

THE TRADIE'S GUIDE TO PROFITABLE PRICING



Tradie, want to make more money without working more hours?

If you're still quoting based on what feels right, you're leaving money on the table, and probably wearing yourself out in the process. I get it. For years, I'd run around doing the job, quoting on the fly, and hoping we'd make a decent margin at the end of the day. But time and time again, we'd finish the job, pay the bills, and realise... we barely made a profit.

Truth is, most tradies never get taught how to quote properly, we just wing it. And with rising material costs and clients constantly chasing the cheapest price, it's no wonder so many of us are working harder and earning less.

That's why together with our friends at Lifestyle Tradie we have put together this practical guide: **'Quote Smarter, Earn More: The Tradie's Guide to Profitable Pricing'**.

At Buy4Tradies, we're all about helping tradies save money on materials, but that's just one piece of the puzzle. If you're underquoting from the start, you're burning time, energy, and profit on every job.

This guide walks you through the exact quoting strategies we've used to take control of our margins, build profit into every job, and stop racing to the bottom. It's real, tested stuff, no fluff.

Whether you're a one-man band or running a growing crew, this guide will help you quote with confidence, win the right jobs, and finally start earning what you're worth.

Let's get quoting smarter.



Andy Smith



The #1 Mistake Tradies Make When Quoting

The number 1 mistake tradies make when quoting is that they quote based on what they think the job is worth, not what it actually costs.

Too many tradies look at a job, do a rough mental calculation, and throw out a number that “feels fair.” Maybe it’s based on what they charged last time. Maybe it’s based on what they reckon the client will pay. Either way, it’s a guess.

And that guess? It often doesn’t include a proper breakdown of:

- ✔ Labour (including YOUR time as the business owner)
- ✔ Overheads (vehicles, insurance, admin, tools, wear & tear)
- ✔ Material cost fluctuations
- ✔ Unexpected delays or risk buffers
- ✔ A clear, built-in profit margin

So what happens?

You win the job. You do the job. And then realise you barely made anything on it.

That’s not just frustrating, it’s dangerous. It’s how good tradies end up stuck on the tools for life, working longer hours to make up for razor-thin margins.

The fix? **Start quoting from the numbers up, not from the gut down.**

That means:

- ✔ Know your true costs - including your time, overheads, and fixed expenses.
- ✔ Use a quoting system or calculator that builds in a consistent profit margin.
- ✔ Stop racing to the bottom - quoting cheaper to win work only guarantees one thing: less profit and more stress.
- ✔ Factor in real-world variables like delays, price increases, and scope creep - and communicate them clearly in your quote.

When you quote with clarity, you don’t just make more money, you get better clients, more control, and a business that actually supports your lifestyle.

The Simple Formula for Building in Profit - Without Scaring Off Clients

One of the biggest fears tradies have when quoting is "Will the client think I'm too expensive?" So what do most do? They play it safe. Trim the fat. Round the number down. Maybe even knock a bit off "just in case" it loses the job.

Big mistake. Because if you're not building a profit margin into every quote, you're not running a business, you're running a charity (and working crazy hours for free).

But here's the good news:

You can quote profitably and still win the job, if you know how to do it right.

The Formula: Cost + Overheads + Profit = Quote

It's that simple, but most tradies skip the last part (Profit!) because they're worried it'll scare the client off.

Let's break it down:

- ✓ Cost = All job-specific costs
 - Materials
 - Subbies
 - Labour (yes, including your own time)
- ✓ Overheads = Your fixed business costs
 - Admin wages
 - Vehicles
 - Insurance
 - Tools & gear
 - Rent, power, etc.
 - These need to be spread across every job or they're coming straight out of your pocket.

- ✔ Profit = Your reward for taking the risk and doing the job
 - This isn't selfish - it's smart.
 - A healthy business should aim for 15-30% net profit per job (depending on the trade).

So How Do You Add Profit Without Freaking Out the Client?

Here's the trick: Don't just send a number, show the value behind it.

- ✔ Break your quote into clear sections so it feels transparent
- ✔ Highlight the quality of your workmanship, materials, and service
- ✔ Include guarantees or warranties - things that justify your price and reduce their risk
- ✔ Avoid vague or "ballpark" quotes - clarity builds trust
- ✔ Be confident when presenting it - clients can smell hesitation

And finally, know your worth. Cheap clients are often the worst clients. The best clients want quality, reliability, and someone who knows what they're doing, not the cheapest guy in town.



