



TOP 10 SIGNS OF A GOOD BUILDER

We've all heard horror stories of building a new home. The joke is that "if your marriage can survive building a new home, it can survive anything." Over the years I've built thousands of homes for thousands of people. For some, it was their first home, for others it was their last home and regardless I've learned that building a new home can be fun and relatively stress free if a person has chosen #1 - a good builder and #2 - if they are a good buyer.

So here's my two bits on the Top 10 signs of a good builder. **A good builder ...**

- 1- **...has experience.** Find out how long your builder had been in business. It says something if he has been in business a long time. There are too many fly-by-nights in any business. You'll never go wrong going with an established builder who has "been there, done that." In fact, I often times get asked by new buyers to give them a really good deal. It's then my response is always, "I'll do better than that, I'll do you a good job!"
- 2- **... is flexible.** Whether it's a starter home or an expensive custom home you should get what you want. That's why you're buying new. Make sure you do – from the colors to the style. Does your builder allow your input on drafting, colors and allowances? Make sure you can do "change orders" if you want to and find out how they are handled.
- 3- **... warranties his work.** The difference between a good builder and a bad builder is that a good builder takes care of the problem. There will always be problems during construction, as well as adjustments after completion. However, you'll quickly find you have no problems if you builder warranties his work. Check out your builder's reputation and warranty. Make sure it's in writing. Check with previous buyers on how your builder backs his work. See if you builder has a means of tracking warranties insuring completion.
- 4- **... clearly spells out what's included.** I often tell buyers "it's more important to know what is not included than what is included." Any such questions should be resolved before you ever start. You should have a clear set of house building plans, a detailed specification sheet with styles, allowances, and colors. A scaled plot plan should also be included. All these should be signed by you and your builder.
- 5- **... has clear communication** for you from beginning to the end. You should always have someone to go to for answers to questions or for concerns. You should have clear-cut guidelines communicated to you from the start-up, through the construction, to the final walk-through and closing. There should be time line communication from your builder explaining what's needed before a certain process is initiated and what is to be expected in change orders. A good builder has clear communication between his sub contractors,

venders, your sales representative and superintendents. Experienced builders use the same high quality people over and over which eliminates many problems.

- 6- **... provides quality.** It's true that you get what you pay for, however, it really doesn't cost any more to have it done right. Quality is a by-product of demanding a good job from yourself, your venders and your subcontractors. Clear communication insures you will receive the product you set out to purchase. Your builder and builder's subs should never compromise quality for time. Although we all want it done today, I often tell buyers "that if it takes us a week longer to do it right they'll be glad in the long run. As well, does our builder provide high quality energy savings in their homes. These kinds of quality items will pay for themselves over and over.
- 7- **... uses a good lender.** I often explain to potential buyers that the most frustrating part about buying or building a home isn't the building process – it's the financing. Does your builder have good preferred lenders that you can use and that will give you priority service? They not only will work well with you but they will get things done for you and your builder as they know his process and visa-versa. Regardless, never start building or buying without first getting approvals and all your financial questions answered up front.
- 8- **... understands timelines.** A good builder ensures that things are scheduled properly and order on time otherwise your home could take forever – and that hurts when you're paying the interest bill. He should have a scheduled start date and scheduled completion date. He should be able to give you a schedule of what will occur during the course of construction so that you can monitor progress. Is your builder willing to work with a late penalty for delays? These are critical signs of a good builder.
- 9- **... belongs to a credible builder's association** that has a high code of ethics and continuing builder education. With continuing education you can be assure he's keeping up on the latest technology in home building. Our local, state and national Home Builder's Association is a perfect example of such an association. Call your local homebuilder's association and get a list of their builders. Call you local city inspection departments and get a list of recommended builders. Believe me, they both know who the good builders are.
- 10- **... provides value.** Keep in mind that just because a home is less expensive than another it doesn't mean it's a better value. Likewise, a more expensive home does not necessarily assure higher quality. There's always someone doing it for less. A common mistake many buyers make is using square footage cost as their measurement of value. Square footage price can be so misleading when you are talking about styles, specialty items, options, garage sizes, porches, etc. Real value is determined by you obtaining the home you want.

There you have it – the top ten signs of a good builder. You can be assured that Patterson Construction provides these 10 criteria when purchasing with us. However there are other good builders to choose from as well – and if you'll follow these suggestions you'll not go wrong. Also, you'll be well on your way to having a great building experience.

Good luck,

James Patterson