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## In This Issue...How To Find A Good Roofing Contractor

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Finding a well qualified roofing contractor or, typically, a group of them to bid on your project is not difficult. Organizations where tax dollars are involved often have less flexibility than most private companies, but there are still some things that can be done which can be of great help. So this is for you too.

First, for our clients, we will take care of all this for you! But much (not all!) of what we do is going to be explained right here.

### **Ask for References, Right? Don't Bother.**

Ask for references from the contractor? Don't bother. Do you really expect a reference to say something bad?! Certainly roofing consultants should know who the good contractors are, but here are some of the methods we use when we go into a new geographic area. They will work equally well for you.

### **Talk to the people who sell things to the roofers.**

The best people to ask are the roofing supply companies. While these companies will not want to appear to favor certain contractors over others, because they sell to all of them, they will generally be willing to tell you who the really competent contractors are that they sell to. They know who does good work and they certainly know who pays them promptly, which is a pretty good indication of the financial strength of the roofer in question. When you place a call you need to assure whomever you are talking to that you will not reveal their input/participation. The conversation will be "off the record". Most of these people will then be very glad to help. Call more than one, look for common contractor names.

**Call roofing manufacturer reps.** Like supply houses, they won't want to have their comments made public, and they will tend to "push" contractors who are most likely to install their products, but they will know who the good contractors are. If they say something like "All our contractors are good contractors", just hang up. All of their contractors are not good contractors.

### **Call roofing contractor tool and equipment suppliers.**

These are not the people the contractors buy their materials from, but the people from who they purchase their specialty tools. They know who the progressive contractors are, those who buy the right tools for the application. They also know who is always

trying to take the cheap way out. They also know who the financially solvent contractors are!

Finally, having a good roofing consultant takes much of the burden off the owner because it is the consultant's job to know who the good guys are.

## **Creative Spec Writing**

By writing your specifications "creatively" you can also narrow down the field to the better contractors. Most major roofing manufacturers give awards to contractors for doing high quality work. They give them names like "Master Contractor". By specifying that a bidder must be a "Master Contractor" and/or that the bidder he must be located within a certain distance from your facility so that he can provide timely service can limit some of your exposure to poor quality work.

## **Don'ts**

Please don't assume that the roofer who did your neighbor's house is qualified to put a roof on your building. Please don't select bidders by the size of their adds in the yellow pages. Our experience has been that many of the very best contractors don't have yellow page display adds at all. (That is because they don't need them.) Please don't assume that large companies are best qualified. There are many smaller companies who do extremely high quality, competitively priced work.

**The biggest mistake** we see people make is to make their purchasing decision by price. Rather than screen the bidders before bidding they take bids and discover that they have an opportunity to save a substantial amount of money with a specific contractor. The lure of money saved is too much to overlook and no screening is done or if any screening is done it is colored and inadequate, because people don't want to discover that the cheap price is probably too cheap!

Next issue we will share with you ways you can save money, sometimes lots of money, before you ever spend a penny. It is called getting it designed right!