



HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION
of Dayton

Remodeling in Your Future? Good Tips for Consumers

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The remaining winter is a great time for planning your home remodeling projects and each year the HBA provides tips on deciding what firm you will use to do the work.

It is a task that requires just as much attention as any aspect of your planning process.

This is especially true since complaints about home remodeling firms continue to rank among the consumers' most frequent sources of unhappiness.

According to the experts, the home remodeling industry will continue to remain steady especially if homeowners feel the time and rates are right to refinance and update their existing home. That also means it is a prime time for scam artists, or firms that simply don't have the necessary skills or resources to get a job done well.

Here are several steps for you to consider before making a decision to employ the services of a remodeling contractor.

If the remodeling firm is a good one, you probably won't see them the day after tomorrow. If you have a kitchen to remodel, and the contractor tells you he can start work the day after tomorrow, your "radar" should go off.

In a strong marketplace, high quality remodeling firms will have a backlog of work. And while it is conceivable that they could get to your project in a few weeks, you should consider telling the "day after tomorrow firms" to hit the road.

Ask for references and examples of the firm's work.

The best remodeling firms in the Dayton area usually maintain a current and extensive portfolio of their work. Once you have reviewed the portfolio, obtain the telephone numbers of two or three recent or current customers. Remember: the remodeling contractor will be working in space at the same

time you're trying to live in it. Comfort and compatibility are essential.

Ask good questions. There are no stupid questions. You want to be certain not only of the quality of the work, but also the quality of the people who will be doing it. To assure minimal possible distraction to your family's daily routine, make certain you get a good feel for when your remodeling contractor will be reporting to your home for work – and when they will leave. It also makes sense to ask for evidence of the firm's business and workers' comp insurance.

Expect to pay for quality. If a remodeling contractor provides you with a cost estimate that sound too good to be true, it probably is. For a variety of reasons – mostly owing to the built-in inefficiencies of building on top of you and your family – high quality remodeling can be an expensive process.

The best way to test the reliability of estimates is to get at least two or three bids for your work. If the bids are wildly apart, something is amiss.

Know what you want, where you want it, and how much your budget will allow. Human nature and the art of controlling remodeling costs are not very good partners. Many customers are tempted to change their minds about fixtures, features and finishes well after the work is underway. And while this is perfectly fine, these changes of mind most often result in higher costs. If you have a tight budget, it makes better sense to make a plan and stick to it.

Inform your neighbors. Be sure to let your neighbors know when your project will begin and when you expect it to be completed, especially if it involves work (and noise) on the outside of your house.

Call the HBA, the NARI, or the BBB. Both the Home Builders Association of Dayton (298-2900) or the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) will be pleased to provide you with the names and numbers of high quality, professional remodeling contractors. Not all reputable remodeling contracts are members of either of these organizations, however, and it may also make sense to check out the Better Business Bureau at www.dayton.bbb.org to check on the firm's status.