

Dear Friend,

Welcome to:

“Six Secrets to a Successful Pole Building”

Believe me, there are lots of things many building suppliers and contractors would love to keep a mystery to you. We will discuss some of them in a few minutes.

But first, let us ask you two questions:

Are you frustrated or aggravated trying to decide who in the world you can trust to provide your new pole building?

How can you be assured, when you spend your hard earned dollars, you'll get exactly what you paid for?

If you are frustrated, you're not alone. Haven't we all heard the “nightmare stories” of the botched jobs, scam artists, fly-by-nighters, unfinished jobs, and general lack of professionalism?

Very scary stuff!

Let's face it. The bad apples of the industry have really made it hard for the consumer to figure out the “white hats” from the “black hats”.

Far too often you pick up a newspaper or turn on the TV only to see another story about somebody who had a terrible experience with his or her building project. Whether it was hiring the wrong contractor, permit battles with planning or zoning departments or worse yet a “wanna-be” builder who just took the money and ran.

According to the Washington Post, “No business classification generated more consumer complaints last year than home-repair work.” This would also include “home improvements”, such as a new pole building. The home improvement category has the dubious distinction of having held one of the top three spots in the National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators and the Consumer Federation of America's annual surveys for the past five years.

Most of us are just too busy these days to take the time to acquire all the necessary and needed information when deciding on major expenditures, like how to go about having a pole building constructed.

Is it any wonder why most property owners make costly mistakes when they're considering a pole building project?

Imagine this:

Chris and Ellen Anderson:

Leaving the big city “rat-race” to buying a home in the country with peace and quiet was always their dream. After years of saving and searching, they finally found their “dream” home. Shortly after moving into their new house, the Andersons found the amount of “things” needed for the upkeep of a country home and five acres to be overwhelming. The far too-small garage was filled to the ceiling. The car and SUV had to be parked in the driveway. There was no convenient place to park the RV, whose roof had developed a leak. They decided to help themselves solve many problems at once. A new maintenance-free, steel-covered pole building was their solution.

Recently, they read an advertisement for pole buildings. The ad said they were Pole Barn Specialists and would give Free Estimates. The ad also said they could get the best quality in Workmanship & Materials at the best prices anywhere. They called the contractor’s office and asked for an estimate.

The contractor’s office employee was highly personable. He listened to Chris’s wishes, made some possible suggestions as to what might best fit the Anderson’s needs and gave them a price over the phone. Chris made arrangements to see a couple of the contractor’s buildings in the area.

The same young man Chris had spoken with initially was the only person at the contractor’s office. “Bob” first took Chris to see a building which was constructed by one of the Bob’s crews, when Bob had previously owned his own construction business. The building owner was present when they arrived. He went on and on about how much he loved his new building, he was pointing out the quality of the materials and spoke highly of the professionalism of the building crew. Chris started to wonder if this was a “set-up”, because this customer was happy beyond belief! Chris had to admit, the building was beautifully designed and constructed.

“Bob” and Chris then visited a second building, which had been built by the contractor himself. Chris could tell it was certainly not of the same quality as the first building they had visited. Chris thought “Bob” seemed rather uncomfortable with the building. He certainly didn’t have the pride in it, as the first building constructed by Bob’s former business.

When they returned to the contractor’s office, Chris told the salesman he was very interested in a building, as long as the quality of materials and the design would match the first building they visited. The salesman assured Chris, he personally would be seeing to the design and the materials, so it would be equal or better.

Chris and Ellen discussed Chris’s visit. Chris really liked the salesman, “Bob”, and especially liked the first building they had visited together. Chris called the contractor’s office and asked “Bob” if he could come take a look at their building site.

Bob soon arrived, fifteen minutes early for the appointment. After seeing the site, he made several good suggestions. Bob told the Andersons, his boss had granted him permission to give them a special deal to order the building the same day, as long as he could return with a signed agreement and a down payment check. While they hadn’t gotten any other bids, the price seemed to be fair and if this young man was any reflection of his employer, they knew they’d be more than pleased with the results. Bob explained he would be overseeing the design and materials ordering for their project, but all construction was coordinated personally by his boss, Greg, the contractor. He gave them one of Greg’s business cards, on which he also wrote in the contractor’s cellular and home phone numbers. This was enough to convince the Andersons. They signed the Sales Agreement for the building and wrote out a check for the requested 1/3 down payment. He explained materials would be arriving within 7 to 10 days. All seemed well and the Andersons were excited.

Good to his word, the materials were all delivered within two weeks of the building being ordered! All of the delivery people had been pleasant and the quality of the materials amazed even Chris. After all the materials arrived, “Bob” called to make sure all was satisfactory and to ask for the second 1/3 payment to be mailed to the office. Ellen put the check in the mail the very next day.

Chris had made a couple of calls to Greg, the contractor, to check on the schedule for the construction crew. Since the calls were made before the materials had been delivered, Chris hadn't thought much about his calls not being returned.

Two weeks passed since the materials had been delivered, with no call from Greg, the contractor. They began calling to find out why there was a delay. After several calls, they finally reached the contractor at home, in the middle of the day, no less! He assured them the next available crew would be sent to the Anderson's and the crew chief, Dave, would be calling them within a few days to schedule construction. Another two weeks passed and no call from Dave. All calls went unreturned and the Anderson's started to get rather nervous. **They had already given Greg over \$20,000!** The money came from the Second Mortgage they had gotten on the house to do the project.

Again another series of phone calls to track down the contractor! When they finally did reach Greg, he seemed upset with the Andersons, because he had not yet received the second building payment. He didn't want to listen to anything Chris had to say. Greg didn't offer any excuses or apologies, but instead shifted the focus on the Anderson's for supposedly not sending the second payment. Chris assured him Ellen had mailed a check, but told Greg he would personally deliver a replacement check to their office the next day. This seemed to appease the contractor.

The day after Chris delivered the check, the construction crew showed up! Chris was a bit concerned about the building crew's "looks". They arrived in a battered pickup truck, wearing threadbare jeans and well-worn T-shirts. He caught himself wondering when it was they had last taken showers! Well, what do you expect from hard working builders? Chris went to greet Dave, the crew chief and found out his name was Richie and there wasn't any Dave. Richie had a series of sad stories about why it had taken them so long to arrive, but Chris and Ellen were just relieved he had eventually made an appearance and accepted his stories with a grain of salt.

Richie put a couple of unkempt teenagers to work digging the holes for the building... by hand with shovels! He said he'd be there personally to work on the building the next day, after the hole inspection had been approved. While digging, the "crew" played music from their stereo at volume levels Ellen was afraid would make her head split open. She was afraid to say anything to them, as they were rather intimidating looking, with all of their tattoos and earrings. Once the holes were dug, the "crew" kept themselves entertained, while waiting for a building inspector to arrive, by tossing around a Frisbee with their pet pit bull. The inspector never did show up to do the inspection.

It turned out the inspector never arrived because the Greg, the contractor, had "forgotten" to go to the Building Department and pay for the building permit! After the teenagers had wasted their entire afternoon (and hers) waiting for an inspection, Ellen decided to step in and get things moving. She drove into town the next morning, paid for the permit and asked to have an inspector out to do the hole inspection.

It was two weeks before Richie returned, after numerous calls to Greg from the Andersons and promises the crew would be there in a couple of days. When they did return, the building poles were then stood in the holes and concreted in. Frankly, Chris was a bit concerned when the builder's helpers dumped dry sacks of concrete mix into the holes around the poles, but the crew chief assured him it was they way they always did it and would be ok! Amazingly, the framing went quickly. Unfortunately, only a portion of the building material had been shipped. The crew chief said he would have to wait until after the insulation arrived to install the roofing.

