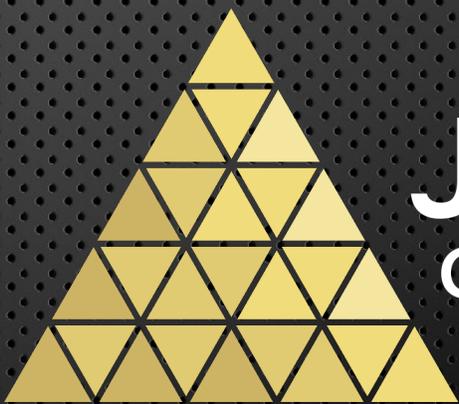


23 Questions To Ask Before You Select Your Contractor



J.A. WAGNER
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Selecting the right contractor can be a daunting experience.

Where do you start? And, once you have made the selection, how can you be sure you have selected the right company... the right people?

There are several things you can do, beforehand, to ensure a successful selection. Apart from seeking referrals from other business people and knowing who the top contractors are within your industry or community, you should decide what you want.

Sure, you might not be able to visualize exactly what the structure will look like, but you should be clear about what you want your new facility or renovation to do for you. Do you need to accommodate specific equipment? Do you need to increase productivity...lower maintenance costs...a better work environment for your employees? Write it all down. In addition, have a budget in mind.

Next, begin to research companies online. Their websites should be a great source of information. Look at the company's history, its people, its longevity and its capabilities. Try to gain a sense of their reputation in the community. Look at the projects they have completed. Do you think they can handle the type of work that is needed to complete your project?

In our 42 years, we have come to learn that the relationship between the contractor and the client is a partnership. It works best when both parties are engaged from the start, with a clear understanding about each other's expectations. It is with this in mind that we created this list of questions we feel you should ask before making this important decision.

We hope you find this list helpful when speaking with construction professionals. If you have any questions about the list or the construction process, feel free to contact us. Our contact information is listed below.



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1. What is your company's expertise? Do you specialize in certain types of construction or construction delivery methods (design-build, design-build-lease, construction management, value engineering)?
2. How will that expertise benefit my project?
3. Can your company handle our project, given your current workload?
4. What sets your company apart from the competition?
5. How many years has your company been in business? How did it begin?
6. What is the hierarchy of your company? What does your organizational chart look like? Who reports to whom?
7. Specifically, who will be in charge of my project?
8. Will I have one main contact, or a team of contacts?
9. Will I work directly with the president of your company?
10. Can you provide me with a list of professional references and past clients?
11. Is your company licensed, insured and bonded? If so, for how much? Who is your insurer and your bonding agent? What is your workers' compensation EMR (Experience Modification Rate)?
12. Is your company financially secure?
13. Are your subcontractors financially secure?
14. Have you ever been involved in a lawsuit. If so, why? What was the outcome?
15. What are some of the things that can potentially go wrong with a project? How can you anticipate those and prevent or minimize them?
16. What types of community service does your company perform?
17. What services are included in the contract or stated price, and which ones are not?
18. What should I expect after the contract is signed? What are the terms?
19. Will you provide me with a timeline for the completion of my project? What happens if the timeline is not adhered to?
20. Are there special building codes, regulations and permits that I will need? If so, will your company secure those for us?
21. What happens if building material or labor costs rise during the project? Are those passed along to me or is your price a guaranteed maximum price (GMP)?
22. What if we are dissatisfied with some aspect of the process? Who do we speak to and how will it be handled?
23. Does your company provide services after construction is complete?