From Knowing the Numbers to Nailing the Process

Understanding your costs and building in profit is the foundation, but if you want to quote like a true pro, it's not just about what you charge... it's about how you quote.

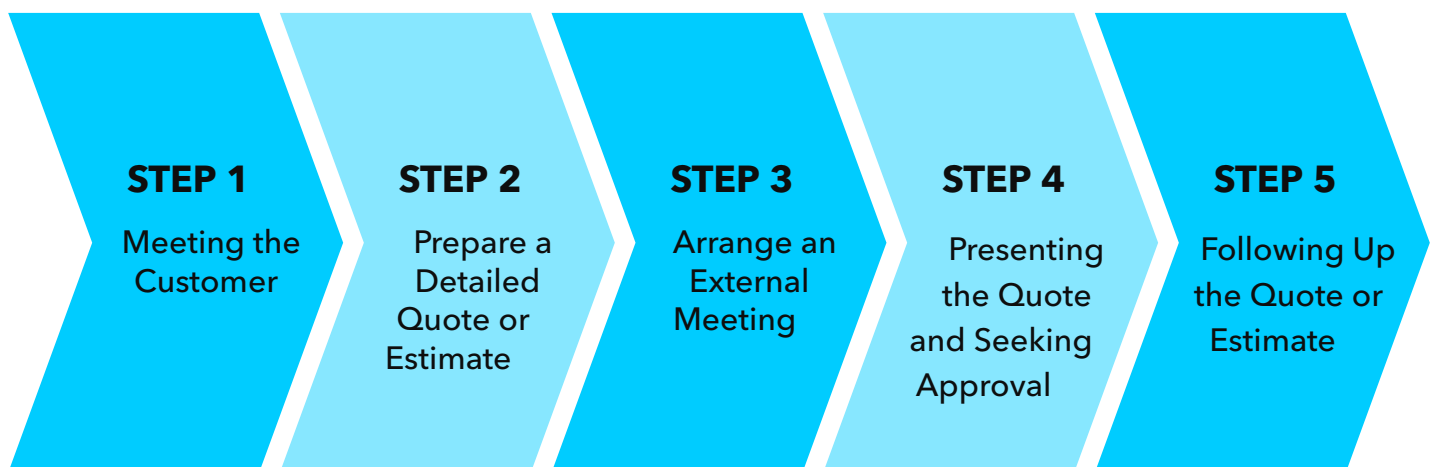
Because let's be honest, you can have the best price in the world, but if your quote looks dodgy, unclear, or slapped together in five minutes, you'll lose the job (or attract the wrong kind of client).

Professional quoting is where the rubber hits the road. It's where you turn all your knowledge into a job-winning offer that positions you as the expert, and gives your customer confidence to say yes.

That's where having a clear, repeatable quoting system comes in.

Thanks to our partners at **Lifestyle Tradie**, we've been able to include their proven **5-step process to Quote Like a Pro**. This step-by-step system has helped thousands of tradies streamline their quoting, boost conversion rates, and take control of their margins, without the stress and second-guessing. It's practical, easy to follow, and designed specifically for trade businesses just like yours.

Let's walk through the **step-by-step process** to quote like a pro, so you can win better jobs, with less effort, and keep more money in your pocket.



Step 1: Meeting the Customer

- First Impressions Count

First impressions happen fast, within the first 30 seconds. Before you've even said a word, the customer is already forming opinions based on how you present yourself: your appearance, body language, how your vehicle looks, whether you show up on time, and how confidently you introduce yourself.