The insulation arrived approximately three weeks later! The truck driver told Ellen they hadn't been able to deliver earlier, because the contractor's account with them was in arrears, but had been caught up. Now the crew was ready to start roofing. BUT.....because it had been almost two months since he had ordered materials, the contractor's bills were past due on the lumber, trusses, and also the steel roofing and siding. He needed the balance of the money to pay the bill and have the crew continue their work.

Chris and Ellen reluctantly paid him the money with Greg's solemn vow to have the building finished **immediately**. The crew returned promptly and seemed to make good progress. With "about

three days work left” the crew left at noon on a Wednesday, saying they had a warranty job to finish, it would take the rest of the day and they’d be back tomorrow. Thursday, Friday and then the weekend came and went, without a word. Chris left messages on the contractor’s answering machine. They paged him. Chris and Ellen even drove over an hour to his house, only to find Greg not home. Three more weeks went by trying to contact Greg before they finally gave up.

Ellen noticed their checking account balance was \$10,000 less than she expected. When she went over their account statement, she found the “missing” second payment check had been cashed by Greg, the contractor, as well as the replacement! They’d now paid an extra \$10,000 for their building and it still wasn’t completed!

One can only imagine the steps the Anderson’s took to try to get satisfaction – all were fruitless. They were now faced with being defrauded out of their money plus they had a building that was unfinished. Not knowing what to do next, they asked their friends for advice. One mentioned they had ordered a pole building material kit package. She told Ellen they had referred her to a contractor who had done an excellent job and finished the building within three weeks from when they had ordered their building. The materials were all delivered promptly and the delivery drivers had nothing but praise for the company they dealt with. Everything had been done correctly and gone off without a hitch. She thought maybe the same company could help Ellen get her building finished. That’s when Ellen called **Hansen Buildings**.

While the people at Hansen explained they weren’t contractors themselves, they did have Ellen send them some digital photos of the building and take an inventory of the remaining materials. Some of the materials had been damaged by the original building crew, so Ellen ordered the replacement materials from Mike at **Hansen Buildings**. The replacement parts arrived promptly and the total cost to complete the unfinished portions of the building with the replacement materials and what was left behind by the first contractor was an additional \$950. Chris was provided with the instructions and technical support to complete the work himself. On the first weekend after the replacement materials arrived, Chris, with a helping hand from Ellen, completed the building! Ellen and Chris were very happy to be able to contact **Hansen Buildings** for technical support, even on the weekend! In looking at the photos sent by Ellen, Mike saw some glaring structural errors, made by the original building crew, and gave free advice to Chris on how to best make the repairs.

Sadly, there wasn’t enough material to complete the entire building, as the overhead doors had never been delivered. There also wasn’t any money left from the loan to complete the entire project as originally planned. This will have to wait until they can save the remaining money, which they had already overpaid to the first contractor, who never finished the job. Many months, headaches and worries later, they will still have to spend **\$2,500.00 more** just to complete their building. Some “Special Deal!”

* * * * *

Unfortunately for Chris and Ellen, there was not much they could do. What happens to the Andersons happens way too often.

Does Chris and Ellen's story make you feel sick to your stomach?

We'll bet it does. And it really aggravates us!

It makes us angry to talk to all of you who have worked so hard, for so many years, to only find yourselves frustrated about your projects and your money.

When you build a building, you should be getting the wonderful peace of mind coming from being in complete **control**, working with someone who understands your needs and your goals, and can assist you to take your project from concept to completion.

Let's look at a very different scene from Chris and Ellen.

* * * * *

Harry and Sharon Stevens both work full-time. Between raising children and grandchildren, 40 hour work weeks and everything that goes into running a household, finding time to look at home improvement projects was a tough task. They decided a good way to meet many Pole Building Contractors was to visit one of the annual Home Improvement Shows. After meeting many contractors and scheduling appointments to get estimates, they thought they may finally get their dream building.

One contractor scheduled an appointment, but never showed. Two days later, he called to try and reschedule since he had “forgotten” as he was so busy. Of course, having set aside rare and valuable time to be there together, just to be “forgotten”, without even the courtesy of a phone call, they declined.

The next contractor showed up on time. He measured the proposed building site, came to the door, showed them one sample card with steel siding and roofing colors, and then wrote a price on the back of his business card. “Call me when you know what colors you’d like and when you want us to start”. It seemed to be a fair price, but they were not sure exactly what they would be buying and if there would be more charges. They had many unanswered questions. Besides, they already had a 10-year-old pole building. The painted steel had faded, the condensation control blanket was sagging from the weight of water from numerous leaks and the overhead doors had just never worked quite right. Supposedly it was to have been a “maintenance free” building. However, the wooden entry and overhead door jambs seemed to always be in need of repainting. And, even though the building had a concrete floor, there were, forever it seemed, rodents entering the building somewhere! They had it constructed on the property when they first moved into the home. The contractor who built it gave them his “Lifetime” warranty on the materials and workmanship. He had responded quickly to the first few calls for repairs however, after those first few visits, would schedule appointments to do the work and simply not show up. When he finally just stopped returning their phone calls, they realized his warranty was worthless! They knew what they didn’t want was to spend a lot of money, just to end up with another, equally poor installation and another short lived “Lifetime” warranty. They wanted to know if other buildings were better. Would everyone’s steel fade so badly? What does the “Lifetime Warranty” really cover?

The next salesman was from a large construction company. This company does work in nearly every state in the country. They advertised how many thousands of buildings they had constructed and how the business was second generation family owned. They have local offices in many states. He seemed very knowledgeable about different types of pole buildings and assured them his company’s technology was only the newest and most advanced, so it wouldn’t have the problems their old pole building did. After many hours of his sales pitch, he offered them a great deal if they would “buy tonight”, 40% OFF! Or, he could save them money, if they were willing to do some of the work themselves. Unfortunately, the price he quoted was **\$60,000.00!** Well, the last guy was only \$15,000.00! Once the salesman heard this he said, “Well, with the 40% discount and the ‘Model Building’ program, we can put your building up for **ONLY \$34,000.00, IF I can earn your business tonight**”. Feeling over-pressured, Harry and Sharon decided to pass on the “Great Deal”.

Next was a salesman from a local contractor with more than 20 years’ experience and lots of local references. They recognized his name and his ads in the paper. He offered two models of pole buildings. \$19,800 for his “Best” building which utilized prefabricated roof trusses or \$23,500.00 for an “Even Better” building constructed with “heavy duty” job site built trusses.

The contractor proceeded to tell Harry and Sharon he was the only good pole building company around and how bad all the others were. “They are too new and have lousy products”. “Their engineering is no good”. “His work really stinks”. “So and so is a drunk”. He named everyone in the book and had something bad to say about every single one! The company did seem to have a decent reputation and had been around quite awhile. His price was in the middle so it seemed to be a good compromise. Not too high, but not so low as to make them wary. They were a “maybe”. They wondered about the salesman’s integrity and felt he lacked professionalism. They doubted him and

felt unsure due to his negativity toward his competition. What was he so afraid of? Is he really this insecure?

Harry and Sharon's oldest son had an idea. He had a week's vacation from work coming up and his two brothers would be on break from school. He had watched his parent's last pole building being constructed and it didn't look all so difficult to him. Harry knew his boys could use the work, it would give all of the boys the chance to do a project together. Besides, he'd rather pay his boys, than some contractor. He certainly was tired of all of the endless "fluff" from all the building sales people.

The first stop was the local building supply, who advertised as "Pole Building Experts". After listening to the sales pitch, Harry had learned just a bit about what he wanted in his new building. The "resident expert" seemed to have a fair idea of what he was talking about, but too many questions were left unanswered for Harry's liking. Plus, he would have to change his building size from what he really wanted to fit the lumber yard's "standard kit". Harry and Sharon were disappointed they weren't going to be able to customize it with all of the features they truly wanted.

