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PROJECT 01

# Commercial Cleaning Bid Estimator

Illustrative engagement · Commercial cleaning services · November 2026

The company in this engagement is a composite built from industry research. Not a real client.

sovrenservices.com

INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

# A $112B industry of small operators.

**$112.0B**
US janitorial services revenue, 2026
IBISWorld

**1.25M**
janitorial businesses in the US
IBISWorld

**~2 employees**
per business on average; highly fragmented
IBISWorld

**$17.27 / hr**
median janitor wage across 2.4M jobs
BLS, May 2024

BOTTOM LINE **Small firms, labor-heavy work: one bad bid hurts.**

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

# Bidding is a known, costly pain.

## 32% and 30%

name winning bids and keeping margins as top challenges

CMM 2022 BSC survey

## 50% to 80%

of every cleaning bid is labor

BSCAI, cited in CMM

## Low-balling

called a top industry problem by contractors

CleanLink roundtable

## A whole category

of bidding software sold to cleaners today

Aspire; CleanGuru; Janitorial Manager

**BOTTOM LINE** Owners feel it and vendors sell to it. Small shops still guess.



Source: CMM; BSCAI; CleanLink; vendor sites (Aspire, CleanGuru, Janitorial Manager)

OUR APPROACH

# Diagnose first, then build.

01
**Discovery call**
How bids get built and where money leaks

→

02
**Opportunity map**
Fixes sized by value and effort

→

03
**Choose the problem**
Pick the one fix to make first

→

04
**Build the fix**
A working tool, tested on real numbers

→

05
**Measure and expand**
Track results, then take the next fix

BOTTOM LINE Every engagement runs the same steps. This one shows each.

01 · DISCOVERY CALL

# Bids are built on gut feel.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 01 | **Late-night spreadsheet** | Same template for years |
| 02 | **Price per sq ft** | Adjusted by feel |
| 03 | **Losses found at payroll** | Months after signing |
| 04 | **Crews staffed after signing** | Hours set too late |

**BOTTOM LINE** The owner prices blind and learns the truth at payroll.

01 · DISCOVERY CALL

# Hours get counted after pricing.

1
**Walk the building**

→

2
**Measure square feet**

→

3
**Pick a price per sq ft**

**Leak:** rate from habit, not hours

→

4
**Sign the contract**

→

5
**Staff the crew**

**Leak:** hours set after price locks

→

6
**Payroll arrives**

**Leak:** loss shows up months later

BOTTOM LINE By the time anyone knows the hours, the price is locked.

02 · OPPORTUNITY MAP

# Fix the bid first.

HIGH VALUE · LOW EFFORT

**Bid from labor hours**

Price from cleaning time per area

HIGH VALUE · MORE EFFORT

**Track actual vs bid hours**

Catch losing accounts in weeks

LOWER VALUE · LOW EFFORT

**Supply costs by building**

Drop the flat percentage

LOWER VALUE · MORE EFFORT

**Walkthrough notes to draft bid**

AI drafts the room list; a person checks it

BOTTOM LINE Highest value at the lowest effort: start with the bid.

02 · REVENUE CAPTURE

# $27K a year goes uncharged.

| Accounts | Monthly billing | Underbid | Left uncharged |
|---|---|---|---|
| **30** | **$90,000** | **1 in 4** | **$27,000** |
| at $3,000 a month | across the book | accounts, by 10% | a year |

**BOTTOM LINE** Same customers, same crews. Priced right.

03 · CHOOSING THE PROBLEM

# The bid is the cheapest win.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 01 | **Cheapest fix** | No new systems or data |
| 02 | **Protects every bid** | Not just one account |
| 03 | **Proven method** | Industry time standards since 1963 |
| 04 | **Sets up tracking** | Hours on every bid |

**BOTTOM LINE** **A small fix today that protects every bid after.**



Source: ISSA, A Journey Through the Cleaning Times

04 · THE FIX

# Hours come before the price.

1 **Walk the building** →

2 **Enter each area** →

3 **Hours and crew worked out**

**Fix:** hours known first →

4 **Price at target margin**

**Fix:** margin built in →

5 **Check the usual quote**

**Fix:** underbids caught early →

6 **Send the bid**

**BOTTOM LINE** The owner still decides. Now with the hours in hand.

04 · THE FIX

# A working estimator, live today.




**Live and free**
cleaningbidestimator.vercel.app

**Public code**
On GitHub

**Private by default**
Runs in the browser, stores nothing

**Tunable rates**
Each company sets its own

BOTTOM LINE

**Example building: an $831-a-month underbid, caught before sending.**

05 · MEASURE AND EXPAND

# Then we track actual hours.

## Next steps

- Tune rates to real timesheets
- Track actual vs bid hours
- Draft bids from walkthrough notes
- Send-ready proposals

## What we'd measure

- Actual vs bid margin, per account
- Time to get a bid out

**BOTTOM LINE** Each step builds on bids that already hold up.

THE TAKEAWAY

# Price from hours. Keep the margin.

Cleaning companies already do the work. We make sure they get paid for it.

Tell us what's slowing you down. sovrenservices.com

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