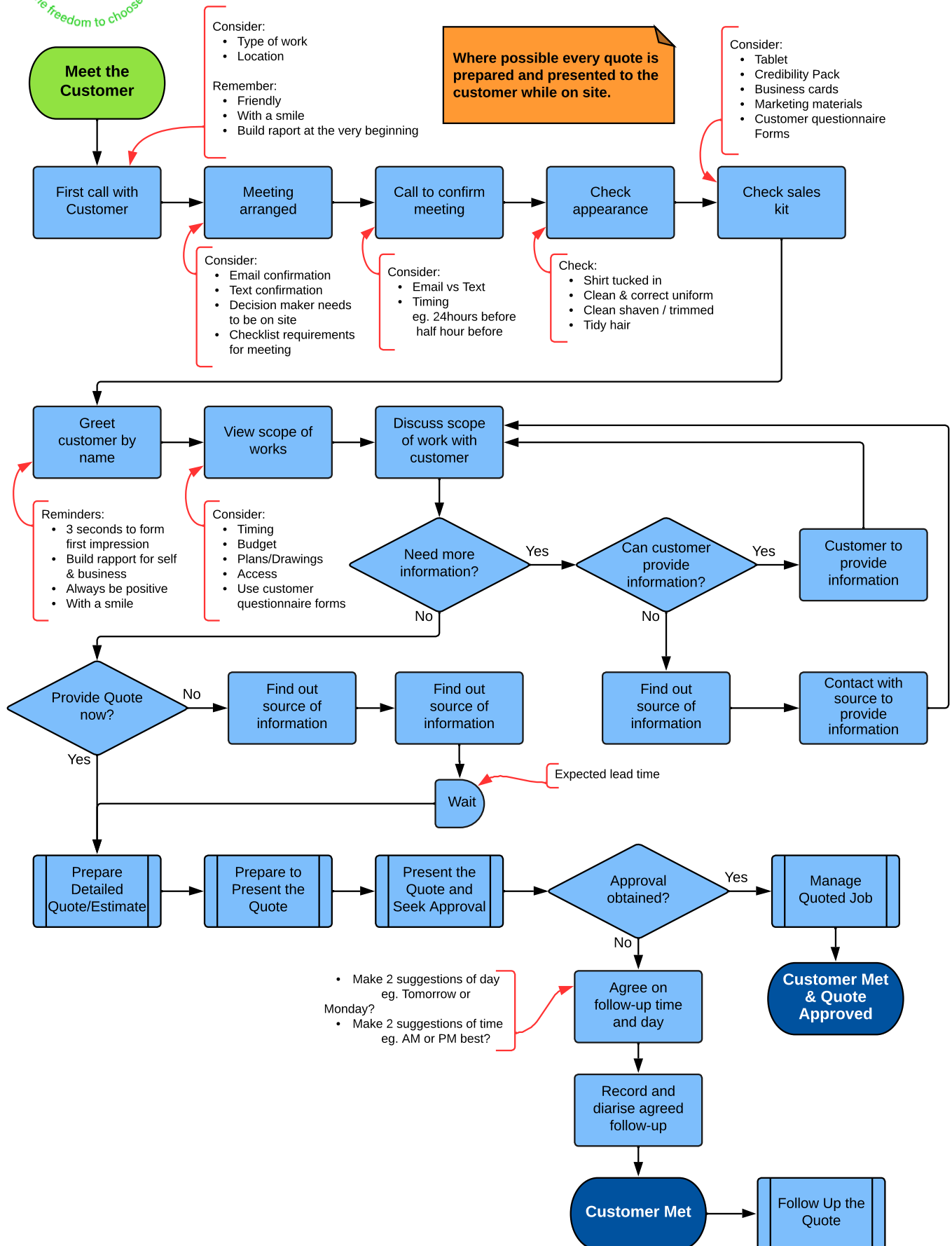
Ask yourself: what first impression are you and your team making?

Are you showing up looking professional, prepared, and ready to solve their problem? Or are you racing in late, covered in dust, and looking rushed? These little details can be the difference between a client seeing you as "just another tradie" or as a trusted expert worth paying a premium for.

And here's where many tradies miss an easy win: delivering the quote while still on-site. This small shift can make a massive difference to your conversion rate. Why? Because you're right there, face-to-face, with a chance to build trust, answer objections, and explain the value behind your price, rather than just emailing it later and hoping for a reply.

Even better? Ask for the sale. Most tradies don't. They assume the client will call if they're interested. But the pros know, confident, respectful follow-through closes more deals. You don't need to be pushy, just clear. "Would you like us to lock this in?" can be all it takes.

Pro tip: People buy from people they trust. So start every quote off right, by showing up like a professional and treating every interaction like it matters. Because it does.



Step 2: Prepare a Detailed Quote or Estimate

A vague or rushed quote doesn't just look unprofessional, it leaves money on the table and creates confusion that can come back to bite you later. Without a clear breakdown, customers don't know what they're paying for, and you run the risk of undercharging or doing work outside the original scope... for free.

That's where a **step-by-step quoting system** becomes a game-changer.

