

REMODELING EVERYONE'S FAVORITE ROOM...

The Kitchen

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FACT IS THE KITCHEN IS THE HEART OF EVERY HOME. You've placed the chips and dip on the family room coffee table and created a beautiful centerpiece for the dining room, but still whenever family and friends are over, everyone congregates in the kitchen. Because of this, a kitchen incorporated into a "great room" has become the most asked for remodeling project in Orange County. That being said, many homeowners don't know where to start when planning a kitchen remodel, and are unaware of all the decisions that will have to be made.

YOU'RE GOING TO NEED HELP

There are three ways you can go about your remodel: Do-It-Yourself, hire a contractor or work with a design/build firm. If you are going to try the DIY method be cautious. Remodeling your kitchen is not a television show on HGTV. It will not be dust-free and completed in a mere 30 minutes. The process can be extremely stressful and a lot of work, and you must remember that your project may not turn out as you had envisioned it. And remember, there are numerous building codes that may apply to your job and you'll need to know them. The second option is to hire a contractor. Contractors can be skilled craftsmen, but most will offer little or no design or budget guidance. Be prepared to select and supply most materials to your contractor that will be installed. Going this route can work well if you have a significant amount of time to dedicate to the project and a true eye for design.

Lastly, you can opt to work with a design/build firm. A design/build firm is quite different from a contractor as it's a one-stop shop; they are responsible for eliminating problems and ensuring you a successful project. A design/build firm should help you establish a budget, craft the design and layout, provide working plans, assist you in selecting all materials and then oversee your project's construction. At the end of the day, every homeowner wants to avoid a remodeling disaster, and it's worth the extra penny upfront to ensure a successful project while saving time and money in the long run.

A WELL-DESIGNED SPACE

A common phrase consistently heard from clients is "There isn't much we can do with the design; our only option is to remove and replace everything in the same configuration." This is entirely not true. A professional kitchen designer will help create a functional layout to maximize space and

hit the items on your wish list. Are you looking for more counter space? Do you have corner cabinets that are not easily accessible? Do you hit your head on the microwave every time you cook on the cooktop? Is your kitchen too small for an eat-in dining space? These are all simple fixes when re-designing your kitchen and just a small list of things to consider when finalizing the best layout for you and your family.

ALL THE SELECTIONS

In addition to determining the layout, you will also need to select materials such as your cabinets, countertops, backsplash, flooring, and appliances, just to name a few. What type of cabinet style do you like? Many people don't realize that you must pick a door style, wood species, stain or paint, finish or glaze—all for just your cabinets! A professional will make sure all decisions are made while recommending products that will match your lifestyle. If you are working with a design/build firm, you should have all of these selections completed prior to entering into a final contract. Having these decisions made before signing on the dotted line helps to eliminate surprises, stay within your budget and produce the project on schedule.

ON TIME, ON BUDGET, ON SCHEDULE

As we mentioned earlier, remodeling is not an HGTV show. For a full kitchen renovation, you should plan for the construction to take somewhere between four and eight weeks, from demolition to completion. If you work with a contractor rather than a design/build firm, it could be even longer if they have limited labor resources and or are relying on you to supply all the materials and fixtures.

The entire remodeling experience can be a bit of an emotional rollercoaster. Everything is exciting when the demolition takes place, but then your excitement level decreases during the electrical, plumbing and drywall phase because you can't see much change. As you watch the cabinets and countertops being installed, then you know you're getting closer to the finish line! Remodeling your kitchen can be intrusive and a bit stressful, but how thrilled will you be to have the family over for the holiday dinner you've always dreamed of in your gorgeous new kitchen. If the kitchen is the heart of every home, why not make it the pride of your home and the place you and your family want to enjoy being in the most?



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