

BMW Contractor



Patrick L. O'Toole

When clients select remodelers, much of the decision to hire hinges on the personal style and personality of the owner or salesperson. Many of the most successful remodelers have cultivated a business style that matches their personal style. The result is a winning combination of authenticity and sincerity.

That is why I was surprised to meet the contractor my in-laws had selected. He looked like a Biff or a Chip or a Trey, off to the country club for a round of golf. He drove up in a BMW, and he even had a sweater over his shoulders with the sleeves tied in front around his neck. This guy really wanted to be on an equal plane with his clients. I could hear him telling his prospects that he had “made a killing” in the market and had later gravitated to remodeling as an avocation. He was above it all.

My in-laws were successful people, but this contractor’s style was not one that matched well with their usual keep-it-real approach to things.

This was 10 years ago, and I was worried for my in-laws. I was worried that they had hooked up with a pretender. Looking back, I should have said something. But it was too late. The job was wrapping up. In my mind, there were a ton of great remodelers I could have introduced them to in St. Louis—Scott Mosby and many others—but I missed the window.

Well, as you may have guessed, over time, problems emerged with the work from this contractor. Siding around a new dormer became

unattached and leaking occurred. Many new windows were improperly installed. But by the time they noticed, their contractor was long gone. He had moved on to take another big job in the neighborhood. That job resulted in a lawsuit.

I mention this not to highlight another story of an unprofessional contractor. We’ve heard too many of those. And I definitely don’t want to imply that it’s not OK for a contractor to drive a BMW or a Tesla or have a garage full of cars. Many, many remodelers I know are great

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business people and have created wealth they could have never imagined when they first started in the business. We love those stories. I mention this story because this contractor seemed to be in the business for all the wrong reasons. There was an inauthenticity about him. My in-laws went with a recommendation instead of trusting their gut about this guy.

Selling jobs and creating satisfied customers begins with quickly establishing trust and authenticity. Early on in a client relationship, who you are and who you present yourself to be says more about you than anything you can say. Be clean, be organized, be knowledgeable, be alert and be prepared. And leave all signs of success—expensive cars, clothing—at the office or at home. You might send the wrong signal and lose a job. Winning remodelers project an air of common sense and professionalism. Anything else is a distraction. | QR

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