

Buyer's Guide

A Reliable Approach to
Selecting a Professional Grade Renovator

Brought to you by

ABBA Construction Group

The Professional Grade Contractors® Since 1994

More Room. More Value. Made To Match Your Home.

NJ HIC #13VH06400800 • PA HIC #181862 • EPA RRP Certified

abbaconstructiongroup.com | 609-591-0700

Serving Atlantic, Cape May & Monmouth Counties • South Jersey

The Pursuit of the Best Renovator

Many homeowners have experienced or heard of the horror stories associated with home renovations. They are rampant. We see reports on the news and know personally those who have experienced nightmare renovations.

These usually occur because of poor communication, shoddy workmanship, filthy work conditions, missed project completion dates, and an endless list of broken promises.

We have assembled this guide in order to help you find the right renovator for you, best-matched to meet your needs, wants, and expectations.

**This guide is
designed to do
two great things:**

- 1.** Help you weed out the renovators who refuse to perform at the high level of integrity and craftsmanship you deserve.
- 2.** Restore a level of trust between you and the renovation process.

It is our desire to provide you with enough information for you to make a well-informed and wise buying decision.

If you have questions or need more clarity on a particular section of this buyer's guide, please reach out to us at Info@ABBAConstructionGroup.com or call 609-591-0700.

The Typical Method

Mr. and Mrs. Smith decide to find a renovator to renovate their home with the hope of getting the kitchen of their dreams. This is a project that has been years in the making and is long overdue. The kitchen is dark and outdated, drawers are broken, there is a lot of wasted space, and it is way too small for entertaining their large family and many friends.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith are fed up with their drab non-functional kitchen — it is definitely TIME to renovate!

Like most people, Mr. and Mrs. Smith contact 2–3 renovators and collect estimates to renovate their kitchen. During each appointment they may look at some photos of the renovator's past projects and ask questions like, "How long have you been in business?" or "How soon can you start?" Then they compare the estimates and make their decision.

"If a homeowner does not ask the right questions when interviewing a renovator, the potential for having a bad experience is highly likely."

The risks of an insufficient selection process

They might feel like they have done their homework. After all, the typical homeowner has been advised to, "Collect two to three free estimates, compare prices and hire the contractor who isn't the cheapest or the most expensive." Seems logical. Right?

What can go wrong will go wrong, and you'll be left holding the ball. The fact is the renovation industry is an easy-entry industry. A person can have little to no experience to jump right in. All it takes is a truck and a handful of tools and presto, you're a renovator.

3 mistakes homeowners make

Most homeowners believe the advice that they should collect three free estimates, or bids. By using the "three bid" selection process, they are typically basing their decision on only cost. The results of this can lead to a catastrophe in your home!

In addition to this, the typical free estimate is based on a one to two hour visit to the home and a ton of incomplete information causing a horribly inaccurate bid.

Comparing estimates is nearly impossible to achieve. There is no industry standard for estimating a project and all renovators offer different levels of service. Plus the renovator you hire needs to fit your project and your family.

Best practices for comparing renovators

We recommend getting ballpark price ranges or average project costs from a renovator to make sure they fit your desired investment criteria.

Then interview the renovator to determine if they are the best fit for your project and for your family. After all, you will be spending the next several weeks and months working with this individual or company.

It is best to know in advance that they can meet your expectations and that the two of you are able to clearly communicate.

"The difference in price between renovators is equal to the value you receive and the experience that you will have."

The Myth Behind "Free" Estimates

There is a long-standing expectation in this industry that all renovators should give free estimates. As a result, little work actually goes into those estimates. Some renovators guess an estimate or make a low bid to get their foot in the door.

But is the estimate really free? Seriously, who works for free? We don't know many people who are willing to produce quality products for no cost. The fact is people don't work for free, especially business owners. If they do, they typically aren't in business for long.

Someone will eventually pay for that free estimate in one way or another. Whether it is the one out of ten homeowners that accept an estimate and start a project, or the contractor who goes out of business because he didn't charge for his time. Someone ends up paying for the free cost. In most cases it is built into the selling price of the project.

"Someone will eventually pay for that free estimate in one way or another."

So "free" for many is paid for by a few. Worst-case scenario, and the most common scenario actually, is that the price we pay for a "free" estimate is a poorly planned, inaccurately priced, mess of a renovation which results in disappointment.

Sometimes, the homeowner even has to hire a second renovator to correct what should have been done right the first time.

Types of Renovators

Many skilled craftsmen enjoy working with their hands and get to the point where they decide to go out on their own. After ten years or so, they have evolved into a business and they find themselves stuck in a business position without business knowledge or experience. As a result, business errors are made, corners are cut, and they have few or no systems and processes. Sadly, there are many home renovation companies that fit this profile.

High Risk of Failure

The biggest cause of failure is incorrectly priced projects. Incorrect low-ball pricing will drive a renovation company out of business quicker than anything. For a homeowner, when a quality or warranty issue arises, there is now no one to turn to. The homeowner must then pay a new renovator to come in and fix what they have already paid for. No one wins in this situation. "Only 1 in 10 Renovation Companies stay in business for more than 10 years."

Big Hearts

- May absorb the cost of "gray areas"
- Do not charge enough for overhead costs
- Unforeseen costs are probably not invoiced
- Most likely do wonderful work, but often over-commit

Bad Reputations

- Price projects low to get the sale, knowing the price will change later
- Spend little time on estimates
- Tally up change orders as the project is underway
- Has the reputation of saying one price, but in the end always charge more

Vanishing Act

- Worst type of the three
- Don't charge enough to realistically get the job done
- Cut corners, often performing illegal work
- Vanish with the deposit

Asking The Right Questions Up Front

It is crucial that the renovator is reputable and can prove to you that he will honor the promises he is making to you up front.

3 Biggest Renovation Fears Expressed by Homeowners

1. Hiring the right renovator
2. Getting a fair price
3. Completing the renovation on time

For your convenience, we have prepared a handy checklist with Questions to Ask Before Hiring a Renovator. You can download it from our website at abbaconstructiongroup.com or request it by emailing Info@ABBAConstructionGroup.com.

Trust your instincts!

Most importantly, you have to feel that the renovator is right for you. If you get a bad feeling, trust it.

As a buyer you are entitled to your needs, wants, and expectations. In the same way, each renovator offers their own way of completing a project and meeting their clients' needs. It is very important to find the perfect fit for you.

We hope that this guide enables you to find that renovator and begin a lifelong relationship with that company as you transform your home. We wish you the best as you begin your journey!

ABBA Construction Group

The Professional Grade Contractors® Since 1994

DESIGN • BUILD • ENJOY

Ready to start the conversation?

325 E. Jimmie Leeds Road, Suite 7, PMB 188
Galloway, NJ 08205

609-591-0700

Info@ABBAConstructionGroup.com

abbaconstructiongroup.com

NJ HIC #13VH06400800 • PA HIC #181862 • EPA RRP Certified
Serving Atlantic, Cape May & Monmouth Counties — South Jersey