*Harry was about ready to give up, when Sharon found an interesting pole building company on the Internet. They spent several evenings reading the information available on their website. They also checked several other pole building websites, but kept coming back to www.HansenPoleBuildings.com, as it offered more useful information than all of the other websites combined. Sharon called their toll-free number **1 (866) 200-9657** and asked for a brochure to be mailed to them. Harry and Sharon were surprised when they received a large Red, White and Blue Priority Mail envelope from **Hansen Buildings** in just a matter of days! Besides the information found on the website, there was also a great product guide and booklet of the most Frequently Asked Questions.*

*Sharon went to the request a bid page on the **Hansen Buildings** website, filling it out to match the features they had been asking about. Within hours, she had an Email back to ask a few "fine point" questions and a complete quotation was in her Email box within 24 hours. Not only did the quotation have the features they wanted, at a price they could afford, but it also had pages of available options, all priced out for their exact size building.*

*But could they actually do the work themselves? Harry called the **Hansen Buildings**' sales department and visited with Mike. He was told the great majority of their customers do their own work, many with little or no prior construction knowledge. The building designer offered to have some sample pages from the construction manual Emailed to Harry, and also reminded him of the availability of seven day a week technical support by Email or telephone.*

*After receipt of the sample pages, Harry was convinced, but Sharon was skeptical about paying for a building over the Internet, especially as their office was so far away geographically. She Emailed Mike with her concerns and received a quick response which included the contact persons and toll free numbers for their bank and major suppliers. After calling several of the references, she was amazed, every one of them had nothing but good things to say about **Hansen Buildings**!*

Sharon ordered the building over the telephone the very next day. Within a matter of days, the full construction manual arrived, along with the order confirmation. Shortly after, two complete sets of building plans arrived so she could acquire their building permit. Sharon was surprised when the building department told her they get lots of people applying for permits for Hansen Buildings and the permit should be ready to pickup in 2-3 days, instead of the 4 to 6 weeks she had expected.

*Within just a few weeks, the building materials arrived. All of the drivers were pleasant and again had nothing but good things to say about **Hansen Buildings**. In the meantime, Harry and his sons had been studying the building plans and the construction manual. They'd had a few questions they emailed Mike about and received answers back promptly. When the actual week for construction came, they felt well prepared to take on the project.*

*While everything didn't go without a hiccup, it went well. Their initial deliveries had been short by one pressure treated column. Harry called **Hansen Buildings** on a Sunday to let them know and not only was the call answered, but the piece they needed was available for them at "will call" of their local lumber yard at 7 o'clock Monday morning!*

Sharon took the week of construction off from work, and took lots of digital photos. She emailed them to the Hansen office every few hours to show their progress. The response Emails included a few individual pointers, which made the project go even smoother. Along the way, Harry's dog chewed into a roll of metal building insulation. When they called to order a new roll, the Hansen rep offered to send them some repair tape. For FREE!

Harry and Sharon's sons had planned an entire week to construct the building, but they were done Thursday night. It was a fun family experience, they saved thousands of dollars and their new building turned out looking far superior to the 10 year old one they already had!

Harry and Sharon Stevens are absolutely thrilled with their new pole building...and they had a Limited Lifetime Warranty to safeguard their investment.

* * * * *

Now this is a much better story than the Anderson's, isn't it?

But what was the difference? What did Harry and Sharon do that Chris and Ellen didn't?

What did Chris and Ellen learn?

What are these secrets you may ask?

Let's get right down to it.

Here are the **Six Secrets to a Successful Pole Building...**

Secret #1 – Avoid Common Misconceptions

1. **If the Better Business Bureau doesn't have any complaints against the business, they must be qualified.** No, this is a myth. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) often does an inadequate job of reporting offending companies, especially if they're dues paying "members".

The October 1995 issue of Money Magazine had some very interesting and revealing things to say about the BBB. Many consumers believe the BBB is a non-profit organization or even a government agency. In fact, the BBB is really a franchised for-profit business often failing to give unsatisfactory ratings to member companies plagued by a history of serious complaints.

*The following article is noted on: <http://www.ripoffreport.com/reports/ripoff1343.htm>
"It has been reported to the "badbusinessbureau.com" that, the BBB encourages and solicits money from the very businesses they monitor! How could this be beneficial to the consumer?*

Consumers have reported, the BBB DOES NOT report consumer complaints under investigation, even when they know the business is under criminal investigation and is about to be shut down....." (See victim's story on website)

What the BBB does, is give the business that is being reported the opportunity to respond. If the business responds many times this is enough to give the business a satisfactory rating, no matter what their response is!

Most BBB offices do not report any past history of a business, even when that business continuously victimizes different consumers. [IF a business can satisfy each customer's complaint, you will never know of this information in the future. All you might know is,"They have satisfied their complaints."...GIVING THEM A SATISFACTORY RATING.

When a business has complaints that are unsatisfied, they still might get a satisfactory rating. The BBB Better Business Bureau will not tell you what the complaints were, only that they "satisfied all complaints". The BBB must realize what a consumer must have gone through before resorting to filing a complaint! And for every consumer that did file a complaint, there are 20 others that did not complain. You could be [the] next!

When consumers see that Better Business Bureau plaque, this gives the consumer a false sense of security. Consumers need to be made aware of this misconception nationwide. Remember, all you need to do to become a BBB member and get a very impressive BBB plaque, is to call the BBB and tell them you want to be a member. You can tell the BBB any lie you want about yourself, ...they will never check it out. That's correct! They never check it out. All the BBB plaque means, is they paid their dues. (Period)

Services they provide? Services is an over statement! If they ever try to resolve your dispute by having mediation, the BBB decision means nothing in a court of law. The BBB does provide a mediation service, but the BBB cannot force the business to do anything for you to resolve your consumer rip-off. They can only make suggestions.

And if the business does not comply, this will not insure an unsatisfactory rating for the business that ripped you off.

Not too good for the consumer who has been victimized and not too good for future consumers who will call the BBB to see if the business has a good rating before they do business.

Even when many complaints are satisfied by a business, they can still get a satisfactory rating. Many times, all a business needs to do to satisfy the victim's complaint is just simply answer the BBB alleged complaint.

Consumers put too much faith and respect into the BBB. The BBB is in the business of collecting fees from the very businesses they monitor. That's like the fox guarding the hen house.

And we wonder why the courts are so jam packed?

And we wonder why the Attorney General's office cannot give the consumer any attention. The Attorney General's office only has time for the high profile cases. They are very under-staffed.

The above information about the BBB may vary from state to state, where some BBB offices may be more scrutinizing in their efforts to check on business when becoming a member and some BBB offices might be more thorough and revealing in reporting than the BBB offices we have investigated around the United States.

badbusinessbureau.com does recommend the BBB to consumers, because it is so hard for a business to get a bad report with the BBB. We always recommend for a consumer, when filing a report with the badbusinessbureau.com or before doing business, to check with the Better Business Bureau first. You know a business is really BAD if it has an unsatisfactory rating with the BBB!

- 2. Going with the lowest price always saves you money.** NO, not necessarily! Everyone tends to look for the lowest price. It is only human nature. British poet John Ruskin (1819-1900) once said, "There is hardly anything in the world that some man cannot make a little worse, cannot make a little cheaper and the people who consider price only are this man's lawful prey." In other words, *you get what you pay for!*

If the first question you are asking the salesperson is, "how much is it?" you may be guilty of focusing on the price instead of the cost. Depending on how you want to use your building, the cheapest *purchase price* may not be the cheapest *overall cost*. (Price and cost are different!)

For example, we've seen many people buy a quonset hut steel building because they are so cheap. But then they have to insulate it (which is like trying to insulate the inside of a giant tin can) which drives up the cost considerably. Even after spending the money for insulation, the "R" value isn't great and so they spend much more money on wasted energy over the next 5-10 or even 20 years than they would have saved in the first place if they had purchased an initially more expensive (but much more appropriate for their use) type of building.

