

 7 Key Tips to Getting Along With Your Builder

- 1. Involve your builder at the planning stage.** This isn't always easy but there are many benefits from your builder being in the loop during the later stages of design and documentation; not least that they are more likely to feel more ownership and commitment to the project. Their advice on construction detail may also save you money.
- 2. Make quoting easier.** The more comprehensive and accurate your documentation is the more likely it is your builder will have the confidence to quote your project confidently and competitively. If you provide the builder with adequate information at the quoting stage then they won't need to make 'guesstimates' for the dozens of selections that will be required. You should provide your builder a 'Prospex' Inclusions Schedule which details the allowances of fittings and finishes that are going into the project. This will greatly increase the transparency and accuracy of the quotes and reduce costly surprises later on.
- 3. Communication.** Throughout the course of the project you will be required to make dozens of decisions. Communicate these to your builder in writing so that they can be easily tracked. This simple tip will help avoid disputes later on. Don't be afraid to ask your builder questions if you are unsure of anything as this can help avoid confusion and manage everybody's expectations.
- 4. Make timely decisions.** You shouldn't be expected to make important decisions with short notice. However, you do have a responsibility to not excessively delay the progress of the build as there are probably a range of trades and suppliers that will get backed up and work schedules will be affected. A good example is the toilet suites; they are one of the last things installed but they are one of the first selections required so that the plumbing set outs can be accurately located. To avoid this problem ask your builder in advance for a schedule of the selections you need to make with an approximate time line for each.
- 5. Don't expect your builder to use your mates who are tradesman.** It's probably not a problem if you introduce 1 (or 2?) preferred tradesman or suppliers to your builder, but if you insist on using a whole range of tradespeople he is unfamiliar with it is more likely to cause problems. Your builder has probably spent several years filtering the good tradesman from the bad and he will have more influence to effectively manage them. If a dispute does arise with your preferred trade it can put both you and builder in a difficult position as to whose responsibility it is to fix it.

- 6. Talk to the trades.** I often hear tradesmen complain that clients don't engage with them. You're much more likely to get a higher quality job if you acknowledge the expertise of the trades involved. Like the builder, the trades like to feel part of the team and they have a lot of experience and advice to offer. However, it is never a good idea to give instructions directly to the tradespeople. Always make sure that your decisions go through the appropriate channels to avoid confusion and disagreements later on.
- 7. Christmas deadline?** Plan to complete by the end of November. This is because the closer you get to Christmas the more overwhelmed the trades will be with similar deadlines and the slower the progress will be; especially considering that painters and tilers are also the last trades you would want to rush given that the quality of their work will be on display to you for a very long time after the deadline has passed.

*If you have plans for your extension or new home want to check on the quality and thoroughness of your documentation, use the **buildingquote.com.au** 'PlanCheck' service. Send us your plans and we will undertake a quality assurance check and advise how exposed you may to cost blowouts and variations.*

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