

TsT Home Improvement Services LLC

Tip of the Month

By Tom S. Truesdale

Tips for selecting the right contractor:

The process of soliciting bids, evaluating a proposal and selecting a contractor can be a complicated process. Here are a few tips and things to think about before you hire a contractor for your next home improvement project.

■ Take time to interview and get to know each bidding contractor:

1. Relationship and trust is critical.
 - Many projects involve work within your home, trusting the personal character of your contractor is very important.
2. Experience in the industry, how will the project be completed?
 - The construction industry can be complicated with several layers of subcontractors and suppliers. Understanding how your contractor will staff and deliver the project is an important detail to cover.
 - Beware of the "Jack of all Trades;" he most likely will be a master of none.
3. Reputation is very important.
 - Ask for references and check with previous clients to see how the contractor preformed.

■ The lowest price is not always the best:

1. When reviewing quotes, make sure that you are comparing "apples to apples" as they say; if similar products and materials are not being quoted, the amounts may not be comparable. If necessary, simply ask your bidding contractor to clarify the products and materials they will be providing.
2. Quality of the labor should be considered; lowest bid generally doesn't include the best total quality. Remember, "you get what you pay for."
3. Ask for a detailed proposal. The contrac-

tor should always describe in written

detail what they will be providing. It is also good to ask what the contractor is excluding.



■ Beware of price slashing and extended warranties:

1. Warranties are manipulated in many ways. Beware!
2. Price slashing is also a way to manipulate the project. Beware of what you are purchasing. Check products and level of quality.
3. Beware of out of town contractors. Local firms have a much higher stake in their personal reputation to deliver a successful project.

■ Ask questions:

1. No matter how simple or complicated the project might seem, the homeowner has the right to ask questions. Ask for additional detail, if necessary, and for a written description of the scope of work.
2. The contractor should answer every question to the best of their ability. If they are not able to respond immediately, they should be allowed to promptly research and follow up with a response.

The selection of a good contractor is key when planning and delivering a successful project of any size or type. A good contractor should always have the customers ultimate satisfaction in mind. Take your time to select the right contractor for your next project. Have a great fall season and I hope this months tips are helpful. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions.

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