

General Contractors Checklist



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1. Communication

Communication is the first and perhaps one of the most important places to start. The better the communications early on, the greater the likelihood of a successful outcome. As you contact General Contractors, you will want to keep these in mind:

- Timeliness-** Find a General Contractor who is consistently responsive to your inquiries. If a GC is not responsive when you're looking to hire them, chances are pretty good they will not be responsive when challenges arise and you need them most.
- Clarity-** Clear communications are critical to a successful construction project. Your GC should be able to effectively understand your unique situation and requirements for finishing-out your space.
- Plan of Action-**A contractor should clearly articulate how they will meet your needs.

2. Thoroughness

Thoroughness is critical to a well thought out and executed project. While you are discussing your project with your GC candidates, consider the following:

- Are they striving to define and understand your priorities for your business and how you will utilize the space?
- Are they helping you think through the floorplan options, defining your scope of work and providing feedback and alternatives for you to consider, i.e. providing value?
- Do they display a grasp of the city codes and what you can and cannot do?

General Contractors Checklist



3. Processes

Processes are important to ensuring that your project finishes on time and on budget.

- Do they give you a sense of confidence that they understand all that is required to complete your project?
- Are they taking the time to help you understand processes and timelines involved in your finish-out?
- Are they able to manage your Tenant Improvements from beginning to end and provide you with Certificate of Occupancy?

4. Culture

During your interview process, you will want to ask each GC questions that will shed light on their business and philosophies.

- How long have they been finishing-out commercial spaces?
- Why did they get into the business?
- How would they define their approach to serving their clients?
- Did they offer to provide progress reports and/or keep you up-to-date on their progress?

General Contractors Checklist



5. Professionalism

Professionalism is an often overlooked and underestimated component of a successful relationship and project.

- Challenges are inevitable; ask how they manage challenges and conflicts when they arise.
- Review your interactions and ask yourself, were they professional and courteous?
- Did they keep appointments, i.e., were they respectful of your time?
- Did they ask you pertinent questions about what you need and what's important to you?
- Did they take the time to answer all of your questions to your satisfaction?
- Did they genuinely seem to care about investing in your success?
- Were there any red flags to be concerned about?

6. Portfolio

Does the contractor have a verifiable body of work that illustrates their ability to deliver the results you're looking for?

- Ask to see examples of their work that can be verified

General Contractors Checklist



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7. Client Reviews and References

Reviews and References are one key way to identify good contractors from the bad ones.

However, it may take a little work to identify their authenticity. Here are some tips:

- If they have reviews posted on their website, make sure those reviews match the reviews on independent sites like Google.
- Ask if their reviews are referenceable and YOU select 2-3 references you'd like to contact.
- Virtually all construction projects run into unexpected challenges. Ask their references what challenges they faced and how the contractor reacted. This will give you valuable insight into what you can expect when issues arise on your project.

8. Pricing

I purposefully saved pricing for the end because most folks think of it first. You would be well served to develop a short list of General Contractors vetted through the criteria above BEFORE considering price.

- Any new/late contractor entries into the field should be reviewed through the same process as the previous contractors.
- It is a good idea to obtain at least three bids.
- Make sure each GC provides a line-item bid outlining the full scope of work, so that you can effectively compare apples-to-apples.
- Confirm that each bid accurately reflects the agreed upon scope of work.

General Contractors Checklist



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- Remember the old saying, “Good work isn’t cheap, and cheap work isn’t good”.

9. Evaluations

- Print and leverage this checklist so that each GC can be evaluated by the same basic standards.
- After you’ve conducted your interviews, you will have an objective tool with which to evaluate and identify the best General Contractor for your project.

NorthStar Commercial Interiors is committed to completing your project on time and winning your 5 Star Review.



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