

# 5 Things to Consider before Hiring a Contractor



*Hiring a contractor can be exciting; it is one of the many steps an owner takes when improving a house or business. But don't get on board just yet, not without doing a little research at least.*

Consider your options, what you need, and what you want. After that, consider these five things before hiring a contractor.

## 1. Understand what you want

Like the famous quote from Alice in Wonderland "If you don't know where you are going it doesn't matter which road you take" - if you don't know what you want out of your contractor it doesn't matter who you hire. But, of course you do care, and you need to have your plan in mind.

What the contractor does first, who they hire, and the materials they order all depend on what you want your building project to become. Do you envision selling the building/house a few years down the road? Do you want the structure to be completely unique? These questions are important to think about before hiring, because some contractors are specialized while others are not. Thoroughly think about what you want as well as what is realistic.

## 2. Ask around

If you live in a newly developed neighborhood or know anyone who has recently built their home, it is likely that they hired a contractor or at least know their contractor. Ask around for reliable, fair, and reputable contractors. Starting your research somewhere is easier than starting from scratch. Beware of "review" sites online where contractors can pay for their listing, get real word-of-mouth opinions.

## 3. Conduct interviews

After you have researched 3-5 references, call each contractor or conduct in-person interviews. Ask about their cost, what they specialize in if any, how many projects they have worked on in the past, and if they would be working on any projects simultaneously with yours. From these interviews, you should be able to tell which contractor is for you and which is not.

## 4. Review what you want together

After you have met and chosen a contractor, meet with them to review your plans. They are the experts, and they can point you in directions that may have been closed or overlooked before. They should also have references and subcontractors (Contractors that specialize in very specific things, i.e. tiling or siding) that can help you decide everything you want in the building, down to the type of flooring you wish to have.

## 5. Keep your contractor in check!

Check up on the progress and the work and assure it's being done to your specifications. It would be wise to sign a contract that binds the contractor (and you) in the case that there is ever a legal issue. While unlikely and unfortunate, a secure contract will provide a safety net if the contractor tries to overprice his work, doesn't finish a project, or works without insurance.

This can be an exciting time for homeowners and businessmen alike, but make sure that you are taking the necessary precautions beforehand. Hire a contractor that wants to build your building as much as you do and will work with you to do so.