



7 Things to Consider When Choosing the 'Right' BUILDER



MAGICO CONSTRUCTIONS™
BUILD WITH QUALITY





Choosing the 'right' builder is crucial in ensuring your project's success.

1

What is the company's and staff's background?

Is it a relatively new company? If so, it is worth considering what project experience the Builder had prior to setting up the company.

The main benefit of choosing an experienced Builder is that they will be able to identify potential issues early in the process. An experienced Builder can easily help save you thousands of dollars in variations and project delays. You will also be able to avoid paying for any accidental mistakes an inexperienced builder may make on the project.

The background of the company's staff members will determine the level of accuracy in estimating the project's cost and knowledge of design and construction. Depending on the project's complexity, it may require the builder to understand the design intent and construction details for the project.

Questions to ask:

- a. When was the company established?
- b. What is the background of the staff?
(Trade background or University background)
- c. Has any of the staff been there longer than 3 years?

2

Client testimonials can be misleading

Assuming the Builder has done excellent work in the past, they should have some glowing testimonials from past clients. Always cross-check testimonials to see which project it relates to. Do not be afraid to ask for the contact details of past clients in order to confirm the authenticity of the testimonial.

Although reading client testimonials is a good starting point to get a 'feel' for the Builder, it can be difficult to distinguish which ones are real. Be aware that client testimonials and online reviews do not always accurately reflect the builder. Be especially aware if there are only a few testimonials (regardless if they are good or bad).

You will always be best served to conduct your own due diligence in investigating. For example, you may request to visit a past client on site to examine the project in person. This will also help to ensure that you are really speaking with the owner.



3

How do they treat their subcontractors?

One of the things that often gets overlooked is the Builder's relationship with their team of subcontractors. Whilst client testimonials may be a good indicator of judging the Builder's customer service, the way they treat their team of subcontractors can often be a dead giveaway of their true nature.

A simple way of gauging how well they treat their subcontractors would be to observe how the site atmosphere is (when you get a chance to visit a site). If the Builder is treating their team of subcontractors with respect and managing their projects well, then chances are the subcontractors are happy to be working on site on the project. You may also consider asking the Builder how long their team of subcontractors have been working with them.

Look out for Builders that do not have a regular team of subcontractors as this may be an indicator that they do not treat their subcontractors well. Beware of Builders that are always yelling or abusing their site staff. There are some Builders out there that are notorious for not paying their subcontractors. These are usually the same culprits that provide the lowest quote on projects as they make their margins at the expense of their subcontractors.



4

How organised is the BUILDER?

A good Builder is one that can organise their time effectively in order for the project to run smoothly to schedule and within budget. If the Builder you are considering is often late to meetings and often takes several days to respond back to your emails and phone calls, chances are they will be unable to run their project on time.

Look out for the little tell-tale signs such as having a messy site or having a messy ute with tools lying around in disarray.

Consider asking the question as to how they are managing their projects. Are they using any form of project management software? Ask what systems and processes they are being used to ensure quality control and to monitor the progress of projects.

The last thing you want is to engage a Builder that simply manages a project as the job goes on. This can easily lead to the project running several weeks' late and resulting in costly variations and extension of time.



5

Ask to visit their current job site

We are firm believers that you are only as good as your last project. We encourage you to visit the Builder's most recent or current job sites.

It is of no surprise that most Builders have at least one 'outstanding' project. However, consistency throughout time should be the factor to look out for. What distinguishes a great Builder from the rest is their ability to consistently deliver good-quality projects through having systems and processes in place to ensure quality-control and consistency.

6

Professionalism

This refers to not only arriving promptly for meetings but also professionalism in terms of how the Builder carry themselves.

Take note of how they communicate with you. Are they transparent in raising potential issues with you up front? Are they often cancelling meetings with you last-minute?

At Magico Constructions, we value the time of our clients and business partners. We make a point of never cancelling a scheduled meeting and always aim to arrive early to meetings.

Although most Builders claim to be 'professionals', very few truly walk the line. Little things such as having a company uniform, a well-designed website, proper email addresses, communicating with correct grammar are all dead giveaways whether the Builder truly exudes professionalism.

Just ask yourself, would a true professional be working in just their singlet top, with no formal company website whilst using just a basic Gmail / Hotmail / Bigpond email address?

If they are skimping on just a few dollars on those small ticket items, can you really expect them to spend the right money in acquiring the right materials for your project?



7

Check the validity of their licenses and insurance

Although this may seem like a no-brainer, we have witnessed a few cases whereby the client forgot to check the Builder's license and insurance cover before signing the building contract. In one stance, the Builder's builder license had in fact expired, resulting in the Owner being unable to obtain the final Occupation Certificate (OC) in order for them to move in legally.

If your residential project involves less than 4 storeys, it is imperative that your Builder is capable and 'eligible' to take on the scale of works of that nature. Always check their HBCF cover (Home Building Compensation Fund, previously known as Home Warranty Insurance).

Some other insurances to consider verifying include:

- a. Workers Compensation
- b. Contract Works Insurance
- c. Public Liability Insurance

Did you know that you can conduct a search regarding the validity of the Builder License and whether there are any pending court cases online?

