

The Insiders Report:

How To Choose The Right Lumber Yard

(Exclusively For Builders & Contractors)

By Arthur Santelli

Here are just a few of the questions we'd like you to ask yourself:

- Is my current lumberyard handling both me and my project managers reliably and professionally?
- Do they partner with me to keep the project on track and within budget?
- Are their technicians proficient in reading blue prints so they can suggest improvements for a project previously designed by an architect who may be wrong?
- Can they deliver to my job site within 24 hours – even if it's one 2 x 4?
- Do they provide a fair price guarantee for the entire job, with no games and no fake lowball entry prices just to get me in?
- Does my current lumber specialist help me source products that I need but they don't sell, even if they'd have to go to great distances to find it?
- To save me precious time, would they meet with my customers assisting them to select interior finishes, windows, doors, etc.?
- To ensure that everything stays on track, do their technicians stop at the job sites weekly, bi-weekly or as needed?
- If mistakes happen, do they fix the problem immediately and engineer and provide a solution within 24 hours?
- Do they offer all of the above even if you're not one of their "Big Clients"?

Find out what you could be getting versus what you're currently getting. It may save you a bundle or time and money and it may also save you grief and aggravation in the future.

How To Choose A “Code of Conduct and Competency” Certified Lumber Yard.

What is a “Code of Conduct and Competency?” It’s simply a set of standards that professional lumber specialists adhere to ensuring that you always get the kind of service and quality that you expect. It also eliminates the risk for builders and contractors being delayed in an ongoing time sensitive project by a dishonest or incompetent lumber yard.

We hope this never happens to you, but let’s imagine:

- Your company has started an important job for a development where capital costs are significant and the time frame is if of the essence. Therefore, all jobs are in sequence and meticulously planned. Lumber, flooring, electrical, HVAC, cabinet installation, paint jobs etc. are all included and now YOU have to delay the entire project and all consecutive jobs because of inaccurate deliveries from a non-certified lumber supplier.

Or

- A lumber yard over represents their skills and gets you into trouble just because you accepted their lowest price. Their technicians were not proficient in reading blue prints. Consequently, the chosen lumber “Specialist” could not tell you about potential problems with certain products and designs and was incompetent to suggest better options. They simply were not qualified. Now, it falls to you to explain to the owner why you’re not to blame.

Or

- You are confronted with an unexpected change of plans that requires immediate action and delivery of different sizes of lumber and related products. The last thing you want to hear from your lumber supplier is: “Sorry, we cannot deliver until four days from today”. You need a certified lumber professional to get the job done on time and right now.

Any one of these situations could be a contractor's worst nightmare and particularly, if you don't know who you can call to get the job done quickly and professionally with accuracy the first time. The following five standards (Code of Conduct and Competency Certification) will help you when choosing your next lumber yard.

First, Make Sure That "Fast Service" Really Is Fast Service:

Even though most lumber suppliers advertise that they can help you and your subcontractors with deliveries quickly, usually it's NOT true. A reliable lumber supplier should consistently deliver stock materials in 48 hours or less.

Second, You Need to Watch Out For Hidden Excessive Charges:

Many suppliers will quote a price before a project starts and then change it in the middle of the job! Make sure you get a professional materials estimate before the job starts... including parts and delivery deadlines. Beware of companies that quote prices over the phone without a detailed written quote or estimate and without knowing about the project. Reputable suppliers know that a job must first be analyzed before an accurate materials estimate can be made. Always insist that the project be thoroughly presented and options discussed before an estimate is presented.

Third, - Avoid Lumber Specialists Who Are Doing "Business" In A Messy Work Area:

Unfortunately, some lumber specialists don't take care with their own working environment. They think lumber is a rough business and their premises are to manifest the same. WRONG! A badly organized lumber yard should make YOU and your subcontractors uncomfortable and put you on alert: The way their work area looks is how they perform, and the same mess is most likely going to be reflected on how they do business with YOU. To have a lumber yard certified their facilities and vehicles must be neat, clean, and well maintained.... Plus all service technicians must be uniformed, odor-free, and well groomed. They must wear adequately protective professional clothing if they are directly working with products that require special precaution.

Fourth, You need to watch out for Lumber Specialists Who Aren't Competent and can't See Potential Problems:

The lumber specialist must be able to quickly and accurately understand the project and have the latest technical know-how to suggest out of the ordinary options and to avoid unpleasant surprises for you. Their expertise must include knowledge of all recently developed products available to lumber yards on the market today; the fact that they don't carry a specific brand should not be used as an excuse. Therefore, they must attend classes to sharpen their skills on a regular basis.

The lumber specialist must be trained to read blue prints so he can identify potential critical issues in a project before they become a problem.

Lumber specialists need to be certified by the Northeast Retail Lumberman's Association, the industry governing body in our area.

