THE HOMEOWNER'S PAINTING QUOTE COMPARISON WORKSHEET

Compare Prep, Materials, Scope, Timeline & After-the-Job Support, Not Just Price

You did everything right: you collected multiple estimates. But now the quotes are sitting in front of you and instead of feeling clear, you feel more confused. One is cheaper. One sounds more thorough. One came with a slick proposal. How do you know which contractor is actually the better choice?

Price alone is not the answer. The real differences between a painter who delivers lasting results and one who does not are buried in the details: how thoroughly they prep, what materials they use, what they actually include, and whether they stand behind their work. This worksheet helps you pull those details out side by side, so you can compare what matters and make a decision you will feel confident about.

How to Use This Sheet

1. Fill in each contractor's name at the top of their column.
2. Work through every row, copying key details from their written estimate, or call to ask if something is missing.
3. Use the "What to Watch For" guide on page 2 to flag weak or vague answers.
4. Review your completed sheet and circle the contractor whose answers are clearest, most complete, and most professional.

Side-by-Side Quote Comparison

PRICING			
Total Price Quoted *Write the full amount, not a range.*			
What Is Included in the Price *Labor? Materials? Both?*			
What Is NOT Included *Anything excluded or priced separately?*			
Payment Terms *Deposit required? Balance due when?*			
PREP WORK			

Surface Prep Process *Cleaning, scraping, sanding, caulking?*			
Priming Included? *Are bare wood or stained areas primed?*			
Crack / Gap Repair *What surface repairs are included?*			
Wood Rot or Damage Treatment *Is deteriorated wood addressed?*			
SCOPE OF WORK			
Surfaces Included *Which walls, rooms, trim, ceilings, doors?*			
Surfaces Excluded *What is explicitly NOT being painted?*			
Number of Coats *One coat or two? Does it vary by surface?*			
MATERIALS			
Paint Brand & Product Line *Sherwin-Williams, Benjamin Moore, other?*			
Interior / Exterior Grade *Professional grade or builder grade?*			
Sheen / Finish Specified *Flat, eggshell, satin, semi-gloss?*			
Who Supplies Paint *Contractor or homeowner?*			
TIMELINE & LOGISTICS			
Estimated Start Date *When can they begin?*			

Estimated Duration *How many days or weeks to complete?*			
Crew Size on Site *How many workers? Owner present?*			
Daily Cleanup Process *What do they clean up each day?*			
Property Protection *Drop cloths, furniture, landscaping?*			
TRUST & ACCOUNTABILITY			
After-the-Job Support *Who do you call? What will they fix?*			
License & Insurance Confirmed *GL insurance + workers' comp?*			
References Available *Can they provide recent references?*			
Communication Style *Responsive? Clear? Professional?*			
Overall Impression *How did the estimate feel overall?*			

WHAT TO WATCH FOR & HOW TO MAKE YOUR DECISION

Red Flags: Weak or Incomplete Estimates

✘ No written scope of work

If the estimate is just a number on a piece of paper, there is no way to hold the contractor accountable for what they actually deliver. Require a written breakdown of every item included.

✘ Vague or missing prep details

"We prep everything" is not an answer. A professional can describe exactly how they clean, sand, caulk, and prime. If they cannot, their prep process may be minimal at best.

✘ No mention of the paint product

A contractor who does not specify the brand, product line, or sheen is either using whatever is cheapest or has not thought carefully about your job. Quality paint is part of quality work.

✘ One coat only with no explanation

Most surfaces require two coats for proper coverage and durability. One coat may be acceptable in some cases, but the contractor should explain their reasoning, not just leave it out of the quote.

✘ No clear answer about problems after the job

If a contractor cannot tell you who to call and what they will fix when a problem appears after the job, you have no way to hold them accountable.

✘ Pressure to decide quickly

A reputable contractor does not need to rush you. If someone is pressuring you to sign before you have had time to compare, treat that as a warning sign.

✘ No license or insurance confirmation

If they hesitated, deflected, or have not yet sent proof, follow up immediately. Do not allow work to start without confirmed coverage.

Strong Signals: What a Professional Proposal Looks Like

✔ Detailed written scope with every surface listed

You should be able to read the proposal and know exactly what they will paint, what they will not touch, how many coats, and what materials they will use.

✔ A clear prep process described step by step

Washing, scraping, sanding, caulking, and priming should be spelled out. A contractor who takes prep seriously will not have to be asked about it.

✔ Named paint brands and product lines

Professional-grade products make a real difference in coverage and durability. A contractor who specifies their materials is making a quality commitment.

✔ A specific after-the-job commitment

Who to call, how quickly they respond, and what they will fix, confirmed by past customers you can contact.

✔ Proof of insurance sent without prompting

Confident, professional contractors share their insurance documentation early. It signals they have nothing to hide and run a legitimate operation.

✔ Clear communication from the first contact

How quickly they respond, how clearly they speak, and how thoroughly they explain their process during the estimate stage is exactly how they will behave during the job.

Making Your Decision

- **Review your filled-in sheet from the top.** Look at each row and notice where one contractor stands out, and where one falls short. You are not just comparing prices. You are comparing how well each one communicated, how detailed their scope was, and how confident you feel about their process.
- **Ask follow-up questions for anything blank or vague.** If a contractor's proposal left a category empty, call them and ask. A professional will welcome the question. A weak contractor may get evasive or dismissive, and that itself is useful information.
- **Weight prep work and communication heavily.** Poor prep is the most common cause of early paint failure. Weak communication during the estimate is a reliable sign of weak communication during the job. These two factors matter more than most homeowners realize.
- **Do not automatically choose the lowest price.** The gap between a $3,000 estimate and a $4,000 estimate can easily represent a difference in prep quality, paint product, number of coats, or after-the-job support. Know what you are getting before you decide what you are saving.
- **Choose the contractor who earned your confidence.** After filling out this worksheet, one contractor will likely feel clearly stronger than the others. Trust that. The goal is not to find the cheapest painter; it is to find the one you will be glad you hired a year from now.

The right painting contractor is the one whose estimate is as clear and professional as the work they will deliver. This worksheet helps you see that, before the first brush stroke.

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