



## TIPS FOR CHOOSING A CUSTOM BUILDER

**EXPERIENCE** -Your potential builder should have at least 10 years of experience in the price range you are interested in. Homebuilders with longevity are important. You can be assured that they are experts in their business and have many satisfied customers. A home builder who's been in the business for at least a decade or more is established and will have a solid client base with positive referrals and strong track record.

**AREA GOOD STANDING** and **AFFILIATIONS**-See that your potential builder is in good standing with the Better Business Bureau. Also check to see that the builder has a good reputation with local homeowners, realtors and other builders. Often your friends and family will know best—solicit referrals from them. If they have bought a new home from a homebuilder, ask them how they found the home builder, who they recommend and who they would avoid. If you have been inside their home, take note what you like about it as well as asking them if they are having any problems. **Affiliations**-See if they are affiliated and active in the area Home Builder's Association and if they have certifications such as the Green Builder Certification. Check with vendors who are the last ones to install items in a new home to ensure that they are being paid on time. Example would be flooring, light fixtures and appliance companies.

**RESEARCH**-Use the internet to research the experience of previous customers. See what the online community has to say about the home builder. Some homebuilders have inspired such contempt that websites exist to showcase reasons to avoid them while others have created incredible loyalty. A little research may save you hours of pain and thousands of dollars. Request a list of homes built by the builder.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE QUESTIONS**-Check to see if the builder will have a representative on site daily during building process. Ask if they are willing to have direct contact with homeowners throughout the building process. When possible, check with previous customers to see if they respond quickly to calls and requests. See if the builder is using an engineer on the project and will he be doing inspections. This is optimal if they are-as it is another set of eyes inspecting your home and making sure its built to the approved specifications.

**CONSTRUCTION COSTS AND TIME**-Be sure to get a detailed list of all of the fees and extra costs that will be included in the construction bid. Request to be notified in prior to any additional costs above an amount you feel is reasonable. **Construction time**- Get an estimate of time it will take to complete construction. **Construction site** – Ask the builder if he has any current projects. Ask for the address and visit the site. Look for a clean and orderly site. It will be a reflection of how the builder runs the crew. Does the potential builder have established relationships with its subcontractors? How many years have they worked with these vendors? Look for partnerships of many years as this will show loyalty and good working relationships



**DESIGN GUIDANCE**-Ask the builder if there are design fees included in the price of the home. Will you have access to their designer? How many hours of the designers time is included in the price of the home. Find out how interior designer charges for any additional hours over that amount. Do they charge a flat fee, percentage of what bought or on a per hour basis? Builders like it when clients bring photos of interiors and exteriors of homes that they would like to emulate. It helps the builder understand the style and look that the customer wants.

**COMPANY IMAGE**-Visit the potential builder's website. If it doesn't look professional this may be a reflection of how the builder runs its business. Check out blogs about the company and also look at how the company positions themselves. Is it organized in its approach? What does its sales brochure look like? The potential builder should have a website that offers photos of projects, and bios of key company executives and recent testimonials.

**WARRANTY**-Does the potential builder have a sufficient insurance. Do they provide a 3rd party 10 year structural warranty? Also a 2 year or more mechanical warranty.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND TESTIMONIALS**-The potential builder should be able to point you to at least several happy customers who will be happy to share their homebuilding experience with you. Hearing about other people's good experiences will put you at ease and allow you to fully trust in the builder. Check website for testimonials - ask the builder for at least 3 previous customers that you can call.

**CONTRACT**-Review builder's contract prior to closing. This will help negate any hasty decisions and allow you to ensure what you are agreeing to. Give any changes found to the builder in advance so that the contract reflects these changes at closing. Contract- Review, Understand and Ask Questions.

Buying a home is an investment for you and your family for years to come. Finding the right partnership between homeowner and homebuilder is vital. At DESCO FINE HOMES we want you to know that we are fully committed to these principals and guidelines when working with our homebuyers.

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