

let's remodel

## Find the right one

After a homeowner has researched products and has a preliminary layout of their project on paper, including a wish list, they will find they have just begun when it comes time to finding the right contractor for the job. You need to find a reputable and professional individual whom you feel comfortable with and can trust. Here are some of the places to begin looking for a contractor.

■ **Word-of-mouth referrals.** Nearly half of all projects signed by a contractor are the result of client referrals. An additional 22 percent of jobs are the result of word of mouth. These are your best sources for leads: relatives, friends, neighbors, business colleagues, lenders, architects/designers, real estate agents, suppliers of materials and subcontractors.

Other sources include:

■ **Your local NARI chapter.**

■ **Job site signs.** Pay particular attention to homes with contracting company signs on their lawns. Is the site clean? Are tools and materials being handled in a responsible manner? Are there dust covers over the owner's belongings to protect them?

■ **Local media attention:** Look for articles about local remodelers. Listen to talk shows in the area.

■ **Direct mail.** Some contractors send direct mail to homeowners within a few blocks of a current job. Call and ask the homeowner if you could tour the project with the contractor.

Here are just a few questions to ask previous customers:

1. Could they communicate well with the remodeler?
2. Were they pleased with the quality of work?
3. Were they satisfied with the remodeler's business practices?
4. Did the crew show up on time?



5. Were they comfortable with the subcontractors?
6. Was the job completed on schedule? Why or why not?
7. Did the remodeler fulfill the contract?
8. Did the contractor stay in touch throughout the project?
9. Were the final details finished in a timely manner?
10. Would you use the remodeler again without hesitation?

Never start with the largest advertisements in the Yellow Pages! Remodeling is serious business and a serious investment of your time and money.

For your home improvement questions or a copy of our roster book, call Gayle Walters, executive director of the NARI-Michigan Remodeling Association at 810-478-8215. Questions can be mailed to the association office at PO Box 1531563, Livonia, Mich. 48153. Members of the association include professional contractors, wholesalers, manufacturers, consultants and lenders representing all facets of residential and light commercial remodeling. Members also answer questions on "Home Improvement Radio," with Murray Gula on WEXL-AM, 1340, 1-2 p.m. Saturdays. Call in your questions at 810-544-1340.

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