

| Guide 1: Bids & Budgets

| The Reality of the Production Bid Process

Bidding is an art and a science. But the unglamorous truth is that it's also often death by a thousand papercuts. Let's take a quick look at how routine "tweaks" and "small" requests can slice and dice your well-crafted plan:

- **The estimate** – You begin with a number that makes sense and fits the scope.
- **Creative changes** – The agency pivots—once, twice, maybe three times. Suddenly the numbers don't match the vision.
- **Client approvals** – Procurement wants it tighter, marketing wants it bigger. You're caught in the middle while your spreadsheet begs for mercy.
- **Director notes** – That one-day shoot just became two. Now the budget doesn't stretch.
- **Re-bids** – Lather, rinse, repeat. Another version, another filename, another night lost.

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How to Keep Bids Under Control

Bids will never be static. That's not how production works. But you can stay in control if you set the right guardrails early and follow them consistently.

- **Start with one master.** One file (or system) should be the source of truth. Everything else flows from there.
- **Track every change.** When the scope shifts, log it the same day so you always know why numbers moved.
- **Guard your margin.** Scope creep starts small—catch it early before you give away profit without realizing.
- **Keep finance departments on your side.** Share clean numbers often so they trust your work.
- **Use tools that think like producers.** Generic project software won't cut it—your work lives in numbers, not just tasks.

Extra Tricks from the Field

- **Build a bid changelog.** A simple log of why each revision was made saves you when clients or finance question the jump.
- **Bake in a buffer upfront.** A small contingency in early bids cushions the inevitable scope shifts.
- **Standardize your templates.** Don't reinvent the wheel—templates save hours and reduce errors.
- **Use conditional formatting.** Quick color-coded alerts (e.g., margins turning red when below 15%) flag issues instantly.
- **Send version summaries, not just files.** A two-line “what changed” recap saves everyone time and confusion.

Tricks can only patch so much.
The real fix is software that works as hard as you do.

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How to Evaluate Creative Production Tools

The wrong tool creates more chaos. The right one keeps you in control even as the requests pile up. Look for:

- **Version control.** Everyone instantly knows which bid is current, so you don't have to guess if "Final_final_v6" is more up to date than "Final_v6_final."
- **Real-time margin tracking.** Every change updates numbers automatically—no guesswork.
- **Built-in scope creep alerts.** Flag those "just one last" requests before they sink your margin.
- **Finance-ready reporting.** Export once, and you're done. No endless reformatting.
- **Seamless bid-to-project handoff.** Approved bids should roll straight into project setup.
- **Producer-first design.** If it only tracks tasks, it's not enough. Producers need numbers and approvals front and center.

Bottom line: Bids will always change, but the right tools give you clarity, consistency, and control.

How Timmy Helps Producers Stay in Control

Timmy was built with these exact headaches in mind. Here's how it lines up:

One source of truth – Timmy centralizes every bid, so no more chasing file versions across your inbox.	
Change tracking baked in – Every adjustment is logged, giving you a clear trail of what changed and why.	
Real-time margin protection – Timmy updates profitability instantly with each change, so you see red flags before your margin slips away.	
Formatted-for-finance exports – Clean, professional numbers go straight to finance without endless spreadsheet cleanup.	
Instant bid-to-project flow – Once approved, your bid spins into a live project with no retyping line items.	
Designed for producers – Timmy puts numbers, approvals, and reporting front and center—because your work is more than tasks on a list.	

With Timmy, you don't just manage bids — you stay ahead of them.