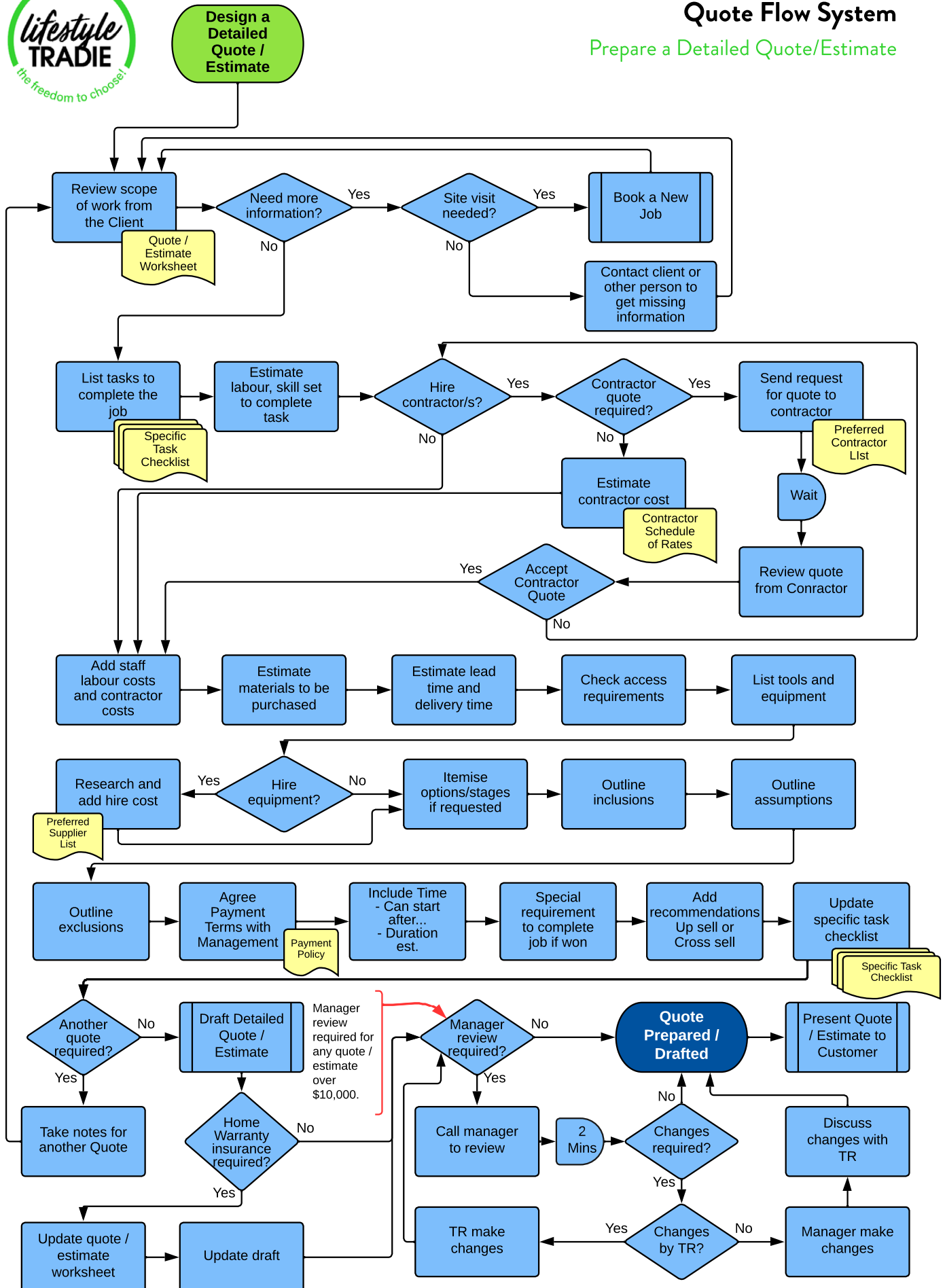
It allows you to take everything out of your head, the experience, the pricing knowledge, the job-specific details, and put it into a structured, repeatable format that's easy to follow, easy to share with your team, and easy for your customer to understand.

