

BID2WIN ESTIMATING & BIDDING PROVES ITS WORTH TO TRAMCO INC. ON A \$4.3 MILLION JOB

Brent Hofer has had plenty of experience in the estimating and bidding department. As a project estimator at Tramco, Inc. since 1998, he has gone from being the estimating assistant to running the show. However, things have certainly changed since Hofer's first days on the job at the Indianapolis-based water, sewer and utility company.



"When I first started estimating, I was using a simple spreadsheet with pencil and paper," explains Hofer. "After a few years of this method, Tramco purchased an estimating program called Quest Solutions. We never did get that program working correctly," he recalls. "There was way too much going on in the background, and it was hard to trust. It was also not very unit price friendly at the time."

Following his spouse to Northern Kentucky when her job required relocation, Hofer spent the next two and a half years working for Bray-Arnspenger—an excavation company who uses BID2WIN Estimating & Bidding.

"During that time, I found that there is a better, more efficient way to do my job," Hofer explains. "When I came back to Tramco in 2005, I made a request that the owner switch to BID2WIN." Tramco purchased BID2WIN in 2005, and Hofer has been estimating and bidding more efficiently ever since.

"BID2WIN streamlines the estimating process, which enables me to get more estimates out to our clients without hiring a junior estimator or assistant. This helps Tramco keep its overhead lower, and allows us to better compete in our present market." He continues, "Also, the fact that BID2WIN is so unit price friendly is a big plus, being that we focus on municipal work."

BID2WIN proved its worth to the company right away, Hofer recalls. "Upon my return to Tramco, the first big project we were low bid on was a storm sewer project for the City of Indianapolis called Mars Hill. The project contract amount was \$4.3 million, and Tramco ended up being low by about one percent," he explains. "Prior to BID2WIN, it was cumbersome to distribute the correct miscellaneous costs, markups, overhead, bond, etc. throughout an estimate. Once distributed, making what I now call a 'quick change' took an extensive amount of time, and lent itself to simple mistakes." Hofer continues, "BID2WIN makes this process easy and accurate. It also allows for simple markup adjustments to materials and other items."

"I have no doubt that BID2WIN assisted Tramco in getting the Mars Hill project. We were getting short on time during bid closing, and we decided to take another five percent off of our material cost. Without BID2WIN being able to make that quick adjustment, we would have ended up being the first loser."

Four years later, Hofer and his team at Tramco are bidding more confidently with BID2WIN on their side—but even an old pro can learn a few new tricks. Hofer attended User Conference 2009, and found it to be very helpful. "I would recommend the User Conference to anyone looking to expand their working knowledge of BID2WIN or BUILD2WIN. Just seeing how the labs work and how others use the program opened a lot of doors for me," he explains. "I hope to attend again next year."

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