



IS CHOOSING A RESERVE STUDY PROVIDER ALL ABOUT PRICE?



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I found [this](#) article thought-provoking. I read the article from the point of view of a professional who has been serving non-profit community association clients for over 30 years. In tracking the reason we are not selected after submitting a Reserve Study proposal, our #1 reason is “Decided not to do”. So they were “window-shoppers”. Our #2 reason is “Went with some else less expensive”. As our client base consists of not-for-profit organizations, to a degree I understand their price-sensitivity.

But I don’t understand foolishness.

“Cheap” is very different from “value”. I’ve heard it said that you should measure a product/service not by what it costs, but if its value is more than its cost. In a sense, it is easy for us (Association Reserves) to state who we are and what we do, because after 30 years in the Reserve Study field, having completed over 45,000 Reserve Studies for clients in all 50 states, with over 80% of our clients returning for updates, this means clients have found us to be a good value. We’ve demonstrated ourselves to be a known, trusted quantity. Associations don’t hire us and walk away disappointed.

This is especially significant in the Reserve Study field, because our clients trust us to craft a long-term financial plan: anticipating expenses and making recommendations that will take years before the quality of our work is revealed. So that’s perhaps why I’m so proud of our client retention #'s.

We will always have a competitor who will be less capable and take less time to provide a Reserve Study for less money that is less effective in identifying the upcoming expenses and financial needs of the association. But those “cheap” engagements don’t lead to fruitful communities with maximized home values, free of periodic special assessments.

That's what I want, "partnering" with my clients to help them make wise decisions about finances that leverage their assessments towards creating a great place to live. An "improved future", in other words. That doesn't come with a "cheap" mindset. We may cost a little bit more than the low-cost bidder, and that's ok with me. I believe our clients will agree.