When you prepare a detailed quote or estimate, you:

- ✔ Outline each stage of the job clearly (labour, materials, allowances, and overheads)
- ✔ Include realistic time frames and scope to avoid surprises later
- ✔ Present yourself as organised, professional, and trustworthy
- ✔ Make it easier for customers to say "yes", because they know exactly what they're getting
- ✔ Ensure consistent pricing across your business, even when quotes are done by different team members

A solid quote isn't just paperwork; it's a sales tool. It shows you know what you're doing, value your time, and respect the client's investment.

Pro tip: A well-prepared quote doesn't need to be the cheapest, it needs to be the clearest. When customers trust what they see, they'll trust you with the job.



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Step 3: Arrange an External Meeting

There are times that asking for the sale on the spot is simply impossible. We get it. In this instance we have to develop the quote and go back to meet the contact onsite.

Here's one of the most common reasons a great quote falls flat: you're talking to the wrong person.

You might deliver a detailed, well-prepared quote... but if the key decision-maker isn't in the room, all your effort can go to waste. Instead of closing the deal, you end up in limbo - waiting while your contact "passes it on" to someone else, usually without the context or confidence to explain your value properly.

That's a problem.

If you want to increase your win rate and avoid the silent treatment after sending a quote, you need to set the stage, and that means arranging a proper meeting with the actual decision-maker present.

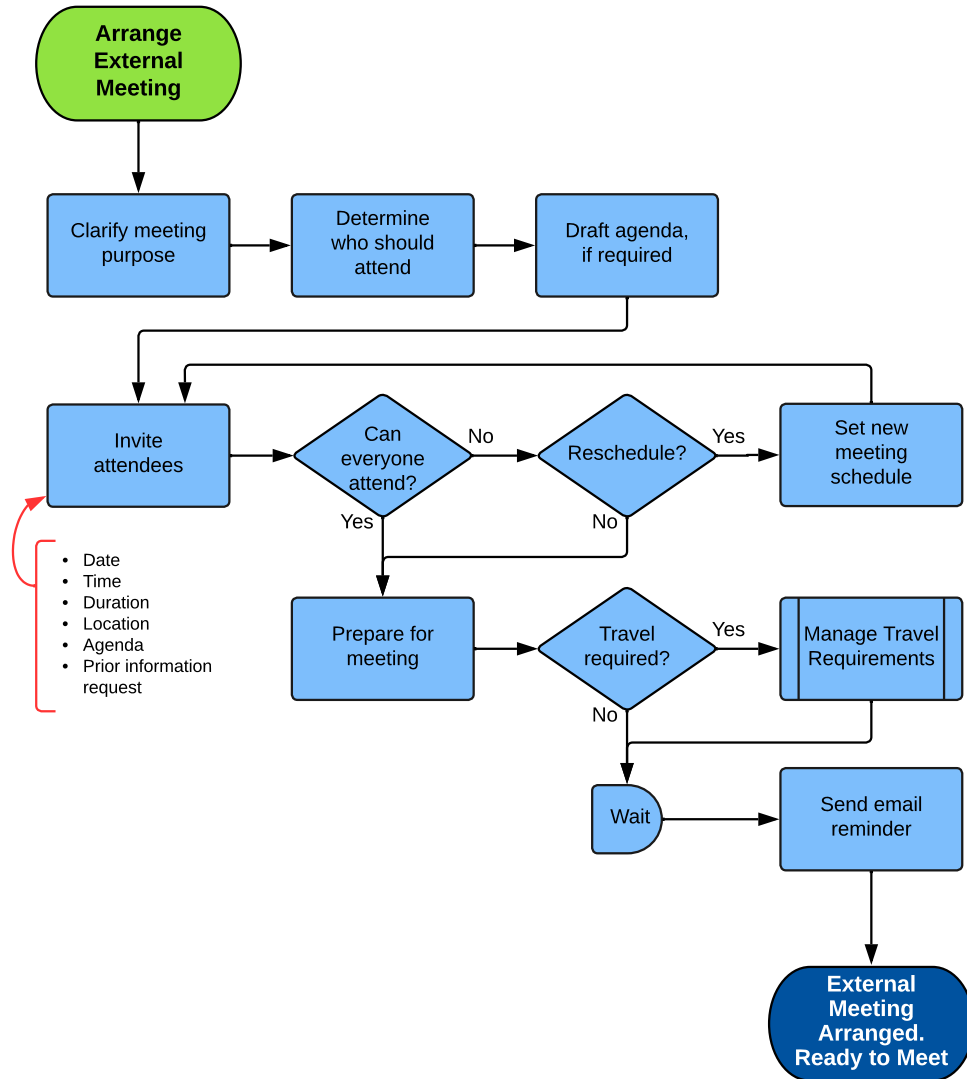
This could be:

- ✔ The homeowner, not just the tenant or spouse
- ✔ The site manager, not just the apprentice or admin
- ✔ The business owner, not just the employee handling the project

Why does it matter? Because big decisions (like spending thousands on a job) aren't made on forwarded emails. They're made when the right person hears your pitch, sees your professionalism, and has a chance to ask questions in real time.

