

COMPETITIVE BIDDING ONLY IDENTIFIES CHEAPEST, NOT BEST REMODELING CONTRACTORS

Let's say two remodeling firms bid on the same 6,300 square foot project and one of those bids comes in \$125,000 less than the other. How can that be?

"It can't," say Andrew Poticha and Michael Menn, AIA, partners in Design Construction Concepts, Ltd., a full service design/build firm based in Northbrook that specializes in high-end remodeling projects.

Citing that very example, Poticha said, the other contractor in that instance actually changed the specifications, thereby knocking \$50,000 off the price from the get-go.

"That change was obvious. But what about all the other corners? Did he cut those as well?" said Poticha.

And therein lies the problem with competitive bidding, say the partners.

"More often than not, specifications aside, you're not always comparing apples to apples," according to Poticha.

The costs of labor, materials and change orders are fairly standard, they say, assuming everyone's bidding in the exact same specifications. But even when they are, there's another huge variable that comes into play and that's service.

"It's for that reason we don't competitively bid. We can't win if we're bidding a BMW against a Chevy," Menn explained.

Indeed, Design Construction Concepts prides itself on incomparable service – from the start of a project to its completion. Consequently, they make no apologies for not participating in competitive bidding, calling it a complete waste of time – time they'd rather use cultivating referral business.

"That's how we get 99% of our business – through referrals from satisfied customers," said Menn.

Not surprisingly, Poticha and Menn advise customers the best way to find a superior contractor is through word of mouth -- not simple math.

Don't base one of the most personal, most expensive decisions you'll ever make on mere numbers, they caution. Instead, ask around. Your friends, neighbors, even family members will often be able to tell you more about a local contractor than the bidding process ever could.

"If you're comparing comparable contractors, the bids should be competitive. If they're not, a red flag should go up," Poticha said.

This business is no different than any other, he reasoned, in that you get what you pay for. If the best is what you want, then be prepared to pay for it.

“Unless price is your only consideration, *best* is rarely, if ever, the same thing as *cheapest*,” concluded Poticha.

For more information about Design Construction Concepts, Ltd., phone the firm's corporate headquarters at (847)498-1676.

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