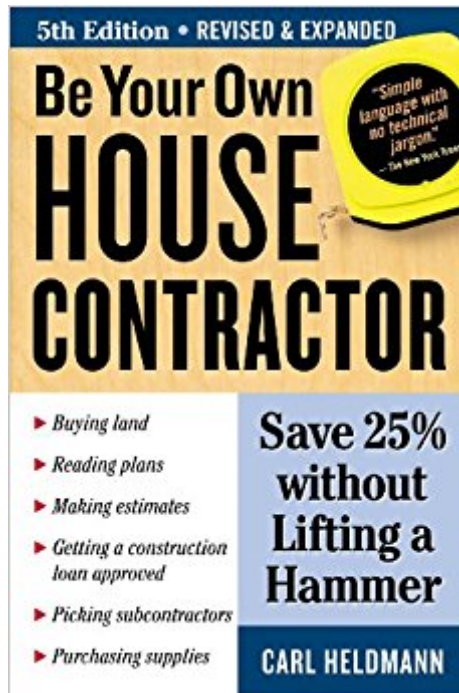


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# Be Your Own House Contractor: Save 25% Without Lifting A Hammer



## Synopsis

You don't need to depend on (or pay) a general contractor to manage your construction project. Whether you're building a new home or renovating an existing one, you can manage the job yourself. Carl Heldmann outlines how to purchase your own land, set a reasonable budget and schedule, describe your needs and vision to an architect, and hire subcontractors to do the actual building. Cut out the middleman and save as much as 25 percent on your beautiful new home!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In 1990 I had my ten acres paid for, and was ready to begin building my retirement home. A friend gave me Carl Heldmann's book, Be Your Own House Contractor. I had a set of plans made from my sketching, and got three bids for building. The cheapest was \$97,500.00. I decided to try my own general contracting, with little to no experience in construction. With the help of some friends whom I bounced ideas off of, I started out with a spread sheet of sub-contractors, getting three bids from each in their order of appearance. In six months, we finished our home, and without cutting any real expenses, built our home for \$67,500. All due to the teachings and following of Carl Heldmann's book. Even if you do decide to use general contractor, this book is still invaluable in the detail and advice given. I have since given this book to three friends who have built homes, and all three were very impressed with the subject matter. A MUST read, in my opinion, for anyone who is going to undertake building or having a new home built. I know of no where else one get such a step by step

explanation covering the do's and don't of every phase of the process.

The author provides an easily understood yet detailed plan to organize the building of your home. Various steps of the building project are well-covered and crucial elements...such as legal requirements for lien waivers, insurance and code requirements are spelled out clearly. I found this book helpful in deciding if I would be able to manage the general contractor process, and was intrigued at the idea of saving up to 25% of labor costs. The sample contracts and other forms were a plus.

I expected this book to be more helpful, but it is really a few vague suggestions spread out across as many pages as the writer could manage. In fact I can save you the money and tell you the entire book in just a few words: 1 Hire good people that know what they are doing and trust them to do a good job, the city will ensure they do it to legal spec. 2 make sure you like your house plans before you start 3 don't pay ahead of schedule Have a budget and stick to it. Of course the problem with this advice' is finding good contractors and trusting them. That is exactly what general Contractors do for a living they spend time developing relationships with contractors. It does not happen overnight, GCs also hire bad contractors they just stop using them after one or two jobs. We don't have that luxury the owner builder needs to get the right ones first time out and that is hard. Carl's big idea is to go to a lumber yard and ask for help, this is great if you happen to get lucky. The lumber yards loyalties are not to some walk in that is only buying lumber for one house it is to the guy who builds houses 365. So sure he might suggest someone, and that guy might talk a great fight and he might be great. But he might also be the next "up" or the guy struggling to pay his lumber yard bills. These kinds of books are suitable if you just want a very hazy outline. But it fails completely to deal with the real issues of acting as your own GC. Schedules, build orders inspections etc are all huge deals that are hardly addressed at all. If you want solid building advice there are a number of very strong sites that give strong detailed accounts of owner builder construction. I strongly suggest skipping this book. And if you want a cheap lightly used copy.....

The concept of self-contracting really works. We contracted all the work on our home, chose all the things that we wanted and that we could afford and got our dream home at a savings of more than 25%. We weren't going to do it because of all the naysayers we ran across, but Mr. Heldmann's book convinced us we could do it, and we did! Bravo!

This book is straight-forward, and easy to understand. It provides a generally good overview of the home building process and many valuable tips, but lacks in-depth detail. If you're trying to decide whether or not to build your own house, this will give you a good "taste" of what's involved. However, it's NOT an all inclusive step-by-step guide.

Very up-to-date publication. Author's web site provides much additional information. I plan to build using ICF's and Geothermal heat source. Good information available through both the book and the web portal. Clearly the best and most current of the 4 similar books purchased at the same time.

This was a great purchase that I made based on other reviews. I am using this as a template for our new construction. I would recommend this to anyone interested in building with or without a general contractor. It gave me the confidence (this and 2 other books-see my other reviews) to general our home. Make sure you order the latest edition (5th, I think). I read the reviews and all the reviews were under both the 1st and 5th edition. I have both...dont make that mistake.

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