Why *do* prices vary so much? If you're looking for, say a 40' x 60' building, you are going to get quotations from \$6,000 to maybe as high as \$60,000. This is a huge spread! The amount of variance is only because you are not comparing apples-to-apples. It is rather like saying, "How much is a truck?" Well, what kind of truck? New or used? Big or small? Loaded or stripped down? Or is it like looking at a picture in a computer catalog and asking, "How much for this one?" You need to know the chip speed, RAM and ROM memory and a whole bunch of other stuff to make sure you are getting a fair price. We hope you get our point. You need to get a valid comparison. After you have done your comparisons, you will find, in most cases, the prices will actually be very close. Competition – in pole buildings as in everything else – drives the quality UP and the prices DOWN. The key is to get a level playing field to insure you are making a *true* comparison.

Quite frankly, the two easiest things to compare are price and size. They are just numbers, and you can get those numbers in ten seconds looking at an ad or talking to a salesperson. This is because every building has a size and every building has a price! *And you know what?* Most people quit comparing right there! Price and size – the extent of their research. And this is why so many people make mistakes! You need to take some time and compare the buildings, determine what is important to you in the building, and THEN go forward and compare the prices ALONG with everything else about the building.

While on the subject of buying the cheapest building, here is a good tip. Ask yourself, "If the price of each building were exactly the same, which one would I buy?" With this answer, you are more than half way to making your proper decision. And then ask yourself "Why – why would I want this particular type of building?" When you answer this question, you will then know exactly what you *really* like and exactly why!

On a low estimate, you must ask yourself what is being left out or what shortcut is being taken. One pole building contractor had his jobs priced \$600 cheaper than anyone else. The homeowner wanted to save money and accepted his proposal. After the job was completed, all the lumber cutoffs, steel scraps, bent nails and dropped screws were still lying strewn about the yard and even in his shrubs. Understandably, the homeowner was having a fit! The contractor told them he had not figured the cleanup in his proposal ... which explained the "cheaper" price!

Another major pole building kit supplier always seemed to be about 10% less expensive than his competitors. When their buildings were completed, they seemed to be noticeably missing other building providers' standard features, such as base, eave, wall light and overhead door jamb trims. They didn't even include colored steel roofing or metal building roof insulation in their bids!

One of the most common signs of trouble ahead can be someone offering to provide a building kit for much less money than others, without a valid explanation as to why it's less expensive. *Like anything else, you can't get something for nothing.* Be careful of choosing your pole building supplier based only upon the lowest price.

- 3. Going with the highest price always gives you the best quality.** Again, NO, not necessarily! Examine carefully what it is you are actually paying for.

Does the building supplier have lots of overhead expenses? Do they have a big office (or multiple offices), or their own lumber yard, roof truss plant and delivery trucks? How many people do they have as salaried staff? How about a big sales force? Someone is going to pay for all of those salaries and the benefit packages with them. Along with the big office, come the big monthly payments, insurance and utility bills. Those trucks have huge monthly payments whether they are driving down the highway, or parked. What about the huge interest costs of flooring inventory?

- 4. Doing it yourself saves money.** Usually, but NOT ALWAYS! Usually the “weekend warrior” can successfully undertake small projects like painting, hanging wallpaper, routine repairs, etc., without the need for professional assistance. But beware of undertaking larger, more complicated projects, such as the construction of a pole building, without detailed plans, complete instructions, and expert (and available) customer service. A “STEP-by-STEP” video tape just doesn't replace over 20 years of experience in helping homeowners successfully construct their own buildings (besides, how many people will actually take their video player and TV out to the building site?) Without this support, what starts out as an attempt to save money can turn into a costly folly. All too often the job is botched and it costs more to have a professional come in and fix what's been done. According to an article in the Denver Post, less than 20% of these do-it-yourself jobs work out. This is mostly due to lack of instruction and support on the part of the package supplier. If you want to be assured your do-it-yourself project will turn out the way you want it, call a qualified professional. This is why **Hansen Buildings provides technical support seven days a week – to get your questions answered immediately.**

- 5. If a person claims to have years of experience, they must do quality work.** NO! We can't tell you how many people receive bad workmanship from contractors who claimed to be in business or the trade for twenty years. Take experience claims with a grain of salt. Don't believe just because a person has twenty years experience, he will do a good job. He could have done a poor job for twenty years. Investigate further to ensure you're dealing with a qualified professional. If they don't provide references, ASK for them...and be sure to check them out! Check out the buildings they have constructed...in person, and look them over carefully.

- 6. It is always best to deal with a contractor who can do “everything”.** Again, not necessarily (or usually). Everything is a big word. What contractor can possibly be an expert and have experts working for him in every trade? Think about how many trades can be involved – site clearing, excavation, grade work, fill and compacting, concrete forming and/or flatwork, plumbing, electrical, insulating, drywall hanging and taping, the list seems endless.

A reputable pole building contractor with your best interests (and keeping in mind your wallet), will stick with what he is best at – construction of your pole building shell. He will take the time to suggest to you how to get the most for your money with other related trades. Even something as simple as a few telephone calls to purchase your own pre-mixed concrete for a floor and hire a cement finisher direct, can save you hundreds, if not thousands of dollars for under an hour of work!

- 7. Membership in the NFBA means you get a better building.** NFBA stands for the National Frame Builders Association. This is the only national trade organization representing the pole building industry. According to the April 2000 issue of Frame Building News, the formation was begun as, “The future of the post-frame building industry was being threatened by a pending Indiana building code.” From its roots as a lobbying organization, now, according to Frame Building News, “One of the association’s primary objectives is to promote education and research and disseminate information concerning all facets of post frame construction, including farm, residential, and commercial use.”

The technical data and information provided by the NFBA is available to all pole builders, whether they are members or not.

The NFBA is professionally managed and the management fees are based upon the NFBA’s income. The NFBA is in the business of selling “memberships” and collecting dues. It is not a reporting agency where pole building consumer complaints are heard or customer-contractor disputes are resolved. Just because a contractor is a NFBA member, does not necessarily mean you are working with someone who is a reputable professional.

We are certainly NOT recommending you do not patronize an NFBA member. Just be aware a business with a NFBA membership does not “guarantee” their work.

- 8. Hiring an architect will save you money.** Rarely. However, on a potentially complex or involved project, involving large scale development and planning and zoning issues (especially commercial or industrial), it probably behooves you to have an architect on board.

For these types of projects, whether you're about to expand your current facility, adapt an existing structure to a new use, or construct an entirely new building, your building project represents a major investment which will affect the productivity and efficiency of your organization for years. Smart decision-makers know the way to maximize such an investment begins with consulting an architect. Architects have the education, training, experience and vision to maximize your construction dollars and ease the entire design and construction process.

Early involvement is the key. By helping you define the building project, architects can provide meaningful guidance for design. They can conduct site studies, help secure planning and zoning approvals, and perform a variety of other pre-design tasks. Plus, when architects are involved at the earliest planning stage, they gain more opportunities to understand your business, develop creative solutions, and propose ways to reduce costs. The long-term result is a facility which adds to the productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness of your operation.

9. Buying an engineered set of plans, in advance, will save you money. Highly unlikely. Very few registered professional engineers specialize in the design of pole buildings. Should you hire an engineer who does not specifically design pole buildings for a living, it is highly possible you will add hundreds, if not thousands of dollars to the cost of your building project.

Further, if you purchase a complete building package, the plans will (or should be) included with the materials.

