

# "The 7 BIGGEST Mistakes When Hiring a Concreter"

Concreters haven't always had the best reputation. We all have stories about the shoddy works, concrete cancer from poor workmanship, or the concreter that left you waiting all day and never came. That's why I wrote this manual to help you avoid these things.

You'll learn never to hire the concreter with the lowest price and understand why not ALL concreters are the same. Don't get ripped off.

Concreters fall into three categories:

1. Reputable brand-name companies who follow a strict code of ethics, provides quality product/services and provide a guarantee.
2. The reputable local contractor who has built a reputation for good service over years of quality work.
3. The backyard operator, the guy who seems friendly at first but ends up not being upfront about the work he's doing.

*So how do you separate the first two from the last?*

That's what this booklet is all about. The information it provides can help make your service experiences painless and trouble free.

Sincerely,



Hans Felden

# **“How To Avoid the 7 BIGGEST Mistakes People Make When Hiring A Concreter”**

## **Mistake #1 -- You hire a concreter based only on price!**

The old adage is really true. “You get what you pay for”. This is especially true in the *concreting* business. If you want good work done you should decide to deal with a concreter because of the overall *value* you receive, NOT because they are the lowest priced.

Here’s why...

$$\text{Value} = \text{Quality} + \text{Service} + \text{Price}$$

It is impossible for any company in any industry to offer the cheapest price, have the highest quality, and provide the best service all at the same time.

You can get high quality and super service, but you can’t get both and still get the lowest price.

Just like in any business, you hire the best people and buy the highest quality products -- consequently, you have to charge more for those services.

Total Value is all three. Quality, Service, and Price!

### **The 3 most common problems YOU WILL have when you hire a concreter who only offers the lowest price:**

1) The first problem is that dirt cheap concreters don’t usually stand behind their work if there is a mistake. Sure, other concreters might do your job for a little less money, but how will they treat you when there is a mistake with your job?

## **Mistake #2 -- You Think All Concreters Are The Same**

Every concreter is different. No two concreters are really the same. Every concreter has different equipment and different employees who know how to do certain kinds of jobs well. Every company has a different number of employees, each with different abilities.

Concreting is art and craftsmanship combined. Most people who hire concreters don’t truly understand that despite all the technological advances, concreters still use the same quality work habits as twenty years ago.

Contrary to what a lot of people think, (*concreting is not just mixing some sand and cement, laying concrete slabs, and forming up on rough dimensions*). It takes craftsmanship to turn out quality work. Concreters have to measure and perform complicated tasks in preparation before they can start a job of concreting.

**Warning: If You Let Dodgy Workman Complete Your Concreting Job You May Be Left With The Unsightly, Embarrassing Photos Below...**



## **Communication is the key to hiring the best concreter for YOU.**

- ✓ Ask what type of concrete work they do.
- ✓ Ask what their average turnaround time is.
- ✓ Ask if they work weekends.
- ✓ Ask any other questions that are unique to your needs.

This will help you decide whether they are the best concreter for YOU!

After you ask your questions, it will become pretty obvious which company you should choose. The company that wants your business will prove to you they are the best concreter to do your work.

Take your time to decide which concreter you would like to use -- but when you decide, you must be loyal to them (See Mistake #3).

### **A few examples of cheap quality & shoddy workmanship:**

- Not using the correct steel mesh in the concrete to provide the correct strength for the purpose for the concrete. If this is not correct there is a greater tendency for the concrete to crack under weight.
- **Not preparing the subsoils appropriately .. not providing a firm base for the new concrete to set on. If this is not carried out correctly or at all, future concrete cracking is very likely.**
- Not applying colouring oxides correctly which may break down on the surface of the concrete.. the result being colour fading within a few years.
- **Not using a high quality stencil material or colouring materials so there's not a clean pattern definition which dulls the whole appeal you were going for.**
- Not forming up the area to be concreted correctly to ensure even levels of concrete depth throughout the concrete works...This directly causes cracking!
- **Not grading the concrete surfaces to ensure surface water runoff is correctly directed to drains and definitely away from the house etc.**
- Not masking up the surrounding walls & gardens properly with 600mm high plastic causing spillages to permanently damage your walls and garden.
- **Not placing extra steel bars at corners and near drains to increase strength at these weaker points. If this is not carried out correctly or at, future concrete cracking is very likely.**
- Not applying the correct concrete MPa for the purpose of the concrete works. The incorrect grading will definitely have a dramatic impact on the strength and endurance of the concrete works.

