



Selecting a Builder or Remodeler

Questions to Ask

When you hire a professional home builder or remodeler, you are buying a service rather than a product. The quality of the service they provide will determine the quality of the finished project and your satisfaction with it. Listed below are some qualifications you will want to explore and questions you will want to ask when you interview a contractor.

Gryphon Builders is an established Design/Build and Remodeling firm. We hold ourselves to a higher standard with regard to professional business practices and have openly responded to these questions.

Home Owner: *Do you maintain a permanent mailing address and phone number?*

Allen W Griffin: We do! Currently we have one in Austin and one in Houston. We believe that a client should be able to get ahold of us at any time, so we make readily available our office and cell phone numbers.

Home Owner: *Do you carry insurance that protects you from claims arising due to property damage or job site injuries?*

Griffin: We carry \$2 million in general liability, plus a builder's risk policy on each individual project. More importantly we require a signed contract with all of our trade partners; this contract was developed by the Texas Association of Builders. The contract requires that our partners carry insurance, and it has performance as well as indemnity clauses built into it.

An owner's biggest risk is an unofficial subcontractor with no insurance. A builder's general liability policy alone does not cover this sufficiently, so by using this contract we make sure our clients are protected.

Home Owner: *Do you have an established presence in the community?*

Griffin: Yes, we are deep-rooted in the building community of Texas. We are involved at both the local and state levels of the builders associations and I personally serve as an Alternate Board Director for the Texas Association of Builders. We have been a source of information in our community for years and contributed to industry sources such as Houston Builder, Texas Builder, Qualified Remodeler and Professional Remodeler magazines.

Home Owner: *How long has the company been in business?*

**Longevity usually suggests financial stability.*

Griffin: I am proud to say that we have been in business for 13+ years. We have built many long-standing, strong relationships over this period. I consider myself blessed that we have the opportunities to expand our businesses.

Home Owner: *Do you maintain solid relationships with experienced independent trade contractors (such as plumbers and electricians) and work with them as a team to keep your job running smoothly?*

Griffin: We have maintained relationships and financial responsibility with industry sources that have locations to serve us no matter where we build.

Home Owner: *Do you possess a trustworthy reputation among customers, peers, and in the home building/remodeling industry? Do you have references?*

Griffin: Absolutely. Our clients consider us friends and invite us to intimate family functions such as a holiday celebration or a wedding. We have letters of past client references. Also, we have won numerous awards throughout the country. To name a few: 2002, 2003, 2007, 2008 - Regional Star Awards for Best Remodel; 2007 National Certified Graduate Remodeler of the Year; 2009 Houston Remodeler of the Year; 2009 Nation's First Green Renovation; and 2012 National Association of Home Builders February Remodeler of the Month.

Home Owner: *Do you have a working knowledge of the many types and ages of homes in the area?*

**A sound structural and architectural knowledge of what is likely to be behind a wall or under a floor helps the home remodeler provide reliable estimates. Extremely low bids may reflect a remodeler's lack of this knowledge and a poor understanding of the actual costs involved.*

Griffin: The short answer is yes; we have relationships with professional engineers if or when we need help. More important, we stand behind our knowledge with a fixed price contract. This question is only being asked because it is somehow expected that the price of the home could change. Not so with us, and we guarantee that.

Home Owner: *Do you offer an array of options when selecting products, materials and techniques?*

Griffin: Certainly. I spent 15 years selling building products. I read our industries leading periodicals, and attend national, regional and local shows. I'm proud to say that we are on the cutting edge so much that in 2009 we registered the **Nation's First Green Renovated home** under the new ANSI standard.

Home Owner: *Do you arrange for the building permit if needed?*

**Remember that the person who obtains the permit is the contractor of record and therefore liable for the work.*

Griffin: We are a Design-Build firm. We start with the client at the planning/design phase and take care of everything from there all the way to the final cleaning of their home.

Home Owner: *Do you offer a warranty? If so, what kind and for how long? What is covered under the warranty and what is not?*

Griffin: The state requires we provide a one year warranty on workmanship and a 10 year structural. We follow the guidelines of the past TRCC & the NAHB Building Performance Standard and we do this for two years. Then we purchase a third party warranty for the remaining eight years.

Home Owner: *Do you understand the scheduling issues required to begin and complete your job within your timetable?*

Griffin: This is where our systems and processes shine. We work through the design and selection process with a client to fully understand what is expected and what they are buying. This is all laid out in a full project scheduling program, Microsoft Project. We can tell when the tile is going to be installed before we break even ground! With this knowledge we can monitor progress and make adjustments if needed.

About Allen W. Griffin: Allen is founder and president of Gryphon Builders and Gryphon Property Services. He is a Certified Graduate Remodeler, Graduate Master Builder, Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist, and a Certified Green Professional with 20 years of experience in the building industry. Allen was named 2012 National Association of Home Builders February Remodeler of the Month, 2009 Greater Houston Builders Association Remodeler of the Year, and 2007 National Association of Home Builders Certified Graduate Remodeler of the Year.

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