



## Need an Extreme Kitchen/Bath Makeover? 5 Tips for Success

Have the latest home improvement TV shows inspired you to make some big changes to your home? They make it look so fun and easy. For most of us, however, the reality is that we don't have a team of experts descending on our homes while we head off to Disneyworld or an exotic location for a week, only to return to a completely renovated, picture-perfect house, none the wiser about the plethora of details and coordination that transpired while we were away. The design team at Carole Kitchen and Bath Design offers these tips for people who are getting ready to remodel.

1. **Determine the scope of your project.** Planning on overhauling several rooms? The best bet is to think about how your family uses each room, and then prioritize the urgency of tackling each room. Many families place high priority on the kitchen and bathrooms, simply given the integral part these rooms play in day-to-day life.

There is a huge budget range for key rooms such as kitchens and baths, but with the range of product lines available, an able designer can craft a great look for most any budget. Be sure to ask whether there are design fees, since firms' policies can vary. Some charge extra for design, and some don't. (Carole's will do the first design at no cost, and you don't have to pay anything until you decide to work with the firm or keep the designs. Then a retainer fee goes toward the products you purchase.)

2. **Decide how involved you want to get.** Not too long ago, when you redesigned a kitchen, you made your selections from just a few types of countertops and cabinet styles. It was a lot simpler. These days, there are literally hundreds of choices, which is great from a design point-of-view. You have a lot more room for expressing yourself and creating your own style. Some homeowners, however, want their designers to present them with only a few options within their budget. Others want to be fully involved in choosing every detail, and relish the creative process of choosing from hundreds of countertop colors, door styles, and wood finishes. Be clear about your expectations with your designer. The Carole Kitchen and Bath philosophy is that by working with one designer from start to finish, you can develop a solid working relationship. You can be thoroughly involved, or entrust your designer with presenting you options to which you can say yes or no.
3. **Do some research.** It always helps the designer to better meet your expectations when he or she can get a sense of your style and vision earlier in the process, rather than later. You don't have to know the names of products, woods, and surfaces to begin the process. That's the designer's job. What does help is if you bring pictures from magazines or homes that you like. Design firms that offer a showroom with several displays can make it easier for customers starting out to quickly react to styles and get a sense of what they like. Carole's can give clients access to significantly more door styles than big box stores, and we offer all popular types of countertops in hundreds of colors.

Also, it's key that when you research pricing, to be sure you are comparing "apples to apples" when you compare your quotes. Ask your designer to explain the quotes and exactly what you are getting for your money. *(continued on next page)*

4. **Consider timeline.** Home design television shows have, on the one hand, helped many people feel less intimidated by undertaking major home improvement projects. But on the other hand, sometimes people can underestimate the time needed to get from the concepts and planning stage to completion. Depending on the scope of your project and whether or not the products you choose—such as cabinets and countertops in a kitchen—are highly customized, projects can take from several weeks to several months.
  
5. **Use a team you can trust.** Assess the customer service at the firms you’re considering. Can you be assured of focused attention when you meet with your designer? Will you, in fact, meet with one designer consistently, or will you get bounced from person to person or be interrupted by noisy overhead pages and other customers’ questions as can happen in a busy home center chain? Are there project managers who have considerable expertise? If you are looking for a highly customized or unique design, be sure the firm has experience with similar projects, and not just churning out cookie-cutter designs.

It’s a big decision and investment to remodel, so there’s no doubt you want to be nothing less than delighted with the results. After all, unlike reality TV, you’ll be spending a lot more than an hour or so with the end results.



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kitchenpeople.com 781.933.3339