# Looking for a Trustworthy Business? Start With These 3 Steps

## *Here’s how to protect your time, money, and peace of mind.*

**By Cameron Nakashima, Media Engagement Manager, Better Business Bureau Great West + Pacific**

Big purchases and big projects come with big decisions—and often, more stress than we expect. Whether it’s a home repair, car service, financial help, or a large online order, we all just want to get what we pay for and feel good about our choice

Unfortunately, with so many new businesses, scam websites, and deceptive ads dominating the marketplace, it’s not always easy to know who you should trust. The good news is that if you know where to look, the tools to use, and the steps to take, you can start making better and easier buying decisions – even when there’s a lot at stake.

From [Better Business Bureau’s](https://www.bbb.org/local/1296/about-bbb-gwp/how-bbb-helps) perspective, we see thousands of consumers each month, and the people who walk away most happy usually did these three things first:

## 1. Look at the business’s track record

Before you hire anyone, take a closer look at their past work. Go beyond just their star rating – look also at their history and website, and ask questions like:

* How long have they been in business?
* Do they have consistent reviews, and does someone at the company respond to them?
* Is the business transparent about who they are, where they are located, and what they promise?

When researching a business’s past, keep in mind that it’s not about perfection; it’s about patterns. A company with a long history, a good reputation, and a pattern of good reviews and resolved complaints demonstrates a positive track record that builds trust.

One of the easiest ways to check these things is by looking up the company’s [**BBB Business Profile**](https://www.bbb.org/search?find_country=USA): you’ll find complaint history, verified customer reviews, and a rating of the business’s alignment with our 8 standards for trust.

## 2. Compare your options

Too often, people go with the first business they find—or the one that shows up in an ad. But remember the old adage, *get three quotes for any major purchase*? There’s a reason this reminder exists. It’s because knowing your opinions and comparing them side-by-side empowers you to make better choices.

When comparing options, we also encourage you to look at things like:

* Business licenses and service areas
* Operating hours and response times
* Reviews from customers with similar needs

But I also know that comparing quotes and companies can get overwhelming. That’s why at BBB.org, we’ve made this easier with our [**Get a Quote**](https://www.bbb.org/get-a-quote) tool. You can request estimates from multiple trusted businesses at once and compare their responses side-by-side.

It’s not just about who’s cheapest—it’s about who is right for the job.

## 3. Know your options if something goes wrong

Even when you do everything right, things can still go sideways. So, before you commit to a business, it’s important to ask: *How does this business handle problems?*

Is the company fair in how it responds to complaints? Do they honor their promises? Are they known for writing fair, ethical, and reasonable customer contracts?

Remember to check the track record, but also ask for references – past customers whose work is similar to what you are having done.

If things ever do go wrong and a business won’t work with you, **you still have a path forward.**

BBB offers free resources to support you, including:

* **Complaint Resolution Services**
* **Scam Tracker**
* **Scam Recovery Toolkit**

BBB’s free consumer tools help you move forward—even if things didn’t go as planned; and if the business you had an issue with was a [BBB Accredited Business](https://www.bbb.org/all/why-choose-a-bbb-accredited-business#:~:text=BBB%20Accredited%20Businesses%20have%20demonstrated,for%20you%20and%20its%20employees.), they have made a pledge to work with customers in good faith and respond to complaints, so they are incentivized to treat customers fairly.

## You don’t have to guess who to trust

Keep in mind these questions, remember you have tools to help find the answers, and follow these three simple steps to make better decisions. When it comes to those large purchases or projects, starting with trust will help you make decisions with confidence.

*For more tips from Better Business Bureau, visit* [*BBB.org*](https://www.bbb.org/) *to check a business, compare quotes, or get help resolving an issue – all for free.*