



Building Success 101

Q: How can I be sure a basement won't leak or an attic won't be stuffy and hot if I want to use it for living space?

A: Today's sophisticated products and systems for truly waterproof basements and comfortable attic areas enable those spaces to become living spaces instead of occasional-use quarters. For basements, elastic but tough waterproofing membranes, insulation and drainage boards, and perimeter drainage systems combine to shed and create a barrier against water intrusion, while heating and cooling systems can be

Remodeling Success: Make Communication Count

I found the following article which provides suggestions to homeowners on how to evaluate a remodeling contractor. I believe we at Dickson Development fit the profile described. We continue to strive to improve our communication program with our clients. We welcome feedback from you on how we can improve.

No one wants to experience the "remodeling horror stories" we've heard from acquaintances or the media. To make the most of your remodeling experience, it is important to understand that good communication with your remodeling contractor is the most reliable way to avoid that problem. Without good communication, headaches and hard feelings are all too common. By contrast, an open line of communication is the key ingredient to a successful and satisfying remodeling experience.

Shopping for a remodeling contractor is fundamentally different from shopping for a new house. When you shop for a new home, you can see the completed work and examine every detail. When you plan a remodeling project, you cannot be sure exactly how your existing house will be changed. That fact underscores the importance of diligently and patiently interviewing potential contractors and checking references before making your selection. You want to start your project with a level of comfort and confidence in the remodeling contractor who will be your partner in the process.

A contractor's way of presenting information during an initial phone call or interview is often an indication of how he or she will communicate during your project. A remodeler or staff member should seek your input and questions and provide understandable and satisfactory answers. Follow-up gestures, such as a thank you note or phone call, can be signs of quality communication.

Before and during your remodel you will have many decisions to make. Be sure you are comfortable with the remodeler's process for maintaining effective communication. Who is your contact person on the remodeler's staff? Many remodelers or their on-site superintendents (often call "leads") use a scheduled review, or "walk-through," of the remodeled section of your house at specified critical stages of construction. These walk-throughs can take place during structural framing, electrical and plumbing rough-in, or after the interior walls have been dry walled. As you select a remodeling contractor, ask about additional opportunities to communicate, such as ad-hoc meetings, phone calls or emails.

"zoned" for smaller and precise areas of a house - each controlled by a separate thermostat - to make sure they remain comfortable and also energy-efficient.

After you select your remodeler, you will find that a detailed scope of work -- outlining the construction process along with an agreed timeline or schedule -- provides a guide for your questions and expectations. The scope of work and schedule will also establish deadlines for key decisions on your part. Avoid hasty, last minute choices and contribute to the smooth progress of the project by making sure decision dates and deadlines are clear.

Before construction begins, review with your remodeler the exact process for requesting, confirming and executing changes, or "change orders," during your project. It is always necessary to make a change or two. A well-established routine will avoid serious misunderstandings. Your selected remodeler should also provide you with detailed information about warranty and service call procedures after the project is completed.

Successful remodelers got that way by communicating effectively with their homeowner clients throughout the entire process of sales, construction and warranty service. Respect your contractor's proven strategies and procedures, but also take the opportunity to express your needs within that framework. Your home and circumstances are unique. Once you and your remodeler have agreed upon communication methods that are comfortable for you, you can rely on the process and look forward to successful completion of your remodeled home.

If you know someone considering remodeling their home we appreciate your recommendation and please pass this article on to them.

Warm regards,

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