

## Software Tools Solve Precon Problems

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In construction, each project comes with its own set of challenges, but with careful planning and management, many disruptions can be avoided. There are many stakeholders involved in construction projects, and each role depends on the others for success, so anticipating issues is essential to both sides of the bidding process. Most importantly, financial risk can be avoided in the preconstruction phase with a solid process and effective tools.

### CHAOS IN PRECON IS RISKY

If you don't lay the groundwork for solid communication practices as your preconstruction team grows, you open yourself up to risk of both over and underestimating bids.

- » Lack of clarity in workflow responsibilities can lead to steps getting overlooked. If there is no process for assigning estimators to bid jobs, projects might slip through the cracks when your team assumes someone else is working on them.
- » Poor communication can waste time, and duplicate work. Without transparency among your team, estimators could be performing the same work as others, including even sending out bids for the same project, affecting your company's reputation.
- » If no process exists to communicate updates or changes to projects, teams risk doing takeoffs on outdated plans or creating estimates based on old pricing. This rework in the



precon phase can carry over to the jobsite with scheduling delays and, ultimately, loss of profit.

### 3 COMMON CONSTRUCTION RISKS

Risks can be reduced through collaboration and proper project management. In committing to a project, GCs need to consider many factors.

1. Solicit and receive enough subcontractor bids to cover the required work. If a bidding phase ends with no subs interested in a phase, the project can't go forward until someone is found to perform that trade's section of the work. This cuts into scheduling and planning, putting the entire job behind from the start.

2. Be selective with vendors. GCs need to cast a wide net when it comes to prequalifying subcontractors. Research basic information for each firm on the bid list, such as how long they have been in business, accident rate, type of insurance carried and if they're woman- or minority-owned. Organizing this data ensures only the top subs are invited who meet any owner or government requirements, without which they might not be qualified to handle the project.
3. Select the right subcontractors for each phase of the project. Once bids have been submitted, it is important that you make an informed decision on which sub will be the best choice for the work. You need to have a solid grasp of job-cost estimates per trade and which type of materials will be best suited so you can effectively evaluate the bids. Without this data, you risk selecting a sub who is overcharging or underqualified for the project.

### STAY AHEAD OF THE GAME


You can use a takeoff and estimating tool to perform your own measurements on projects both before and after bids are submitted. This way, you will understand what a reasonable bid might look like, and you can quickly check subcontractors' work when evaluating proposals. Integrations between preconstruction software can create a streamlined process in which you can solicit bids, and interested subs can perform takeoffs and estimates, submitting their proposals back to you directly. This has a significant impact on both sides of the bid. A bid management solution simplifies finding and prequalifying subcontractors based on project needs. You can use tools like this to request bids as well as to perform bid leveling – comparing bids to choose the best option.

### KEEP YOUR HEAD (AND BUSINESS) IN THE CLOUD

With a cloud-based document management system, your team is aligned. Using a single source of truth for plans, documents and specs, everyone can collaborate. Look for software with:

- » Real-time access from anywhere on any device. Teams need to be able to collaborate simultaneously. You can spread the workload by sharing plans with unlimited access.

- » Access to revisions, with options like side-by-side and overlay plan comparisons, you can see the timeline of changes to every project.
- » Key details using callout and markup tools can call attention to specifics or flag questions directly within the plans.
- » Ability to designate responsibilities and manage workloads with project assignments, status and bid calendars to monitor which team members are on what projects when.
- » Plan-sharing with external stakeholders. For others outside your team, you'll want to grant access to plans in view-only mode. This way, partners or vendors can view the same plan set without the ability to make changes.

When your team is fully connected in the cloud, your risk of losing bids or profits due to team inefficiencies and miscommunication is minimized. Collaboration is a vital part of maintaining a top preconstruction team and winning more profitable work. 

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### About the Author

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As Director of Enterprise Sales for [Stack Construction Technologies](#), Aaron Henderson helps contractors grow and scale their companies, leveraging technology to increase efficiency and minimize risk.

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### About the Article

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