Making Your Bid Responsive

For your own and the project’s protection
good bidding guidelines are a must

1. Don’t send in a long list of vendors for prior approval. Be specific. Refer to the particular section and paragraph and request approval for a specific product on that particular item. Outline in letter form what you want to bid on which item and submit substantiating data with the letter and advise of your availability to show samples at A/E’s request.

2. Submit estimate early — Don’t let your estimator put off looking at the job until the last minute. AIA complains that they always receive harried questions 2 to 5 days prior to bidding (and the job’s been out for 4 weeks). It’s too late then for an addendum or a bulletin and at that point you may get an off-the-cuff interpretation (from someone without authority) or you’ll have to wait until after bidding (so you lose money and so does the general).

3. Put it in writing. You’ve complied with items 1 and 2, but now you find ambiguities in the plans. Put it in writing to the general with copy to the architect. Don’t leave it to a last minute phone call—phone calls can be forgotten. Remember that everyone is rushed at bid time—Architects don’t leave things out deliberately, but, being human, they sometimes do omit an important detail. The general is not a specialist in your field—you are the one that is paid to know.

4. Approval Bulletins: Make certain you have seen the Project Manager for your approval and make sure that the approval will be issued by bulletin. If you see the wrong man, you’ve wasted time and money in the takeoff and perhaps made some enemies, too.

5. Know the General and Special Conditions — Your estimator may not understand them or take the time to look at them—give him the authority to have copies made of the General and Special Conditions, to be brought back with the takeoff—this is where you’ll get hung! Special Conditions mean exactly that—something peculiar about the job, i.e. phases; bonding; insurance; access to jobsite; time element; payments and retainage; facilities such as hoists, etc. (We read of a job where the Special Conditions stated that all work would be done between the hours of 6PM and Sam. Of course that was double time, but the sub hadn’t read the Special Conditions). Make it a rule that you see the General and Special Conditions prior to bidding the job.

6. Clarify exactly what you are bidding on and what you are deleting—what you are substituting and what you are not. Saves grief, aggravation and conflicts after the award, during job progress and prior to final payments.