Fifth, Your Lumber Specialist MUST have a Track Record:

Many companies that have little experience in this business will use shortcuts whenever they can to save money by having less and cheaper employees on their payroll. This consequently results in poor execution of orders and almost zero customer service, meaning you can't reach them if you have an emergency. Needless to say, they tend to be less technically competent and their "Specialists" receive less training, if at all, which could lead to costly surprises for you and your customers.

In addition to complying with the "Code of Conduct and Competency" there are specific questions to ask lumber supplier candidates to see if they are qualified:

1. Ask them how many years have they been doing business with builders and contractors.
2. Ask to see at least 10 recommendations from other builders and contractors.
3. Do they have any complaints against them from the Better Business Bureau?
4. Ask for permission to call a few of their successful builders or contractors.
5. A lumber specialist should be able to explain to you in clear language the specifications, features and benefits when using a specific product.

6. Ask for a legible detailed written estimate in advance of starting the job.

If they cannot produce any of these requests, choose a more reliable lumber specialist.

At Santelli Lumber, we not only comply with the “Code of Conduct and Competency”, we surpass it, and here’s why:

As a reputable lumber specialist, for all jobs we offer a professional materials estimate that ensures that you’ll know how much a job will be within 3%-5%... regardless how complex your project might be. And, of course, if we do quote prices over the phone, you’ll get it in writing to confirm what has been agreed. Expect a binding quote with no unpleasant surprises.

You can be confident that Santelli specialists are competent to give you expert advice for all the questions you might have regarding your project due to extensive training and “hands-on” experience.

We welcome background searches and checks regarding our reliability and credibility.

With over 62 years of experience in the lumber industry, we have successfully helped with literally thousands of projects, from simple orders to complex jobs. We are proud to say that we saved many builders and contractors from costly and unpleasant surprises.

The following are some real life situations and Case Studies to help you understand how we might be able to help both you and your customers...

Santelli Lumber has the expertise to avoid problems before they unfold

A builder had a job for a custom A-frame type house involving trapezoid shaped windows. The roof pitch was a 12/12. That is the way the builder ordered the windows. Our Santelli experts know from experience the way the walls are built on that type of house. The windows would not have an exact 12/12 pitch.

We called the builder and mentioned the problem. We urged him to check out the measurement once more before we executed the order.

It turned out we were right. We saved the builder \$3000-\$4000 worth of windows that would not fit that house and could not be sold because they were to be custom made.

Patience for Loyal Customers

A contractor told us that he had a house sold and wanted to order the windows for the new house. We ordered the windows. After the windows arrived the customer's house deal fell through.

At Santelli Lumber, we helped the contractor by holding those windows and not billing him. Some of the windows were used later and some were sold.

For \$6,000-\$7,000 worth of windows, we did not insist on payment. We kept them for a year until the contractor used some of them in other jobs while part of the initial order was sold to another individual.

Our action and special effort was really appreciated by our contractor customer.

At Santelli Lumber We Solve Problems Fast, “Miracles” Take A Tad Longer

A contractor was building a new home and the mason made a mistake on the breezeway portion of the house. Unfortunately, he made the breezeway a foot bigger than it was supposed to be. The problem was that the already- manufactured roof trusses would be too small for that section.

Typically, it takes 2 to 2 ½ weeks to get trusses manufactured. We called our supplier and explained how important this customer was to us and, ultimately, to them. After our intervention they understood that we *really* needed the trusses as soon as possible.

We delivered them swiftly to the customer’s job site within 48 hours and made another customer very happy.

Pointing Fingers Is Not Our Game...

Our truss supplier made mistakes on trusses. Somehow, the delivery was not thoroughly checked upon arrival at the construction site. They started the job and halfway through construction became aware of the problem.

The contractor had to get a crane to remove the old trusses before installing the correct pieces.

As finger pointing started between the supplier and the contractor, we intervened.

It was never clear who made the mistake. However, at Santelli, we felt responsible so we talked to the truss supplier.

Not only did our contractor get new trusses as soon as possible and Santelli paid for the crane and labor to remove the old trusses.

Few Questions Asked For Loyal Customers

Here are a few situations we found many contractors are confronted with again and again:

A crack in a sash or a front door that is warped or is not manufactured perfectly, when a contractor needs to close on a house are just a few of the annoyances that may need to be faced. This can be very embarrassing because the financing bank won't sign off unless they are fixed.

The usual parts service provided by suppliers takes approximately three weeks which is not good. At Santelli Lumber, we have a solution for our good customers. In these situations, we order the parts needed and at the same time we express order an entire, complete new unit, which we can get in a couple of days. We then take the parts needed out and deliver (and sometimes even install) them in the house. With our help and fast action they can now proceed with the speedy closing on the house.

(This Is A Partial List, Many More On File)

SPECIAL 15% DISCOUNT OFFER

Call us, either Arthur Santelli or Andy Clark, personally at 315-597-4185 and we'll explain how we'll help you with your future projects. Plus, to introduce you to Santelli Lumber's professional services, we'd like to offer you a **15% discount** on the first job we do for you.

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