

How to Choose a Builder

The single most important decision in the process of building or remodeling your home is choosing a builder. The right builder will make the process go smoothly *and* make it enjoyable for you!

When you hire a builder, you're entering a long term relationship – typically months, or even years when the warranty period is factored in. You'll be working closely together, so mutual trust, respect and personal compatibility are important. You'll want to perform due diligence *and* you'll want to make sure you work well together, because your builder is your partner in creating the most important place in your life.

The resources below explore this in much greater detail, but here are the basics.

First, make a list of builders in your area. Our [members section](#) is an excellent starting point.

Next, check the real estate section of your local paper for builders and projects. This will give you a sense of who is building what in your area. Check prices and features, and note which builders specialize in the type of home you're looking for in a suitable price range.

When you've narrowed your list, ask those builders for a list of their customers for you to contact. NPBA members are proud of their work and willing to provide names of home owners who would be willing to talk with you.

Talk to some of these clients and ask about their experience with the builder. Are they happy with the work? Was it completed on schedule and within budget? How were changes and "punch lists" handled? Perhaps most important, ask, "Would you work with this builder again?"

Once you've had a chance to talk to owners and seen some of their builder's work, narrow your list further and schedule interviews with the builders who seem most appropriate.

Decide which builders you feel you'd like to work with, and then delve deeper. Check with their sub-contractors, suppliers, lenders and insurers. Ask about scheduling, job site organization, and billing and payments. Look for recommendations like "professional", "dependable" and "trustworthy".

Then arrange an appointment with the builder or builders who seem to be the best overall fit and get specific. Are they available within the time frame you have in mind? What do they see as the process and sequence, and does it match your needs? What guarantees do they offer?

Then, if you still haven't narrowed it down to a single builder, ask yourself which builder you would feel most comfortable working with. By this point, you should be confident about the credentials and competence of your finalists, so choose the one with whom you think you'll have the best relationship.

Additional Resources

The National Association of Home Builders offers a [good overview](http://www.nahb.org/generic.aspx?genericContentID=284) for choosing a builder. <http://www.nahb.org/generic.aspx?genericContentID=284>

What's the difference between a custom builder and a production builder? If you're not sure of the distinction, the National Association of Home Builders makes it clear [here](http://www.nahb.org/generic.aspx?genericContentID=3911). <http://www.nahb.org/generic.aspx?genericContentID=3911>

When you hire a remodeler, you are buying a service rather than a product. The quality of that service determines the quality of the finished product and your satisfaction. NAHB offers a guide on [How to Hire a Professional Remodeler](http://www.nahb.org/category.aspx?sectionID=716). <http://www.nahb.org/category.aspx?sectionID=716>

New Homes Portfolio also offers a detailed guide titled "The 7 Deadly Mistakes to Avoid when Choosing a Builder" <http://newhomeportfolio.wordpress.com/2007/12/08/how-to-choose-a-builder/>