

WHAT A HOMEOWNER SHOULD CONSIDER BEFORE HIRING A DESIGNER

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO INVEST INTO THE PROJECT?

Share what your pocketbook will allow. A lot of people find this first step extremely intimidating and invasive because they feel that by “showing all their cards” they are somehow allowing their designer carte blanche at their bank account. Just the opposite is true. By sharing what you feel comfortable spending, you will give the designer an immediate direction and keep them from “over-designing” a project that can’t be built and this will help the designer and the contractor make the appropriate decision for material choices and amount of detailing that can go into your project. There’s nothing worse than falling in love with a set of plans and then being hit hard by the reality of the contractor’s bid. That’s a terrible let down and completely unnecessary and you’ll probably end up spending more on the redesign if you do. Instead use those precious dollars towards the actual construction.

WHAT IS YOUR TIME FRAME?

You may not want to consider opening up the roof around January or start that kitchen overhaul just before the holidays. Consider your schedule and personal needs and determine how soon you would like to start the design phase and the construction phase. An experienced designer can give you insight into how long a particular job may last and give you a timeline that won’t inconvenience your household as much.

IN TERMS OF TIME, EXECUTION AND BUDGET, WHAT ASPECT(S) OF YOUR PROJECT ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Make a list of your needs and desires. Here is a list of some critical elements to consider:

- How long do you plan on living in your house?
- Period style w/ modern conveniences vs. a more contemporary look
- Space to entertain and to dine in
- Appliances: professional vs. conventional, gas vs. electric, decorative hood
- Storage, recycling center, food pantry, corner lazy susan
- Built-ins: desk/message center, display cabinets
- Finish materials i.e.; flooring, countertops, painted vs. stained cabinets

Share what best describes your needs and make sure that your designer and contractor fully understand what takes precedence for you.

WHAT IS THE STYLE OF YOUR PROJECT?

It's where *you* live and should be a reflection of your taste and lifestyle. Remember *you* are a vital part of the design process. Share what you envision for the space(s) with the designer. Before that initial meeting, spend some time looking through magazines and books or take pictures of details. Like a specific color? Have any strong dislikes? Particular materials or surfaces that you want incorporated? It's your time to share them all! This scrapbook will help immensely during the design phase. The more information you provide the more efficient the design process will be.

HOW DO YOU USE YOUR SPACE?

Are you a busy family with teenagers all on different schedules? Or a couple that work 50+ hours a week, but love to entertain on the weekends? Do you have any pets? Do you have any special collections you've always wanted to display? Do you like to entertain family & friends? There is usually a specific list of questions a designer will ask you at your first meeting. It can be helpful to get this in advance so that you can thoughtfully prepare your answers and also get the input of other members of your household.

WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITIES?

Be clear about specific features you need. Do you have a popcorn budget with caviar dreams? Sometimes budgets and ideas or "dreams" do not work succinctly. If so, you need to determine what you could live without or less of before the first design is begun. It's a good idea to prioritize your wish list and allow for modifications. Would you be devastated not having high-end appliances, but would be able to live with laminate countertops in lieu of granite? On larger remodels, the choices for space planning and options for layouts are vast and the need to accommodate changes due to budget constraints is critical. Make it clear what is important to you and what items you are willing to be flexible on so the designer can steer you towards making the appropriate decisions. A qualified designer can help you to get more than you thought because of their extensive knowledge of material options and space planning. Remember, you're paying for their experience.

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