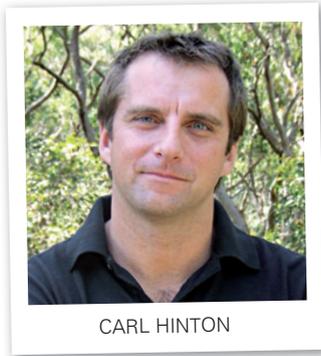


HOW TO KEEP THE BUILDER HAPPY



CARL HINTON

Carl Hinton, director of the multi-award-winning development company Urban Impact, gives you the insider knowledge to help you create your renovation dream.

So your DA has been approved and you've carefully chosen your builder. Work is finally about to start on your precious construction. Do you feel relieved? No! You've heard all the horror stories of how a fantastic relationship with the builder can turn nasty – and even end up in court. Just like in a marriage once the honeymoon is over, you have to work together and communicate to achieve your goal of a dream home.

HERE ARE SOME EASY TIPS TO KEEP THE RELATIONSHIP SAILING THROUGH THE GOOD TIMES AND THE BAD.

Keep up to date. Schedule weekly meetings to discuss progress and address any queries you or the builder may have.

- Bring up issues as soon as you notice them. It's hard to move the staircase 50mm to the right once the top floor has been built!
- Agree on the cost and scope of any variations to the original contract before the additional work is carried out.
- Be contactable at all times. Just because you're busy at work, don't keep the builder hanging around waiting for you to call back. If you're going to be away let the builder know well in advance.
- Have a clear understanding of what you want, but be flexible enough to discuss options with him.
- Try to be as efficient as possible when making decisions. Ask the builder to provide you with a timeline for all the critical decisions you need to make. Nothing will destroy a relationship

faster than making the builder stop work while he waits for you to decide which kind of white you wish to use.

- Choose all taps, baths, tiles and kitchen appliances well before they're required by the builder, and have them stored and ready for delivery so he isn't waiting for tiles to arrive – say – from Italy.
- Make sure all progress payments are timely, and if any issues arise ensure they're addressed prior to the payment due date.
- Builders may be part of your 'family' for quite a while so a cheerful "good morning" and a hot cuppa will work wonders.
- Building your home is an exciting and challenging experience that can be very rewarding if these simple steps are taken.

