

“TRUST ME, I’M A PROFESSIONAL”: THE IMPORTANCE OF CHOOSING THE RIGHT REPAIR & REPLACEMENT VENDORS

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Anyone who has owned a car for an extended period of time has gone through this dilemma: "Well, something is definitely wrong. At least, it doesn't sound like the engine is going to jump out of the hood. Who should I take this to?"

Similarly, association Boards inevitably find themselves wondering who to turn to when the time comes for extensive roof repairs, [elevator modernization](#), asphalt resurfacing, etc. As the majority of Boardmembers are not construction specialists and are simply looking to do the best they can with limited knowledge and resources, the best solution can often seem difficult to find.



Finding the Right Vendor



Boardmembers may find themselves surrounded with numerous bids from different companies, many with multiple options, and no real sense of clarity as to which vendor represents the best option. Although it may seem overwhelming at first, it is possible to systematically narrow down your choices by confirming which prospective companies are in fact certified to do the work needed.

It may take a little more effort, but with the nearly unlimited access to information, it should not be too difficult to find out what a given industry standard is if a vendor does not provide you with that information themselves.

Many people are willing to do work in which they have little to no training if the price is right. Your friend's cousin Steve who works as handyman on the side is almost never the best choice. It's unlikely that Steve carries all the necessary insurance to protect the Association. Steve probably doesn't offer any kind of warranty for when the balcony railings begin falling off a year later.

Invest in Quality Replacements & Repairs from Reputable Vendors

I recently worked with an association where the [fences](#) had been installed by a one man operation who enormously undercut any of the competition. While the decision seemed great on paper, the Board first noticed that a few gates were suspiciously absent, and then shortly thereafter, many sections began doing a Dali-esque lean.



In the end, the project cost significantly more to fix due to the poor workmanship. This not to say the cheapest option will always be disastrous, but it is undoubtedly a gamble; much of the time paying a little more the first time around will prevent the need for expensive ongoing maintenance.

A slightly more difficult situation to recognize is when a vendor may be certified to do similar work, but not exactly what you need. An association recently undertook an extensive multi-level parking garage renovation project with the counsel of an architect. They received numerous bids from companies that did concrete work, but upon closer examination, these companies almost exclusively performed ground level parking garage and road repairs.

Though these companies had good references and likely do great work, in this instance, the association absolutely needed a certified concrete structure specialist who would work alongside the architect to ensure that the structure was rebuilt safely and correctly. You wouldn't go to a dentist for eye problems; be sure that you're choosing the right professional for the job.



Naturally, it is possible that not every industry will have a specific standard of expertise or that numerous vendors will have the right certifications. In this case, the vendors bidding for the work should provide an easy way or you to contact them with any questions or concerns and a list of references. It may take some digging, but it is much better to have confidence that a project will be safely done right the first time than having to wonder how much more money will be needed to fix any mistakes.