


Choosing the Perfect Home Contractor

Are you remodeling your kitchen? Updating a bathroom? Follow these proven tips to find the best East Tennessee contractor to tackle your dream renovation.

Average Reading Time: 3 minutes

You've decided that now is the time – you are going to give that bathroom a facelift or improve the traffic in a challenging kitchen. Now you need to find a qualified contractor. There are dozens of contractors in Knoxville or East Tennessee; how do you choose? Who best to oversee the project and deliver your finished dream? Here are 7 tips for getting the best contractor for your project.



These proven tips will ensure a solid choice to head your East Tennessee home remodel project.

1. Get Recommendations

Start with family and friends. Who has recently remodeled? Ask them about their experiences, both good and bad. Aunt Cassie may have the perfect contractor for you; her neighbor may have a name for you to avoid. And your husband's coworker may have a story about the company he used, and the company he wished he had used instead.

2. Do Your Research

Get online and investigate your candidates. For many of us, it's our first instinct. Take a look at these areas in particular:

- ***Website.*** Is it professionally done? Has it been updated recently? Does it feature photos of completed kitchens and baths? Does it have written testimonials from satisfied clients?

- *Google Business Profile.* When you Google search the company by name, look for an outlined box on the right-hand side of the results page. If it's there, you'll see photos, contact information, and a summary of starred reviews from customers. Professional businesses set up and maintain their Google Business Profile pages.
- *Reviews and Testimonials.* You likely have a good start on reading the reviews. Read them all, the 5-stars and the 1-stars. Note if the comments are sounding too similar, question if they are legitimate. Pay attention to the dates of the posts as well. How valuable is an opinion from 8 years ago?
- *Social Media.* Another good spot to read reviews. Does the company have a presence on Facebook, Instagram, Yelp, and others? Are the pages well maintained? Social media can tell you a lot about how companies operate. Modern companies embrace modern technologies.

3. Interview the candidates

Time to make some calls. From your list of possibilities, get answers to the following questions:

- Are you taking on projects of this size (briefly describe your remodel vision)
- Can you provide a list of previous clients?
- How many other projects would you have in progress at the same time?
- How long have you worked with your subcontractors?
- How do you communicate progress to your homeowner clients?

The responses to these questions will show: readiness to work with you, how much attention they would give your project, experience with kitchens and baths.

4. Meet face to face

At this point, you are narrowing your list. Pick 3 or 4 contractors to meet. You are looking for a smooth rapport: someone willing to answer your questions in a manner that puts you at ease. Be sure to understand their process: that is, how the company works and communicates with its clients.

At Lakeview Home Improvement, owner Nate Burket asks clients to complete an online project brief. Homeowners sketch out the parameters of the project. The process helps the homeowner to focus their thinking. In turn, Lakeview staff can better answer questions. Bonus: a more accurate estimate.

5. Check Referrals

Call up former clients and ask how their project went. Request to visit and see the finished product. You may wish to visit a current job site, to see how the contractor works. Is the job site neat and well maintained? Are workers observing safety protocols? Remember, these same workers would be in your home.

6. Firm Up Your Plans

Conscientious contractors insist on a complete set of blueprints before starting any work. Spending time and money on the front end will yield more efficiencies as the project rolls out. Also, understand and set up a payment plan. For large projects, the contractor may require 10-25 percent of the total upfront. Subsequent payments will be spread over the course of the project. Generally, a final 15 percent will be due at completion.

Modern contractors use technology to communicate schedule progress. Look for use of tools such as Buildertrend: your password provides entry to the project schedule, updated daily. You also see photos of material delivery, installations, and more. Over the weeks, your project blossoms onscreen, sparing you from regular visits to the job site.

7. Get It in Writing

Your contractor should provide a final contract. It will list each step of the project; materials and products to be used; payment schedule; proof of insurance (liability and worker's compensation); process for change orders; start date and projected finish date. Having the details clear to all parties ensures a smooth project and successful renovation.

Our staff at Lakeview Home Improvements, headed by Nate Burket, can consult with you in realizing your kitchen dreams. We specialize in kitchen renovations and understand the do's and don'ts, the best practices, or executing a remarkable classic kitchen design. We are a leader in Knoxville and East Tennessee.

For more information on your unique kitchen or bath project, [contact us](#).

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