

Choose a builder



As you plan for your construction project and start to interview general contractors, there are many questions you'll want answered. The company you choose, along with a group of its key people, will be with you from start to finish. Naturally, finding a company that is the right fit for you and your goals can make all the difference.

A little planning today can save a lot of headaches and expense down the road. Take the time to really understand what your project will entail. You'll want to choose a builder with a team that can take your project from concept to completion. They should be able to help you with the initial planning and work with you through the entire process.

You'll want a contractor who knows current, up-to-date building designs that are economical. When building a new facility, you will want a contractor who understands your business and knows that communication is critical to the success of the project.

Personality should be one factor to consider. A friendly, accommodating person who pays attention to details and has your best interest in mind will be much easier to work with. You will want to find a builder who is responsive to your needs, and detail oriented — someone who listens to what you are saying, hears what you really want, and will take you through the process, step by step.

You must have confidence in your builder. Your salesperson should be able to provide any information you request, helping you with proper planning. The contractor you choose should return your bid in a timely manner, and sit down with you, going through the contract line by line, with an explana-

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tion for each step that will be taken to complete your project. They should be able to commit to getting you into your new facility on time and on budget. Your builder should understand that your business is dependent on timely completion of your project. This means being aware of costs, what your schedule expectations are, and being able to make timely decisions throughout the process.

In choosing a builder you will want to consider: Does the builder have a rep-

utable name? Is the builder willing to share references with you? Does the company have a reputation for being on time and doing a quality job? Can the company provide you with preliminary building designs and cost estimates?

Timeline is going to be important to you, as well. A builder should be able to provide credentials and testimonials for you as the customer. Don't hesitate to ask for them and then take the time to contact other customers who have used this builder. Ask them detailed questions about their project and experience with the company. Their previous customers can be a great resource for you. Ask them: Did the contractor stay on time? Did the contractor show you up-to-date designs and offer good advice on layouts? Did the builder have a project manager on your project? Did the project manager stay on top of everything, keeping the subcontractors on schedule? Did they hold weekly job site meetings and were you invited to attend them?

On-site job meetings are the best way to keep you abreast of what is happening, when the project will be moving into the next phase, and it gives the team members time to discuss any challenges that could arise on your project before they actually happen. This is also the time when you should be receiving a two-week schedule, so you'll be aware of what will be happening with your project in the near future.

Choosing the right builder can be a little work, but it's definitely worth the effort. You'll get the best layout for your project, the most efficient price and get your project built on schedule. All of this will happen when you work with a good reputable contractor.

Think Smart. Build Smart.

— By Deb Barlament, Vice President of Operations, Bayland Buildings, Inc.