



10 STEPS TO A BETTER REMODEL FOR MAXIMUM VALUE

BONUS

Thanks for visiting Redecorate Remodel Or Move. We look forward to sharing expert advice and tips that will make you love living in your home more.

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As a real estate professional, I see hundreds of houses a year. Not only do I tour the homes on the market in the area, I consult with clients on how best to showcase their homes for sale. With Redecorate Remodel Or Move, clients are asking our advice about what they should remodel, to get the best value when they sell.

1) Have A Goal

When we remodeled our home, we needed to bring a mostly original 1957 home up to 21st Century standards in a style and a floor plan that we could stay in forever. We had done some minor updates over the last few years, kitchen counter tops, bathroom flooring, cabinetry and window treatments, but the roof was shot and the systems were outdated. Our remodel was a whole house remodel and we moved out for 7 months. Your remodel may be smaller - a kitchen, master suite or great room, but you still need a goal. Do you just want to update and refresh? Do you need to make it more comfortable to accommodate a smaller or larger family? Is it just to get by for a few years until you need to sell? This is important because once you start, you want to avoid "Scope Creep" which can be deadly to your pocket book and your sanity. You will have so many choices to make that if you keep your goal in mind, it will help narrow the choices down because they will fit the overall goal.

2) Design For You – And This May Not Be Your Forever Home

You should enjoy your home and how you live in it. When you bought your home, you bought it for a reason. I can tell when a client falls in love with a home when they start to place their furniture in the rooms. Sometimes, buyers make decisions/compromises because of price point, location or schools. As the years go by, you see similar homes that have been remodeled and you want to do the same things. You should remodel your home to suit your taste and lifestyle, but I caution you about going too far out of the normal range. Chances are likely, that this won't be your forever home. I have seen many homes where one spouse has a hobby or a passion, designed around it, and was disappointed that when it was time to sell, the buyers were turned off by the remodel.

3) Have A Budget

Now that you have your ideas, you need to know how much it will all cost. There are so many ways to research costs - on line, stores and professionals. Do your homework and check your numbers to make sure that you are including everything. I say that because, you don't know what you don't know and so many homeowners look on line for the best deal but don't have all the information to make the right decision. There are subtleties in things like lighting, appliances, window treatments that you may not know. If you don't get the whole story of what you need, then you may have a hard time returning things. Make sure you get what you pay for and it is exactly what you need.

4) Hire It Done Or Do It yourself?

We just talked about a budget and how you are going to pay for your remodel, so you don't run out of money. By its nature, a remodel is going to be expensive. If it wasn't a significant outlay of money, it would be called a "redecorating" project. In my business I have seen many do-it-yourself remodels that were terribly flawed. The remodel actually devalued the home, instead of making it appreciate. Please think long and hard about saving



money by doing a remodel yourself. You don't want to use the cheapest surgeon or a budget septic company, because pricing often reflects experience and the quality of the outcome. "No remodel is better than a bad remodel!" Over my years in business, I have advised some clients to sell their home "as is" because the choices that they make are not appealing to the majority of the market and if they spend more money on things that don't look good, would just remind a buyer that that it will cost more money to rip it out and put in something more tasteful. Its worth stating again: "No remodel is better than a bad remodel!"

5) Be Prepared For Surprises

Your budget should have at least 10% extra for surprises. This may mean that you pair down your choices or that you just wait until you have the extra money for the choices you want. You may want to pay cash, refinance, take out a home equity loan or borrow it from family. Whichever path you decide to take, make sure you have an additional buffer ready for the inevitable surprise. If you are remodeling an older home, you are bound to have surprises, because things were built differently and today's codes can be very demanding. I remember during our remodel, we visited one day and the front wall of the house was gone. When they took the roof off, it wasn't strong enough to stand on its own – Surprise! I have spoken to contractors that won't work on older homes because of potential complications. There are some things that can't be known until you start digging and that's not the contractor's fault. Don't be in a position to have to stop the job because you run out of money.