- **Not carrying out saw cuts in the new concrete at the correct distance or the correct depths to the concrete and for this process to be carried out in a timely manner shortly after the freshly laid concrete is poured.**
- Etc etc etc.....the list goes on!!

### **Mistake #3 -- You Always Have Three or More Concreters Competing With Each Other For Your Work.**

You may think this is a good way to do business. And it is to some extent. But here is why it usually isn't a good way to deal with concreters.

A good concreter has enough loyal customers that they don't have to deal with price shoppers.

Once you find a good concreter, you must be loyal to them. If you flip-flop from concreter-to-concreter, a good operator won't be too motivated to keep YOU as a customer.

Price is important. But price should not be more important than good quality and good service.

This is what people typically like to do. They try to get everyone fighting for the same piece of pie. This might be an OK short term strategy because you save a few bucks. But when you need a favour, or super fast service -- not one of these companies will instantly bend over backwards to help you. And if you have been a price shopper in the past, *they will probably charge you more!*

Every concreter expects to bend over backwards for their loyal customers now and again. He might have to work long hours or on a weekend, to do a super rush job, or pull off a miracle. Provided the customer is loyal, the concreter will do all he can to help you meet your needs. All good concreters will be loyal to you if YOU are loyal to them.

### **Mistake #4 –You Don't Check That Your Concreter Has The Right Insurance?**

It is very important to hire a concrete contractor who carries current liability and workmen's compensation insurance.

This protects you and the contractor if one of his employees gets injured while working on your property. It also shows that this person is a professional in his field who knows how to run a responsible business.

Don't be afraid to verify the insurance coverage before hiring the concrete contractor to ensure the policy is current.

By doing your homework up front, you can be assured the concrete contractor you choose will provide you with the highest quality workmanship for your home improvement project.

## **Mistake #5 -- You Don't Give Your Concreter Enough Time To Complete Your Job Properly!**

Mistakes happen when you rush!

When you're in a hurry, you may forget to tell your concreter certain instructions. Or you might make a mistake in judgement or purchase decision because you were concentrating on getting it done, instead of getting it done correctly.

### **Schedule. Schedule. Schedule.**

Before you start work on your project, talk with your concreter. Get your concreter involved from the beginning because there might be a more efficient way to finish your project on time that you may not be aware of.

You can save time, money and headaches from the very beginning by communicating with your concreter!

Why do most people do the opposite of this and wait until the last minute to talk to the concreter? Because everyone takes the concreter for granted. Everyone thinks the concreter can easily take care of his or her work.

Most everyone thinks the concreter is sitting around waiting for his or her job to come through the door. This isn't the case.

You should think of your concreter as your "project partner". Consult with your concreter. Ask them if there are any tips they can give you to make your job go smoother.

Remember ...you are not the only customer your concreter has. When they walk on your property and you're saying you need it now, a concreter can't always help you. YOU need to work together.

## **Mistake #6 -- You Hire Concreters Who Don't Guarantee Their Work.**

All reputable concreters guarantee their work automatically. This means if they make a mistake on your job, they will re-do or fix your job at no charge.

Unfortunately, there are unethical concreters who won't do this. Instead, they won't make good on your work and may not take any responsibility for their mistakes.

An unethical concreter may hold your work hostage. Or may say they will fix your job, but pin the problem on you and tack on an extra charge. There are about a hundred other things a not-so-good concreter may do to you. The best thing you can do is hire a concreter who unconditionally guarantees their work. If it's not done right and it's their mistake, they will do it again or fix it.

## **Mistake #7 -- You Don't Ask For References & Check Out Consumer Affairs Victoria**

Check out if they are in fact Qualified Concreters to do your work.

Do check out if the concreters are in fact correctly licensed to carry out the works. Check out if the concreter has any outstanding consumer complaint orders against them OR if they have had any penalties imposed under the Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012.

Checking this is probably the best way you can avoid any problems with a concreter. ALL good reputable concreters will eagerly give you references and license details.

Also ask your concreter to give you at least three names of people who they have done business with in your area. And also ask them how long ago they have worked with this customer.

Also ask them what type of job they did for those references. Try and get the names of customers who had similar things done that you need done. This is the easiest way you can hire the right concreter for YOU!