Pro tip: Be upfront. Say, "To make sure we get everything right and can answer any questions on the spot, is it possible for [Decision Maker's Name] to be there when I present the quote?"

That one line can massively increase your chance of closing the job.



Step 4: Presenting the Quote and Seeking Approval

This is where all the hard work pays off. How you present the quote matters just as much as what's in it.

Too many tradies email the quote and hope for the best. No follow-up. No explanation. No real connection. The result? Silence. Or worse, the job goes to someone else who took the time to walk the client through the details.

Here's the truth: the way you present the quote can make or break the sale.

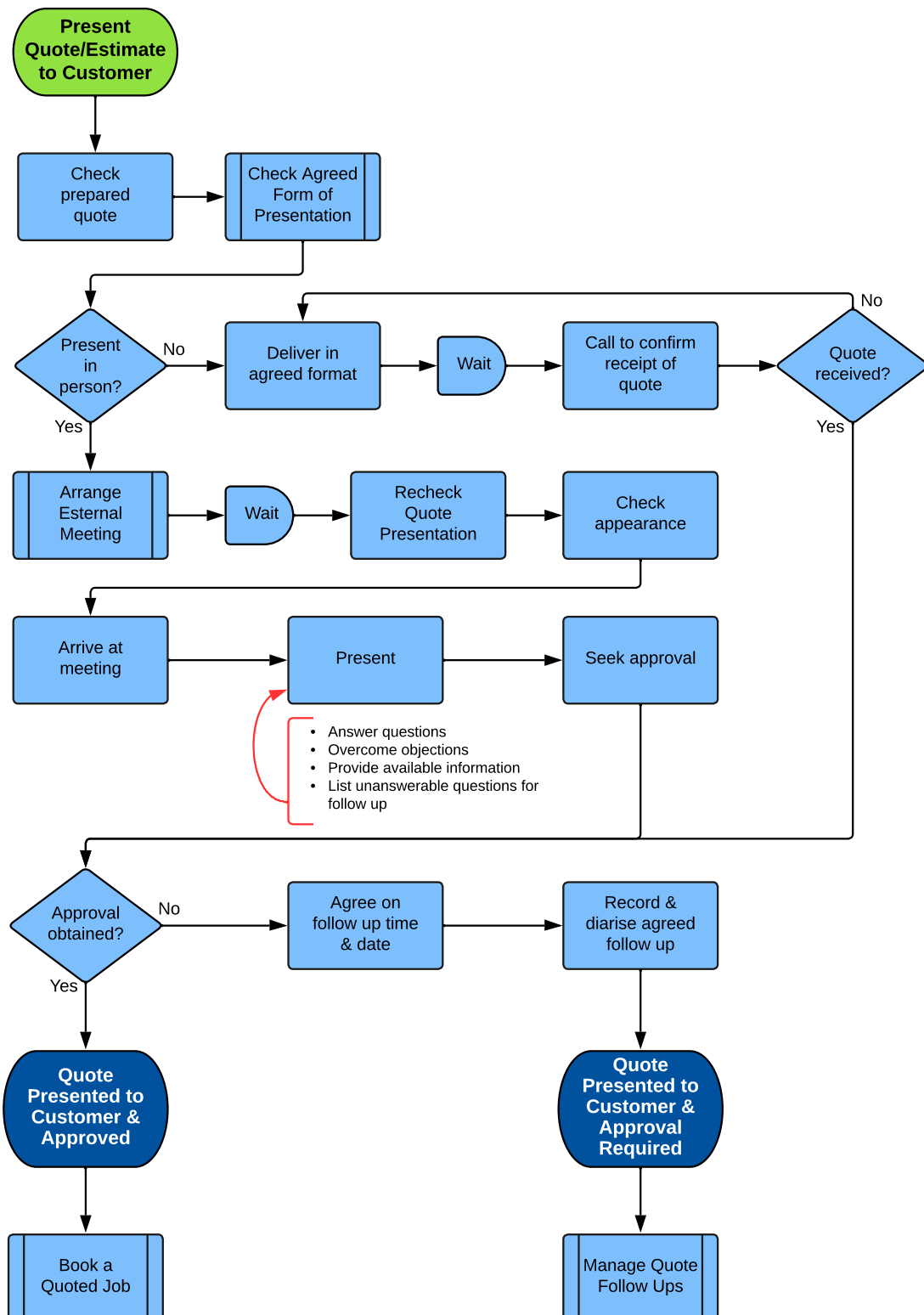
By using the structured system and flowchart provided, you're not just sending a quote, you're delivering a professional, polished proposal that shows you've thought of everything. It gives your customer confidence that they're dealing with a tradie who's organised, experienced, and serious about doing the job right.