10. Shopping for each piece of material yourself will save you money. Almost never.

And what is your time worth? Here is a clue – most professional pole builders purchase complete building material kits from suppliers. Why? Because they know the kit package supplier will provide complete building plans and the materials which will meet or exceed the specifications of the design engineer. Certainly, the builder could do the material list himself, call all of the different manufacturers, and arrange to have the materials delivered (or go pick them up himself). Not only would this be time consuming, but who takes care of the problem if a piece is missing?

11. An advertisement in the Yellow Pages is your assurance a business is reputable. Hardly. Anyone can advertise in the Yellow Pages. An ad should not be considered an indication of the quality of a product or of a contractor's work. As in any advertising, anyone can say *anything!* It's the proof you want – so ask for it and do yourself a favor by checking them out. Professional businesses will take this as a compliment. Be wary of those who look upon asking for references as a threat!

Secret #2 – Common Scams

1. **Beware of “Door-To-Door” contractors.** These people may not be contractors at all. Never allow them into your home until you have checked them out thoroughly! This cannot be stressed enough. It has been reported two men claiming to be contractors have entered into homes and while one took the homeowner on a pretend “inspection”, the other was going through purses and picking up items which could be sold quickly!

Some contractors working in your area may put out fliers or come to your door soliciting additional work in the area. These contractors could be honest, reputable people. If you're interested in their services, do not invite them in. Politely ask them for their business card and the name, address, and telephone number of the people they are doing work for in the neighborhood. Then make an appointment with the homeowner to take a look at the quality of the contractor's work.

2. **Avoid businesses who “Bad Mouth” their competition.** These contractors have no other way to “sell” themselves to you except for making their competitors look bad. Their workmanship and products may not stand alone as merit of their performance and only by “badmouthing” the competition are they able to earn your business.

Plainly, these people lack professionalism and integrity. You should ask yourself, “How am I likely to be treated by this type of person?” It may be the competitor has superior quality products or workmanship and he hopes you'll never even talk to them, afraid with further research you may choose the competitor instead, thus costing him the job. The “bad mouthed” competitor should be the very next one on your list to call and thus given the time to describe his own products and services to you. Then you are equipped to make up your own mind. Something these “Bad Mouthers” fear the most. They cannot be shown the door soon enough!

3. **Avoid high pressure salespeople.** You should never feel pressured into making a decision about choosing who you get a building from. If you ever feel a contractor or salesperson is pressuring you, ask them to back off. If they persist, it's time to look for another provider. High pressure usually leads to a bad decision when building. A qualified professional would never have to pressure anyone into a project.

4. **Discounts for Cash.** This means green backs, not checks. Think about it. Why would anyone want to give you a discount for paying by cash? Are they potentially doing something unlawful?

You should always make payments by check or credit card. Your credit card statement, cancelled check, or bank statement give you proof of payment, besides a receipt. Paying with a credit card also may give you extra protection. For example, if you have a problem with merchandise or services charged to a credit card and you have made a good faith effort to work out the problem with the seller, you have the right to withhold from the credit card issuer payment for the merchandise or services. You can withhold payment up to the amount of credit outstanding for the purchase, plus any finance or related charges.

Banks have refined and protected the ACH “check by phone” to the extent you'd be better off paying this way instead of risking the “old fashioned” paper check being lost in the mail.

5. **Today Only Discounts.** If a building supplier ever tells you the price is available for “today only”, it’s time to show him the door.

Quite often they’ll provide you a story... “by signing today you’re entitled to a ‘model building’ or an ‘advertising discount’”. The story typically centers on the need to use your building as a model to advertise their services in the neighborhood. They mark their prices up just to give you this false discount. Don’t be fooled. This is an old trick used to pressure homeowners into making a quick decision. This is your money we’re talking about! Quickly show these salespeople the door!

So remember, you are buying a building, not a bunch of sales hype and pressure! You are going to hear all kinds of stories designed to pressure you into making a decision **RIGHT NOW**. This is especially true if you are going to be dealing with a building company selling only in person. It is expensive to make a personal, face-to-face, visit. You will hear about “there is one on the loading dock right now” or “someone canceled their order and you can have it at such-and-such price if you buy it right now” or “there is one left over from the state fair promotion” and even “buy today and you will get a free door or free shipping or free eave lights”. It is all “buy today, buy now, last chance, don’t wait, hurry up...yada...yada...yada...” These tactics are designed to pressure you into making a decision immediately. Separate the information you need *on the building* from the hype about being pressured to *buy the building right now*.

6. **30% OFF or 50% SAVINGS.** If you’ve seen these ads, look out! 30% off *what?* Once again... highly marked up pricing with false discounts to trick consumers into thinking they are getting a deal. To catch these guys, wait until they’ve given you a price and then pull out the ad and ask for your “discount”. Watch them backpedal, and hope it is right out the door. Good suppliers have a published price book they work with. From the list price you can now verify discounts. It won’t be a discount off an imaginary price.

Most potential customers are very in-tune to such tactics, and they don’t really work anyway. But, it is still nice to know what is going on so you can be prepared. Such sales tactics are used just for selling buildings, of course. This is why it is easier to spot such tactics and deal with it.

Is the salesperson offering you a “deal”? If so, then use your common sense. First, and most importantly, ask yourself, do you like the building? Never buy a building you *don’t* like just because it is cheaper than the one you *do* like. Is the price legitimate? Is it a comparable price to others?

When you get down to it, it is going to boil down to a matter of trust. You need to trust the company and its people. And you have *got to* like the building at the price it is being offered. If you can answer “yes” to those questions, then it is just a matter of the details.

With decades of experience in the construction industry, we can tell you most people do procrastinate. We have been in buildings literally leaking like a sieve, with buckets all around to catch the rain. And still we’ve heard “I want to think about it” rather than getting the problem repaired! We’ve been involved in volatile real estate markets where the prices of homes go up \$5,000 a week. And still people “want to think about it”, even though procrastination will cost them thousands of dollars. We’ve experienced lightening-fast sales of lots in hundred unit developments selling out in a week. And yet people still can’t bear to make a decision. They

don't want to make a mistake and making a decision involves the potential to make a mistake. People sometimes forget, not making a decision is, in fact, a decision!

So never rush, but when the time is right, buy it. When you like it, when you can afford it, when you trust the company and you like the product at the price it is offered, don't procrastinate. Buy it.

Secret #3 – How to Chose the Right Contractor,

12 Questions to Ask Before Inviting Him into Your Home

If you are considering ordering a constructed building from a building contractor, or purchasing a building kit package and having a contractor do the labor for you, pay careful attention to this secret! **(NOTE: These questions are going to make *most* contractors squirm!)**

- 1. How long have you been in business?** Look for a company with an established business history. Surviving in any business in today's competitive marketplace is a difficult task. Most successful contractors are proud of their history in the industry.
- 2. Are you licensed?** Make sure your contractor is properly licensed. (And IF the contractor uses subcontractors, are they properly licensed?) Businesses with a physical presence must be registered to do business in your state. This can be verified either by calling the Secretary of State's office or on the Internet.

