

Renovation Know How: 18 Questions You Need To Ask A Contractors' References. by Sheila Doris, BAA.

So you are thinking about a home renovation? and you are nervous about finding a contractor you can work with?



That is understandable .. it is an important decision! A poor choice could be costly and create extra stress for you as you go through your renovation. Many homeowners find renovation itself unnerving and stressful.

The best contractor referral you can get is a trusted name from a good friend. If you get a name from websites that rate and refer construction trades it is important to interview well to get the information you need to know before working with the company.

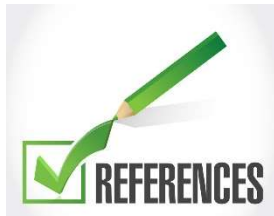
It is absolutely critical to ask the right questions of the contractor's references to see what you can find out about their work ethic. This can determine if their values and practices match your expectations.

There are two Categories of Questions to ask :

First : From the contractor him/herself you need to know about their renovation experience & their business practices.

Experience in commercial settings does not transfer necessarily to working well in residential situations.

That they be licensed themselves and use licensed trades for electrical & plumbing work is legally required and mandatory to avoid headaches. That they have Liability Insurance and Workman's Compensation in place when working on any renovation is critical to ascertain also. Beyond this an investigation with the Better Business Bureau is also highly advisable.



Second : You need to know how the owner or boss manages a job and about their people skills. This insight comes from your interview questions for people they have worked with.

A potential candidate is not going to give you a reference of someone who did not like working with them.. so you can assume the names you will get are the best working relationships the company has to offer.

The following are questions to ask referrals you speak with to get critical information.

18 Critical Questions To Ask A Contractor's References:

Make sure to ask many questions about the workers skills and the personality of the boss, including the following :

1. Did workers show up when they said they would?
2. Was work done consistently on the renovation or was there much time with nothing happening waiting for trades with work left incomplete?
3. Did materials arrive as needed or were there delays waiting for materials?
4. Were you notified when there would be a break in the work or left wondering when people would be back?
5. Did they do their best to contain the dirt/mess to the renovation area? (ie. Plastic and drop sheets)
6. Did they clean up their tools at the end of the day and leave the work site safe?
7. Did they pick up garbage when the bin was full? or did it sit for days overflowing on your lot?
8. Were you given an overview of the sequence of the renovation work at the onset and told who would be coming and going from your house?
9. Were you able to reach the contractor easily with your questions? Were your calls returned promptly if you left messages?
10. Were your questions answered without making you feel like you were pestering by asking?
11. Did the person in charge give you updates on the work in progress or were they rarely there?
12. Were you clearly informed of what deposits were required and when ?
13. Were any extra costs required clearly communicated, estimates given, and the reasons for extra cost explained?

14. Were the workers respectful of your home? No smoking, debris or garbage left lying around, or really dirty conditions left in your washroom?
15. Were your doors kept securely locked when workers left your home?
16. If you needed to change anything decided on at the onset of the renovation during the work how was your change request received?
17. Did you need to remind the contractor of requests or tasks to be completed or was the project well managed?
18. Did you have trouble getting the finishing touches completed?

Whether you remodel a kitchen or add completely new space it is critical to learn about the person who will be doing the work for you. Asking important questions at the beginning gives you the information to ensure you know that their work will be a good fit for your renovation project.

For further Renovation tips and information contact Sheila Doris of **A Home You Love Designs** 416-266-2717.