

What should you consider?

There are several factors to consider when choosing a contractor. Knowing these before you invite contractors out to bid on your project will both help you ask all the right questions during the meeting, but also to get a sense of the contractor. Consider these areas:

- [Relationship](#)
 - [Execution](#)
 - [Pricing](#)
 - [Intuition](#)
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Relationship

The relationship I'm addressing here is the working relationship or rapport with the contractor. This includes communication, professionalism, thoroughness, respectfulness and consideration, among others.

- Is the contractor returning your phone calls/emails in a timely manner?
- Is the contractor professional and respectful?
- Does the contractor communicate well during your meeting?
- Does the contractor listen to you? (this is very important)
- Does the contractor clearly and thoroughly explain the work he or she be doing?
- Does the contractor identify any potential problems or offer alternate solutions?
- Does the contractor anticipate future finishes and work to accomodate them?
- Does the contractor communicate the project timeline of the work, including length of work and scheduling?
- Was the contractor punctual?

Execution

How is the contractor going to execute once you've agreed to hire him to do the job. This encompasses performance, quality, and site-management as well as other factors. Ask about this up front so there will be no surprises when you get started.

- Does the contractor have the proper insurance/licensing/bonding/certification necessary to do the work?
- Will the contractor use the proper material/the best materials available?
- Will the contractor observe proper installation/application techniques and best practices?
- What dust control measures will the contractor employ?
- Will your project be cleaned up daily?
- Does the contractor have a waste management/disposal plan?
- What kind of warranty/guarantee does the contractor offer?
- Who will be doing the work and do you feel comfortable with them & are able to communicate with them?
- How does the contractor deal with changes or hidden/unanticipated conditions?
- What safety measures will the contractor be following to protect your family, pets, home, belongings, as well as those doing the work?
- Does the contractor offer any special services above the competition? In other words, is there a good reason to choose this contractor over any other?
- Is the contractor willing & able to do any potential prep work that may be needed for the project? This could include demolition, light framing, insulation, light electrical, etc. If yes, does the contractor have qualified staff on hand to properly perform those items? And, if not, what other contractors will need to be hired? What are those costs? Does the contractor have any recommendations of other related trades?

Scheduling:

- How long will the work take?
- When will the contractor be able to start the project?
- If the contractor cannot start the work as quickly as you are ready, are you willing to wait?
- Will the contractor work consecutive days?
- What hours/days will the contractor be working?
- How do the contractor's timeline and scheduling affect the rest of your project?
- How is the contractor's flexibility to work around your availability?

Pricing

The estimated pricing that a contractor provides is an important factor to consider. Pricing, however, cannot always be the primary determining factor. The expression "you get what you pay for" is not necessarily a blanket statement when it comes to contracting, but it certainly can harbor some truth. You must weigh the bottom line against the other factors you're considering to determine its import.

- How does the pricing compare to other quotes?
- Is the pricing based upon the same scope of work as other quotes? (Are the same services, approaches, techniques, etc. being quoted? Are you comparing *apples to apples*?)
- Are there any hidden fees?
- How does the contractor deal with changes or hidden conditions?
- If necessary, are there items that you could provide or work that you could do to save money?
- What payment methods does the contractor accept?
- What are the payment terms?
- How much do you give pricing compared to all the other considerations you have?
- How does the price fit into your overall budget?
- Are there any "*value engineering*" solutions (ways to cut cost) that the contractor can provide?

Intuition

Lastly, your intuition or *gut feeling* about the contractor you might hire cannot be overlooked. In fact, it might be the most important thing to consider. The contractor you hire will be working in your home or on your project and will likely be around you, your family, your pets, and your belongings.

- Do you feel comfortable with the contractor?
- If the contractor that you meet with will not be doing the work, do you feel comfortable with that?
- Does the contractor seem honest and forthcoming?
- Does the contractor treat you, your family, and your home with respect?
- What feedback from outside sources have you received about this contractor?