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Joe is the Director, Government Sector for the Americas at PRICE Systems, LLC. He oversees training, mentoring and consulting in parametric estimation and data analysis for all government and government-supporting clients. Prior to his new role, Joe was a Solutions Consultant with PRICE® for over 8 years focusing on U.S. Air Force and Canadian government customers. Joe joined PRICE® in 2012 upon retiring after 20 years of service in the U.S. Air Force. He earned a Master of Science degree in Cost Analysis in 2009 from the Air Force Institute of Technology and an MBA in 2005. Joe is a Certified Cost Estimator / Analyst (CCEA) with ICEAA and is a frequent presenter at ICEAA.
Agenda

• Background
• Research
• Preparation
• Execution
• Follow Up
• Techniques
• Q&A
Background
PRICE Cost Analytics

Search & extract data from the PCA Ecosystem
Manage & Analyze Data Sets
Predictive Models
Integration Framework
Customer Data Mapping
Basis-of-Estimate Generator
Access PCA Engine from Excel

Estimate with Confidence™
Background

• Role of a cost estimator:
  • We perform precision guesswork based on unreliable data provided by those of questionable knowledge
  • In truth, much of our role involves communication
    • Scoping estimate
    • Defining requirements
    • Obtaining data / information
    • Delivering results

• How does your training stack up?
  • Informal research into certificate and graduate level program requirements show little to no focus on communication-related curriculum
Research
Research

• Take the initiative: YOU need to learn as much as you can about the project prior to asking OTHERS any questions
  • Program history
  • Company product / technical specification websites
  • Industry news
  • When in doubt, Google it!

• Why?
  • Accurate cost estimation requires some basic understanding of the technical solution
  • Research will help you formulate relevant, intelligent questions during interview
  • Research will help you figure out WHO and WHEN to interview!

“You have no business estimating costs for this aircraft if you’ve never seen the production process in person.” ~ Air Force SES
Preparation

• Different than research...this is prep for the interview itself
• What did you learn from your research?
• What do you need to know for your estimate?
• Build list of questions to bridge the gap
• Establish time and place that works for your interviewee
  • In person is better than virtual meeting
  • Virtual meeting is better than a phone call
  • Phone call is better than an email
  • Email is terrible...just terrible

• Why?
  • This will create your “game plan” for the interview and create buy in
  • Most precious resource is time...try not to waste any of yours and DEFINITELY don’t waste any of theirs
Execution
Execution

• Give clear expectations early regarding depth and breadth of interview questions
  • *But be careful about sending all questions ahead of time*

• You may ask questions that have no answers yet
  • *Defensive response can be a natural reaction*

• Open / close of interview should be loose and conversational
  • “*Can you describe the project to me at a high level?”*
  • “*Is there anything else you can think of that I didn’t ask?”*

• Middle of interview should center around your plan
  • *You did make a plan, right?*

• Stick to your meeting time
  • *If you need a follow up meeting, so be it*
Follow Up
Follow Up

• Ask about meeting for potential follow-on questions
  • Don’t forget to say thanks!

• Document the interview
  • This helps to summarize info and obtain buy in
  • Share notes with interviewee
  • You did take notes, right?

• Re-evaluate what you still need to know
  • In early interviews, you may generate more questions than answers

• Why?
  • This interview will be just a blip compared to all the other work you will do
  • You may not need any more information now, but you will someday
Techniques

• Easiest technique of all: stop talking!
  • You’ll be amazed what you learn when you actively listen

• Looping the conversation
  • Three steps forward, one step back...it gives you a chance to clarify and validate info

• Don’t ask “Yes” or “No” questions
  • You’ll get a “Yes” or “No” answer, and you want more than that

• Repetition is the key to good information
  • Ask the same questions in a different way
  • Ask the same questions to different interviewees

• Don’t just call when you need something
  • Build and maintain relationships with people; it is an investment!

• Passive interviews can be helpful
  • Get invited to meetings; take notes and listen!
Ohh...

One more thing...
Contact PRICE®

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Questions?