## **Mistake #8 – You Don't Thoroughly Review & Compare Quotations:**

Once you receive all estimates, take time to compare them. Don't ever base your decision on price alone. Keep the following steps in mind before you make your decision:

- \* Be cautious of an extremely low bid. Compare all items on the bid often time the low will find a way to cut corners dilute products and end up costing you more in the long run..
- \* Check the materials. Some estimates may contain lower quality materials, which reduce the cost of the project.
- \* Check the QUANTITY, are you comparing apples with apples. Unscrupulous contractors will quote for a smaller area and then hit you with variations once they have the job. A Professional contractor will establish your needs and quote accordingly.
- \* Review any items you do not understand with the concrete contractor.
- \* Time frame is an important factor. If one bid is higher in labour cost but the contractor can finish the job in two days instead of two weeks, the additional cost may be justified.
- \* Do not sign anything until you understand all aspects of the contract.
- \* Keep all documentation related to the project.

At the end of the day, when your due diligence has been done, it sometimes come down to instinct.

You've met numerous people and it now comes down to what you feel.

- Does the contractor have the same vision, and ideas that you have?
- Do they represent themselves in a professional manner?
- And ultimately can they create the finish and look you desire?

## “Costly Misconceptions”

**Misconception #1:** As long as everything seems to be working, it’s O.K. Not necessarily. Concrete may often appear to be fine but may in fact be slowly breaking down or cracking. Ensure correct ground preparation and expansion joints are correctly placed.

**Misconception #2:** The company that offers the lowest price is the company you should hire. Maybe - but not always.

Here are a few points to consider.

**Point #1:** The price you see offered may not be for the services you want performed. Before you select a company, decide what you want to accomplish.

Price is usually an indication of quality. More efficient concreters generally cost more. Better trained support staff cost more. Reliable service and products cost more. You don’t buy the cheapest car, clothes, or foods. Don’t let price be the deciding factor when choosing a concreter.

**Point #2:** The price you see advertised or quoted may not be the price you pay.

Many homeowners have learned that the low price they saw advertised or quoted was not the amount they were charged.

And if you’ve hired a concreter, you too may have been the victim of false or misleading quotation. You probably learned the hard way that some companies offer a cheap price – and then pressure you into paying a lot more once they start your job.

To give the cheapest price, they usually have low-wage, inexperienced employees that have not been adequately trained.

The end result is that you get what you pay for.  
And the little bit of money you saved ends up costing you more in the long run!

Believe me, this is a little saying we tell our customers: “The good feeling of a cheap price is long gone before the stench of poor quality is ever used up.”

2) The second problem with a concreter who offers the lowest price is that they tend to also offer the lowest quality. Your renovation work can be one of the biggest expenses in your home. And, one of the best investments you can make in your home if done properly.

Plainly said, “Shoddy or low quality work because of cheap price costs you money.” No amount of savings is worth this. You’ve worked too hard and spent too much money on your home. Why throw it away for the few pennies you save on a concreter?

3) And the third reason why hiring the cheapest concreter is a problem is that you might get charged extra for things other concreters normally include in their quote in the first place. You’ll be charged extra for such things as incorrect calculations, every part of a concreters job has to be costed, overtime due to bad estimates.

Cheap concreters can end up knocking on your door and asking for so many more extras once they have started the job. What seemed like a good price actually ends up costing you more in the end. This is just a tactic cheap concreters use to get in the door.

To avoid buying on price alone, we suggest you choose two or three concreters and rank them in the order that is important to you such as Quality first, Service second, and Price last.

**AND ONCE YOU FIND A GOOD ONE...STICK WITH HIM!**

As in all businesses and professions, the trade industry has its share of bad apples. I take no pleasure in telling you this, but some are unethical – and, sadly, a few are dishonest. By their misleading advertising and false promises, they cast a dark shadow on our entire industry.

Then you'll find other companies – professionals like ours who work hard to earn your trust and respect. As a way of improving our profession, I've dedicated my business to educating the public. The only way you can make an intelligent decision is to have all the facts you need.

Don't ever be shy about asking a concreter what he's done and why. A good concreter will be able to explain everything in plain English. Make sure you have a firm understanding of what a concreter plans to do before he does it.

He'll be happy to answer your questions – provide you information over the telephone – or come into your home and give you a Free Inspection and Quotation – without obligation of any kind.

THANK YOU,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Hans'.

Hans Felden