



Hiring a Home Remodeler: 3 Tips No One Ever Told You

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When we speak to customers about their previous remodeling experiences, we hear a lot of similar stories.

“Our contractor disappeared after a week and we couldn’t get ahold of him!”

“There was a construction trailer parked outside my house, but there never seemed to be anyone using it...”

“We were washing our dishes in the bathtub for a month!”

In general, the construction industry doesn’t have the greatest reputation when it comes to remodeling projects—and it’s not hard to see why. A successful remodel depends just as much upon the people and communication as it does upon the actual work.

We’ve all heard the advice about hiring a home remodeler: check their references, read reviews, interview them ahead of time. But hiring the right remodel contractor is about more than simply making sure they’re who they seem to be.

Here are three practical tips for hiring a home remodeler that no one ever told you:

Tip #1: Hire based not only on what they can do, but who they are.

Plenty of people are skilled in construction, plumbing, tiling, and the other trades needed to complete a remodeling project. But that doesn’t mean they’ll be a pleasure to work with.

The biggest tip for choosing a home remodeler—and the tip that is most often forgotten—is to choose someone based on how well you will be able to work with them throughout the remodeling process.

Building a new home is like buying a new, completely customized suit. You'll meet with the tailor, discuss what you want, and probably come back for a few fittings. But the majority of the work will be completed behind the scenes, without you there.

Remodeling, on the other hand, is like getting a suit tailored while you're still wearing it. You and the tailor will both be in each other's way, and it can be a frustrating process.

That's why it's critically important that you select a remodeler you can get along with. Even if your builder and you have the best intentions, you'll still end up poking each other at some point—that's simply the nature of remodeling while you're still living in your home. During your interview process, be sure that you get a good feeling from your potential contractor. Check for mutual trust and alignment about the project. If you can feel a connection with your builder, you'll be on the right path to a successful remodeling project.

Tip #2: Get organized from the very beginning.

Imagine: you've been dealing with a bathroom remodel, and it's been stressful on your family. Everyone is a bit on edge, and you've felt out of control since the project began. Suddenly, a couple of weeks in, you get an email from your contractor telling you that you need to choose your toilet by tomorrow. Tomorrow! The contractor seems disorganized, and you know that this will only continue as you move forward with the project.

Unfortunately, scenarios like this are all too common. That's why tip number two is to be organized from the very beginning.

Your remodel contractor should work with you to finalize your plans before the first hammer is ever swung. Just as if you were building a whole house, you need to complete your remodel on paper first. That includes picking out all of your fixtures and finishes *ahead of time*.

Not only will this make the project much more efficient, but it will save you money. In the scenario above, let's say you rush to the home store and pick out a toilet as requested by the contractor. Only it turns out the one you bought won't fit in the space that has been roughed out. Now, you either need to waste time returning the toilet and picking out a new one, or changes will need to be made on the construction and plumbing end, which will cost more money.

By getting organized and planning every aspect from the beginning, you will know exactly what you are getting—and how much it will cost. If your contractor isn't willing to work this way, it's time to find someone else.

Tip #3: When it comes to construction, company size matters.

Small construction operations can be appealing to work with for a number of reasons. Their prices may appear lower, and you may feel as though you are more familiar with the person who will be performing the majority of the work.



But there are a number of drawbacks to working with smaller construction companies. One is that the remodel process can often take longer. Smaller contractors will often hire subcontractors that are also small, meaning it's more difficult to schedule their time. Your project timeline may end up getting stretched out as you wait for other trades to make time for you.

Full-scale, professional construction companies have a greater number of resources, meaning that they can be more organized and efficient. They are able to manage multiple projects at once while completing each one on time and on budget. Your project will run smoothly from start to finish.