

CABINET

CREATIONS

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Questions You Should Ask Remodelers:

- #1.** Are your installers W2 employees on your payroll or do you use subcontractors?
- #2.** Do you produce a full set of construction drawings for me to review and approve before we start?
- #3.** Do you use allowances and how are allowances handled?
- #4.** How will I make selections related to allowances?
- #5.** Being that we are going to be in a multiple-month relationship, how do you intend to update and communicate with me throughout this process?
- #6.** Once my project is started will you be working on other projects simultaneously? Or, how many projects are you currently working on?
- #7.** Can you send me a sample of what your proposals look like?
- #8.** Will I lose the functionality of my garage while you are doing this project?
- #9.** Do you include contingencies for unexpected labor and materials in your proposals?
- #10.** Walk me through your exact process of getting me through this project with my sanity? Or, do you have a pdf/document that shows me your process for completing my project?
- #11.** How long have you had relationships with your subcontractors?
- #12.** How long is this project going to take?

Questions and what you would like to hear:

#1. Are your installers W2 employees on your payroll or do you use subcontractors?

What you would like to hear: We use our own W2 employees and don't use many subcontractors.

Remodelers who have W2 employees control what project the employee goes to, when the employee goes to the project, and the quality of work performed on the project.

Remodelers who use subcontractors hope the subcontractor shows up where and when they say they will and is subject to whatever quality the subcontractor provides. When a remodeler is using a subcontractor they are hiring another company to perform work for them and the subcontractor is likely to have 10 other projects they are working on simultaneously. This obviously can cause problems getting a project completed in a timely fashion.

#2. Do you produce a full set of construction drawings for me to review and approve before we start?

What you would like to hear: We create multiple plans that cover the multiple facets of your project and you the homeowner sign off on them before we ever pick up a hammer.

Let me explain what construction drawings are before we get to why they matter. Construction drawings indicate specific construction details broken down into categories like electrical, plumbing, HVAC, hardware, finish carpentry, flooring, and many others. These plans have very specific details such as, where are light switches going to be placed, what position are the new can lights going to be arranged, how is the backsplash tile pattern going to be laid out, where is the backsplash ending on the wall, where should hardware be installed on different size doors and drawers, where is the flooring transition going to be placed, and many other details.

So why does this matter to you? If you do not finalize these details before the hammers are swinging you're going to get can lights where you don't want them, tile laid in a brick pattern when you wanted a herringbone pattern, hardware installed in places that do not make sense, and I think you get the idea! Get these plans finalized and signed off on before the hammers start swinging!

#3. Do you use allowances and how are allowances handled?

What you would like to hear: We use allowances and we make sure we have a healthy allowance amount so there are no financial surprises in the middle of the project. We use a web-based program that will list all of the allowances and it allows you to make selections for the allowances while calculating the variance from the allowance and the final selection.

We talk to people who want to remodel every day and one of the most common complaints from homeowners is related to previous remodelers and their very low allowances so the remodeler can win the job knowing that later there is no way the homeowner is going to use \$1.25 per sq ft tile. This obviously turns into budget overages for the homeowner and hard feelings.

#4. How will I make selections related to allowances?

What you would like to hear: Our designers will put together multiple options for every selection that needs to be made and you will sit down with one of our designers and look at each selection in our showroom. From there you will choose your selections and we will upload your choices into our web-based program for you to digitally approve with the cost variance clearly laid out for you.

The amount of selections that are made for major remodeling projects is often overwhelming. Just to name a few you will have to decide on flooring, transitions, tile, backsplash, moldings, hardware, faucets, sinks, shower tile, curbs, grout color, how a tile ends, wall colors, cabinetry colors, door style, pendant lights, chandeliers, flush mount lights, countertops, and the list goes on! You will want someone who understands design to sit down with you in an organized fashion to make all of the selections that make your space your space! If this is not done this causes major hiccups in your project being on time and on budget.

