



DESIGN PLANNING

Guide

welcome & thank you

*you are now one of the many homeowners who understand that how you
start the remodeling process matters*

I've been designing kitchens for many years. I have done the designing while other builders manage and install, I have designed, built and managed, I have collaborated with other designers and worked with homeowners that have done the work themselves, I have done it all. I do this every day, 3000 plus hours a year, Through all the years of remodeling kitchens and bathrooms the most common factor to achieving successful projects is always the effort put into the planning stages of the project.

If you are able to work with me one on one with our full on design build service you get to experience our planning process first hand. Not everyone can, so if not, then this guide is for you!

Now, where do I start.. I'd like to take the first opportunity to talk with you about how I can help you get the best results, how you feel about your space now and how you want to feel after we finish.

My questions come from a place of sincere and genuine interest, plus it helps me to see into your lifestyle, the struggles you are facing, it's very personal.

A lot of time our conversations go like this;
How long have you been thinking about updating or remodeling your kitchen? The answer always surprises me,
“Wow, I respond, that long? What's Holding you back?”

continued...

I almost always get one of three responses, and it rarely is about time;

ONE:

No idea if we can afford this project

TWO:

Can't agree on what needs to be done

THREE:

Just don't know how to get things started

Feelings of fear, stress and overwhelm sums it up in three painful words.

I developed this guide for all of you ready to start planning, who like to research the options and feel confident that what you want doesn't get lost during the process. I want to help you plan the best project for you.

The best way to use this guide is to use it as a workbook. I have allowed lots of space for you to write your thoughts under each item. This guide is about the planning, not doing the work- in Section 3 we discuss ways to get your project done.

now, lets get started!

Cindy Murphy

contents

the design planning guide is a blueprint of decisions that go into remodeling a space, the breakdown in the sections below should help you feel more prepared in project designing process

SECTION 01:

Breaking through obstacles; Why, What, & Who.

SECTION 02.

Choosing your remodeling path

SECTION 03.

Communicating your style

SECTION 04.

Follow a process; Designing and sourcing.

SECTION 05.

Hiring for the right results

SECTION 06.

Knowing what it will cost to get what you want

Getting Clear on the Three W's; Why, What, and Who.

Before you start looking at products, deciding on a budget, or talking with professionals let's get clear on the bigger personal picture.

01. WHY...

Is this project important to you?

There are lots of variations to the reasons you may want, even need to remodel your kitchen or bathroom, by understanding your why, costs can be controlled. Focus the budget on limited specialty items, and recognize the right choices when they show up.

Think about your reasons, are they...

Comfort, ease, pride, approval, appearance, status, style, self care, to give to others in your family, reward, maintenance, superior quality,

What is your why? Start with how you want to feel once the project is complete.

EXAMPLES:

-I want to feel like all my hard work pays off by allowing me to have a beautiful kitchen for me and my family.

-I want to be able to wake up in the morning and feel organized and stress free as I get ready for work.

-I want to drive up to my home and feel happy and proud that this is my home.

-I want to be confident and able to host my families events in our home.

-I want my family to enjoy spending time in our basement together.

LIST YOUR REASONS FOR REMODELING BELOW:



02. WHAT...

Don't you like about your current space?



Do you like about your current space?