When presenting your quote:

- ✔ **Set the scene.** Sit down with the client (in person or over a video call) and walk them through each section of the quote, clearly and simply.
- ✔ **Highlight the value.** Explain what makes your business different. Talk through the quality of materials, your experience, any guarantees or support you offer, and how you'll manage the job.
- ✔ **Be confident.** You've prepared a solid, professional quote, so back yourself. The clearer and more confident you are, the easier it is for the customer to trust you.
- ✔ **Ask for the sale.** Don't just say, "Let me know what you think." Instead, try, "Would you like to go ahead with this?" or "Can I lock in your start date?"

Pro tip: Always leave time for questions. Your job here isn't just to give information, it's to remove doubt and make the client feel like they're in safe hands. This is where your Credibility Pack helps to convert the quote too. It supports everything you've just said with proof, testimonials, qualifications, licenses, photos of past work, and more, to help back up your quote with trust and professionalism.

Presenting your quote isn't a formality, it's your chance to close the deal. Do it well, and you won't just win more jobs, you'll win better ones.



Step 5: Following Up the Quote or Estimate

This is where many tradies drop the ball. You've done all the hard work, prepared a professional quote, presented it clearly, and then... nothing. You wait. You hope. Maybe you send a polite email. But without a proper follow-up process, even great quotes can disappear into the too-hard basket.

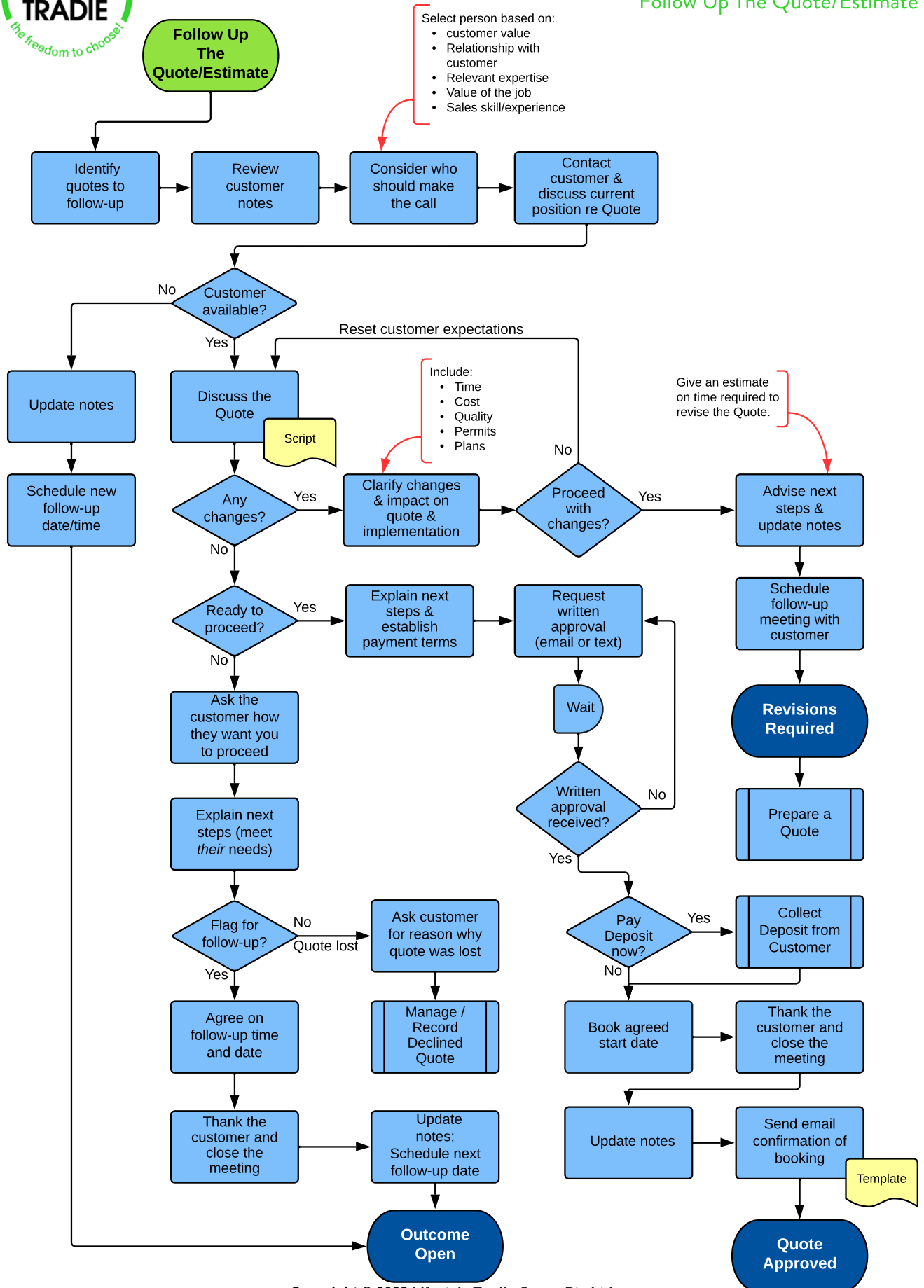
Here's the truth: Following up isn't being pushy - it's being professional.

