

How to Hire a Remodeler

When you hire a home remodeler, you are buying a service rather than a product. The quality of the service the home remodeler provides will determine the quality of the finished project and your satisfaction with it. Listed below are some qualifications you will want to explore and questions you will want to ask when you interview a home remodeler.

Business Experience and Management

Does the home remodeler:

- Maintain a permanent mailing address, a phone number, and a pager or answering system? You want to be able to reach the remodeler quickly and easily – especially at critical times.
- Carry insurance that protects you from claims arising due to property damage or jobsite injuries?
 - Ask for a copy of the home remodeler's insurance certificates so you can be sure that you are not liable for property damage or jobsite-related injuries.
 - You should also ask the home remodeler how much the project will add to your home's value and then obtain the necessary additional insurance.
- Have an established presence in the community?
 - How long has the home remodeling company been in business? Longevity usually suggests financial stability.
 - Does the home remodeler maintain solid relationships with experienced independent trade contractors (such as plumbers and electricians) and work with them as a team to keep your job running smoothly?
- Possess a trustworthy reputation among customers, peers, and those in the home remodeling industry?
 - Ask for a list of building materials suppliers and call them to see if the home remodeler has an account or pays for materials on delivery. Most suppliers are willing to extend credit to financially sound companies.
 - Does the home remodeler have a track record of successful projects similar to yours?
- Participate in a trade organization such as the Home Builders Association of the Sioux Empire's Remodeling Council? Membership reflects a home remodeler's commitment to professionalism in the remodeling industry.
- Carry a designation such as Certified Graduate Remodeler (CGR) or Certified Green Professional (CGP)?
- Does the home remodeler have expertise and education in specialty projects, such as universal design or aging in place? Or green home remodeling? A qualified home remodeler may have been trained as a Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS).

Construction and Technical Expertise

Does the home remodeler:

- Have a working knowledge of the many types and ages of homes in the area? A sound structural and architectural knowledge of what is likely to be behind a wall or under a floor helps the home remodeler provide reliable estimates. Extremely low bids may reflect a remodeler's lack of this knowledge and a poor understanding of the actual costs involved.
- Know what products and materials would likely be used for your project?
- Offer an array of options when selecting products, materials, and techniques?
- Specialize in particular types of projects?
- Arrange for the building permit? Remember that the person who obtains the permit is the contractor of record and therefore liable for the work.
- Offer a warranty? If so, what kind and for how long? What is covered under the warranty and what is not?
- Understand the scheduling issues required to begin and complete your job within your timetable?

Customer Service and Communication

Does the home remodeler:

- Respond promptly to your inquiries?
- Emphasize customer service?
- Listen to and understand your needs and wants?
 - When you discuss what you'd like to do, does the home remodeler show enthusiasm for your ideas and suggest ways to make them work within your budget?
 - You should ask the home remodeler for examples of how the company has solved home improvement challenges for other customers.
- Facilitate and encourage communication? Ask how the home remodeler handles communication during construction (such as a message center in the house for you and the remodeling team).

With the answers to these questions, you'll be able to pick the home remodeler that's the best match for your home.

To find a list of remodelers in the Sioux Empire area, visit www.hbasiouxempire.com and click on Find a Member.