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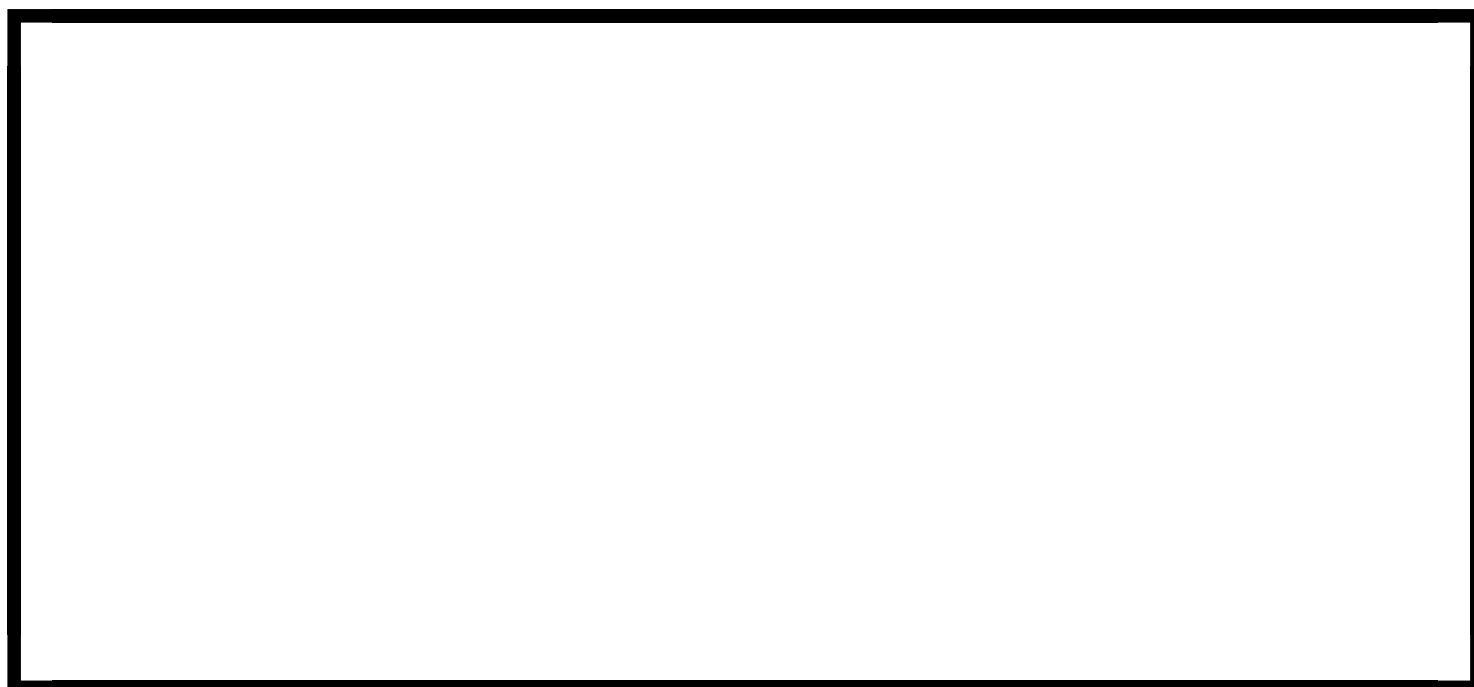
Do you ever feel frustrated in your current space? If so, when:

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How do you want to feel in your new space?

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What new activities would you like to do in your space?

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The Three W's Continued...

What activities would you like to continue doing in your space?

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03. WHO...

Do you need to help you with your project?

(Check All That Apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DESIGNER (INTERIOR, KITCHEN OR BATH) | <input type="checkbox"/> HVAC PROFESSIONAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECT | <input type="checkbox"/> HANDYMAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PROJECT MANAGER | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GENERAL CONTRACTOR | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CARPENTER | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PLUMBING AND GAS FITTER | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ELECTRICIAN | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TILE PROFESSIONAL | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ROOFING, SIDING, AND GUTTER SPECIALIST | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COUNTERTOP FABRICATOR | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FLOORING PROFESSIONAL | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DRYWALL AND PAINTING PROFESSIONAL | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WINDOW AND DOOR PROFESSIONAL | |

some final words of advice..

01.

Evaluate your time investment. If you checked more than the Designer and Handyman box you need to evaluate how much time you have available to spend coordinating the project, interviewing and selecting the appropriate tradesperson. Expect to spend up two-three times as long in the process when you go it alone.

02.

