



## Essentials—The General Contractor

First, as a portion of his bid—before you sign a contract, you want a general contractor who will produce both a detailed cost breakdown and a timeline for your project. How much will the foundations cost, and how long will that work take? The framing? The drywall? Etc. The general contractor will be handling costs and scheduling and coordination, so you want someone who has a good understanding of time and detail and money. The cost breakdown and timeline are one good way to analyze and compare contractors. In addition to being a coordinator, the GC is your link to the sub-contractors and city officials. He will meet city inspectors, review the work with them, and ensure that the sub-contractors make any necessary corrections before they are paid. Additionally, he will usually have his own employees do the sort of work seldom specified on plans (trenching and filling trenches, protecting the project against rain and wind damage, cleaning trash, providing storage for materials, opening and closing the site daily, etc.) Unless you have hired a separate funding control company, the GC is normally your agent for disbursing money to the sub-contractors and material suppliers. Before you start comparing bids, you need to confirm the services each GC provides. Here are a few to consider:

- i. Does the price include full time site supervision?
- ii. Does the price include surface protection for materials you have installed? (woodwork and tile and countertops and hardwood floors)
- iii. How often is there a thorough clean up, and how clean will the site be left daily?
- iv. Does the price include regularly scheduled meetings, which might include architects and sub contractors?
- v. Does he provide regular written progress reports? At what stages?
- vi. Can you see one of his completed jobs and one in progress and get the phone numbers of at least 3 of past (or present) customers
- vii. Will you be named on his insurance policies?

Again, this outline is brief and incomplete. If you wish to delve further into this topic or discuss your individual project, give me a phone call.

Sincerely yours,

Jeff Bruce