



Guide to a Great Remodeling Experience

Definition: “A great remodeling experience” is one where the journey and the end result leave you saying;

“I loved remodeling my home and I love my remodeler and their team!”

Remodeling starts with dissatisfaction. It could be the isolation of the kitchen, the size of the bathroom, the design of the master bedroom, or any other “deficiency” in the home. Regardless of the cause, you have reached the point where you are dreaming of ways to fix the problem.

Should You Remodel Your Home?

No matter how big or how small the changes you desire, wouldn't it be nice if you could find a way to decide if remodeling is the best choice for you?

Location Is the First Thing You Should Consider

1. Do you like the area where you live?
2. Is the school district adequate for your family?
3. Are the tax structures favorable?
4. Is your lot adequate? Are the neighbors friendly?
5. Are you close to parks, schools, shopping, entertainment, banking and work?
6. Are you close to family and friends?

My Suggestion: List the good and bad about your location so you can determine if your existing location has the potential to meet your long-term needs. If it doesn't pass the test, then maybe a new location in a new or existing home would be a better choice for you.

If the location passes the test, then let's move on.

Develop a List of Priorities and Questions

As a family, put together a list of features that need to be included in the remodeling project and prioritize them. If you can't agree right now, on the priorities, then include everyone's desired features. Your remodeler will be able to help you sort through the features and/or develop a design that incorporates everyone's wishes and desires. The important part of this process is that you begin to see the project from everyone's perspective and work toward a common goal.

Also, develop a list of questions for your contractor. Do not worry about asking dumb questions. Your remodeler should be willing to take the time to answer as many questions as you ask. Remodeling is not something everyone has experience, so there will be questions.

My Suggestion: Keep your list of questions handy so you can add to it as questions come to mind.



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Determine Your Budget

Your next step should be to decide what your budget will be for the project. Check into the different financing options available to you and evaluate them based on amount available, amount of time until you receive the money and other factors to determine which would be wisest to pursue.

My Suggestion: Be willing to share your budget amount with the remodeler you choose. This will be very helpful to them in designing options for your project. We typically will show options to our clients above of their stated budget only if the designs are particularly requested by the client.

When developing a budget, your future plans with the home and the potential return on investment should be considered. We remodel our homes to make ourselves happy, so if you plan to sell soon, it may be best to allow the new owners to complete the project. For smaller touchup projects, your realtor can give you ideas of what the return on investment could be financially.

Determine the Potential of the Home

Now you must determine if your home can physically be remodeled into the home you desire. For smaller projects, this may be a simple yes or no answer. For larger projects involving removal of walls and other intensive work, it may require an on-site meeting with a qualified remodeler to determine if your dream project is feasible.

My Suggestion: Find a quality professional remodeler to help you determine if the changes you desire are possible. With this you can determine if you want to proceed with your project.

You Make the Call

Armed with the information gathered above, you will now be able to make the final decision of whether or not to move forward to designing your project.

“The remodeling process beginning-to-end must build happiness not detract from it.”



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Selecting a Remodeler Who Will Provide a Great Remodeling Experience

Where do you start when you're looking for the best remodeling contractor to help design and build your remodeling project?

My Suggestion: **You pick Don Jason Remodeling, of course!** I am obviously joking. However, I do feel we will be the best option for those of you who want our level of quality and customer service. We love to help people create the home of their dreams.

The best and safest way to identify potential remodelers is to seek out family and friends and ask them for referrals to remodeling contractors with which they have had positive experiences. Other good ways to find quality remodelers are to check with your plumbing or HVAC contractor, your local building department, or builders associations. These people work with remodelers often and will be able to guide you to remodelers who they like to work with, who pay their bills, and who are professional in their dealings.

With your new list of potential remodelers, do a simple internet search for their company name. This should reveal any horror stories from other consumers about a particular remodeler. Next, you're ready to begin interviewing them.

Interview

Call the remodelers you choose and be prepared to ask them a series of questions either in person or over the phone. The remodeler you select should be the one who displays confidence, professionalism, creativity, communication skills, integrity and the commitment to help you discover and build your project with the utmost care, compassion and quality. This remodeler will be one who can help you enjoy a stress-free process and completed project.

Here are some questions which will help you determine who you feel comfortable working with.

1. Is your company licensed and bonded as per requirements in my area?
2. Does your company carry worker's compensation insurance?
3. Do your sub contractors carry worker's compensation insurance?
4. Does your company carry liability insurance and does it cover completed operations and sub contractor liability?
5. Is your company a member of NAHB, NARI, Remodelers Council and PRO?
6. How long has your company been in business?
7. Does your company have an accessible office location?
8. Does your company have in house design capabilities?
9. Does your company have the ability to show 3D presentations of the finished project?
10. Does your company provide a schedule and completion date?
11. What is your company clean up and debris removal policy?
12. Does your company have experience with projects similar in size to my project?
13. What portion of the work do your own employees do?



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After hearing the answers to these questions there is one final question to ask yourself. “*Do I feel that I can work with and communicate with this remodeler?*” Listen to your gut on this one!

Here’s What I Think That Process Should Look Like

<i>Design</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Smooth Construction Process</i>	<i>Completion</i>
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Design

First you will sign a professional service agreement. This will state that your contractor will design and create a conceptual idea that can be built at a price that you feel meets your needs and desires. This contractor will work on these ideas until they meet your requirements. It may take two ideas or it could take dozens. Your ability to communicate and make decisions along with the skill of the contractor you select will determine the length of this part of the process. Take your time and make sure you really love your final design.

Details

A qualified contractor will be skilled in helping people discover their true desires. They will work out all the design details, so that everything that is part of the project is shown on the working drawings and the contract documents. They will help you make all the selections so that your project meets your desires. Just one example is what windows, their color, their size and style. Where they will be placed and how they will be trimmed. Will they open and what style screen will be included. These details can be seen on a 3D drafting program which will help you see the finished project before it has even been built. It's best to work with someone who has the patience to make as many drawings as are necessary so you understand and approve of what your finished project will look like. This way you will know what your project will look like and the investment you must make to receive the completed project of your desires.

A Smooth Construction Process

Once the drawings, specifications and contracts are all complete and accepted you are ready to start production. This is where the contractor's production team shows up at your home and starts to do the various parts of the project. This is where it becomes important that the production crew be professional, knowledgeable, skilled and customer friendly. There should be a project manager on your project every day who can keep the project proceeding efficiently and effectively. They should communicate with you about any concerns or questions and make sure all work is done to your satisfaction. If there are questions or changes they will work diligently to make the necessary documentation so that everything can proceed smoothly. The project manager will work closely with you to see that the project is finished and that you are happy with the finished product.

Completion

Once the project is complete you should be very pleased with your finished product. If problems or questions develop just call the remodeler and they should respond quickly to remedy the situation. Remember a good remodeler will back up their work because they take great pride in



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providing a great product. Their satisfied clients are what keep them in business and inspire them to be the best that they can be. Thus with the right remodeler you should enjoy your home for years to come and know that if you ever need more work you can call your remodeler and he will be ready to serve you again.

Time to Get Started

I hope the questions and suggestions provided regarding location, potential and selecting a remodeler help you get started on a great remodeling experience.

If you select a quality, professional remodeling contractor your experience should be rewarding and pleasant. If you have questions I would love the opportunity to discuss your remodeling project with you and see if I can help you make an informed decision.

Good luck and may you make the home of your dreams.

Remember:

"The remodeling process beginning-to-end must build happiness not detract from it."