

Getting a Kitchen Right

THE KITCHEN IS THE HEART OF today's home – the place that is a part of our daily living, as well as an entertaining center. A well-designed kitchen has a pleasing aesthetic and a “user-friendly” efficiency. It also enhances your home's resale value and adds to the enjoyment of the daily task of cooking. The average homeowner will only remodel the kitchen once, making the remodeling process an important one.

Homeowners often find remodeling to be a stressful time. Working with a professional kitchen design and remodeling company will end up saving the homeowner time, money and stress. Many homeowners who serve as their own general contractor believe that they can keep costs lower and stretch their budget. However, this is not always the case.

A professional remodeling company already has in place a group of experienced experts who work well together. As a homeowner begins the process of contacting plumbers, electricians, carpenters, tile installers, and countertop fabricators, the task of sorting through recommendations and bids can be a daunting one. After the homeowner has made design and product selections, the difficult job of scheduling and communicating regularly then begins. Would every homeowner have the expertise to manage the project?

One area family thought they could handle the sub-contracting process. They worked with a local cabinet dealer who specified and ordered their cabinetry. They hired a carpenter to do the tear-out and install; they pieced out the plumbing and electrical work. It seemed all was going well. The cabinets were ordered in early May with an expected delivery date of July 1. The carpenter began the tear-out June 1, allowing plenty of time for the plumbing and electrical work. However, at the end of June the homeowner learned that the cabinetry was on backorder and wouldn't be delivered until “sometime in September”! To make a long story short the family had no kitchen for more than six months.

Working with an experienced kitchen and bath designer who is part of a professional remodeling company can eliminate many problems for the homeowner. The professional's experience working on many projects with the same skilled tradesmen is invaluable. The homeowner will have peace of mind, going into the project, knowing that all of the tradesmen have worked with one another before, and the homeowner will know that they are qualified and licensed. An additional benefit is having the professionals deal with the village licensing process. The professional remodeling company has experience and understanding of expectations and will furnish detailed drawings that meet all requirements.

Check with your remodeling company to see if they recycle the materials and construction debris from your kitchen demolition. Additional ways to go green include choosing low voltage lighting, energy efficient appliances, recycled glass countertops and cabinetry lines with environmentally friendly finishes and production methods or even renewable wood species such as bamboo, lyptus or beech.

Many homeowners are afraid to share their budget expectations with the designer from the beginning of the project. Experienced designers can work out a solution to match your budget. Letting the designer know up front allows for product selections that will work with your personal budget. There are many ways to save on the project including:

- Purchasing more affordable cabinetry, but dressing the room up with a focal point of kitchen furniture such as an armoire, sideboard, or special island piece.
- Designing with larger cabinets—one 60-inch cabinet with three to four doors costs less than two 30-inch cabinets with two doors each.
- Utilizing granite tiles rather than solid granite can save up to 60 percent on countertops. Stone look-alike laminate surfaces can save more. You can always upgrade to granite down the road.



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• Selecting the right line of appliances to fit your space, budget, style and cooking needs.

After the design is approved, a professional remodeling company can usually complete the project in five to six weeks. A well-planned and well-executed remodeling of a kitchen causes minimal disruption to the daily lives of the family.

While many consumers don't necessarily want the trendiest kitchen, a kitchen makeover will still bring many benefits. A well-designed kitchen is timeless. A professional designer will work with the architecture of your home, space restrictions, and pull in “green” components, while addressing any existing problem areas in the kitchen – making the “heart of the home” a more comfortable, more energy-efficient, and more welcoming space to enjoy! 