

Hunt & Collins Win \$3.7M Bid for Multi-Family Complex with 1build Cost Estimate

Ricky Hunt is President and Owner of Hunt & Collins, an HVAC contractor, responsible for strategic operations of the business.

Hunt & Collins, Inc

“We got much more value than we paid for.”

COMPANY

Hunt & Collins is a HVAC contractor located in Madison Wisconsin, focusing on residential, new construction, and commercial building projects. As a full-service contractor, the company services include everything from ductwork, piping, hot water systems, and steam systems.

The company was founded by Ricky Hunt, who completed trade school in 1983, gaining 30 years of journeyman experience before he founded Hunt & Collins in 2014. In 1996, Collins completed Western Michigan University's undergraduate program in Business Administration, so he could understand how the business functions in both the field and the office. Hunt is that rare builder who knows his way around the office, but can also tell if a steam system is being put in properly.

As a union aligned, minority-owned business, Hunt & Collins now has over 50 employees, many of whom were hired from unions, and Hunt takes special pride in the diversity of his company and his crew, where the “balance of cultures” ensures “everyone works harmoniously together.”




\$3.7M
Contract



\$3K
Savings



620x
ROI



Being a minority in the industry wasn't easy when he first started, but he soon discovered that to be "taken seriously" he had to get better at building relationships. Ricky now attributes much of his success to long-lasting relationships: "I'm knocking on doors before the doors are even open." He's able to discover opportunities before his competitors because of his people skills:

“If you want to be successful you need to be able to communicate with people well and to see if you can establish a business relationship, but also a working relationship and eventually a personal relationship.”

BACKGROUND

Hunt & Collins started out doing work for the city, but it was always Ricky's goal to expand his business from small city con-

tracts to larger state contracts and eventually to federal contracts.

However, due to Ricky's excellent reputation, Hunt & Collins has more opportunities than they can keep up with--usually bidding on 3 or 4 projects at a time, and Ricky just didn't have the bandwidth to take on one more estimate.

As an HVAC full-service contractor, Ricky has a staff of in-house cost estimators to develop estimates, but using in-house estimators was starting to make it difficult to grow and expand his business.

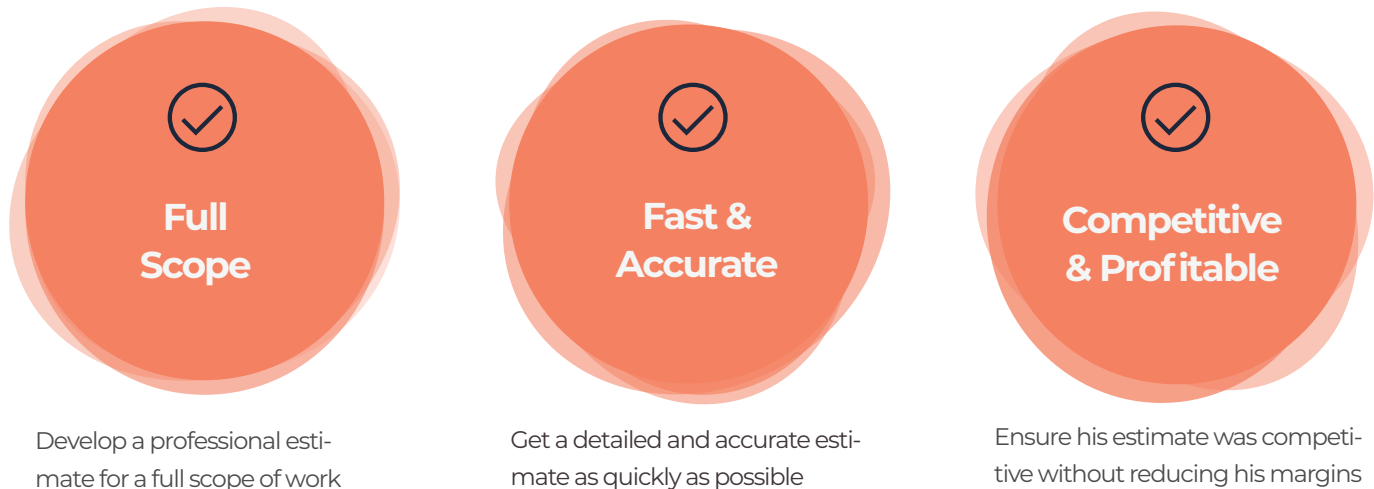
CHALLENGE

Ricky heard about a large project from his network, which would bring in millions of dollars worth of business if his company won the bid: a 225-unit, multi-family housing project with a community center. As a federally-funded project, approximately 50 of the units have been set aside for low income households. More importantly, Ricky only had a few days to submit a bid with an accurate estimate. "So it was a job estimate that would consume a lot of our time" says Ricky, "and given our current workload, it was too much to ask our own estimators to take it on."

