



TRIFECTA OF DESIGN-BUILD

Tips from the Pros on How to Choose a Strong Design-Build Team

By DANA W. TODD

A home renovation project, whether it's a kitchen, bathroom or the entire house, can be stressful. To alleviate much of the headache involved in the process, a homeowner's best bet is to utilize a complete design-build team up front for greater efficiency in conception and design. Having over a decade of experience, Realty Restoration, LLC of Austin has developed a strategy for building the perfect design-build team. Their proven success is a trifecta of professionals that embody a few critical characteristics.

A complete team includes an accredited remodeler/builders, architect and interior designer. Whether the team works under the roof of a design-build firm or operates as a virtual team, there are a few points to remember when selecting the professionals who will handle a renovation project.

EVERYONE MUST SHOW MUTUAL RESPECT.

Proven performance is a hallmark of a team that respects each other. Likewise, the homeowner must respect each of the professionals involved in the project. A team that listens closely

to their clients' needs and desires will inherently instill respect and credibility.

"Mutual respect ensures consistent and productive communication throughout the project, making the process and execution much smoother," says interior designer Christy Bowen, CKD, of Twelve Stones Designs.

"Our success with detailed, difficult and expansive projects is based on open lines of communication, resulting in strong relationships between our team and clients," says David Davison, Certified Remodeler with Realty Restoration.

THE TEAM SHOULD HAVE PROVEN SUCCESS STORIES. Look for long-term working relationships between accredited architects, builders and designers with resulting client successes. You don't want to be the guinea pig in a fledgling design collaboration.

"Our design-build team integrates the design ideas of Christy Bowen for specialized emphasis on kitchens, baths and material selections with our firm's proven design and building talents," says Davison.

CHEMISTRY IS IMPORTANT. Your intuition will lead you to the right team for your project.

"If it doesn't feel right from the beginning, it probably won't feel any more warm and fuzzy by the end of the project!" says Bowen.

TEAM BENEFITS. Once you have chosen a harmonious team, you will begin to see the benefits of a strong design-build collaboration.

The process is efficient, with a satisfying end product.

For faster results, a diverse group brings together professionals with varying viewpoints and skills to balance out the team as a whole. The take-home benefit is nearly flawless design and execution.

"When brainstorming, the team will see structural and design elements differently, bringing his or her concerns to the table to be worked out together," Bowen says. "Personally, I love the creative process of working with the architect and remodeler simultaneously. The last thing I want is to waste my time or the homeowner's time by designing something that can't, in actuality, be built."

"I look at the collaboration process much the same way I view the transition from two dimensional drafting to 3D. Working with an interior design professional early on in a project forces you to take a look at the details much earlier, leaving fewer chances to forget something," says Christopher Davison, AIA, Architect with Realty Restoration. "I can spend more time focusing on the big picture of how a space should function instead of getting bogged down with the specifics, knowing the designer is concentrating on those details."

Enjoy a single point of accountability and responsibility.

One point of contact minimizes risk for the homeowner and reduces the overall schedule, according to David Davison.

Adding a designer to the architect/remodeler dynamic equals less stress. The detailed selection process, while fun, can exasperate and frustrate an inexperienced homeowner because of all the choices in the marketplace. A designer can remove hours of comparison shopping from a homeowner's to-do list since he or she is already familiar with the products and resources to complete the project.

"Whether designing a dream kitchen, expanded master bathroom or whole house renovation, a successful partnership marries the art of creativity with the science of professional project development," says David Davison. ❖

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