Years ago, I was the sub on a big project having trouble getting paid from the GC. I’d call and call, send faxes (this was before email, mind you), and nothing. They were totally ignoring me. So one day, I decided I’d had enough, and went over to their office in person, and asked to speak to the accounts payable person.

Her desk was a mess – there were papers that looked like invoices everywhere. But when I took a closer look, I noticed that there were two distinct stacks of invoices, two huge piles really, arranged on her desk. She finally got off the phone and asked me what I wanted. I told her that I was there to get paid, but first I had a question for her. ‘I see you have two big stacks of invoices on your desk. I’m guessing that they’re all from subs just like me. I gotta know, what do the two different stacks mean?’

Pointing to the left stack she said, ‘this stack here is invoices from subs that have also sent me preliminary notices.’ Pointing to the other stack she continued, ‘and this stack is invoices from companies that did not send a preliminary notice.’ ‘Oh,’ I replied. ‘So why do you separate them like that?’ ‘Easy,’ she answered. ‘We pay these invoices first,’ as she pointed to the left-hand stack of invoices that also had preliminary notices, then motioning to the other stack she continued, ‘and we pay these invoices when we get around to it.’ From that day forward, I always sent preliminary notices on every single job, no matter what.

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93% Of companies that receive preliminary notice call them helpful or just part of everyday business