According to Ricky, Hunt & Collins didn't have enough time, resources, or availability to hire another estimator. And if Ricky couldn't find another option, he was going to have to pass on the project, losing revenue and a rare opportunity to significantly expand his business.

GOALS

When Ricky reached out to 1build, he had three goals beyond growing his business:



SOLUTION

Ricky found the other option he was looking for when a trusted source in the industry recommended 1build's cost estimating service. The recommendation was so strong that Ricky didn't even look at 1build's competitors.

Ricky immediately reached out to 1build to discuss the housing project with 1build's estimators. Because the project was outside Ricky's comfort zone, it was especially important that 1build's estimate not only be accurate but also include the full scope of the work:

Our scope for the multi-family complex is the HVAC portion of that project, which stretches out to over 10 acres of land. It will entail four different buildings and two stories. We'll be installing gas furnaces, air conditioning, condensing units, special duct work, along with electrical baseboards and different ventilating systems. So, this particular project in terms of both the size and scope was something totally different for us since we were used to doing smaller residential projects.

Ricky soon learned that another benefit of working with 1build's estimators was their deep expertise in the trades:

“If I asked a question about something in my trade, they understood exactly what I was asking.”

After determining that 1build had a strong grasp of the scope of work, Ricky submitted his plans online, and within a few days, 1build provided a detailed and accurate estimate for the multi-million-dollar project. “The process overall was really easy,” says Ricky, “1build went out of their way to simplify it, so it was very smooth.”

Ricky was also pleased with the quality of 1build’s estimate, which was detailed and comprehensive. When Ricky first approached 1build, he was unsure what the project “was going to cost to build,” but after receiving 1build’s completed cost estimate, which included an itemized spreadsheet with a total breakdown of the project cost, he not only understood the cost, but also felt confident he and his crew could handle the job. 1build made sure to “stick to the specifications and the right equipment” and included a “buffer” in the estimate to handle any contingencies that came up with the job. In other words, says Ricky,

“1build gave me one number for the cost and another number for contingencies, so if something comes up I’m covered. If nothing comes up, 1build has just made me more money.”



Ricky also believes 1build’s responsiveness was critical for ensuring the whole process was effortless and that he’d be able to get a detailed estimate submitted by deadline:

“The communication was very delightful. If I had any questions or concerns, I could call or email those concerns to 1build’s estimators and get an immediate response. If they said they were going to get back to you, they really would get back to you in a timely manner.”

In fact, when Ricky explained to 1build that he needed to get the estimate immediately, 1build went out of their way to “fastrack” his estimate, enabling him to submit his bid on time.

But Ricky wasn't just impressed by how quick and easy the process was or the quality of the 1build's estimate, he was also impressed by 1build's customer service and commitment to customer satisfaction. Indeed, 1build went above and beyond the call of duty when the plans Ricky was given were changed midway through. 1build made a point of reviewing the changes on the plans to ensure the final estimate they gave Ricky was going to be accurate:

“They were just as concerned about getting the right number to me as I was concerned about successfully completing this project.”

RESULTS

With 1build's help, Ricky received a detailed and accurate cost estimate for a project that enabled him to win a contract valued at \$3.7 million dollars. What's more, this contract didn't just increase Hunt & Collins revenue, but also enabled Ricky to grow his business, fulfilling one of his original business objectives--to expand from city projects to federal projects: “1build allowed us to break into a new area into our business, and we feel very comfortable doing it because we established relationship with 1build.”

Moreover, because Ricky didn't have to hire a new estimator, Hunt & Collins saved over \$3,000 dollars. In fact, due to 1build's competitive price, Ricky actually saved 5% more than if he had completed the estimate in-house, which means he received a 620x return on investment in 1build. Ricky is so satisfied with the estimate and services he received that he believes Hunt & Collins “got much more value than we actually paid for.”

