

How to Work With Your Contractor

Are you planning to remodel your home? If the answer is yes, here are some tips on how to establish and maintain a good working relationship with your remodeling contractor.

Of course you believe you're a reasonable, understanding person with whom anyone would be happy to work. However, if you've never been involved with remodeling your home, you'd be surprised at what might happen!

Realistic Expectations

Everyone who begins the remodeling process has visions of the "dream" home they'll have when it's completed. Few, however, give much thought to the dust and dirt, noise, inconveniences, scheduling delays, and slight problems that must be dealt with along the way. These elements are part and parcel of any remodeling job, and every client must be realistic and accept the fact that there will be some inconveniences.

How inconvenient and unpleasant the process is depends a lot on the working relationship we create right from the beginning. A good client-contractor relationship depends on several things:

1. Be honest with us from the beginning about your expectations. Clear communication is the foundation of a successful project.
2. Be realistic about what you are looking for in the remodel and what you are willing to budget for the project. Many homeowners enter a remodeling project with grandiose plans that need to be scaled down to meet their budget. We'll work with you to provide you with the best your money can afford. But remember, this is our livelihood. As with any profession, some profit margin must be factored in to the price.
3. Let's discuss our work schedule. If the schedule falls behind, feel free to ask why.
4. Realize that certain stages of remodeling may seem to go more quickly than others. For example, during stages that involve more tangible work (for example, when walls are being torn down or replaced, framing constructed, or appliances installed), you'll have a true sense of rapid progress. During other stages, however, that involve work of a more "hidden" nature like the installation of electrical lines or plumbing, it may seem that the work is going nowhere. Don't worry. Just because you can't see it easily doesn't mean that nothing's happening. Trust us--it is.
5. Recognize your role in the remodeling process and allow us to perform our work. Your input regarding design, expected craftsmanship, etc. will be incorporated into the job scope before the contract is signed. Once work is underway, give us the freedom to execute the job effectively. This is not to say that if you see something going wrong you shouldn't speak up. However don't try to take on our role in the process.

6. If possible, avoid making changes to the job scope. They tend to upset the schedule, which ultimately upsets you. If you do decide some changes are necessary settle the cost difference up front with the lead carpenter or salesperson so there is no misunderstanding.

Finally, remember that maintaining a good contractor-client relationship is a two-way street. Just as you would want others to respect your professional expertise, respect ours. At the same time, you can be sure that we're committed to providing you with as painless a remodel as possible, with the final results you expect!