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Get Treated Like Royalty during your Home Remodeling Projects

Whether you have the income and credit to get a blank check from a lending institution, have recently received a tidy inheritance, or have other means of expendable wealth, before you go out and plan the home improvement to end all home improvements, you might want to spend that little extra money on a full-service, hassle-free home remodeling company. Luxurious home improvements are one thing, but you should also be able to maintain a decent quality of life your remodeling project.

The Prince and the Pauper

You might be thinking, how is this type of luxurious home remodel different than any other type of home remodel? Shouldn't I be able to expect a decent quality of life with my home remodel? Aren't all reputable home improvement contractors full-service and hassle-free? Like it is with so many things, the answer to these questions are far from cut and dry. Many professional home remodeling contractors, or general contractors for that matter, are great at what they do and are reputable professionals in their business, but don't offer the same level of hand-holding that full-service companies deliver.

If you like/plan to do all the legwork of the home remodel yourself, including, but not limited to, pouring through different manufacturers' products and websites, researching and considering the different strengths of granite, recycled glass, and engineered stone countertops, and choosing plumbing fixtures, you can probably save some money on the cost of your remodel. You're also likely to incur a migraine or two. In some cases, ambitious homeowners up the ante even further, eliminating the general contractor altogether and directly hiring subcontractors—a course of action not to be taken lightly. In each case, even with the most professional contractors, there is still a level of difference in the convenience and quality of life you're likely to experience during the project.

Full-Service Remodeling: Rolling Out the Red Carpet

Keith Steier, owner of Knockout Renovation—one such full-service home remodeling company—gives a description of how his company caters to Manhattan and Brooklyn clients, people known for their sense of luxury:

1. The Design. Home remodels entail dealing with at least a handful and usually a dozen or more remodeling professionals. Everyone from the master electrician to a shower door manufacturer representative can play a role in your decision-making and the workings of the remodel itself. Rather than swamp you with these individuals, however, as a queen or king might be harassed by their subjects, Knockout Renovation first sets up a meeting with you and their designer.

During this initial meeting, which generally takes place in your home, you'll discuss your remodeling needs and ideas, be introduced to your company's services, the different home improvement trades you'll be using, and begin to compile an itemized proposal list. Talking one-on-one with a designer allows you to talk in an intimate, low-pressure setting that should prevent you from being overwhelmed by the scope of the project.

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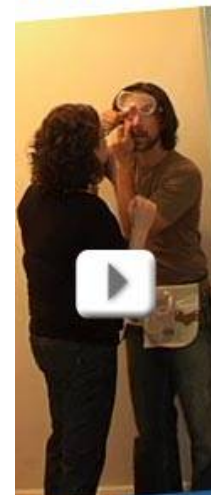
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2. Materials Selection. Once you've finalized the itemized list of work to be done, you'll have an opportunity to meet each contractor who will be working on your home, including the project manager who will be handling your remodel and usually the owner of the company him or herself. (Knockout Renovation refers to this as the "kick-off meeting.") Being able to meet face-to-face everybody who will be working on your home gives many people peace of mind, for obvious reasons.





Next, you and the designer will head to the company's showroom floor so you can choose the materials for your remodel. You'll be able to see a seemingly limitless array of samples and surfaces to choose from. If needs be, you can take a handful of your favorite samples back to your home to make a final decision. Once your materials are selected, a tentative start date is scheduled.

3. Production. Some companies use "tentative start dates" in reference to possible scheduling conflicts with other projects. Full-service remodeling companies use tentative start dates to confirm deliveries from manufacturers, minimizing the chances of further delays once these deliveries are confirmed and a firm date is set. This also shortens the time the remodeled area of your residence is out of commission or, for more extensive projects, how long you need to find alternate accommodations altogether.

Again, while any reliable home improvement contractor will keep you informed of what's going on in your home, full-service remodeling companies are willing to go that extra mile to make sure you don't need to spend any money on aspirin during the project. Knockout Renovation holds weekly client meetings where you can ask questions face-to-face and get answers about the progress of your project. In addition, your project manager will send weekly emails giving you an update on the work already completed and the work scheduled for the upcoming week.

More than solid gold cabinet pulls or rare (and not very eco-friendly) hardwoods, you should think about taking that little extra room you have in your budget and talk to a remodeling company who can give you the royal treatment. ■

Marcus Pickett is a professional freelance writer for the home remodeling industry. He has published more than 600 articles on both regional and national topics within the home improvement industry.

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