

# What Makes a Good Contractor?

**Technical Expertise** Look for a contractor who has experience in the type of project you are planning. Calling Bobs Fence Repair, for your dream kitchen remodel probably is a bad idea. A contractor who is familiar with your type of project will be able to bring a lot of great ideas to the table. Things like the latest in appliances or counter top materials can make your project really stand out. A good contractor stays abreast of the latest materials and design trends. A well experienced contractor will understand important issues regarding your project. Things like the proper amount of outlets, the placement of the sink to align with existing plumbing or whether the floor needs reinforcing for the new tiles you are going to add. All these details come with years of experience and training.

**Business Experience** A contractor that has been in business for many years and is well established in the community is in a better position to make good on any problems you may have with your project. His high standing in the community will ensure that he will do whatever it takes to keep his good name. He will also be in a better position to back up any warranty work you may have. Well established contractors have a great working relationship with some of the best sub contractors in the area. A high quality sub contractor will only work for the best contractors. These guys know that the job will be ready for them when they get there and things will go smoothly. A good contractor will co-ordinate the different tradesmen so they can get their job done efficiently. And lastly these sub contractors know they will get paid promptly. Contractors that consistently under bid projects try to make up their losses by not paying the subcontractors, eventually the only sub contractors these guys can hire are the bottom of the barrel.

**Customer Service** Look for a contractor who places an emphasis on customer service. Your contractor should be friendly and professional. Check his references and ask if there were any problems in getting the contractor back to fix any problems you might have had or taking care of any warranty work. The contractor should try and honor any special request you might have while working on your house. If you need him to clean up the site because you are having company over for the holidays, he should be glad to accommodate you. The little things make for great customer service.

**Communication** It is very important for a contractor to listen and understand the needs and wants of his clients. Your contractor should show enthusiasm for your project and suggest ideas that can make your project stand out. A good contractor can help relieve any stress or concerns you have about your project. Cell phones, e-mail and fax machines make communication easy; a good contractor should be able to supply you with all of them. If a contractor is doing his job right, he should be happy to return your phone call. Having job site meetings to go over the jobs progress is a great way for you and your contractor to stay on top of things. At these meetings you should be presented with written change orders for any additional work that you requested. Written change orders are a sign of a professional contractor. Miscommunication is the number 1 reason for contractor disputes. A good contractor will have everything in writing, contracts, change orders, product descriptions, specifications, phone call logs, and e-mail communication.