

from the pros

HOW TO BE A BETTER REMODELING PARTNER

Finding a design pro
you trust is key.
So is speaking up.
Start with these
10 strategies.

writer LINDA EGGERS

“Getting the most from a designer begins when the client has thought through their objectives for the project. You don’t have to have solutions in mind, but it’s important to have a sense of what you envision.”

—NICK GERAGI,
GENERAL MANAGER,
KLAFF’S KITCHENS,
SOUTH NORWALK, CT

“Faith is a must. Have faith that your professional will design the room that best suits your needs, not their portfolio.”

—KAREN WILLIAMS, PRINCIPAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER, ST. CHARLES OF NEW YORK, NEW YORK CITY

“A PICTURE IS INDEED WORTH 1,000 WORDS. COLLECTING IMAGES THAT REFLECT YOUR PERSONAL STYLE OR PREFERENCE CAN BE HELPFUL. WITH SITES LIKE HOUZZ AND PINTEREST, IT’S EASY TO ORGANIZE YOUR IDEAS AND SHARE THOSE IMAGES WITH YOUR ARCHITECT/DESIGNER.”

—MICHAEL WARD, ARCHITECT, ALLARD WARD ARCHITECTS, NASHVILLE

“Don’t be scared to ask lots of questions. Sometimes designers use jargon that may not be familiar to you. If you don’t understand something, ask what it means. It’s better to ask and not be sorry later—you’ll be living in your space every day, so be sure you are confident with every decision.”

—JANE LOCKHART,
PRINCIPAL AND
PRESIDENT, JANE
LOCKHART INTERIOR
DESIGN, TORONTO

“Ask the designer to solve certain challenges or meet a list of objectives before explaining how you see the kitchen laid out. Most of our clients have good ideas, but a professional has the advantage of not living in the paradigm of the problem—and can add more value by introducing a unique perspective.”

—RAYMOND J. WIESE, FOUNDER AND DESIGNER,
THE WIESE COMPANY, INC., SHERBORN, MA

“Ask for references for projects that went great and not so great. That way you find out how a pro handled a tough situation, in case one arises.”

—RUTH ANN TAYLOR LONG, OWNER
AND PRINCIPAL DESIGNER, TAYLORED SPACES, RALEIGH

“IF YOU START DREADING MEETINGS IN THE MIDST OF A PROJECT, YOU MAY BE INCOMPATIBLE. BE HONEST AND MOVE ON. IN THE END, YOU’LL BOTH SAVE TIME AND MONEY.”

—JENNY GILBREATH,
PRINCIPAL, JG INTERIORS, OMAHA

“Be open-minded and ready to embrace unusual ideas and concepts. Don’t be afraid to say what’s on your mind—politely—remembering that this is your space, and your mortgage will pay for it. Stay away from designers who want their kitchen in your home. Sometimes even the finest designers need to scrap some ideas and create new concepts for you.”

—DUVAL ACKER, OWNER AND DESIGNER,
KITCHENS BY DESIGN, INC., MOUNT PLEASANT, SC

“If you’re thinking of getting a professional’s help, do so as early in the process as possible. It is easier (read: more affordable) to guide a project than to rescue it!”

—ABIGAIL REAMES,
DESIGNER, KITCHENS BY
DESIGN AND KBD HOME,
INDIANAPOLIS

“A comprehensive consultation will help you determine if you’re in the right place with the right product and the right person. If not, move on to the next pro.”

—MARIA STAPPERFENNE,
MANAGER, TEWKSBURY KITCHENS
AND BATHS, WHITEHOUSE STATION, NJ