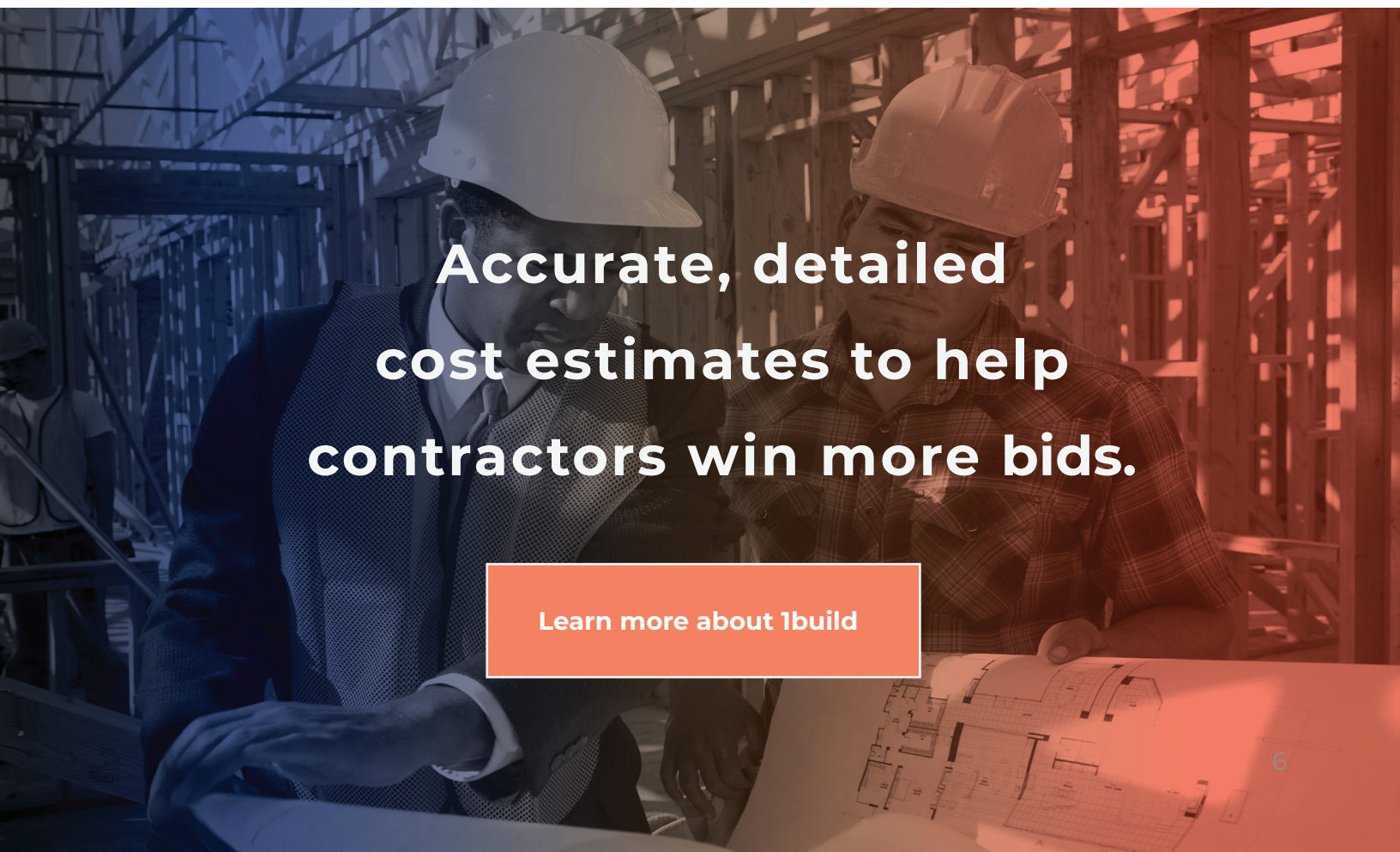
SUMMARY

According to Ricky, what sets 1build apart from other estimating services is that 1build's estimators go out of their way to develop relationships--indeed friendships--with the builders they serve: “I didn't feel like I was in it alone. If there was something I couldn't handle, they were right there with me. I felt like I had a true partner in 1build.”

“They were always there right next to me. I felt like I had a true partner in 1build.”

In fact, according to Ricky, the estimate for the multi-family complex will be the first of many estimates Hunt & Collins completes in partnership with 1build:

“With 1build, you’re going to get a full scope of work—a complete, qualified quote quickly. They’re also going to make certain everything is covered in your project. That you’ll be able to talk directly to the estimator about any concerns. And then, they’ll deliver a spreadsheet breakdown that’s easy to understand. Overall, I’m impressed with the quality of service, the accuracy of 1build’s estimates, and their commitment to doing the right thing. 1build promised to deliver a high quality estimate quickly and at a competitive price and they kept their promise.”



**Accurate, detailed
cost estimates to help
contractors win more bids.**

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