



*Great Ideas
Come in
Small Packages*

The Realities of Remodeling

As your family grows and your needs change you may look around your home and decide its time for a change to either enlarge a space, update it or adapt it to its new use. Remodeling has remained at a healthy level in our area even during this economic downturn as homeowners can realize up to a 140% return on remodeling costs when they sell their updated home. (Percentages of the return on investment vary with the room that is remodeled and the extent of the remodel.) Remodeling has its own inherent problems most of which can be minimized by reviewing what to expect.

Get recommendations for trades-people from professionals who have used them before so you won't end up with a less than satisfactory project. Ask to speak with three clients they've worked for in the last six months. Go on site and actually see some of their previous work.

Unless you have hired a general contractor, interior decorator or architect to keep on top of things, you will take on the responsibility to make sure that schedules are coordinated, that work is proceeding as planned, and to take care of the inevitable problems. This can be a very time-consuming role. Hiring the services of a project manager will ease your stress and you will have referrals to a team of trades- people who have worked efficiently together on previous projects.

It is always a good idea to have a written contract to refer to as the job progresses. Delineate your expectations of the trades-people, their compensation and the time frame of the job completion. Expect to pay more for any changes to the final design once the work has started. Make sure the contractor's licenses and the subcontractors' insurance policies are current.

The scheduling of various subcontractors and the component delivery is usually the most time consuming part of managing a project. If you don't want a long waiting period between sections of the job, consider waiting until all the materials have arrived before beginning the remodel. Lead time for products to be delivered to the job site vary from a few days to three months. By keeping your contractor updated on the material arrivals he will be able to better plan the time to reserve for your project in the upcoming weeks.



*Great Ideas
Come in
Small Packages*

Problems will come up, but don't let this scare you because it is a normal aspect of the remodeling process. If you haven't hired someone to deal with the problems, you will need to deal with them yourself. It is impossible to determine what is behind a wall or ceiling prior to starting a project. Termite damage, corroded pipes and dry rot may temporarily delay the completion of a project; but once these issues are resolved, the remodeled area of the home will actually be more sound than before the work began.

When necessary holes are made for electrical or plumbing connections, a plasterer and a painter will be needed to finish the job. There are few things more invasive than plaster dust. Even if the rooms that are being remodeled are sealed off with plastic sheeting, the dust will still penetrate other parts of the house. It is a problem that can be minimized, but never eliminated. Ask your contractor to use a shop vacuum in the work area at the end of each day.

During the remodel you will have a number of people working in your home. In order to maintain control of your privacy; establish some rules early and post them where new subcontractors coming on the job can see them. Designate which one door they should use, which one bathroom they can use and whether they should answer your house phone.

Finally, take before and after photos of the remodeled space. The photos will help you appreciate any of the hassles it took to create your new space.

Get Ready, Get Set, Remodel!