



February 18, 2026

Presented by Chris McDonnell



Winning Earlier in 2026 Fewer Quotes (bad ones) and MORE DEALS!

How does Central engage prospects *before* quotes are delivered?

How can we improve opportunity quality, reduce wasted quoting, and creating clearer expectations and commitment earlier in the sales process?

Bad vs. Good

A bad quote answers the question: What does this cost?

A good quote answers: 'How do I win this job, protect my margin, and sleep at night?'"



Bad Quote Attribute

Why It's a Problem...

- 1 **No clear scope or assumptions** Contractors assume “all-in” pricing; missing details lead to rework, disputes, and margin erosion.
- 2 **Built without discovery** The rep priced *products*, not the job. Leads to missed phasing, access issues, crew constraints, or customer priorities.
- 3 **Commodity-only pricing** Treats Central like a price list instead of a partner; invites apples-to-apples comparison with competitors.
- 4 **Unrealistic or vague lead times** Causes job delays, crew downtime, and contractor distrust—especially in peak season.
- 5 **No alternates or options** Contractor has no flexibility if budget, supply, or design changes mid-project.
- 6 **Hidden exclusions** “That wasn’t included” conversations kill trust and often force margin concessions later.
- 7 **No expiration date** Pricing floats indefinitely, exposing Central to supplier increases and inventory risk.
- 8 **Generic formatting** Looks like every other distributor quote; nothing reinforces Central’s value or thinking.
- 9 **No job context** Quote doesn’t reflect whether this is residential, commercial, phased, or weather-sensitive.
- 10 **Created to respond, not to win** Quote was sent because the contractor asked and without qualification of seriousness or decision criteria.

Good Quote Attribute

Why It Works for Central & the Contractor

- 1 **Clearly defined scope & assumptions** Sets expectations upfront and prevents “scope creep” and re-quotes.
- 2 **Built from real discovery** Reflects job size, timeline, crew capacity, access, storage, and install sequence.
- 3 **Positions Central as a problem-solver** Connects materials to outcomes: speed, quality, durability, and fewer callbacks.
- 4 **Realistic lead times & availability notes** Helps contractors plan crews and schedules with confidence.
- 5 **Options and alternates included** Gives flexibility for budget changes, substitutions, or supply disruptions.
- 6 **Transparent inclusions & exclusions** Builds trust and protects margins on both sides.
- 7 **Expiration date tied to market conditions** Reinforces professionalism and urgency without pressure tactics.
- 8 **Job-specific formatting** Clearly labeled by project, phase, or location—easy to use in contractor proposals.
- 9 **Notes that show thinking** Short commentary on why certain products or quantities were recommended.
- 10 **Aligned to a decision process** Quote reflects *who* is deciding, *when* they’re deciding, and *what* matters most.

Role-Play: “Just Send Me a Quote”

Goal: Slow the process down, protect margin, and improve close rate, *without sounding defensive.*

Contractor: “Can you just send me a quote?”

Typical (Bad) Response: “Sure – what quantities do you need?”

(Transactional. Zero differentiation. High chance of ghosting.)

Central Response: “I can absolutely do that – and before I send anything, let me ask you several quick questions so I don’t miss the mark.”

Follow-up questions:

- “What are you most concerned about on this job... Price, timing, or availability?... Or something else?”
- “Is this a job you feel confident you’re going to win, or are you still feeling that out?”
- “If I sent you three options instead of one number, would that help or complicate things?”

Control the Next Step: “Here’s what I suggest... Let me put something together that actually helps you win the job. I’ll send it by _____, and then we’ll spend 10 minutes walking through it together. Fair?”



Red Flags Leaders Should Challenge!

- “They just wanted a number”
- “I didn’t want to slow them down”
- “Everyone else is quoting it this way”
- No follow-up conversation scheduled



Central Quote Quality Checklist: “Before You Send It” – Non-Negotiable Standards

DISCOVERY & CONTEXT

- I understand what job this is for (residential, commercial, phased, seasonal)
- I know why the contractor is quoting this job (new bid, redesign, replacement, deadline)
- I understand what matters most to them (price, speed, availability, consistency, margin)

SCOPE & CLARITY

- Scope, quantities, and assumptions are clearly stated
- Inclusions and exclusions are explicitly listed
- Quote is labeled by job name / phase / location

VALUE & POSITIONING

- Quote reflects why these products were recommended (not just what they cost)
- Options or alternates are included where appropriate
- Quote positions Central as a partner, not a price list

RISK & REALITY

- Lead times and availability are realistic and noted
- Expiration date is included and explained
- Any known risks (supply, timing, substitutions) are called out

DECISION ALIGNMENT

- I know who is deciding
- I know when they are deciding
- I know what happens after they receive this quote



Time, Trust & Control

1. "I don't have time to deal with another supplier."

Response: "Totally fair... time is money. Before I hang up, can I ask - how much time do your guys spend chasing missing materials or waiting for deliveries right now?"

If they describe wasted time: "Sounds like that's already costing you hours each week. What would it mean if that time went back into billable work?"

2. "I just need a quote right now - I'm not ready to switch."

Response: "I need your help... So I don't waste your time, what would have to happen for you to even consider trying someone new?"

This gets them thinking about their *decision criteria* and opens the **Up-Front Contract** for next steps.

3. "We handle purchasing through the office - I don't make those decisions."

Response: "Got it - I appreciate your honesty. Before I reach out to your office team, can I ask- if they ever did make a change, what would be most important to you as the person on-site?", (shows respect for the role and builds champion)
"If it made your life easier on the job, would you feel comfortable introducing me to whoever handles purchasing?"

4. "Call me back after the season - I'm slammed."

Response: "Totally understand... This is your busy time. Let me ask - when business is booming, do you ever find supply challenges or delays make it harder to keep up with demand?" (listen for pain)

If yes: "That's exactly when our best customers lean on us - to keep jobs moving while they stay focused on the work."

5. "I've tried switching suppliers before - it was a hassle."

Response: "I don't blame you - switching can feel risky. Can I ask, what specifically made it such a hassle last time?"
(listen for pain: communication, missed deliveries, confusion)

Once pain is revealed: "So if you could change suppliers without that hassle-with a clear hand-off plan and guaranteed stock - would that be worth revisiting?"

SANDLERSM

Thank you for coming!

**Share your Actions and
Commitments and your Feedback!**

CENTRAL
TURF & IRRIGATION SUPPLY

