



Searching online for Contractors



WAYNE
SAGE

First off, before I start the column for this edition, I just need to say how proud and fortunate I feel to be a part of this community and province. We have all stepped up to deal with the worldwide pandemic, making Manitoba literally one of the best places in the world to be right now. Not only have we taken and followed all the right steps, but also the humanity we have demonstrated, helping our fellow man and woman is really quite a rare experience in this world and proves beyond a shadow of a doubt what a truly unique place we call home.

Speaking of home, most of us are now spending much more time in our houses and no doubt we would all like to make a number of improvements.

The first step for many is to search online for designers and builders. I agree that this is a wise route to follow, but I also must inform you that this system is flawed, and you should know how to decipher and navigate the information and resources you find.

What I am talking about in particular is when you get that first page of results, it usually lists a bunch of advertised contractors who pay dearly to be at the top of the list. Anyone with enough money can do this! This is typically followed by a number of referral companies who say they know who the best are and who's a star, or who's endorsed by so and so, therefore ensuring credibility, etc, etc. Nothing could be further from the truth. These sorts of lists do nothing to qualify who is on their list, their history or credentials further than the amount of the cheque they've asked contractors to write in order to be on those lists. I

know this for a fact as I'm often asked to write a cheque so I can be included on the list and I am astounded at how they say I can be number one in the country and on page one if I just sign up and send them money. This I suppose would be attractive, if we were not already legitimately the highest awarded renovation firm in the country.

The truth is, what they are doing is working on volume to pay for and maintain a page one presence. Data shows that few consumers even go past page one when searching for anything, so that's the place everyone wants to be. Another truth is that it costs a lot of money and time to maintain a page one presence. And to be honest, most busy hard working contractors simply don't have the time or expertise, nor do they charge enough to pay for that positioning. It's almost a full time job for someone to stay on top of this, and it must be maintained daily as the criteria often changes on how to stay on page one which keeps the game constantly fluctuating.

Now, I'm not saying you won't find some very good legitimate contractors organically placed on page one as there definitely are some. Manitoba enjoys the fact that we have some of the best incredibly talented renovators and builders in the country. But what I am saying is maybe for your own sake, go past page one, certainly past the referral companies, even to maybe page three or four and do your own deep dive research before you let some cubicle cowboy from God knows where decide who they think you should use because they paid the fee to be on a list.

Stay well and safe, keep up the great COVID-19 battle and maybe we can enjoy a Winnipeg Jets Stanley Cup parade in the not too distant future.

Wayne Sage is the owner and President of Harwood Design Builders, a multi-National and Provincial award-winning Winnipeg Design - Build contracting firm, winning 18 top five placements for best renovations in Canada, including a Best in Canada win.