Visit: <https://www.onegov.nsw.gov.au/publicregister/#/publicregister/search/Trades>



Bonus

Has the Builder done their 'homework' and do they 'understand' the project?

This should be obvious as some Builders fail to even make the effort to schedule a site inspection and to meet clients in-person prior to providing a quote. We believe each project should be tailored for the client and site inspections are mandatory in identifying any potential risks or restrictions which will come into play during construction.

Things to be aware of:

- Did the Builder conduct a site inspection?
- How much time did the Builder spend getting to know you and all key stakeholders for the project?
- Does their proposal mention any site-specific risks and constraints? Or is it just a generic quote with a figure attached?

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In Summary

Choosing your project's Builder should **NEVER** come down to just price or reputation alone.

Choosing a Builder that has shown interest in the project and taking the time and effort in understanding the project is far more important as this will ensure that there will be no hidden variations.

If you are someone with limited or no prior experience in construction, we highly recommend that you seek assistance from an experienced professional to help with the project's tender review. (Consider engaging either an Architect or Project Manager)

Although this means investing some money up front, this investment in having the right consultant can easily save you thousands of dollars in variations down the track.

The reality is that selecting the 'right' Builder is a complex process that involves weighing multiple factors across the board.

To make this as objective as possible we have included within a simple checklist. You may choose to use this as a score sheet when making your final decision in selecting the right Builder for your project.

If you have an upcoming project which you would like to help with, simply visit our website and fill in our contact form.

We hope that you have found this eBook to be of value. We are always looking to continuously improve our services. Should you have any feedback or suggestions, please get in touch with us. Our social media accounts are as below:



Builder Checklist

1. Check the validity of licenses and insurance	Y	N
• Is the Builder License valid? (Verify online using Fair Trading website)		
• Validity of Workers Compensation Insurance (Note the amount insured and number of workers/staff)		
• Validity of Contract Works Insurance (Note the amount insured, ensure it is sufficient for the project's scale)		
• Validity of Public Liability Insurance (Also note the amount insured)		
• Validity of HBCF on project (Check by contacting iCare)		
2. Research the company's and staff's background		
• Has the company been in business longer than 5 years?		
• Does the company staff exhibit knowledge in architecture, engineering or project management?		
• Has any staff member worked there longer than 3 years? (A high turnover rate may imply a bad working environment)		
• Has the Builder completed similar projects before?		
• Has the Builder worked on projects in your local council area		
3. Doing your due diligence		
• Were you able to speak with any of the people who left the		
• Were project references provided for the testimonials?		
• Has there been any recent positive testimonials? (Within the last 1-2		
• Does the Builder have any testimonial from consultants? (Such as Architect, Engineers, Surveyors, etc.)		
• Does the Builder have a good credit rating?		
4. Professionalism		
• Has the Builder demonstrated good communication skills?		
• Is the Builder transparent when discussing the project? (For example, voicing their concerns for certain things related to the project or proactively suggesting alternatives)		
• Does the Builder usually respond back to calls/ texts/ emails within		
• Was the quote/proposal put forth well-presented? (Does it show details such as assumptions, allowances, exclusions, etc.?)		
• Did the Builder include trade breakdowns and details regarding their scope of works?		

5. How Organised is the Builder	Y	N
• Does the Builder always arrive on time to meetings?		
• Does the Builder have some form of Project Management software/ tool in place for managing their project?		
• Does the Builder have systems and processes in place to ensure in the quality of their projects? (For example, they may be ISO-certified)		
• Has the Builder been able to keep all their promises made? (Notice whether their final quote/proposal includes items as discussed)		
6. Ask to visit a current jobsite or past project		
If visiting current jobsite:		
• Was the jobsite clean and well-managed? (Rubbish and waste collected in one area, no tools lying on the floor, etc.)		
• Was there a good friend team atmosphere with the trades on site? (No unnecessary yelling or swearing)		
• Was there proper safety signage on site? (Legally there must be safety signs erected on site)		
• Were there adequate facilities on site? (Such portaloo, temporary site office, shed, etc.)		
If visiting previous project:		
• Does the Builder still have a good relationship with the past client?		
• Has the building or work completed stood the test of time? (In other words, no defects have risen over the years)		
• Was the Builder able to provide any project references to projects over 5 or 10 years ago?		
7. How well do they treat their subcontractors		
• Does the Builder have trades they have worked with over several years?		
• Has any trade worked with the Builder for over 5 years?		
• Was the Builder able to provide any subcontractors as reference?		
• When visiting the jobsite, did the subcontractors seem happy?		

BONUS - Does the Builder Understand the Project?	Y	N
• Did the Builder raise any potential issues that may occur for the project?		
• Did the Builder identify any details related to the projects which others failed to mention?		
• Did the Builder proactively propose anything for the project?		
• Was the Builder able to show any 'working out' as to how they derived their construction estimates?		
(Such as screen shots of digital measurements made on the plans)		
TOTAL:	/50	/50

For more information on how we can help you accurately achieve your design, contact us today.



www.magicoconstructions.com



info@magicoconstructions.com



(02) 8277 4314



Level 26 / 100 Mount Street,
North Sydney NSW 2060

