

THE REASONS THAT YOU WILL NEVER FIND A “PERFECT” CONTRACTOR

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INTRODUCTION

Closing a deal between a client and a contractor is a two-way agreement between both parties in terms of price, time, and quality. However, most of the clients did not satisfy with contractors due to the performance is under the client's expectation. It is undeniable that there are incompetent contractors in the market and they could commit to the client anything just to close the deal and eventually could not perform at all, but sometimes it might not be the case as well. Approaches, demands, and expectations of the clients themselves would also affect the perception of the client against how professional a contractor could be, as most of the clients tend to think that the contractors shall able to serve them with “cheap, fast, and best quality” works. Hence, the clients shall judge the contractors rationally based on the agreement and not just based on own feeling without proper justification. Here are some reasons why you may never find a “perfect” contractor.

1. UNREASONABLE EXPECTATIONS

After all, the client attempt to optimise the performance and quality of work done by the contractor. However, going too far will lead to an unreasonable expectation to the contractor. Therefore, from the client's perspective, the contractor is always underperforming. Generally, the clients would expect the contractors to:

- a) Be efficient
- b) Always yield towards the clients' need or opinion
- c) Provide prime work quality
- d) Be helpful and willing to provide professional advice at anytime
- e) Be honest
- f) Equipped with CIDB license and insurance coverage
- g) Have professional certifications and recognition
- h) Have the lowest price in the market

By requiring the contractors to fulfill all these expectations are definitely unreasonable, while there are also some contractors that are able to achieve most of these expectations, but the prices for their services will not be cheap likewise.

Therefore, clients need to know exactly their own requirements. In some points, they will need to compromise certain aspects to achieve their expectation. For example, if the client has a budget constraint, he might need to compromise on the product quality or engage the small-scale contractor to perform the works. On the other hand, if the client needs the premium product quality with professional installation, then the client shall not expect the price comes cheap. A client shall strike the balance between cost, time, and work quality when intend to engage a contractor.

2. LOWEST BID MAY NOT BE THE BEST OPTION

Most clients have the tendency to select the lowest bidder to perform the works. They always have a mindset that contracting is just like a product, every contractor performs the same and able to complete the jobs within their expectation. Unfortunately, contracting is not a product, but it is a service, which the services provided by each of the contractors can be varies based on their resources, experience, integrity, etc. There is no way for the services provided by every contractor are exactly the same as the product manufactured in the factory.

As mentioned, the client needs to know exactly what is their expectation and need to see if the contractor profile could meet the requirements. For instant, the client could evaluate

whether the contractor has similar job experience, sufficient manpower, product quality, payment terms, etc, before making the decision for the contract awarding. It is worth mentioning that most of the time, the lowest bid might not be the most competent contractor. In a lot of cases, professional procurement would select the bidder from the middle range as the best suit contractor.

3. GOALS BETWEEN CLIENTS AND CONTRACTORS

Different contractors have different goals and interests. Some may have larger scale projects such as skyscrapers while some may work on smaller scale projects like warehouses. Each contractor has more experience within their region of interests, therefore as a client, it is important to align your objective with the chosen contractors' interest to optimise the performance. Clients can simply ask for a list of past projects through email or go through their website to know more about their past projects. This will help clients to understand each contractor's aim and interest to find the most suitable contractor for the job.

4. ITEMISED QUOTATION

Clients tend to request contractors to provide them a breakdown quotation so that they can bargain on the price for every individual item. An item like "Labor-only" makes it easy for the clients to reverse calculate the hourly salary of the contractors by knowing the project duration length. After deducting the overhead expenses, the client would roughly know the hourly pay rate charged by contractors. Some clients refuse to pay those hourly rates unless it is within a "fair" range.

While for the itemized quotes, contractors tend to underbid some parts of a project and overbids the others due to unforeseen uncertainties in the project. However, due to the itemised quotation, the client always bargains with the contractors to decrease the overbid items but never allow the contractor to increase the underbid items, and thus resulting to an overall underbid project which leads to the loss at the contractor side.

5. AVAILABILITY OF GOOD CONTRACTOR

Generally, competent contractors will not have time to deal with these difficult clients. A competent contractor will always have their repeating clients to serve. They are willing to explore new clients but definitely not those unreasonable clients, who expect "cheap, fast, and with the best quality". They will avoid those project which will potentially occupy much of their time and have to handle a lot of unnecessary problems. Hence, if the client is unreasonably expecting the perfect contractor with a cheap price, in most of the cases, the client will end up engaging a cheap contractor who claims they are the perfect contractor (remain unsure in reality).

CONCLUSION

As listed, these are the reasons why you will never find a "perfect" contractor. Overall, clients shall not solely emphasize on the price, rather they should also evaluate the contractor from other perspectives, such as experience, resources, professionalism, recognition, testimonial, etc, before making the decision for the contract awarding. Although it is never possible to get a perfect contractor, the client could get a matching competent contractor to serve them and eventually lead to mutually satisfactory with the end results by both parties.

Reference:

[1] Jensen, M., Rumora, E., Felice, A., & LaCava, M. (10th November 2021). 4 Reasons You'll Never Find a Good Contractor (Insight from a Contractor). Retrieved on 20th January, 2021, from <https://www.biggerpockets.com/blog/how-to-find-a-good-contractor>