Many states require contractors to be registered, to find out if your state does you can look on the Internet at: <http://www.contractors-license.org>

Anyone can say they are licensed or registered. Make the contractor prove it by either showing you the license or giving you a copy of it. Remember not only to check the expiration date, but also to confirm it is valid with the appropriate contacts from your state (take this part seriously, check it out!). In most states, being licensed is the law. If a contractor does not have a valid license, where required, **DON'T HIRE HIM!**

- 3. Do you carry general liability insurance?** Make sure your contractor carries general liability insurance. This type of insurance protects your property in case of damage caused by the contractor and/or his employees or sub-contractors. The insurance company will pay for the cost of replacing and/or repairing any damage which occurs. Anyone can say they are insured. Make the contractor prove it by having their insurance company FAX or mail you a certificate of insurance with you named as the certificate holder.
- 4. Do you carry industrial insurance?** Even in states which require contractor registration, many allow for contractors to exempt themselves or any general partners from industrial insurance. This type of insurance protects you, in the event of injury or death to the contractor and/or his employees. Protect yourself; anyone doing work on your property should be covered by industrial insurance. Don't just assume the contractor has coverage. Make him prove it.
- 5. Will you provide me with a written lien waiver?** Your contractor should provide you with a written lien waiver at the end of the job. This is a legal document which says you, homeowner, have paid the contractor in full for the services rendered and the contractor waives his right to place a mechanic's lien on your property. If, during the course of construction, you receive any Notice to Owner documents from material suppliers or sub-contractors, it would be prudent to ask the contractor for a Final Release of Lien from each one prior to paying the contractor his final draw. This protects you in case the contractor doesn't pay his material suppliers or sub-contractors after you have paid him in full.
- 6. Do you guarantee your work?** Your contractor should guarantee his work for at least one year from the date of completion. Some contractors even guarantee their work for twice this. **Get it in writing.** The contractor's full warranty should be written into your contract documents. The

names and address of the parties honoring the warranties – contractor, distributor or manufacturer – must be identified, in writing. Verbal warranties will not be enforceable when you need them! Also, read any Manufacturer’s Warranties. Be wary of manufacturer’s prorated warranties. 100% coverage for the entire warranty period is best. If the manufacturer only trusts their product for the first three years and then starts prorating, how long should you trust the product?

- 7. Will you provide me with written references?** A good contractor will be happy to provide you with references. You should look for a well established contractor, who can give you several customer references. Ask for the name of the contractor’s accountant and banker. Call them, as you want to ensure the contractor is financially sound and won’t be declaring bankruptcy in the middle of your project. Ask for the names and phone numbers of the contractor’s major suppliers. Call them to make sure they pay their bills and have good business practices. The last thing you need is liens against your property from unpaid suppliers.
- 8. What percentage of your business is repeat or referral business?** This will give you a good indication about the company’s customer satisfaction. A good company has a referral “network” built into his business. Older companies with few referrals should be a red flag!
- 9. How do you handle “dirty work”?** Construction is a messy business! Dirt and scraps get everywhere. Make sure the contractor will make an honest effort to keep the mess contained. Make sure the contractor agrees to straighten up and place all construction debris in a predetermined place or refuse container at the end of every day. Is site clean-up and trash hauling included in the price? Ask for a “broom clause.” This makes the contractor responsible for all clean-up work, including spills and stains.
- 10. Can you show me proof?** Make sure any representations of products and materials being made are legitimate. Ask to see third party tests or studies. Trade magazines, such as Rural Builder or Frame Building News, often have comparison studies and recommendations. Also, Consumer Reports has many published studies along with Independent Research Firms’ tests on products ordered by a manufacturer.
- 11. Are your products covered by prorated Warranties?** Be careful, many contractors represent Warranties as “Lifetime” and forget to mention the prorations.
- 12. Will you provide me with all state required disclosure statements?** Most states have public disclosure statements which must be provided to property owners prior to the time a contractor performs services. Normally, these disclosure statements are advice about lien releases. In such states, the law requires contractors provide these.

Secret #4 – The Biggest Mistakes Homeowners Make and How to Avoid Them

- 1. Buying on the spur of the moment.** Buying a pole building from the first salesperson you talk to is like marrying the first girl (or boy) you meet! For heavens sake, you are going to spend a lot of your money, so take your time and make certain you make the right decision!

Buying on the spur of the moment is usually only a problem if you are dealing with a “pushy type of salesperson. We don’t have a problem with salespeople. In fact, we have a great deal of respect for them *if* they are the right kind of a salesperson. Times have changed. There are a lot more options out there. There is more competition. You need to find an “enlightened salesperson”, one who understands times have indeed changed. The best salesperson will work *with* you to help decide what is best for *you*. The worst salesperson will simply work *on* you to get you to buy his product for his benefit. The *enlightened salesperson* will help you to invest in the best product for your benefit, not his!

- 2. Listening to the wrong people.** It never ceases to amaze us how many people take advice on their construction projects from people who are totally unqualified to give this critical advice. Quite often when we see construction messes, (which is virtually every day) and we ask where they got the idea to do this or that, we inevitably hear things such as:

My brother-in-law told me to do that. He used to do work like this on the side when he was in college.

I asked the guy in the office next to mine. He had a pole building built for him when he lived in Wisconsin.

My neighbor is an engineer and he advised... (there are many types of engineers – but proportionally few with the knowledge to accurately design pole buildings.)

I read an article by so-and-so which said we should.....

Everyone seems to have an opinion on what you should do with your pole building dollars. “Do it yourself” or “Hire the sub-contractors and run the project yourself”, etc. Just because someone is your relative, friend, or thinks they know construction, doesn’t mean they know the answers to your pole building questions or problems.

If you have an idea or a thought about a pole building, call someone qualified to answer your questions.

- 3. Call at least three of the references you’re given.** Unless you are contacting a local contractor who will come out and try to sell you a building in person, when you first talk to a building company, it is just a voice on the other end of the phone, from miles away. How do you know you are getting a good building and a good price? And even if you get both of these, how do you know if you’ll get any service after the sale if you need it? One of the best ways is to ask a lot of questions up front and check the references of the building company. So many people start out on

the right track by asking for references, but then they never call them. You can never learn too much about the company you are considering using. Take a few minutes to talk to these people. It will be worth it! Ask if the job was done on time and at the agreed upon price.

If they hired a contractor, ask if the contractor was easy to reach and easy to deal with. Were they pleased with the quality of work, satisfied with the builder's business practices? Did the crew show up on time? Were they comfortable with any of the trades people the builder may have subcontracted to? Would they hire this contractor again without hesitation?

- 4. Visit the references and see example work.** It is OK to ask the company directly, "can I look at one of your finished buildings?" (Not a model! Those are always perfect and staffed by expert salespeople...never bring your wallet to a model building!) Of course, don't expect every neighbor down the street to have one, but the company should be able to provide a reference. If you live out in the "boonies" somewhere you might have to expect to take a drive, but it will be worth it. You can learn more in five minutes looking at the product than you will in an hour talking with some sales guy. If the contractor is good, many previous clients are extremely proud of their "new" pole buildings and will be glad to let you look.

This can be an important step and you shouldn't do things backwards. Since it is your time you are investing in your research, get all your basic questions answered first, *then* go look at a building. Get the size, height and door configuration figured out, make sure the building is within your budget and make sure you like the company and the building style BEFORE you go look. You want to be fair to yourself (and the company) and be serious about making your purchasing decision. Looking at the building should be the *last* thing you do, not the *first*. So get all of your groundwork (no pun intended!) done first.

And then go look! Ask questions, take notes, find out what they liked (and didn't like) about the building. Find out how the company treated them, did they have any problems, if so, were they resolved quickly and fairly? Check on how the delivery went, how the erection and assembly of the building went, etc. Another huge advantage of looking at a building is the fact you will be talking to an actual building owner, not some commissioned salesperson. You will gain incredible insight by looking at a building instead of a brochure. And you may not even have to look at his building; sometimes just talking on the phone can be a huge benefit. So, if the company doesn't have any buildings in your area, or if you don't want to spend a whole lot of time driving and looking, maybe a phone call would be the next best thing.

See a job in progress. Is the job site clean? Are tools and materials strewn about like a hurricane just blew through? Chances are if a contractor keeps his work sites clean and neat; especially at the end of the day when it's time to go home, you've got a conscientious contractor. What about tools and equipment left on your property? Are they taken home each day or properly secured?

