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# Find Success Fulfilling IDIQ Contracts

8 project management best practices to keep projects on time & within budget

BY ANTHONY SIMMONS

Indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contracts, which may secure a construction manager for an undefined number of projects during an extended time period, are highly beneficial for owners with ongoing construction needs. IDIQs allow owners to use one construction manager for multiple projects, help the team to operate more nimbly and create management team consistency.

However, contractors must lean on project management best practices to ensure success while executing numerous smaller, often simultaneous and fast-paced projects. Kwame Building Group is the construction manager at risk (CMAR) for the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, Inc., a nonprofit with the mission to empower African Americans and others in securing economic self-reliance, social equality and civil rights. In addition to managing a 4-month renovation for Urban Leagues' new \$20 million corporate headquarters, Kwame is consulted regularly on new projects that arise as the organization receives donations of time, resources and even buildings. In order to make full use of donated time, buildings, money or resources, there is no choice but to be flexible and move quickly.

Through IDIQ relationships for many clients, including Urban League, Kwame has developed eight project management



best practices for delivering projects on time and within budget no matter how small or fast paced.

## **1. UNDERSTAND THE END GOAL**

Don't just take the design and build it. In an IDIQ relationship, construction managers serve as a strategic advisor. Take time to understand the client's ultimate goal and advise them through the various projects to reach that goal.

## **2. DEVELOP AND RELY ON YOUR SYSTEM BUT ADJUST AS NEEDED**

Don't be tempted to ditch structure on smaller projects. Make sure to adapt your systems in order to operate efficiently. You shouldn't do a task unnecessarily just

to check a box. All items on the checklist should satisfy the project.

## **3. ESTABLISH AN EXPERIENCED, SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT**

Many IDIQ projects required thinking on your feet and troubleshooting along the way. An experienced project manager, who is the client's single point of contact will help the workflow go smoothly and streamline communications.

Leadership is critical when selecting the project manager. The right project manager must have a sense of urgency about completion and budget constraints. Kwame often pairs newer team members with an experienced manager so they can gain experience.

## 4. DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH SUBCONTRACTORS

Make sure to have numerous, trusted subcontractors identified and ready to work with you before you need them. Part of the mission of Kwame and the Urban League is to use MBE/WBE/DBE contractors as much as possible. Kwame maximizes the utilization of minorities and women with education, experience and work ethics. Since some of these businesses do not have the advantage of bigger companies, Kwame often advises them on developing project management systems so those firms can be successful.

## 5. MONITOR SMALL PROJECTS

The quality of work being done by subcontractors directly relates to the frequency of being on-site to monitor the work. It may seem counterintuitive, but smaller projects, especially when being

completed on a rapid timeline, need even more frequent communication and higher coordination.

## 6. USE PRODUCTS YOU TRUST

There is no time for mistakes or shipping delays on IDIQ projects. Choose products you know and manufacturers you trust to ship on time to avoid unexpected issues.

## 7. BE AT THE FRONTLINE OF TECHNOLOGY

Project management, including scheduling and reporting, can be supported through so many technology tools these days.

Build your team's comfort level with technology and strive to be on the frontline of adopting new technology.

However, never forget that while tools make your job efficient and productive, experience and knowledge are the most important requirements.

## 8. OPEN THE DOOR TO FEEDBACK

Ultimately, IDIQ contracts are all about the long-term client relationship. Regularly ask the client, "How are we doing?" You'd be surprised by the things you learn when you ask. Uncovering any sore spots can help prevent issues in the future and demonstrate your commitment to the relationship. CBO

*Anthony Simmons is a senior project manager at Kwame Building Group, Inc., which dedicates 100% of its resources to project management services. An employee-owned company, Kwame provides estimating, scheduling, project planning, value engineering and other project management services as an independent advocate for owners and developers. Kwame's public and private sector projects include educational facilities, major airports nationwide, light-rail systems, hospitals, wastewater treatment facilities and government facilities. Visit [kwamebuildinggroup.com](http://kwamebuildinggroup.com).*



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