

San Diego Lifestyles Construction

10 Things You Need to Know About Any Contractor Before You Hire Them

1. Ownership: Do they take ownership of your job?
2. Job Completion: What is their track record for staying and finishing their jobs?
3. Trades: Who will be doing the work. Craftsmen vs. Employees?
4. Manners: Do they cleanup and lockup?
5. Personnel: Who is your site foreman?
6. Permits: Do they recommend that you obtain the proper permits?
7. Transparency: Do you know where your money is going?
8. Past Clients: Have they provided you references from past clients?
9. Licensing & Insurance: Are they legit?
10. Your Intuition: What does it tell you?

1. Ownership: Do you get the feeling that you will just be another name on a file amongst the several other jobs that they are carrying, or do you get a sense that the person that will be doing your job, actually has that rare disease called caring?

2. Job Completion: When you call their past clients, ask if the contractor stayed and finished their job? Or did they put the customer off to “take on” another job before completing their job?

3. Trades: What is the skill level and expertise of the persons doing the work? Are the industry partners (sub trades) working on your job persons that run their own business and take ownership of them, or are they employees with less experience handling power tools doing important surgery on your most important asset?

4. Manners: The age of the persons working on your house matters. Do they have a mature work ethic and treat you and your property with respect? Are they going to be friendly to your neighbors, and treat them with respect as well?

5. Personnel: Know who your site foreman is? This is more important than you might think. Is your GC (General Contractor) the one who will be meeting the

employees and sub trades at your home, or are they going to be using a site foreman? If so, what is their experience level? How well do they communicate?

What is their ability to resolve difficult situations while providing good customer service? How many other jobs will they be supervising at the same time as yours? How often will they be showing up to manage your job? Have you met this person? Please insist on meeting the site foreman, in person, before you sign a contract. This is the person that you will be dealing with. Make sure you feel comfortable with them.

6. Permits. Has the GC explained to you exactly what permits are required for the work you intend to have done on your home? Has the GC explained to you that accidents and liabilities incurred from non-permitted work, may no longer covered by your homeowners insurance company. Are you prepared to manage this risk?

7. Transparency:

Have you received a line-item itemized estimate showing you where your money is going? Does your GC show you material receipts and sub trade invoices? When the GC invoices you, do they walk the job with you and show you exactly what you are being invoicing for? Will they allow you to select materials from any source, or do they tell you that you can only order from their approved sources?

Have they provided you with a written scope of work, a job schedule and a materials list of items that will need to be purchased for your job. Have they defined who's responsibility it is to select these items and then manage the supply chain?

Have they asked you for more than a \$1,000 deposit up front. Will they ask you for monies to be paid in advance of any work being done, or any materials being purchased? If they ask you for money in advance, what will be your response?

8. Past Clients:

Has the GC provided you with a list of their last 3 clients? I recommend you call past clients and ask what kind of work they did, and how they managed themselves and their sub trades while at their home? How well did they communicate? Did the customer know who was coming to their home and when?

What was the overall customer service like? If the past customer was a single woman, that was done to make her feel safe in her home? Are they satisfied with the work that was done? Would they use them again, and/or recommend them to friends and family? If there was a “call back” how quickly did they respond?

9. Licensing & Insurance:

Is the contractor Licensed? Have you checked at: cslb.org/licensecheck? Are there any complaints against their Bond? Do they carry both Liability and Workers Comp insurances? If the General Contractor does not carry workers comp insurance, and there is a personal injury on your job, you become the workers comp responsible party. Are you prepared to take on that risk/responsibility?

10. Your Intuition:

And this one is the most important of all. What is the “vibe” of the person that you have sitting in front of you? Are they relaxed? Are they pushy? Do they display confidence? Do you get the sense that they can adequately perform the work that you are wanting to have done? Do they talk fast and drive a big truck? Have they adequately explained to you, who they are, and how they do business?

I hope that by reading all this by now, you realize how important it is for you to know who it is that is going to be present in your home. If the person you are interviewing cannot give you straight answers to these questions, that should tell you something.

*** How these questions are answered, will be a direct representation as to the quality of work your project will have, the level of care of customer service you will receive, and the timeliness regarding the completion of your project. ***

Please remember, that this person, their employees and sub trades are going to directly interacting with you and will be in your home for the next several months performing surgery on your most important asset. Please do some investigating, and soul searching, about who you are potentially thinking about hiring, before you hire them...

Additional questions about these 10 points can be answered by contacting:

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