

Five Tips for Choosing the Right Remodeler

By Lucy T. Katz

The Remodeling Industry is growing by leaps and bounds, and in Texas, unlike many professions, remodeling is not regulated. Remodeling professionals in our industry are working to educate consumers on how to find the best remodelers.



Five tips to know before the remodel

- 1 Only work with a Contractor that is registered with the Texas Residential Construction Commission (TRCC). Check if they are in good standing or have complaints at www.trcc.state.tx.us
- 2 Know exactly what the Contractor is providing by reviewing blue prints and specifications. They should be included in your written contract. Don't wait until the last minute to get a copy of the Contract. Read it early in the interview process to familiarize yourself with any issues you don't agree as you may not come to a resolution. Some things may not be negotiable. You need to decide what issues you are willing to compromise and do so early on. Be sure you understand everything in the contract. Never sign an incomplete contract and make sure all the blanks are filled and financial information is addressed.
- 3 "The Right of Rescission" is a law that requires a contractor to give you a written notice of your right, without penalty, to cancel a contract within three business days after signing. All contracts should be signed at an appropriate place of business. They should not be signed at the Contractor's place of business. Know if there is a penalty should you decide to cancel at any given time after the "Right of Rescission" as well as how change orders are handled.
- 4 Be sure you understand the warranty the Contractor provides. Some Contractors use an insured third party to warranty their work. These companies, often times, are still around long after the Contractor is out of business. Texas warranties are as follows: One year workmanship and materials, i.e., paint, carpet, etc. Two years for mechanical delivery systems, i.e., plumbing, electrical and HVAC. Ten years for structural, i.e., foundation, roof, framing. Ten years for habitability.
- 5 Have in writing exactly what the process will be and what to expect while the Contractor is working in your home. Where will the dumpster and porta be placed; what vegetation will be removed; how will they draw electricity and water; what hours will they be working; how long will the project take; will they create a time table of when things are expected to be done.

Even if our industry was regulated, there will always be the remodelers that promise the moon but deliver a rock. These types of individuals always find a way to work around the system. Here's how to avoid them and get more out of your home remodeling project.

We have all heard the phrase "you get what you pay for" and remodeling is no exception. There are times when a Contractor will offer to complete a job at a substantial savings or reduced rate. Beware! If it looks and sounds too good to be true, you can bet that it is. Ask yourself: What is being left out? Will the products we can not see be inferior? Is a major item left out of the proposal and will it become an extra or change order? Is the total expected quality being compromised?

There are a variety of services that remodeling contractors provide which range from: In House Design-Build, Out of House Design-Build, General Contracting and Handy Man services, just to name a few. Identifying the company that will best service your needs is critical.

Reputation is key and the company who's contract you sign should not only have experience but should have projects that show quality workmanship. Just because a remodeler has been in business for a long time doesn't mean that the quality of their work or services are up to your standards. Consider the contractors that belong to a professional association such as The National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI), that provide the most current industry information and training to its members.

Whoever you decide upon, make sure you are comfortable with them and that they are willing to discuss materials, methods as and details about anything and everything. They need to have good communication skills. As your project moves along, good communication is essential.

CHECK REFERENCES! Don't just call one person. Check with homeowners, trades and the professionals such as architects, designers and engineers that do their work.

You have worked for the dollars that you are spending on your home. You should make sure that you are spending them wisely and that the person you are retaining will be all that you need and all that you expect.

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