

The Free Estimate, Or Is It?

If you are in the contractor business, the "FREE" estimate is the way to quote a client and have face-to-face time with MONEY! The biggest mistake made is that many [contractors](#) treat an estimate as if it were FREE. Well, it isn't free and here are some of the costs of not converting the estimate into a sale or job:

1. Travel time to and from. Time = Money
2. Wear and tear on vehicles.
3. Your salesman(s) salary or base.
4. Marketing material handed out at the estimate.
5. Time away from other potential sales.
6. Loss of marketing dollars to get that estimate.

Just to name a few, these all add up over time for all the estimates that were not converted. Go into your files and look at the stack of estimates that were not converted. Now multiply this against the cost, and I hope you are sitting down. In addition, think of why all those estimates did not become actual jobs. How much money do they all add up to? Things you can do to make sure your "FREE" estimates turn into cash, not losses:

1. Be on time
2. Verisimilitude. Always tell the truth.
3. Have a standard way to conduct the estimate--repetition equals smooth.
4. Give more information than the client needs.
5. Don't pressure, clients are sophisticated and knowledgeable.
6. A two-step sale is better than a one-time estimate.
7. Have a sales book that is professional.
8. Be presentable.
9. Train your sales crew.
10. Ask for the sale and have trial closings in a well-established script.
11. Never talk bad about your competition.
12. Establish credibility (References, Associations, Dealerships).

The lesson here is don't give away your estimates. They are not FREE and you must convert them to make a living. So when you go to your next estimate, think of the cost and make sure you give one heck of a presentation. Pump yourself up. Before I went to any estimate, and my closing ratio was very high, I listened to my favorite music in the car. Get pumped up and act as if this is the only sale that matters. Be excited about the prospect of doing their pool, addition or remodeling job. Your fears and MOJO are sensed by clients and they will react to your attitude. Excitement, politeness and taking your time shows people you care, and people are less likely to say NO if they feel positive emotions and feelings towards you.

About the Author

Lee Starusta is president of [YourContractorDirect.com](#)

[Local Contractor Directory](#)

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