Case Study #202

Environmental Engineering Firm – Onsite Training

Overview
A multi-national design-build environmental engineering and remediation company serving and a United States Air Force Base leveraged e4Clicks Project Estimator™ and RSMeans Cost Data for cost estimating and project management for numerous renovation, repair, and construction projects.

Problem/Need
As a valued contractor serving the Air Force, it was important for the engineering firm to become proficient with RSMeans-based line item cost estimating to assure higher estimate detail, greater accuracy, track project milestones from concept thru warranty, and to be in overall contract compliance.

The Solution and Results
The environmental engineering firm elected to have Bruce Sarty, Director of Training for 4Clicks Solutions, LLC come to their headquarters and conduct an on-site training session dedicated to their specific needs.

Several topics were covered spanning the following areas: Coefficients, Subcontractor Estimates, Preliminary Project Scope Estimates, RSMeans Assemblies Cost Database, Estimate Templates, Custom Crews, and the RSMeans Index.
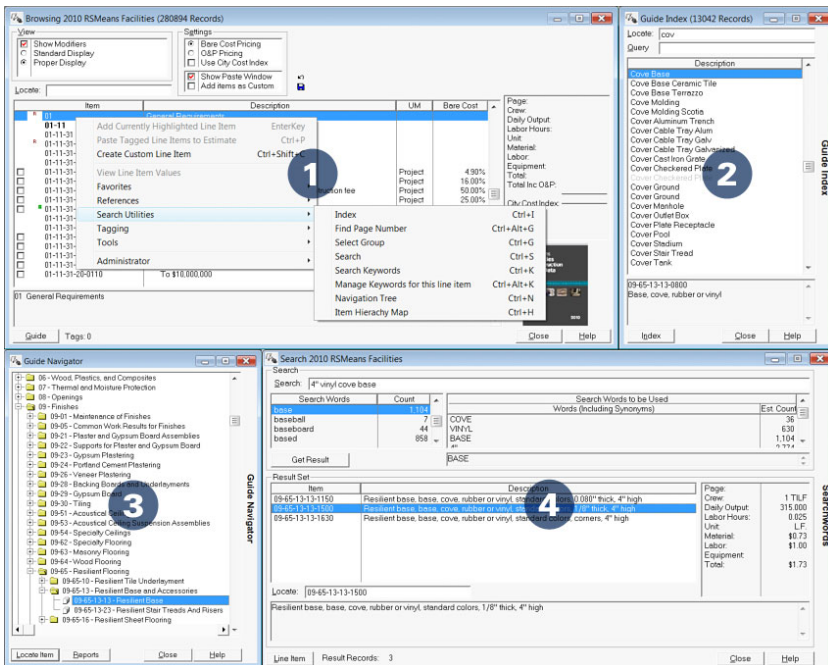
Questions and Answers from this session provide just a glimpse of the value of professional training "by Estimators for Estimators."

1. Search Utilities, 2. Index, 3. Navigation Tree, 4. Word Search

Products and Services Used

- e4Clicks Project Estimator
- RSMeans Facilities Electronic Cost Book, enhanced by 4Clicks
- 4Clicks Onsite Training Services

Q. I am new to RSMeans Line Item Estimating; am I going to have a difficult time searching for line items?

A. No! e4Clicks Project Estimator was created "By Estimators for Estimators." Project Estimator was developed to offer users a variety of ways to search for line items. If you've used an RSMeans Database before, Book or Electronic, you may be familiar with the Index. The Index is what's found in the back of the RSMeans Hardcover Book. The Index allows users to search by keyword. Now as many users will note, some items within the Index are associated with a keyword, which you may not be familiar with. For example, while searching for "Cove Base" within the Index, the user may enter "Rubber Base." However, our software allows users to edit the guide index within our software. Once you find an item, you can add it to the Index using your terminology for future reference. This process does not change the index; it just augments it. Additionally, users who are new to RSMeans Line Item Estimating have the option to search for line items by keywords. Project Estimator has a search feature built into the program that allows users to search for keywords located in a line item description. Other ways to maneuver the RSMeans Guide include drilling down using the Navigation Tree, to searching by division number, or using "your own" Favorites line item database. 4Clicks reduces the "hunting" for line items.

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Associated Questions and Answers

Q. Can 4Clicks assist clients in determining standard coefficients in saber contracts?

A.   While 4Clicks does not get directly involved with coefficients, our partners offer a variety of services to assist clients in establishing coefficients. e4Clicks Project Estimator users are encouraged to view our Partners Directory.

Q. As a General Contractor (GC) how can I receive detailed Subcontractor Estimates?

A.   Detailed Subcontractor estimates are crucial to the successful deployment of Integrated Project Delivery contracts.   A GC must build strong relationships with Subcontractors, which enables the efficient deployment of the contract. GCs need to receive detailed line item cost estimates from their subs. They need to see how the estimate is broken down and the usage of different types of line items.   Therefore it is important for a GC to locate Subcontractors that are willing to explain in-house estimates in great detail. This allows the GC to reproduce estimates with e4Clicks and the RSMeans Construction Data.

Q. The RSMeans Assemblies Cost Database is sometimes required for use on SABER Contracts. However this data can be largely incomplete with respect to cost. How can I circumvent this issue?

A.   While the Assemblies Cost database is a great tool for Owners of SABER Contracts, it may be difficult to provide a complete estimate using assemblies. Contractor's estimates are driven by the Owner's specifications.   More precisely, the database may not meet the Owner's specifications.   The best way to address this issue is to identify whether the assembly matches the Owner's specifications.   By developing a solid relationship with an Owner early on in a project, by opening up conversation with regard to Owner's specs, issues of incomplete assembly line items may be avoided.

In short, assembly line items can oftentimes be inconsistent with Owner's specs; these items must be discussed early in a project, so that both parties can agree on the use of the "correct Line Items" that match the Owner's specs. At the end of the day, it may be more efficient and accurate to build an estimate from individual line items and not assemblies.

Q. Is it beneficial to share my Scope Development Estimate with an Owner?

A.   Sharing a Scope Development Estimate with an Owner may kick off the contract in the right direction.   This may save lots of time and headaches on future delivery or task orders. The typical process begins on the Owner's side with a programming estimate.   Programming develops an initial estimate, which is part of the initial SABER/JOC package.   The SABER Project Manager then develops an Independent Government Estimate (IGE).   The IGE is not always as complete as the contractor's estimate. By sharing your Scope Development Estimate with an owner early in the process, drawing conversation to specific line items without discussing price or amounts, both parties will benefit from using the correct and the same line items in their estimates.   This process will circumvent the standard practice in which, "Not a single line item matches up with the Owner's estimate." This process greatly reduces the time the Owner will take in completing the Technical Evaluation   of   the   Contractor's   Estimate. Contractors shouldn't fear sharing a Scope Development   Estimate   with   an   owner; collaboration is good for a contract and will expedite the delivery order process for future projects/contracts.

Q. What is the value of using Crews as a line item in my RSMeans Estimate?

A. RSMeans crews may be used as a line item to capture costs when the task you are estimating is very specialized and not covered in the cost data. A crew may also be used when you are installing government-provided material, and a "crew" would be appropriate. Always read the Contract!

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