One last comment about looking at buildings, for some people this step is not at all necessary. It can be overkill...and it may even be a big waste of your time. If you are comfortable with the aspects of the building, the company and its people, you do not need to look at a finished building. And this is OK. Not everyone needs to go look. Frankly, most people *don't* need to go look! We had a friend recently buy a brand new 2004 truck...and he never even took it for a test drive! In fact, he never actually spoke with anyone or even sat in the driver's seat until after he bought it and they handed him his new keys. He completed the entire transaction over the Internet. Was he satisfied when he got the truck? You bet! But buying that way might not be what's right for you.

And, of course, recognize this secret, often missed by common sense, the company would NEVER provide a reference who would say bad things about its own product. So you may not have to go look, since you know everything will be fine or the company never would have provided the reference in the first place!

While on the subject of references, here is a neat tip we learned recently from another contractor friend. Years ago, when he first got started as a contractor, he was in the process of buying some building components from an out-of-state company. He liked the particular building and the low price, but he still wasn't convinced, since they hadn't provided any products in his area. So, he directly asked for the business owner's home telephone number. *And do you know what?* Even though this particular business gave out the owner's home phone number and everything worked out fine, he has since found lots of businesses won't give out the owner's home number when asked! (Which is hardly fair, since they call YOU at home, why can't you call them at home?)

- 5. No building experience.** Most pole building kit packages are designed for the "do-it-yourself" market, so if you purchase a "kit", you shouldn't have too much difficulty even if you are a complete novice. However, if you are planning on a building which is very wide, say over 60 feet or very tall, over 16 feet eave height or if you have an unusual configuration, you may have some challenges erecting the building yourself.

In any case, you should ask the company representative detailed questions on how their particular building goes up, to check if any of the procedures are going to be a problem for you. Ask the rep to explain each of the steps necessary for the complete erection of the building. Is everything included? Are the roof trusses pre-fabricated? Are there trusses on the endwalls, or do you need to cut rafters? Are the doors included? If so, is all the hardware for the doors included? Are the fasteners included? Is all the trim included? Is the exterior sheeting pre-cut to the exact lengths? Do you need a crane or any heavy equipment to unload or erect the building? What do you have to buy locally?

Frankly, lack of construction experience doesn't usually come up very often as one of the top mistakes, since most people who are considering a pole building kit are doing so because they are specifically seeking out a building they can erect themselves. It is like using your own "sweat equity", since you can do all (or most) of the work yourself and save a ton of money. Pole building kit buyers generally expect to erect their buildings themselves.

If you are a novice, you will want to pay close attention to service AFTER the sale. What are the hours of the company? When you call, do you get a "real person" or voice mail? Can someone answer your questions right now or fairly quickly with a call back? If so, are your calls returned promptly? Is the organization oriented *just* to sales? Do they have on-staff customer service people? How about on-staff engineers? What kind of "feel" do you get when talking with the company? Are you "just another guy to sell a building to", or do you really feel the company or its salesperson is actually looking out for your best interests?

Here is another tip. How you have been treated BEFORE the sale can be a great indicator of how you will be treated AFTER the sale. How fast did mailed information arrive? Or, if it is a local company, how willing were they to come and see your proposed building site? If you call the company, how long before your calls are returned? Did the salesperson take a little time to talk with you about how you wanted to use your building and what was important to you? Was he concerned about your door height, square footage requirements, door configuration and your budget? Did he offer to explain things or did he just wait for your questions? Were all of your

questions answered to your satisfaction? Were the answers direct and specific? Did he help you invest in the building (best), or did he sell you the building (worst)?

- 6. Not getting proper permits BEFORE you decide.** Most cities and towns require permits for building projects. Failure to obtain the necessary permits or to arrange obligatory inspections can be illegal. In some cases, if a project violates a zoning law or some other regulations, it may even have to be demolished, if there is no way to comply with the law!

Getting permission to build is usually a two-step process. The first is planning and zoning and the second step is structural. Zoning is usually a size and appearance issue. Your local planning and zoning officials may limit the size of your building (square footage as a percentage of the main dwelling or as a percentage of lot size), the height (blocking views), outside appearance (color, shape, finishing materials) or door configuration (making sure you have multiple egress doors in case of fire) or setbacks (making sure your building is set back a certain distance from your property line, easements, other structures, septic systems or drain fields) or wetlands issues (you can't build on or close to a watershed) or any one of a number of other issues specific to your particular area.

Zoning issues are often consistent in a given area. One of the easiest ways to get a feel for if it will be OK for you to put up your building is to just look around and see if other similar buildings (similar in appearance only, since at this point it is the best way to compare) are already erected in your area. If so, you probably should not have many problems clearing zoning for your building. Others have gone before you and if someone else has already received permission to build, it is unlikely they will deny you.

In some situations, you may not even need to worry about zoning or permits, if your building is for agricultural use or if you live in a jurisdiction where building permits are not even necessary. Or, in these areas, if there is a building permit required, you might just have to fill in a form and shell out ten or twenty dollars to help fill the local coffers.

In any case, it is always prudent to contact the officials first, before you even begin to check for pricing. Find out, in advance, what all of the governmental requirements will be.

After you clear zoning, you will need to pass the second step – proving to the building inspectors and permitting officials the building you want to construct is structurally sound for your local conditions. Depending on where you live, this might be a VERY crucial part, determining what type of building you will buy. Some areas of the country have VERY strict guidelines covering the wind and seismic ratings of buildings. This is especially true for buildings designated as high-occupancy buildings, like churches and retail stores. Do you live in an area getting lots of snow? Then you will have to make sure the building will comply with the snow load ratings for your city or county. Are you right on the ocean? Then you will have high-wind requirements your building must comply with. Are you in “tornado alley”? Then you have to comply and make sure your building meets the requirements.

How to check? Ask the company if they provide certified, stamped engineered blueprints, plans and calculations for the building. These blueprints are stamped and signed by a licensed professional engineer or architect. (Important, the engineer or architect must be registered in the state in which the building will be erected and the plans stamped with the proper state's particular stamp.) These plans prove the building will meet local loading conditions. If the company cannot provide solid, independent proof on the quality and structural integrity of the building, you should

immediately hang up the phone, walk away, or give the guy the boot! *Why in the world would you buy a building if it can't be proven and guaranteed to meet your load conditions?*

- 7. Signing a Sales Agreement and/or Making a Downpayment Before You Know What You Are Getting.** Make sure you fully understand the terms of any agreement, *before* you sign it. You should never do business with someone who urges you to sign a contract before you have had a chance to review it. High-pressure sales tactics usually indicate you are dealing with an unscrupulous person.

If the person you are dealing with can not adequately explain the agreement to your satisfaction, consider hiring an attorney to review it. It is cheaper to spend \$100 now, than to wish you would have later.

And never, ever give someone money without clearly knowing what it is you are getting for your money.

- 8. Not Understanding Lien Releases.** Understanding lien releases is very important because a contractor's bond may not be enough to cover a claim, if one arises on your job. If any supplier of materials, worker or subcontractor is not paid, a lien may be filed against your property to force you to pay. You could pay twice for the same work. Or worse, an unpaid lien could lead to foreclosure.

Liens can be avoided. If during your project you receive a "notice of intent" to file a lien on your property, you have the right to ask for lien release documents from the supplier or subcontractor who has sent this notice, to prove they have been paid.

Secret #5 – How To Tell If Your Pole Building Project Will Run Smoothly – Before You Order

1. **Good communication.** If you can talk with each other, you can work out any details which come up.

When you leave a message, does he return your call?

Does he return a page promptly?

Does he offer you his cellular telephone number?

If his office isn't local, does he have *TOLL FREE* telephone *and* FAX numbers?

Does he answer Emails from you promptly?

Does he listen to you?

