



## **How To Hire A Contractor**

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### **Hiring a New Contractor**

It's amazing to me how many clients that I meet who have had bad experiences with contractors. I had a client the other day who hired me to install new windows and custom skylights comment at how I am the only contractor they'd ever had who showed up consistently on time to every scheduled meeting. I find that sad and an indictment on the state of the remodeling industry as a whole. If your contractor can't show up on time to a previously scheduled meeting, how is the rest of the project going to go? Below I've outlined a few things that will help you to weed out the bad and focus on the great contractors who are bidding your project.

### **References, References, References**

Demand references up front from any contractor who is bidding your job. Great contractors are eager to show off their reference list and will provide more than you need. Make sure they provide phone numbers and addresses of their previous clients and call a couple. Talking to previous clients who rave about a contractor is a great way for you to establish a comfort level that you are picking the right company. A good remodeling company should provide 25 or more references with addresses and phone numbers of their past clientele as well as AngiesList.com reports (at least 10). By providing this information a contractor is backing up their claim of being great by allowing you to hear it from their previous clients, not them.

## **The Devil is In The Details**

Once you've gotten past the references it's time to move on to a detailed description of the job itself. A great contractor will provide you with written information describing their company, the job process and the materials being used. If the contractor can't describe the process to you than they shouldn't be doing the job.

Items That Should be Covered Are;

Does the contractor use subs or in-house crews?

*In-house crews are always preferred if possible. This insures that the project manager has a working relationship with the crew and that the crew is fully briefed on the companies' installation practices. Good remodeling firms will typically have a mixture of in-house crews doing the main scope of work while maintaining a list of top-quality subs for trade work (electrical, plumbing etc...) whom they've established a solid working relationship with over the years.*

Who runs the project?

*It's best if the person you initially meet with also runs the project. This insures that wild promises aren't made upfront by a salesman who doesn't have to run the project. It also insures that the person you are speaking with understands the process of the job, not just how to sell the products used in the job.*

What type of materials are being used and why?

*Quality contractors use top quality materials. They are easier to install, last longer and make for happier homeowners. Remember you'll always be focused on price before you hire a contractor, but once hired you forget about price and focus on the look of the job. Saving some \$\$\$ by choosing a guy who uses cheap a material never feels good once the project starts. For an exterior project look for contractors who use stainless steel fasteners, 50 year elastomeric sealants, lifetime warranted paint and high grade wood or siding products (i.e hardwood decking, clear vertical grain cedar or Hardieplank siding). I believe that it is our responsibility as contractors to remodel homes not just for the current owner but for future owners to enjoy, quality materials will insure that the job lasts long enough for this to happen.*

How is the Product Installed?

*A quality contractor will educate you on the correct way to install the products that are being offered. 90% of failures on a remodeled home are installation based.*

What Type of Warranty do You Offer?

*Manufacturer warranties are typically useless as they don't cover any installation based failure. Since 90% of failures are caused by improper installation it is imperative that your contractor offers an "installation based warranty". Our company offers a Lifetime Craftsmanship Warranty covering any installation based failure for as long as you own your home. By using high quality materials, and in-house crews we are confident in our installations.*

### **Confident Contractors, Great Results**

A quality contractor will have confidence in their company and the methods that they use and should want to educate you on those methods. By educating clients on the front end it insures that you can share in the remodeling experience because you understand the steps that are being taken at every level of the project to insure that not only will your house look great, but that it will last a long time. By educating yourself about the process and working with a contractor who is knowledgeable about the work that is being done you can assure yourself that you will have a good remodeling experience and avoid the “pitfalls” that so many homeowners experience through a lack of research and price based decision making. Educate yourself upfront and choosing an educated contractor with a solid long-term reputation pays dividends once the job is finished.