

SALES

# Quick Tips for Efficient Qualifying

WHEN TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE, THESE TIPS CAN HELP SPEED UP QUALIFYING



*Jenny Rice is co-owner of Chicago area Icon Building Group. She participates in setting the strategic direction of the organization, the hiring of key personnel, and built Icon's Remodeling Division from the ground up.*

## THE CHALLENGES FACING OUR INDUSTRY HAVE

resulted in remodelers having little time and lots of interest. When it comes to addressing the influx of leads, being efficient and quick in the qualifying stage is key.

Day to day, I manage the design and sales side of Icon Building Group, a Chicagoland-based remodeling and building company. This is what I do to qualify efficiently.

### 1. Review Property Photos

When I contact the customer via phone, the goal is to do as much screening as I can. That can be a little challenging because people like to play pretty close to the vest, especially when we get to budget.

On that initial call, I will ask if I can get the address. If there are still pictures online from the last time the house was listed, it can be really helpful. So now you're speaking to this client while looking at some version of the house. It gives me some sort of framework to see what we're dealing with. It helps to understand the scope of work and have a realistic idea if it's a job that you want to take on.

### 2. Use Stats to Nail Down Budgets

The real crux of qualifying is budget and seeing if they have a realistic idea of what remodeling in today's world

costs. Customers may be concerned that if they tell me, "Hey, my budget for my kitchen is \$50,000," I'm going to say, "Oh, well, happily, this is going to cost \$49,000."

I understand that, I think they're scared. There's still a little bit of uncertainty in our industry in general, which is an uphill battle for all of us. So when people are nervous, I like to give them statistics. Statistics can't offend anybody.

I tell them what the average suburban kitchen size is and the cost of that average kitchen with a stock cabinet and quartz countertop and what they might expect to pay for that sort of facelift project. This at least gives a basis for comparison. Then I ask for their budget range.

### 3. Paint as an Option

A lot of remodelers do not offer paint. Paint is a sticking point for some people. It's incredibly expensive to do remodel painting due to all the prep work in covering and protecting everything—on top of the cost of paint.

Paint itself has gone up about 20% in the last 18 months. It can really shock people when they see how much painting is. We do offer painting because I believe in leaving people with the finished product, but I understand some remodelers don't.

Having said that, paint is one of the first things I peel back if I feel like I'm getting some resistance to a price. I ask, "Hey, do you have a good painter? How handy are you? Is this something you'd like to tackle?"

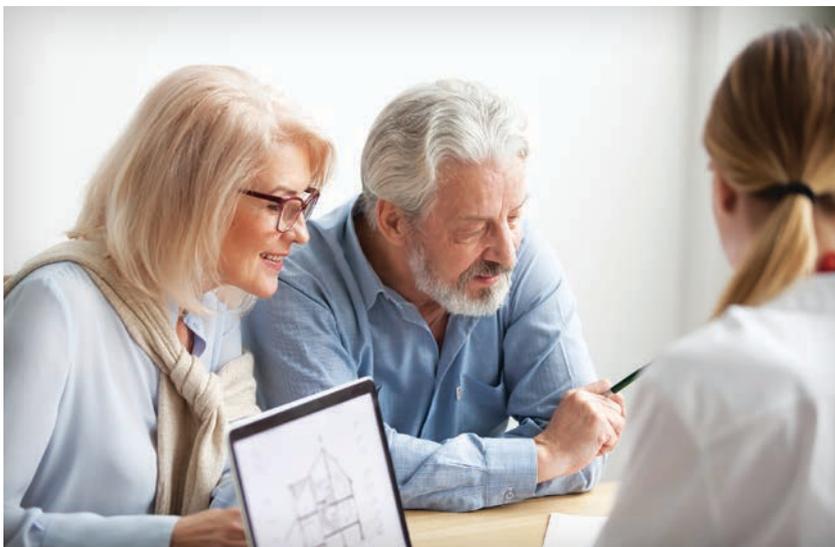
I think this builds a sense of trust and community because I'm trying to make this work for them the best I can.

### 4. Set Expectations and Provide Choices

This goes past the qualifying stage, but I address labor troubles in the first meeting with homeowners. We have always prided ourselves on our project management with almost no downtime between trades, but COVID changed that. Now, trades can get sick or materials from a previous job are delayed so our project gets bumped.

When it comes to materials, we're lucky to have several suppliers for most of our products. I explain the challenges with each product line by line and explain the pros and cons of each to see where they're most comfortable. In every selection, I try to get a second choice or similar option if something really holds up production.

I think it engenders great trust. We're all in the same boat paddling together instead of fighting. 



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Having wish-list items to pull back on if needed can help build trust with homeowners and ease budgets.