2. **Comfort.** If you are going to hire a contractor, do you feel comfortable with him? If so, the chances are good your project will run smoothly. Think about it. You've just invited a stranger into your home. Do you find this person nice? Considerate? Personable? A listener? Was he polite and courteous? Or did he make you feel he wasn't interested? You will be working with this person for a matter of days, weeks, or months depending upon the project you need completed. Can you stand to have this person around?
3. **Trustworthy.** If you feel your contractor is trustworthy, the likelihood of a successful project is good. Check his references. Keep in mind, if your project will entail entrance to your home and you won't be there during the day, the keys to the castle will be given to your contractor. Can you trust him? Listen to your conscience.
4. **Who will be assigned as project supervisor for the job?** Also ask whom you should contact if the supervisor is not available. Get exact names and contact phone numbers for everyone who will be involved in the project.
5. **Time frames.** Will your contractor give you a reasonable estimate for how long the project will take to complete? A good contractor will do this. Remember, you want to hire a good contractor, not a new roommate! Nothing is more frustrating and irritating than a pole building job dragging on and on.
6. **Written Proposal.** We can't tell you how many contractors we've seen look at rather complex jobs, pick a price out of thin air, scribble the figure only on the back of their business card, and give the card to the homeowner. Show contractors doing this the door!

You want a detailed written proposal showing what is included: all features clearly spelled out, colors, sizes, quantities, amounts, price (and if applicable any sales tax or permit fees), work to be performed, materials used, start and completion dates and the payment schedule (including any payments to be made by you to subcontractors or suppliers). This proposal must contain the contractor's name, address, phone number and license number, if required. Is the contractor obtaining all necessary permits? If so, is the price included? Does the proposal cover all of the potential "gory" details, or does it leave things to chance?

Itemized, thorough and complete proposals often indicate a complete and thorough job. If the proposal is generalized and approximate, **expect to get *approximately* what you wanted.**

7. Details. Work out the little details before work begins. Talk about things like:

Where will the surplus scrap go?

What time will construction normally begin in the morning?

What time will construction usually end in the evening?

Will work take place on weekends?

Will workman bring their dogs to the jobsite?

What do we need to do to get ready for the project?

8. Flexibility. Keep in mind, having a pole building constructed is an interruption to your normal lifestyle. Don't plan on scheduling a vacation at home to coincide with its construction.

9. Appearance. If your contractor has a neat appearance, this is a very good sign of things to come. This may sound silly, but it is not. He does not have to show up in a coat and tie, but neatness does count.

Is he clean? Is his truck presentable, or falling apart? If his appearance is neat, chances are he will keep your job neat.

10. Down payment. If your contractor asks for a big chunk of money up front, this could be a tip-off they are not in good financial shape and you could be in for a rocky experience. A fair down payment for a constructed building (or labor only) should not exceed one-third, unless your project is very small in scale, at which two equal payments may be simpler. On larger jobs, as the work progresses, you should expect to pay out additional funds to match the prescribed, completed stages.

If you are advancing money to a contractor for materials, make the checks payable to both the builder AND the material supplier.

11. Change orders. With construction, there is always the chance you may want or need to change a material or contract item, ask how these are handled. The original agreement should specifically detail how these changes are to be dealt with. Ideally, they should be written on a separate document showing in detail what is being changed and how much it will cost. This should be done before the change is affected and signed by you.

Secret #6 – Plan Your Project!

This is really the greatest “secret” of all!

Plan your project with a qualified pole building expert!

Most people spend more time planning a one week vacation than they do a new pole building. Before you buy any building, you need to answer some very basic questions about how YOU plan to use YOUR building. Many people forget the building is there to serve their needs. If you don't define those needs, you don't really know what will work for you.

Plan your project carefully. If you know what you want done and can clearly explain it, you're less likely to misunderstand instructions or encounter cost overruns.

You can avoid most mistakes if you'll take some time and determine what you really want your building to do for you. As an example of what we mean by “defining your needs”, think back to when you purchased your house. Before you ever talked to a realtor, did you have an idea about the style of house you wanted, square footage requirements, bedroom configurations, price range, lot size, neighborhood, and so on? We'll bet you did. Or what about when you purchased your computer? Didn't you give some thought to the type, memory requirements, speed, etc. before you bought? You need to give the same thought to your building! You need to consider some basics:

- What's this building going to do for you? (Not what it *is* – workshop, storage, garage, business, church, hangar, etc. – but what it will *do*? What in your life will be better if you have your building?)
- What size building do you think you need? (By the way, no matter what size you get, it will never be big enough!)
- What door sizes will you need for all your things? And should they be overhead doors or sliding doors?
- Where should you place those doors? On the sides or the ends?
- How tall do you need the building to be?
- Will you insulate the building?
- Will you ever want to add on to the building? If so, would you likely want to add to the length or to the width? Or maybe both?
- Would you want a second floor?
- What overall appearance do you like? What colors?

- What shape do you want... a square building or more rectangular?
- What about roof pitch? Should it match the slopes of existing or future buildings on the same site?
- How about overhangs? Do you have doors to protect from rain or snow run off? Do existing structures have overhangs which should be matched?
- Are you going to use your building for a specific purpose – airplane hangar, horse arena, church, retail store, etc.? If so, then you'll have even more considerations based on your specific end use.
- Will you need permits for your building?
- Do you plan to erect the building yourself?
- Do you plan to pour the concrete floor yourself?
- Will you need financing?
- If you're considering a pole building in the near future, you can avoid a lot of problems by talking with a professional pole building expert who can help you answer all of these questions. This is the best advice we know of! By doing so, you'll eliminate most disappointments and avoid the #1 mistake of all – buying the wrong type of building for your needs!

You need to find:

- Someone who can help you through the “maze” of designing your building, not to mention all the bureaucratic “red tape” awaiting you at the building department! –
- Someone who listens to your every concern.
- Someone who subscribes to the principles and “Secrets” discussed above.
- Someone with complete product knowledge, not just of their own products, but other options also, who helps educate you. The more knowledge you get, the more you can trust you'll have a successful job. **Knowledge is truly POWER!**

As you may have guessed, this is the only way **Hansen Buildings** works.

We provide FREE, NO OBLIGATION interviews by telephone or Email to determine your needs and see if we may be of service to you and your family.

Hopefully, we can show you, as we have many others, how to make your pole building absolutely magnificent, the best value for the dollars invested and something of which you will be truly proud!

Sounds good, doesn't it?

You have to understand, we truly love helping our clients build their buildings. We are hired by hundreds of people each year to design and provide their pole buildings. Because we have a steady volume of business, we never accept clients who aren't really excited and interested in undertaking their project. We have so much fun seeing people's new buildings (and their lives change for the better), we would never work with anyone who wasn't excited and really looking forward to seeing their "dream building" become a reality.

If all this makes sense, and you like our approach to pole building, please give us a call at **(605) 694-2805**, or call Toll Free **1-866-200-9657**. Visit us on the web at: www.HansenPoleBuildings.com

And remember, absolutely **NO PRESSURE!**

No one is going to try to sell you anything. This is simply a chance for you to meet us, over the phone or via the Internet, and see if our services can benefit you. If, after our initial conversation, you believe there is no benefit to be derived from working with us, we simply leave it at that. If, however, you would like our help, we will discuss how to proceed.

We can't think of a better way to work. Can you?

If you like this fair and honest approach, please call our office while this is fresh in your mind to discuss your pole building needs. Again, our phone number is (605) 694-2805 or toll free 1-866-200-9657.

Whether you choose to buy a Hansen Buildings kit, or find another company who satisfies all the questions contained in **Six Secrets to a Successful Pole Building**, we wish you the best of luck with your pole building plans. Take care.

Kindest Regards,

J.A. Hansen

Hansen Pole Buildings, LLC
46891 Chambers Road
Browns Valley, MN 56219

P.S. Don't be another "Nightmare Pole Building" story. Plan your pole building with a professional, so your "dream building" will become a story with a happy ending.