Pennywise and dollar foolish. You may or may not save any money by acting as your own “General” contractor as most professional trades charge one price to a General Contractor and another “retail price to homeowners.

03.

Safety First. It’s not worth avoiding the cost of professionals in the Electrical, Plumbing, and Gas professions by either doing it yourself or having a handyman tackle, the risk is too great!

04.

Return on Investment. A project well done will return more dollars back to you when you are ready to sell. Even if you are just doing cosmetic changes, when well done, they can garner a greater return. (Well worth the cost of getting a designer’s help)

There are 5 roads you can take to get to a completed project.

They are dependent on 3 important decisions you are making in your pre-planning so far.

01. PROJECT SCOPE

The what of your project. what are you going to do? is it a quick update or a complete gut? is it somewhere in between.

02. TIME INVESTMENT

How much time do you have to visit showrooms working with specialty associates such as cabinet designers, countertop specialists, flooring and the time consuming process of sourcing fixtures and finishes?

03. DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

Do you need structural evaluations, spacial planning, coordination between licensed trades? Do you need assistance with visualization and the combining of materials? Are you easily overwhelmed when making design decisions?

You will notice that cost investment is not how they are listed. Cost is not a reason to choose one of the roads over the other, that is a recipe for disaster. The old saying “Don’t be penny wise and dollar foolish” stands true here. A poorly executed project will cost you way more money in the end.

The 5 Roads

ROAD 01. DO IT YOURSELF

This is best for the kitchen or bath update. New appliances, adding a new countertop and backsplash are all great ways to give a tired kitchen or bathroom new life. Tasks such as removal of existing materials are easily tackled on a weekend. Never attempt electrical work unless you are an electrician, never remove any walls unless you have had them professionally evaluated and met local codes.

(Your time investment on this road is VERY HIGH.)

ROAD 02. THE DIY HYBRID

This road is a combination of the Do it Yourself and the Handyman service. This road works well for simple pull and replacement of existing cabinets, new countertops, tile backsplash and new appliances in the same locations as before.

Most Handymen are well versed in disconnecting and making the re-connections for plumbing. Most appliance stores will offer a service for connecting the new appliances, particularly when gas is involved. They are usually happy to have you take on the time consuming aspects of your project or let you coordinate all the moving pieces.

(Your time investment on the road is VERY HIGH.)

ROAD 03. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

A very common road, these professionals are licensed to pull permits and complete the work. Structural changes to the home is within their skill set. They have the necessary relationships with all the tradesmen, electricians, plumbers, drywall to get the job done. They do not handle any of the designing or sourcing of the final finishes but are happy to refer you to local showrooms for assistance. Supervision may or may not be included, good communication is essential to getting the work done in a timely manner and within your expectations.

(Your time investment on this road is HIGH.)

ROAD 04. DESIGN AND BUILD

For complete gut remodels and spacial changes this is the most chosen and successful road. Whether a specialty kitchen & bath firm or a general design build firm this road is best known for the quality of the finished project and the time-saving aspects. Be cautious that you think you are taking Road 4 but are actually taking Road 3—design build firms have one assigned designer working with you and the build team from start to finish. This can be more expensive than the other roads, but they also are vested in your project from the start working with you on design ideas, drawings, sourcing of the right material, cost management coordination and supervision throughout. Your time investment on the road is MEDIUM.

ROAD 05. DESIGN BUILD HYBRID

Selecting a professional kitchen & bath designer to work with you through out the design phase and project manage the construction phase is an acceptable choice. Typically, this marries the designer with the independent contractor. Similar to Road 4, the quality of the finished project and the time saving to you is maintained, particularly if they have worked on multiple projects together. Communication is usually strong and the designer will act on your behalf conveying changes and the many details of your project. Your time investment on this road is LOW MEDIUM.

You will notice that none of these reflect a LOW time investment. In reality, getting a space that reflects your needs and wants takes your input. The difference between a MEDIUM time investment and a HIGH time investment can be significant. Projects with many moving pieces and structural changes are best left to the Design Build or Design Build Hybrid unless you have the time and the patience to stay involved.