#5. Being that we are going to be in a multiple-month relationship, how do you intend to update and communicate with me throughout this process?

What you would like to hear: We will update you weekly via email. Even if we have nothing to tell you while we are waiting for cabinetry to arrive, I will give you an update!

We hear about poor communication from remodelers all the time. Choose a remodeling company that has a team in place to make sure you are always in the loop. This is where small remodelers or “Dan in a van” can really be frustrating to homeowners because they do not have the time or resources to respond to everyone during their workday.

#6. Once my project is started will you be working on other projects simultaneously? Or, how many projects are you currently working on?

What you would like to hear: Yes, we will be working on other projects. With that said, regardless of how much a homeowner begs us to start your project will not start projects until we have completed previous projects so we never have more than **X** jobs going on at any one time. Our installation staff can handle **X** projects without delaying or prolonging projects.

Every remodeler who is any good has multiple projects going due to the nature of what we do and how projects play out. What you are concerned about is a remodeler having too many projects going on simultaneously. Furthermore, if the remodeler uses subcontractors instead of employees you are at the mercy of the subcontractors showing up to your project being that they have multiple projects that they are doing for themselves and for the remodeler you hired!

#7. Can you send me a sample of what your proposals look like?

What you would like to hear: Of course, not a problem at all, I'd be happy to send a sample over.

It never stops amazing us how little detail our competitor's proposals have. We talk to homeowners every day who have been burned by a proposal that lacks detail related to the scope of work, has no contingencies, has no allowances, and in the end, the homeowner is put in an awful position. The horror stories related to poor proposals might be the number one reason people are afraid of remodeling!

#8. Will I lose the functionality of my garage while you are doing this project?

What you would like to hear: Unfortunately, yes. We need a place to store materials outside of the elements, we will also need a place to work in the event it is snowing or raining outside.

#9. Do you include contingencies for unexpected labor and materials in your proposals?

What you would like to hear: Absolutely! We have done enough remodeling jobs to know potential areas of the project that can quickly add costs but we won't know the additional costs until we get the project started. If we are removing a soffit we always add 2k for additional materials and labor within the provided budget.

Good remodelers should be able to anticipate potential costs related to the scope of work that cannot be determined until the project labor has begun. For example, if you are removing a soffit, a good remodeler knows that soffits are used to hide wiring, plumbing, ductwork, and other items during the construction of a home. The problem is we as remodelers cannot see through your soffit to know what is inside of the soffit so we will use a contingency to budget for what we might find in the soffit once the construction begins.

#10. Walk me through your exact process of getting me through this project with my sanity? Or, do you have a pdf/document that shows me your process for completing my project?

What you would like to hear:

We have a very defined process and it can be found in this pamphlet or on our website. ([Click to Read](#)).

#11. How long have you had relationships with your subcontractors?

What you would like to hear: We don't generally use subcontractors because we have our own W2 installation crew.

What is acceptable to hear: I have been using Smith Electrical for the last 5 years.

The way remodelers have sway with subcontractors is often long-term relationships. If you are working with a remodeler who has short-term relationships with their subcontractors you are going to be subject to slow turnaround times and potential quality issues.

#12. How long is this project going to take?

What you would like to hear: Once the demolition starts it is about 6-8 weeks for a kitchen remodel. Usually, 1-2 weeks to get through demo, rough electrical, rough plumbing, rough HVAC, and base cabinets complete. Once the cabinets are set we can order the countertop template which is usually performed about a week after the cabinets are set. It usually takes about 2 weeks to fabricate the countertop after the countertop template is complete. Once the countertop is installed we will have about another 3-5 days of work. This usually ends up being about a 6-8 week project.

You are looking for details on the work that needs to be performed and the timeframes for each specific type of work that needs to be completed. If you don't hear this you should be worried about the remodeler's understanding of the timeframes and the process for completing your specific type of project.