

# Pre-Qualify Your Home Remodeler

## Questions To Ask Your Potential Home Remodeler

When you hire a professional home remodeler, you are buying a service rather than a product. The quality of the service the home remodeler provides will determine the quality of the finished project and your satisfaction with it. Listed below are some qualifications you will want to explore and questions you will want to ask when you interview a home remodeler.

### Business Experience and Management

Does the home remodeler:

- Maintain a permanent mailing address, a business and cell phone number? You want to be able to reach the remodeler quickly and easily – especially at critical times.
- Carry insurance that protects you from claims arising due to property damage or job site injuries?
  - Ask for a copy of the home remodeler's insurance certificates so you can be sure that you are not liable for property damage or jobsite-related injuries.
  - Also ask the home remodeler how much the project will add to your home's value and then obtain the necessary additional insurance.
- Have an established presence in the community?
  - How long has the home remodeling company been in business? Longevity usually suggests financial stability.
  - Does the home remodeler maintain solid relationships with experienced independent trade contractors (such as plumbers and electricians) and work with them as a team to keep your job running smoothly?
- Possess a trustworthy reputation among customers and those in the home remodeling industry?
  - Ask for a list of building materials suppliers and call them to see if the home remodeler has an account or pays for materials on delivery. Most suppliers are willing to extend credit to financially sound companies.
  - Does the home remodeler have a track record of successful projects similar to yours?
- Participate in a trade organization such as NAHB Remodelers? Membership reflects a remodeler's commitment to professionalism.
- Carry a designation such as Certified Graduate Remodeler (CGR), Graduate Master Remodeler (GMR) Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS), Certified Green Professional (CGP), Certified Bath Designer (CBD), or Certified Kitchen Designer (CKD)?

- Does the home remodeler have expertise and education in speciality projects, such as universal design or aging in place? Or green home remodeling? A qualified home remodeler may have been trained as a Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS) or Certified Green Professional (CGP).

### **Construction and Technical Expertise**

Does the home remodeler:

- Have a working knowledge of the types and ages of homes in the area? A sound structural and architectural knowledge of what is likely to be behind a wall or under a floor helps the remodeler provide reliable estimates. Extremely low bids may reflect a remodeler's lack of this knowledge and a poor understanding of the actual costs involved.
- Know what products and materials would likely be used for your project?
- Offer an array of options when selecting products, materials, and techniques?
- Specialize in particular types of projects?
- Arrange for the building permit? The person who obtains the permit is the contractor of record and therefore liable for the work.
- Offer a warranty? If so, what kind and for how long? What is covered under the warranty and what is not?
- Understand the scheduling issues required to begin and complete your job within the agreed upon timetable?

### **Customer Service and Communication**

Does the home remodeler:

- Respond promptly to your inquiries?
- Emphasize customer service?
- Listen to and understand your wants and needs?
  - When you discuss your plans, does the remodeler show enthusiasm for your ideas and suggest ways to make them work within your budget?
  - You should ask the home remodeler for examples of how the company has solved home improvement challenges for other customers.
- Facilitate and encourage communication? Ask how the remodeler handles communication during construction (such as a message center in the house for you and the remodeling team).

With the answers to these questions, you'll be able to pick the professional remodeler that's the best match for your home.

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