Your quote is not a set-and-forget task. Clients are busy, distracted, or comparing options. Sometimes they genuinely forget. Sometimes they've got questions they're too nervous to ask. A good follow-up strategy helps you stay top of mind and gives the client a gentle nudge to take the next step.

Here's how to do it right:

- ✔ **Follow up by phone.** A quick call beats another email. It feels more personal and gives you a chance to clarify any concerns or objections in real time.
- ✔ **Be persistent, but respectful.** If you don't hear back, try again in a few days. Don't be afraid to follow up more than once. Most clients need a few touchpoints before making a decision.
- ✔ **Ask the right questions.** Instead of "Just checking in," try:
 - "Have you had a chance to review the quote?"
 - "Is there anything you'd like me to clarify?"
 - "What's holding you back from moving forward?"
- ✔ **Follow up even if you don't win the job.** Find out why. Was it the price? The timing? Did they go with someone else? This feedback is gold. It helps you fine-tune your quoting process and win the next job.

Pro tip: Keep a simple follow-up tracker or a more advanced customer relationship management (CRM) system so you don't lose track of who you've contacted and when. It keeps you organised, and helps close more jobs, faster.



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WANT TO LOVE YOUR BUSINESS AGAIN?



Hi, we're Andy and Angela Smith, co-founders of Lifestyle Tradie and Dr. DRiP Plumbing.

We've been in your shoes.

From building a multimillion-dollar trade business to hitting rock bottom, we've faced the chaos of long hours, cash flow struggles, and constant bickering. But we found a way to turn it all around.

We created **Lifestyle Tradie**, an award-winning trade business coaching program and community, to help tradies like you regain control, time, and profit. Whether you're a plumber, builder, electrician, or any other trade, we offer proven systems and strategies that work.

Here's the thing: It's not about being the best tradie; it's about becoming a great business owner. If you're ready to reclaim your life and love your business again, let's get started.

As proud partners of Buy4Tradies, we're here to guide you to a better business and lifestyle. Together, we're committed to helping you succeed.

That's why we're inviting you to our **1-Day Live Event for Trade Business Owners, Stress Free Tradie**. This is your chance to learn the exact steps to systemise, scale, and succeed in your trade business—all in one actionable day.

Andy & Angela Smith

Andy & Ange Smith

Proud Partners of
BUY4TRADIES
STRONGER TOGETHER

LISTEN TO...



This podcast is about having conversations on topics that matter to tradies, tradie wives, and partners who want to be better at business. You'll hear expert tips, step-by-step trade business strategies, insights and the occasional rant!



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