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Home reno 101: any job worth doing is worth doing right

Laura Lennie, Stoney Creek

(Jun 15, 2007)

When Triple R Inc. president and CEO Bobby Assadourian received a request from a Stoney Creek homeowner who had been taken for a ride by another contractor, he dug right in.

"Nothing is worse than when a homeowner has to pay for the same job twice," he said. "This lady being new to the country, it was her first time hiring a contractor in Canada. She hired the contractor, things went terrible. There were mould issues, there were deposit issues, she ended up in the courts with him."

"I met with her, reviewed the situation, did the job over again. She's very happy with the work now, but again she had to pay for it twice."

In 2004, Mr. Assadourian established Triple R Inc. to provide quality indoor and outdoor home renovation services throughout the Golden Horseshoe.

Since then, Mr. Assadourian has appeared on CH Morning Live, fielding questions and telling his story about "renovations gone wrong," and his company has received a *Hamilton Community News* Reader's Choice Award in the Best Business/Service category.

"I don't want to go around scaring homeowners," he said. "I want to give them the facts."

The fact is, before doing home renovations, do your homework.

"Learn about it," said Mr. Assadourian. "My dad always taught me, 'Fine, don't be a mechanic, but if you want to make sure you always get good service on your vehicle, learn what's going on with it, have an idea.' Books, Home Depot, Cashway, the Internet, there's just so many ways you can find out about it."

Mr. Assadourian says when it comes to hiring a contractor, go with your gut.

"You have to like them. They're going to be part of your home; they should be there before you're ready to leave for work and they should be there when you're getting back from work," he said. "After your initial consultation, don't even think about insurance, credentials, references, history - put all that aside - how do you feel about him or her?"



PHOTO BY LAURA LENNIE

Triple R Inc. president and CEO Bobby Assadourian is a member of www.quickcontractors.com - a quality control group that helps consumers find reliable contractors.

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Also, watch out for contractors who say they do everything themselves, says Mr. Assadourian.

"You can't be an electrician, plumber, flat roofer... all rolled into one," he said. "It's just impossible."

Mr. Assadourian says the biggest mistake homeowners make when hiring a contractor is paying "under the table."

First, it's illegal; second, you think you're getting a good deal, but you're not, he says.

"The problem is you're getting the contractor with zero Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage, which ties into liability issues," he said. "They don't have WSIB coverage because the employer pays it when they're with the employer, not when they're working privately, illegally with the homeowner."

Mr. Assadourian adds homeowners are ultimately responsible for anybody coming in their door.

"Don't let them start the job until you see they have WSIB coverage," he said.

These days, a good contractor can be hard to find.

To hire the right contractor, Mr. Assadourian suggests www.quickcontractors.com - a quality control group that helps consumers find reliable contractors.

The Web site, started by president and CEO Trevor Bouchard, has been featured on City TVs' Breakfast Television, as well as CH Morning Live.

Mr. Assadourian says nothing upsets him more than abusive contractors.

"It kills the industry," he said. "I find I have to work so hard to prove myself... because of what these abusive contractors have done, they've shamed the industry."

After being in the home construction and renovations business for about 12 years, Mr. Assadourian says his effectiveness as a contractor comes down to one thing: synergy.

"I can communicate, I have pride and I really care about my reputation, all these factors are good for the homeowner," he said.

Though he has, at times, up to three tradespeople working with him, Mr. Assadourian says he still digs right in.

"I'm in the trenches," he said. "I don't multi-task too much. The most jobs we've started at any given point is two, but I can still communicate between both at the same time, but if I leave the people on the one, it's just because they're doing what they're trained to do," he said.

"I'm not perfect," he added. "I just do my best, it just makes sense."

For more information, visit www.triplerincontracting.ca.

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