

Remodeling Your Kitchen Or Bath

Remodeling your kitchen or bath is one of those projects that you are likely to approach with a mixture of excitement and trepidation. There are a myriad of possibilities and considerations and yes, let's not forget the 6 letter word BUDGET. Where do you begin? How much should you spend? Who can you trust to work on what is likely your most precious asset?

Success with this endeavor is largely dependent upon proper planning. Embarking on a remodeling project is akin to planning for a trip. You have a destination in mind but how are you going to get there? You need a road map to follow so that you do not end up in the wrong place. Today we are fortunate to have resources at our disposal including the internet, home improvement shows, referral services, apps and websites with thousands of images of kitchen and bath design ideas. There is plenty of information available but it all takes time and that is a precious commodity for most of us today.

What follows are some ideas and suggestions that might save you time, aggravation and most importantly – money.

Goal Setting

It all begins with the establishment of clear goals. The most important question to answer is “why am I embarking on this project.” Possible answers include: updated look, improved layout, more storage, enhance marketability, ease-of-use features. Rate the importance of each so that when it comes to budget and compromise you have a good idea of what you must have and what you can live without.

Budget

If you are planning to stay in your home forever and you have the money then spend whatever you want. Unfortunately, for most of us, our career and bank account will likely have some part to play in determining what you will spend. Moving in the next five years? If so, you want to be careful not to over invest. Are your kids heading to college soon? Saving for college may have some impact on how much of the family treasure you are willing to invest. A rule of thumb – a kitchen remodel will range between 10 – 15% of the value of your home. Remodeling your master bathroom will cost approximately 10% and guest baths around 5%. Spend more, and you may not recoup the full value of your investment.

Planning

This is the most critical part of your project. Fail to take this step seriously and your project may exceed budget and take more time than you have allotted. Unforeseen things will happen and can have an impact on time and cost. However, more often than not it is the lack of a clear vision and plan that lead to disappointment at the conclusion of a project. No one wants to be disappointed when the project has been completed and paid for. To create your plan – build your team and seek their advice. The more homework you do prior to signing a deposit check—the better off you will be.

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Build Your Team

Depending on the scope of your remodel you will likely require the services of a design consultant, general contractor, kitchen and bath dealer, electrician, plumber or handyman. A general contractor can coordinate all aspects of your project including filing for any permits that may be required. If you are “handy and ambitious” you may elect to take on certain aspects of the project yourself. However, you must be prepared for the unexpected such as unforeseen structural, electrical or plumbing issues that require time and skills you may not possess. Spend the time to interview potential members of your team to determine whether or not you are confident that they can deliver on your vision. Referrals and reviews are helpful. It may be worth spending more to hire someone that has good reviews or has been referred by a trusted friend or family member.

Material Selection

This is where the help of an interior designer and or a kitchen and bath dealer can be of great value. Sometimes “that vision thing” is hard to wrap your mind around. Is my style sense considered traditional, transitional or contemporary? What “vibe” am I trying to create? Maybe you would like an “old world feel” or maybe a “sleek sophisticated look.” You may like a lot of color or wish to pursue a more conservative approach to color selection. Cabinets, countertops and tile backsplash are often the eye catching features in the room and are a good place to start when beginning to create your vision. Don’t attempt to make too many decisions at once and rely on experts that can help you to visualize how your choices may look in your space. The ability to re-imagine your space is difficult and will likely involve samples and renderings to bring your vision home. Searching the web is helpful but visiting a showroom where you can touch, feel and see your choices is far less risky than relying on a digital image to make your selections.

Be Realistic and Prepare for the Unexpected

Remodeling is not wrinkle-free. Your timeline and budget should allow for the inevitable surprises. From an unexpected plumbing problem to an electrical issue, be prepared for a hiccup that may impact your timeline or pocketbook. A custom look will require materials that are made to order. Depending on the scope of your remodel, cabinetry may be your long lead

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item – possibly six to eight weeks. Once received, items must be inspected before confirming an install date. Realistically, a typical kitchen remodel may take 8 – 10 weeks to complete. Properly planned and executed, you hopefully will not be without a kitchen during the entire period. It is important to understand what to expect and plan accordingly. How do I cook? What bathroom will I use? Can I entertain guests? These are important questions to ask and answer before major disruption.

Excited but Not Surprised

At the conclusion of your project you will hopefully be excited to begin living in your newly remodeled space. Properly planned, you should not be surprised with the result.