

“The 20 Critical Questions You MUST Ask Before *Even* *Thinking* About Hiring A Remodeling Professional to Work on Your Home Remodeling Project...

**...Not Knowing This Insider-Information Can
Literally Cost You Tens of Thousands of Dollars
AND Make You A Target of Unethical Companies
Out to Profit From What YOU DON'T Know!”**

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The 20 Critical Questions You MUST Ask Your Prospective Builders (and their past clients)

(NOTE: You should print out one copy of this workbook for each company you interview)

Asking the right questions "up front" is the most important thing you can do in selecting your designer/builder. This section has two groups of questions to help you with the evaluation. There are questions: (1) for the Designer/ Builder and (2) for Past Client References. **Note:** You may want to make copies of this guide before you begin your interviews.

Questions for your Designer/Builder –

The success of your building or remodeling project depends heavily on the organization and people you choose. The lowest price is not necessarily the best choice -- nor is the highest price. You're assessing the professionalism, quality and empathy of the designer/builder, and you need to visualize how it will be to work together on the project.

What is the average number of jobs you do at the same time? How many jobs does your company have in progress right now? Do these numbers seem in line with the number of support staff. Does it seem like each job has an adequate amount of supervision?

How are jobs managed on a daily basis? Who will be in charge of my job each day? Who checks for quality, mistakes, progress? Get names and contact information.

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Who were your two best Clients? Who were your two worst Clients? Why? Do they sound similar or different? Do you sense a conflict?

Do you use sub-contractors for some specialties? What is the average length of time you have worked with them? An established firm will have worked with their "subs" for 5 years or more.

Have you worked on many projects like mine? Can I view examples of your work? Will the same crews who worked on those projects be working on my project? A construction crew and subs that do beautiful work on one home will be of no value if they won't be working on your project!

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Describe your payment schedules. Reputable builders do not require payment or advances for work not accomplished. *Advance payments usually indicates that the builder is (1) in a poor financial position to complete your project or (2) wants to use the fact that he has your money as leverage negotiation or (3) plans to not complete your project and increase his profit. Payment should only be made on the basis of predefined building progress/milestones have been completed.*

Describe your insurance protection as a builder and get a written statement of insurance coverage. *Many small builders do not carry workers compensation or general liability insurance claiming they are not required by law to do so.*

Many will tell you their sub-contractors carry it. They are correct. However, a reputable builder will carry both policies to protect his employees, his clients, and his assets.

WARNING: Your homeowners insurance *will not* protect you in the event your builder's employees become injured on your project or your builder damages someone else's property during the construction.

NOTE: **Require your builder to have his insurance carrier mail you a copy of his insurance certificate.** *Do not accept a copy from a builder. Some uninsured builders carry reproduced copies of phony insurance certificates.*

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Describe your warranty policy. What items are covered? *Even a well-executed project may need subsequent attention by the builder after it's finished. Ask about terms of warranty, response time, and advocacy for you in the event of a conflict.*

Will a building permit be issued for the project? *Most remodeling projects, as required by NC law, must have a building permit. A builder that is hesitant to "pull" a permit should be avoided.*

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Questions for your Designer/Builder's Past Clients

Past performance is a strong indicator of what you can expect in the future -- and that is particularly true for building/remodeling. Checking the experiences of your builder/designer's past clients is an important step, and don't worry about "bothering" them.

They were once in your place and will almost always be happy to discuss their experience and answer questions. Here are some of the most important questions:

What work did the builder perform for you? Is the project similar to yours? What highlights made the project a unique solution?

What was the level of collaboration during the design and building process? Were your ideas incorporated into the design? Did the design solutions fit your budget?

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Did the builder prepare you and your family for the construction? Was there a pre-construction meeting to discuss how the work would be done to minimize the impact on your daily living?

How was the communication between you and the builder? Did the builder keep you updated on design progress? Did the builder keep you updated on the progress of the job through weekly meetings? Was the builder readily available via phone or pager?

Were the members of the design and construction team likable? Were they trustworthy? Did members of the team treat you and each other with respect?

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Are you pleased with the quality of the design and construction work? Was the design work creative and aesthetically attractive? Was the construction work done with high quality craftsmanship? Have there been any problems with the design or construction? How were problems resolved? *Hint: ask about the details!*

Was the project completed within budget? What affected the project costs? Could the builder have foreseen these issues?

Was there anything that concerned you about working with this builder? If so, how did the builder respond to those issues?

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Do you feel the quality of design and construction justified the project costs? Was the quality of work consistent with the cost of the project?

Was the process interesting and what you expected? How did the builder make the process more enjoyable? *The process is hard work, but it doesn't have to be unbearable!*

Is there anything I should know about this builder that I didn't ask? *Let the client share their own feelings and impressions in their own words.*

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Here's What People Are Saying About Bob Porter... *The Affordable Home Designer:*

Use Design Plus 3 - you won't be sorry!

Bob Porter was recommended to me, and I can attest that I will continue to recommend him to others. He is a genuine pleasure to work with, has very creative ideas, and executes a great design.

He is flexible in communicating (I strongly prefer email), very responsive, always on time for appointments, and delivers more than he promises. It seems also that the construction community is confident in working with his designs; a very important asset! Use Design Plus 3 - you won't be sorry!

- Pam Sinclair

I would HIGHLY recommend his services!

Robert with Design Plus 3, Inc. designed a new attached two car garage for our home. Robert walked the property, looked at our original survey, listened to our ideas, then went to work to draw up some designs. Within days, he emailed us ideas of what we could accomplish with the space we had to work with.

After answering our questions he finished the job and delivered the final drawings. Robert was an absolute pleasure to work with. He always arrived on time, provided superior customer service (returning phone calls promptly) while answering all of our questions thoroughly. I felt very comfortable with Robert from our first meeting. I'm THRILLED with his work.

His drawings were EXACTLY what I envisioned I wanted from his project and I would HIGHLY recommend his services!

- Darren King & Nadine Allen

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Don't hesitate to hire him!

Bob with Design Plus 3, Inc. designed and completed drawings for a remodel/addition to our ranch home. He was so thorough on our first meeting, and even pointed out things that might pop up as surprises, and made sure he included everything in his drawings to ensure those things wouldn't be missed.

Bob is professional, kind, punctual, knowledgeable, and VERY easy to work with. He gave an estimate and delivered the finished product true to the original estimate...and his experience as a builder was also very helpful - he was able to easily combine design with function (e.g. extra outlets and wider stairs for moving furniture).

After a painstaking decision whether to move or remodel, we are thrilled with our design and home. Don't hesitate to hire him!

- Eric and Darla Ellington

NOTE: All client testimonials are real, and verifiable. Please contact us @ **(704) 841-1988**, if you would like to speak to any of our past clients about the work we did for them...

All of our clients understand that they have been in your shoes & would be delighted to share their experiences (good, bad, or indifferent) with you.

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Asking the right questions of your designer/builder and their past clients will pay *big* dividends in anticipating what you can expect and your confidence that the project will be a success.

When you ask prospective builders the questions outlined in this Home Remodeling Workbook...

Accomplishing the vision, goals and desires you have for your remodeling project will be much simpler, more cost effective, and more rewarding [and enjoyable] for months and years to come.

I hope you've enjoyed this workbook and find it useful when looking to begin your next project.

I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Take care and God bless,



Robert Porter, Master Designer

Robert Porter, Master Designer
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PS - Currently, I'm available for project evaluations on a limited basis. My calendar fills quickly, so if you have a project you'd like me to review, then request a no obligation project evaluation today...

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