Why do so many homeowners get anxious and avoid starting the planning of their home remodeling projects?

It's rarely because of cost, the initial stages of planning are usually free. More often than not it is because we have heard the stories of projects gone wrong, and like going to the dentist we want to avoid that experience. The best way to insure the avoidance of such unpleasant events is to put them front of mind, your instincts will warn you when you get that uneasy feeling of impending angst.

Let's take a look at the most common fears and how we can use them to our advantage...

Common Fears

- Hiring a contractor, or service provider solely based on price?
- Getting swept away by a showroom display that doesn't work with your lifestyle?
- Being convinced to spend too much money on any one thing that in the end was not a priority for you?

How do we stop fear from paralyzing our project and remain confidently in control of the hundreds of decisions that need to be made? I recommend the following essential steps before you select a single finish, fixture, or interview a single professional:

Where Do Your Fears Come From?

Get them out of you head and onto paper. I want you to write below anything you can think of that can go wrong with your project. This simple step will keep it front of mind and you will use it throughout the planning stages to keep your plan on course.

Examples:

Example: I am afraid this project will cost more than (your budget)

Example: I am afraid that I will select the wrong cabinet color

Example: I am afraid I will get tired of the (appliances, tile, paint, cabinet finish)

Example: I am afraid of not getting the quality that is important to me

Example: I am afraid of being convinced I need to spend more than I want to

Now it's your turn,

"I AM AFRAID THAT..."

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Communicating what you do want

Design Professionals have used visual boards, mood boards, and swipe files for years to communicate their design ideas to potential clients. It wasn't that long ago that the design process was not a collaboration. Mostly this was caused by lack of access to the types of materials, design ideas, finishes and fixtures that were available. Now with sites like Houzz and programs on TV we have ample access at our finger tips.

Luckily, in the last ten years, the internet has opened this world up and we can now search and find anything that our hearts may desire.

Unfortunately, the downside of this is F.O.M.O. Fear of missing out. Also disguised as overwhelm.

“ F.O.M.O ”
FEAR OF MISSING OUT

The fear and feelings of overwhelm that can happen during the selection phase of a project can be avoided when you communicate with visual information.

Words can be misunderstood, but pictures can communicate quality of materials, expectations, colors, textures, moods and feelings. No longer do we strictly speak with the classification of one “style”. Most people are not one “style”, but want more personal expression. It's time to put together your...

Your Visual Swipe File

There are 5 Steps to creating your swipe file listed below. These 5 steps are designed to eliminate hours of frustration once you begin the design and selection phase. Time is money, yep, your time and your money is valuable, don't skip this step.

STEP 01. SET IT UP

I recommend Houzz.com as a great resource. It's free and organizes all of your space ideas.

STEP 02. IDEA BOOKS; CREATE THEM ON HOUZZ.COM

I recommend the tabs; Overall Design, Special features, countertops, flooring, tile, paint, colors, lighting

STEP 03. TAG & SORT; AS YOU ADD TO YOUR IDEABOOKS

Search and Limit yourself to 30-45 minutes of organizing at a time so you don't get overwhelmed.

STEP 04. EDIT & REMOVE

Wait 1-2 weeks then edit and remove any photos that you no longer feel connected with.

STEP 05. SHARE

Share your pics with your designer, family members, spouse, or bestie to hear second opinions. NOTE: Just because you seek their opinions doesn't mean you have to listen to them. Things you feel connected to will only stand out more.

Here are my last words on the importance of a swipe file;

As a Certified Kitchen and Bath Remodeler and a Kitchen and Bath designer, if you express to me what you don't want and you can show me pictures of things you do want you accomplish four big wins;

- 01.** *I become your partner and we collaborate with even better fine tuned ideas.*
- 02.** *I can bring my experience and do a better job of communicating the cause and effect of decisions.*
- 03.** *I can openly discuss the impact decisions make on project cost*
- 04.** *I can gently remind you and re-direct when you start to stray on colors and finishes, while the decisions are being made which saves your time.*

If you are working with me one on one and don't have a swipe file -we create one, why? Because we communicate throughout the process with these visual images.

