of it than necessary? By fine tuning your bidding process you can win more of the jobs you really want.

### Information is Golden

Obviously, pricing is a major consideration when you're putting together a bid, and you need to be right on. That's not always easy, though, when the costs of commodities such as fuel and steel refuse to stay in one place.

Everyone will have specs and drawings in advance, but most bid documents won't have all the information you require. That's why pre-bid meetings are important. Go to all of them so you can ask questions, review specifications and clarify expectations.

It's a good idea to walk the job site. Look for potential problems with site access or equipment storage, as well as soil type, depth of water table and terrain. If your subcontractors can visit the site as well, so much the better. They may spot conditions that won't affect your crews but could mean trouble for theirs.

You should already have a good handle on your overhead costs and labor capabilities, but be on the lookout for anything in the specs that could require adjustments. If architectural details such as offsets or unusual rooflines may slow your crews, price that portion of the work a little higher than normal. If you're concerned about material price fluctuations, consider adding qualifiers to your bid. A phrase such as "Pricing good for 60 days" can give you some room to maneuver if you need it. Also consider building cost escalation clauses into your contracts to protect against job delays.

### Money Isn't Everything

Keep in mind that price may not be what carries the day. Before you submit the bid, ask the owner what factors, other than price, will be considered. For instance, if you offer to provide extra services, such as handling all permitting and approvals or coordinating job-site utilities, you may build the goodwill that puts you over the top.

Also remember that business is built on relationships. Maintain face-to-face contact (phone calls and e-mails aren't the same) with key customers, architects, subs and others, and stay active and involved in the community.

Last, know when not to bid. If a job doesn't capitalize on your core strengths, or is for an owner or architect that has been problematic in the past, do you really want it?

### Write and Win

Plan ahead, ask questions and emphasize your construction company's strengths to write and win the bids you really want.

## Tech Support

### Things to Remember for Year End



#### Before Closing:

1. **Year End Tax Update:** Do NOT install the tax update for 2010 until you have completed your last payroll in 2009.
2. **Employees:** Think carefully before removing old employees. If they have worked on a job moving forward, the employee name will be blank on job reports.
3. **Verify Closed Jobs:** Removing old jobs speeds up processing time. All jobs with a status of 2-Refused or 6-Closed can be removed along with the corresponding records from a/p, a/r, project management and job cost. To verify if a job can be removed, go to menu 1-6. Click on Audit Books. Select Options, Verify Job Removal. You will either get a message that says jobs are ready to be removed or a path to a file listing which jobs cannot be removed and why.
4. **Prior Year Checks:** Address all prior year un-cashed checks in your cash accounts. If you close your fiscal year without doing so, your bank rec will be out of balance.
5. **Verify 1099 Balances:** 1099 Balance at menu 4-4 should be the total payments made this calendar year unless the Vendor has been used on a GL check. GL checks are not reflected in the a/p payments table.

#### After Closing:

1. **Reset 1099 Balances:** Don't forge. Go to menu 4-4, select Options then Reset 1099 Balances.
2. **Purge Items in Company Folder:** There are files that are stored in the archive that may be deleted from the current company folder moving forward. For example, SMB has some default folders named Direct Deposit and Reports. You may want to delete the prior year information stored there. This information is still in your archive folder in the MB7 directory on your server.
3. **Update SUTA:** Don't forget to revise your SUTA rate. This will come from the UIA of your state. (Note: FICA rate and maximum did not change for 2010)
4. **Update Miscellaneous Deduction PR Calcs:** Don't forget to update calculations for employee deductions dependent on YTD wages. For example, you have an employee who borrowed \$1000 paying back \$100 per payroll. He has YTD deductions of \$800. Go to menu 5-2-1 and update the Maximum column for the calc to \$200. If you forget, you will continue deducting \$100 per paycheck until he reaches \$1000 again.

