



Building Success 101

Q: I am asked the following question all the time... If I am not selling my house what work could or should I do that makes sense both economically, functionally, and esthetically?

A: 1. Kitchen & bath remodeling...If you plan on staying in your home 5 or more years and it is 25 years old or more consider redoing the bathrooms and kitchen. Why? a) You will enjoy the change; b) Buyers who are considering older homes want these areas up to date; c) Historically the cost for this work increases value and can be recouped in a sale.

2. Check the insulation in the

Homeowner's Role in the Building Process

Homebuilding has changed significantly over the last hundred years, especially since the 1950s, when the housing industry boomed following World War II. In many respects, construction has evolved from a trade or craft to a systematized process, and building a home, in a classic, hands-on sense, is far from standard practice these days.

Modern homebuilding is much more sophisticated. Today, builders manage construction materials and methods, coordinate trade partners and suppliers, and deal with a variety of building codes and other regulations. The sophistication of these processes naturally distance homeowners from the actual building process, and can cause uncertainty as to their role.

We at Dickson Development strive to marry modern construction techniques with quality workmanship and close personal contact with our clients. However, a homeowner's role during construction is more important than ever; it is vastly different than it was a century ago. The homeowner is still, ultimately, a leader in the process. By gaining a solid understanding of the building process homeowners can provide an example of professionalism to the rest of the team.

Consider the following "leadership training" tips that help define a homeowner's role on a project:

- **Education is key.** Even though you won't be building the house or renovation to your home or acting as the general contractor or builder, get educated about the home building process and gain an understanding and respect for the pace, phases, and materials that go into a home's construction. (That is one of our purposes in offering this newsletter.) This knowledge helps you communicate with us, and will give you confidence as your home moves through progressive stages of completion.
- **Meet deadlines.** Builders set deadlines for certain decisions so that materials and labor will arrive on the job site at a certain point during construction, enabling steady progress and on-time completion. As the homeowner, take responsibility to negotiate reasonable deadlines for decisions you'll have to make, such as the selection of cabinets or flooring, and stick to them. In addition to helping maintain the construction schedule (which ultimately impacts your move-in plans), it sets a good example for your builder and his suppliers and subcontractors to follow suit and return the gesture.

following areas: a) Attic - Insulation should be at least R-30 or more; b) Basement - In the basement the exterior perimeter of the floor joist should have R-30 insulation; c) Crawl space - The ceiling of the crawl space should be insulated to R-30.

3. Heating/Ventilating & Air Conditioning (HVAC): a) Duct work in the basement should be sealed; b) Duct work in a crawl space of attic should be insulated to R-8 and sealed; c) Furnace - Old furnaces still work but the fuel goes up the chimney. Consider installing a 95% efficient unit. Old units rated at 80% often run at 65%; d) Air conditioning unit - Old units had a SEER rating of 8 to 10 and their efficiency can be lower. New units have a minimum SEER rating of 13; e) Install a humidifier and if you have one and it is old check to see if it is working; f) Check your filters regularly and consider adding a modern filter.

4. Caulk all your doors and windows

- **Respect the change order process.** Our contract includes a formal and dedicated process for managing change orders, which generally are decisions made (or changed) after an agreed upon deadline. Change orders often impact the schedule. As your builder, we do our best to accommodate your requested changes. For your part, you must respect the impact a change order has on costs and the construction schedule and take responsibility for requesting and accepting the change.
- **Communicate.** Communication is critical. Avoid keeping any concerns, issues, or ideas to yourself. Come into the process with an open mind and don't be shy about asking questions. If possible, keep a list and present your questions during a meeting or on-site conversation or email contact, but don't shy away from an occasional ad-hoc phone call (during business hours) if you need an answer more quickly.

As a professional builder, we are proud of our business operations and systems. We partner with each of our clients. We understand and respect the relationship we have with our clients. We hope our clients meet us part of the way, by educating themselves, sticking to deadlines, and asking quality questions.

Warm regards,

Richard

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regularly to stop air leakage.

5. Windows - If you have single pane glass windows with old fashioned storm windows on the outside consider changing the window sash to an insulated glass sash. You do not rip out the old frames saving the cost of exterior or interior modifications. The windows will be more energy efficient and look better and this modernizes your home.

6. Replacement of refrigerator and/or freezer. We have all been accustomed to taking pride in how old our freezer and refrigerator last. Check out the energy usage cost of these old units vs the energy usage cost of new units.

Tax credits and rebates are available for some of these items. Check with your accountant about the tax credits and your utility company or HVAC contractor about rebates for high efficiency equipment.

If we at Dickson Development can

help you with any of
the above noted
items please call us
to discuss what you
may want to do. If
you know of
someone who may
find this information
useful please
forward it to them.

Richard