6) Don't Overbuild For The Neighborhood

We've all seen it, the house that doesn't fit in the neighborhood. Someone got carried away with their "ego home" or they remodeled their home to fit a specific lifestyle and it just doesn't fit with the rest of the street. I'm all for personalization, after all it is your home, but if you go too far outside the box, you will actually spend a lot of money and you won't get a return on your investment. That goes for the inside and outside as well. I had a conversation with a contractor recently that was asking about values in a neighborhood because their client wanted to do a \$400,000 remodel in a neighborhood of homes that were about \$600,000. If or when these folks need to sell, they will not likely get a return on that investment. Moving may be a better alternative at that point.

7) Keep Track Of The Details

I firmly believe that hiring a professional is the best way to go, but the ultimate responsibility is yours. Whether you do it yourself or you hire everything done, there are important details that cannot be missed, for the project to be successful in the end. Timing, choices, expenses, permits and inspections are all details that are critical to a successful project. By hiring a good professional, the odds of these things being missed go down dramatically and in our case, we didn't know what we didn't know and would have been fooled by contractors that might have taken short cuts, if we didn't have on-site supervision daily by our site supervisor.

8) Don't Lose Track Of The Warranties

Roofing, appliances, flooring, siding and many other items that you have purchased come with warranties. Some are through the contractor, some through the manufacturer and some through the store where you purchased them. Don't let this detail slip through your hands. To say that they don't build things like they used to is an understatement. With so many electronics, new materials and a shortage of skilled labor, things might break down



or not work properly. If you don't know what your warranty covers and how to make a claim, you could be in for an expensive surprise that was avoidable.

9) Consider Having Someone Inspect The Job

As Realtors, we routinely arrange home inspections for our clients. Sometimes before a home goes on the market, but always when helping a client buy a home. Even with new construction, we write an inspection into the contract, to catch those things that can easily be missed: electrical outlets wired wrong, hot and cold switched, vents that aren't attached in the attic and many more. We did a whole house remodel, but it didn't occur to us to have an inspection done upon completion. We finally had one done a year after we were in the house. As it turned out, the reason we thought that the living room was colder than we thought it should be was that two of the four vents were unattached in the crawl space. There was also insulation not covering a section of the bedroom ceiling and some unterminated wires that were dangerous. These things were all most likely installed properly, but different contractors did different jobs and moved things along the way, but didn't put things back where they belonged. So glad that we had the inspection, discovered the problems and called the professionals back to put things in order. I'm just sorry we waited a whole year. Even if your remodel isn't as extensive as ours, consider having someone go through the work to make sure it is done properly.

10) Enjoy!

It's finally done and you deserve to enjoy it! Whether you are just doing a room-by-room remodel or you have finished the entire project, take the time to sit back, admire your work and enjoy the new and improved lifestyle that it brings. If this project is just the beginning or you look around and say "this part looks great, but now the rest of the house looks sad" take a deep breath and call me because it may be time to consider moving!

These are 10 steps to a better remodel for maximum value. Unlike a redecorating project, most people will need to hire professionals to do the work. You might need an architect, or just a contractor or you have experience and can do some or all of the work yourself. One of the things I love about working with professionals in each of these areas is that they know more about the options available than you can find out, even if you do lots and lots of research.

If you would like to talk to me or get a referral from one of the many professionals I work with, just send me an email at Patricia@RedecorateRemodelOrMove.com or give me a call at 425-941-4841 or check out the blog at www.RedecorateRemodelorMove.com and see what the experts have to say on the subject.

Patricia Wangsness has been helping buyers and sellers find great homes since 2004. Joined by her husband, David, in 2006, they work as a team in real estate and have been life partners for over 21 years. Real estate transactions can be very stressful and she succeeds in negotiating the best outcomes for her clients, time and time again. Recognized with many awards for sales volume and client satisfaction, the passion, and creativity Patricia brings to everything she does makes her successful and fun to be around.



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