



## Trends in Telecommuting: The True Home Office

***Additions and renovations must make economic sense. Follow these suggestions to increase your return on investment.***

### ***Kitchens and bathrooms count.***

These rooms are consistently rated the best places to spend your remodeling dollars.

***However...*** Don't neglect the rest of the house. Make sure the entire home is updated to an acceptable level.

### ***Does this kitchen go with these bedrooms?***

If you're considering a major project, a design-build remodeling firm or architect should be consulted so the look and feel blends seamlessly into the rest of the home. Poorly matched

Today's home offices have changed residential design forever. They are now a mainstream feature in nearly every type, size, and price of new home. Professional, market-sensitive builders know that families need a separate space to conduct business from home and meeting individual family needs is key to blending both work and living environments.

At last count, more than 4 million people work full time from home, and professional builders are making space in their floor plans to meet the need for a work space that is both separate and private. Increasingly, builders are providing more than one room in which owners can conduct business, and the floor plan placement, access, and other features of today's home offices are increasingly sophisticated.

Compared to the work spaces, dens, and libraries from just a few years ago, today's home office is specifically designed for and dedicated to office use. Just a decade ago, a spare bedroom or parlor doubled as the home office. Depending on its size and placement in the house, a home office might be converted for another or shared purpose, but increasingly is a staple in the floor plan by itself.

To answer the homeowners demand for dedicated office space, builders often locate these rooms on the main floor, often just inside the front door. This allows privacy by separating the office from other public areas. In addition, the office might share a powder room or full bath (with its own door) and provide built-in bookshelves or extra storage and surfaces for files and office equipment. In model homes, home offices are marketed to make sure that potential homebuyers are aware that the builder offers a dedicated office space in addition to the bedrooms within the floor plan.

Increasingly, luxury and custom homebuilders may provide a smaller office niche near or adjacent to the master bedroom or in the kitchen. These secondary office areas work well for home management tasks, such as paying the bills or maintaining the family schedule. Such space can also be carved into a long and wide hallway or in a second-level loft between bedrooms providing family access to a computer or as a dedicated homework area for school-age children. The floor plan may also include a similar space near the kitchen or family room so parents can supervise schoolwork, craft projects, or oversee Internet access.

additions can even decrease value.

**Nice, but not too nice.** While you may want to have the best house on the block, the return diminishes if your home becomes the most expensive in the neighborhood.

**Square peg, round hole.** When renovating or adding on, avoid too much customization of space so potential buyers can envision the home suiting their needs. A well designed fourth bedroom to you could be an office, workout room or home theater for someone else.

There is no single project that guarantees a 100 percent return on investment. However, careful planning and professional work will ensure your remodeling dollars go their farthest.

**We at DDC can assist you in adding value to your home while meeting your needs for additional and changed spaces.**

In some cases, the home office is a separate building, outside the main footprint of the home's floor plan. As such, these offices also feature a separate entry that allows at-home workers to come and go and greet clients or visitors without disturbing or being disturbed by household activities.

Regardless of the context and however accommodated in the floor plan, there's little doubt that home offices have changed housing design forever. They are now a mainstream feature in nearly every type, size, and price of new home. Market-savvy builders recognize that families need a dedicated space to conduct business. Whether as full or part-time at-home workers or as part of managing the household, this trend is sure to continue and evolve.

Warm regards,

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