

EXPENSE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES (EMA) · COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

8% off project cost by fixing preconstruction

A project management firm covering 2M+ square feet of commercial real estate rebuilt its bid process, cutting cost, change orders and time to contract.

~8%

reduction in project cost

~10%

fewer change orders

~5 days

cut from bid-to-contract

3 days

cut from bid comparison

BASELINE

EMA provides project management services for more than 2 million square feet of commercial retail, office and industrial real estate across New York City and surrounding states. Its processes for running projects once underway were sound. The weak point sat earlier, in preconstruction: bids were rushed, there were no standard templates, scope documents were inconsistent, and comparisons took days to reconcile. When bidders price different scopes in different formats, the lowest number is rarely the lowest cost. The difference shows up later as change orders.

WHAT WE DID

- **Standard bid templates by trade**, so every bidder priced the same scope in the same structure.
- **Formal scope review and detailed scope leveling** across all bidders, surfacing clarifications before award rather than after.
- **Unit price leveling**, comparing actual unit pricing rather than headline totals.
- **A best-and-final buyout process** built around the critical needs of each project.
- **Sourced new contractors** to increase competition in trades where the same names had always bid.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ADOPTION

The process was run on live projects with EMA's team involved throughout, so the discipline stayed with them. Better scope and pricing documents also expedited contracting, and clearer expectations improved relationships with general contractors and subcontractors across the workload.

VALIDATED RESULT

- **Project cost reduced by roughly 8%.**
- **Change orders down about 10%**, from better scope accuracy and a wider contractor pool.
- **Preconstruction shortened by around 5 days** from bid to contract, with 3 days taken out of bid comparison alone.
- **Improved work quality**, from better-defined scopes of work.

Faster preconstruction and fewer change orders compound across a portfolio: each project starts sooner, prices closer to its final cost, and takes less management attention to keep on track.



SERVICES · ADVISE · EXECUTE · DEVELOP

Every number here was validated with the client. Read the full case study and the rest of our work at s2vadvisory.com/projects.

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