PaintBusters Australia

FREE MINI GUIDE

ESTIMATING PROFITABLY

Win the Right Jobs, Make the Right Money



PAINTBUSTERS AUSTRALIA | BUSINESS GUIDES

ESTIMATING PROFITABLY

THE REAL COST OF GETTING IT WRONG

You can be flat out painting every day and still struggle to make a decent living. I've seen contractors win plenty of work only to discover that their prices never covered the actual job.

Estimating isn't about guessing what the customer might pay. It's about understanding what you're committing to deliver, what it will cost and whether the job is worth taking on.



> **A busy painter isn't necessarily a profitable painter.**

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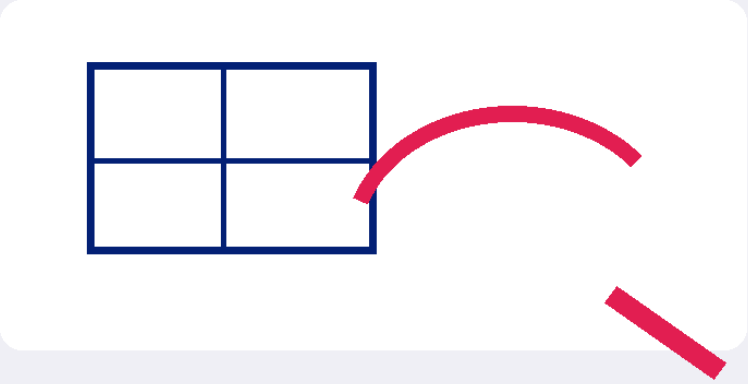
DON'T PRICE WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE

A set of plans, a quick walk-through or a few photographs rarely tells the whole story. Preparation, access, repairs, protection and site conditions can turn a straightforward paint job into an expensive lesson.

Before you put a figure on the job, understand the surfaces, the finish expected and what's included. Where information is missing, ask questions and record your assumptions.

WHAT IS REALLY IN THE SCOPE?



- SURFACES
- ACCESS
- REPAIRS
- PROTECTION

> **If the scope is unclear, your price is at risk.**

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LABOUR IS MORE THAN BRUSH TIME

Most painters can work out roughly how long it takes to roll a wall. The trouble starts when they forget everything that happens before and after: setting up, masking, sanding, filling, moving equipment, cleaning and returning for another coat.

An estimate must allow for the complete job, not just the enjoyable part. Your labour allowance should reflect the actual conditions and the people doing the work.

THE WHOLE JOB TAKES TIME



Allow for every stage — not just the time spent painting.

> **Don’t give away the hours nobody sees.**

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THE CHEAPEST QUOTE CAN BE THE DEAREST

Winning work by shaving the price is easy. Making money from a badly priced job is much harder. Once you've promised the scope and price, the risk is yours unless your agreement provides otherwise.

Know your costs, allow for genuine business overheads and leave room for a reasonable return. If a client wants a lower price, discuss a legitimate change in scope—not a silent reduction in your margin.

A LOWER PRICE CAN WIPE OUT YOUR MARGIN

SENSIBLE PRICE



Costs remain. Margin shrinks.

CUT PRICE



Costs remain. Margin shrinks.

> **Turnover is not profit.**

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CHOOSE YOUR CUSTOMERS CAREFULLY

A big contract can look impressive, but it means very little if payment is delayed, disputed or never arrives. Check who you're dealing with, understand the payment terms and think carefully about tendering for speculative work.

I'd rather see a painter complete a sensible, profitable job for a reliable customer than chase a large contract that puts the business under pressure.

A GOOD CUSTOMER IS PART OF A GOOD JOB

RELIABLE CLIENT

- Clear scope
- Agreed terms
- Payment confidence

RISKY CONTRACT

- Unclear terms
- Delayed payments
- Uncertain award

> **A profitable job with a reliable, paying customer is worth more than a large contract with an unacceptable financial risk.**

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PUT THE DETAILS IN WRITING

Many disputes begin with two people having different ideas about what the price included. Spell out the areas to be painted, preparation allowances, number of coats, access arrangements and any exclusions.

Unexpected conditions and requested changes should be documented and agreed before extra work proceeds. Clear paperwork protects the customer as well as the contractor.



> **If it matters to the price, put it in the quote.**

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HOW PAINTBUSTERS CAN HELP

PaintBusters Australia helps painters and painting contractors make better estimating decisions. Our estimating service can prepare an itemised bill of quantities with recommended pricing for you to review and adjust to your own business and project conditions.

Need to sharpen your estimating skills? Ask about our estimating education and business support, or explore the extended Estimating Profitably guide when available.



PaintBusters Australia doesn't just help painters price more jobs. We help them price the right jobs, at the right rates, with less wasted time.

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BEFORE YOU SEND THAT QUOTE

Ask yourself: Have I understood the complete scope? Allowed for preparation, access and clean-up? Checked the customer and payment terms? Explained assumptions and exclusions? And, most importantly, is this job worth winning?

If you're unsure, stop and review it. A few minutes of careful thought can save weeks of working for nothing.

YOUR PRE-QUOTE CHECKLIST

- ○ Complete scope
- ○ Labour and materials
- ○ Client and payment terms
- ○ Assumptions and exclusions
- ○ Worth winning?

PRICE THE JOB. PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS.

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