It's just that important.

Our goal in this section is to go step by step, taking the next right step, in the right order.

“Why does it matter”, you say?

If you randomly tackle selections you will experience what I call the select and repeat method of design. Very frustrating, time consuming and often leads to overspending.

Susan experienced that before coming to see me, let me tell you about Susan.

Susan is a past client who was starting a bathroom project, actually, she had been starting this project for over a year. While trying to save some money and feeling confident that she had a good grasp on her likes she decided to make all her product decisions before interviewing her project team. But every time she got close to being done with making selections, something just wasn't right.

She had read on a blog that the first step was to pick a “jumping off point”, (yeah, more like a jumping off the cliff point!) for her it was a picture in her bedroom that she loves. Starting with the colors in that picture she headed off to find the cabinets. After a couple of showrooms and some quick measurements she had the sink cabinet selected, fully loaded with all the organizational accessories she had seen on pinterest.

Thinking that was easier than she thought she decided to tackle the countertop. This time it took several weeks of research to decide on right material. Now, to the look—she was clear on a very classic top, she had seen it a million times but she wants quartz not marble, because of maintenance concerns.

By the time I met Susan she had selected 4 different tops, three alternate cabinet finishes. What happened? Susan did not select tile until the end. Tile is first.

It's the biggest influencer on all the selections working well, it is;

01. The biggest impact in the room and

02. The largest costing item..

Before you reduce yourself to a puddle of tears I have found one checklist over all others to shepherd you along the path.

MDLLC Project Process Checklist will get you through with little to know second guessing.

MURPHY'S
Design, llc.
project progress checklist

step

date completed

Take Photos of the Space to use during selections

Flooring Selection/Bathroom Tile (if applicable)

Cabinet Selection
-Door style
-Finish
-Layout changes
-New Appliances

Countertops

Kitchen Backsplash if applicable

Faucets, plumbing and sinks

Lighting plan and Decorative lighting

Cabinet Hardware

You probably think that you have two choices;

- 01.** Doing It Yourself or
- 02.** Done for you Design and Remodeling.

But in between those two are the many ways to remodel that we outlined in SECTION "Choosing Your Path". So, unless you are doing it all yourself you need to hire help that you know, like and trust.

Below I break out the top 10 hiring mistakes that can derail your remodel

- 01.** DON'T Hire a design build contractor to save time and then break out DIY projects to save money - it causes longer time delays and communication issues.
- 02.** DON'T Hire a handyman to do a full gut remodeling, they don't have the support they need to do a great job.
- 03.** DON'T Hire an Independent Contractor expecting design assistance
- 04.** DON'T Tackle electrical and plumbing work yourself!
EVER.
- 05.** DON'T Hire a Design Build Contractor to do cosmetic updates. You will pay way too much, we take those clients and run them through a different process to save them time and money.
- 06.** DON'T Ask for a discount for ignoring permits or licenses, that's just bad business. So if they offer that as an option reconsider your choice of professional.

07. DON'T Hire a Design Build Contractor who does not actually have a designer to provide these services. You will pay more in the end.
08. DON'T Hire as your general contractor an interior designer that is not licensed to act as one. General Contractors are licensed and held accountable in many ways; From contract wording (to protect you), disclosures (are required), and timing.
09. DON'T Hire anyone who will not discuss with you in detail the cost of the project and the effect of the choices you are making.
10. DON'T Hire a kitchen or bath designer or remodeler who does not have you sign a contract that lists the products being installed, detailed scope of work by task and final signed plans with elevations.

bonus tip!

11. NEVER put a project out to bid without a complete and final set of plans and specifications, that means all those estimates you get before design and selections.