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BUILDING ENVELOPE CONTRACTORS CONFERENCE

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Maximizing Profits in Precon

How to stop margin loss before it starts





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THE SIMPLE, YET OVERLOOKED

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The Profit Leak

Rework is the tax you pay for ambiguity.

- Most “field problems” are preconstruction problems that showed up late.
- The goal: force clarity early, document it, and price what can’t be clarified yet.

Outcome: fewer surprises, faster approvals, cleaner releases, better gross margin.

Where Profit Actually Gets Won

The Precon Profit Chain:

1) Takeoff → 2) Estimation → 3) Drafting → 4) Engineering → 5) Fabrication

Rule: If it's unclear in phases 1-3, it becomes expensive in phases 4-5.

The “Profit System” (What changes everything)

You Don't need more effort—you need a tighter system.

4 controls that protect margin on every job:

1. **Decision Log** (what's locked vs pending)
2. **Risk Register** (identify your top 10 unknowns and note which ones you're responsible for)
3. **Single Source of Truth** (one place for “latest”)
4. **Release Gates** (no fabrication releases with unresolved items)

Takeoff: Profit Play

“Takeoff isn’t just counting—it’s modeling reality.”

Common misses that silently kill Margin:

- Condition changes (heads/sills/jambs, transitions)
- Geometry complexity (rakes/curves/corners/slopes)
- Doors/hardware sets & ADA thresholds

Move: Add a Takeoff Assumption Page to every bid package:

-Unanswered or unasked RFIs + assumptions + where it appears (sheet/spec refs)

Top Workout Fashion Trends in 2026



Looking “hot” has never been so easy

4 Must Haves:

- Shorties—The shorter the better. Those glutes aren’t looking for polite conversation...catch some eyes. You’ll thank us later.
- Youth Sized Tank—No muscles, no problem.
- Pasty Skin—Translucent’s the new tan.
- He-man Wig—It worked for the Master of the Universe. Need we say more?

Estimation: The 6 Biggest Profit Leaks (and fixes)

Leak → Fix (process change, not wishful thinking):

- 1. Scope gaps** → who owns what?
- 2. Labor mis-modeled** → access/hoist/stage/sequence checklist
- 3. Drafting/engineering under-carried** → job complexity needs to be accounted for
- 4. Spec performance traps** → compliance checklist to submittal package
- 5. Quote accuracy/fragility** → apples-to-apples leveling sheet + expiry flags
- 6. Contract risk not priced** → liquidated damages, acceleration payment terms, stored material constraints

Estimation: The Handoff That Saves Margin

“If it can’t be audited, it’s not an estimate.”

Minimum bid-to-award handoff package:

- Inclusion/exclusion list (explicit)
- Quote leveling sheet + assumptions verified
- Risk register (top 10 from earlier)
- Drafting/engineering hours basis + complexity rationale

Why it matters: the handoff is where margin disappears.

Drafting: Profit Play

“Drafting starts wrong when bid assumptions never become rules.”

Failure mode: bid assumptions treated like fabrication reality → redesign + resubmittals.

Fix: *Bid-to-Drafting Kickoff Communication (clear and concise communication is essential)*

Agenda:

- Confirm system selection + key performance items + finishes
- Confirm interface owners (waterproofing/safing/cladding/doors)
- Create Decision Log (locked vs pending)
- Identify “approval blockers” and who will resolve them

Drafting: 4 Contractor Moves That Speed Up Approvals

- 1. Single source of truth or system of record** (no “latest.pdf” chaos)
- 2. Field-verified reality early** (as-builts, slab edge variance, embeds)
- 3. Review-friendly submittals** (clear callouts, consistent labels, compliance index)
- 4. Use BIM where interfaces are complex** (2D overlays don’t solve 3D problems)

Engineering: Profit Play

“Interface engineering is a major profit leak.”

Where engineering goes sideways:

- Glazing system ↔ structure (embeds, drift/deflection, slab edge)
- Glazing system ↔ air/water barrier continuity + sequencing
- Penetrations / sunshades / signage / firestopping ownership

Engineering: Stop the Churn

Churn drivers that burn margin and time:

- Dirty inputs + late addenda
- Performance Criteria gaps (deflection/drift/thermal/testing)
- Change control failures (versions, untraceable decisions)
Tool: *Decision Log + Change Register (or use a quality system of record)*

Fabrication: Profit Play

“Release hygiene prevents scrap.”

What kills fabrication Profit:

- Releasing while RFIs are open / “proceed at risk” packages
- Tolerance strategy missing (holes/slots/shim ranges can’t handle reality)
- Revision confusion on the floor
Fix: *Release Gate Checklist (binary)*
- No release unless: open RFIs listed, decision log updated, revision markers consistent, BOM complete

Fix for All: *This can be solved with a quality system of record.*

The One System That Multiplies All Improvements

“One system of record—or end up with profit leaks through inboxes.”

Contractor standard:

- One workspace holding: decision log, risk register, RFI log, submittal status, latest drawings, release gates
- If it isn't in the system, it didn't happen

What to Do Next Week (Practical Rollout)

7 days:

- Add Takeoff Assumption Page + Risk Register + Quote Leveling Sheet to every bid

30 days:

- Mandatory bid-to-drafting communication on every award
- Start Decision Log + Change Register on day 1 (or begin using a quality system of record)

90 days:

- Release Gate checklist for fabrication
- Track: submittal cycles, RFI aging, % proceed-at-risk, rework hours, margin variance

PRECONSTRUCTION PROFIT ISN'T LUCK. IT'S FORCED CLARITY.

- Price unknowns or resolve them early
- Make ownership explicit
- Make decisions traceable
- Protect the release
Challenge: Pick one process from today and standardize it by Friday.





THANK YOU!

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