

Estimating provides the information required for managing the material costs and labor hours efficiently and effectively. This job management information is important to the project manager for job costing and tracking. Without a good solid estimate, project management is no more than putting out fires and responding to crisis situations. Project managers need to be task-oriented people with a strong sense of urgency and must also focus on starting and finishing tasks on schedule. The project manager's knowledge of their crews strengths and weaknesses as well as the working conditions on a job site and their own experience in the field make them best suited to schedule the right people for the job to complete the project on time.

Specialization – Look at estimating and project management as a production line. Estimators estimate, and project managers manage. The split between these two job professions allows each to become more efficient. A full-time estimator becomes more proficient and able to complete accurate bids quickly. The experience in the field for a full time project manager develops his or her team management skills and product expertise to complete the project on schedule. Both individuals improve their skills because they specialize in their profession.

Communication – An advantage for the individual who is both the estimator/project manager is that there is no miscommunication between the two job functions. When the estimator is also managing the project, he or she is more familiar with details and conditions of the job thus saving time in turning the project over. Just be sure to avoid the temptation to delay decisions to the project management stage when you are performing both roles...the result could be a loss of time and money.

When the roles are separated, it is essential that the estimator and the project manager communicate effectively with each other. The project manager has specific knowledge of the work required for the job and is, therefore, an important resource for the estimator in producing an accurate estimate. A good estimator is laying the framework for the project. If the estimate is done completely and accurately, the project manager will experience fewer problems on the job.

The success of both the estimator and the project manager requires a cooperative team environment of encouragement and support. Both roles are critical to the success of your company. Skilled project management is often the difference between a profitable job and one that produces a loss. Effective estimating and job planning of labor schedules and material procurement are major factors in determining the actual cost of a project. Ultimately, it is careful job planning and precise plan execution that is the necessary groundwork that will reap desired benefits and profits for your company whether you hire one individual as your estimator/project manager or separate the two roles between two individuals.

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