MURPHY'S *Design*

Project Planning Guide:
When you don't know where to start, start here.

John and Susan cut across from each other at the table quietly contemplating what to order for dinner. "You know it just seems like we are spinning our wheels going to showrooms looking at products when we don't really know what we want or what we can afford," Susan finally broke the silence.

"Well, the last guy we spoke with said we needed to have a list of things we want installed if we want to have some real costs. I don't know any other way to pull that together", John explained.

Susan sighed and then added: "Maybe we need to figure out what's important to us about the kitchen first before we start trying to find the kitchen that fits our lifestyle and what will make us happy."

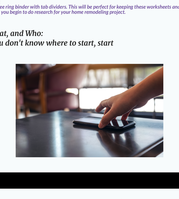
This and similar conversations happen at dozens of tables with dozens of homeowners every day. In a recent 2019 study 90% of homeowners indicated that they plan on remodeling in the future. Getting started on a super home remodeling project can be a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be that way.

Sec.ond at Murphy's Design believe that offering a guide that helps you lay a foundation of what you want before you start talking with pro vendors will give you a better chance at a successful project. We have put together a guide that we call our "Project Planning Guide" to help you do just that. Further working with professional, trusted pros, all of them have got your best ideas at heart when you should work with only certain pros. It's better to find get your ducks down so that you are one step closer to making the entire process easier.

This guide is meant to be a guide, not a magic wand.

We will cover how to decide on your priorities for scope of work, getting your preliminary investment range established and prepare yourselves for pulling together the team of

Let's get Started.

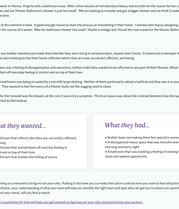


This project planning guide is a blueprint outlining decisions, best practices, and the things you can't know about remodeling but need to know before you remodel your home. Or so I like to say the things you don't know that you don't know, until now).

I've broken this guide into the 5 sections below. I've included an easy to use worksheets that outlines what you need to do so you can quickly run through this guide and get your projects moving.

Quick tip
Purchase a three-ring binder with tab dividers. This will be perfect for keeping these worksheets and all your notes in one place as you begin to collect your research for your home remodeling project.

Why, What, and Who:
When you don't know where to start, start here.



Why

If you have come across this guide then it's likely that you have a reason to believe remodeling is in your near future. You might think that this is your who, after all it seems pretty obvious, but it's not that clear-cut. Over the course of the last 30 plus years I have found that the initial reason someone says they want something is seldom the reason at the heart.

Maybe you can see yourself in John and Nancy's story:

It was a rainy Saturday morning when my phone began ringing. "Good Morning, Murphy's Design, How can I help you?"

It was Nancy, a homeowner in Vienna, Virginia with a bathroom issue. After a few minutes of introductions Nancy shared with me the reason for her call. "We've been in our home for about six years and our Master Bathroom's shower is just too small". We are looking to remodel and get a bigger shower and we think it makes sense to update all the finishes at the same time.

That was Nancy's who at this moment in time. A good enough reason to start the process of remodeling in their home. I worked with Nancy designing and planning their Master Bathroom over the course of 4 weeks. Was the bathroom shower too small? Maybe a vestige, but I found the real reason for the Master Bathroom remodel while we worked together.

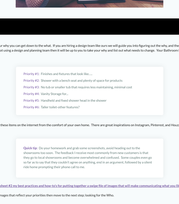
This was:

1. The life in the space was bulkier standard and made them feel like they were living in someone else's, anyone else's home. Cracked and in disrepair It didn't make them feel special in any way. They were looking to feel their home reflected where they are now: successful, efficient, and loving.

2. Looking to change their was a feeling of disorganization and messiness, neither truth they wanted to be reflected in any part of their lifestyle. What they did want is a bathroom that starts their morning feeling in control and on top of their lives.

3. A huge portion of the bathroom was being occupied by a tub with large decking. Neither of them particularly valued a bathtub and they saw it as wasted space, always needing to be cleaned. They wanted to find the luxury of a Master Suite not the nagging need to clean.

Although the cabinet for the remodel was the shower, at the core it was only a symptom. The true reason was about the control between how the space was making them feel and what they wanted to feel instead.



What

Now that you have your who you can get down to the what. If you are hiring a design team to help you remodel and get you into figuring out the why, and then help you create the what. But, if you are not using a design and planning team then it will be up to you to take your why and list out what needs to change. Your Bathroom list might look something like this:

Priority #1: Finishes and features that look like...

Priority #2: Shower with a bench seat and plenty of space for products.

Priority #3: No tub or sealer tub that requires cleaning, minimal cost

Priority #4: Vanity Storage Sq.

Priority #5: Handheld and fixed shower head in the shower

Priority #6: Table Toilet other features?

You can find visuals of these items on the internet from the comfort of your own home. There are great inspirations on Instagram, Pinterest, and Houzz.

Quick tip: Do your homework and grab some screenshots, avoid heading out to the showrooms until you have a clear idea of what you want and what it looks like. Showrooms are great for a final observation, and become overwhelmed and confused. Some couples even go so far as to say that they couldn't agree on anything, and in an argument, followed by a silent ride home prevented any further discussion.

I have attached Worksheet #1 to help you organize and begin to put together a vision for what it means that will make communicating what you like easy.

Once you have some images that reflect your priorities then move to the next step, looking for the Who.

Who

This is where "you don't know, what you don't know" really kicks home. At this stage you need to choose a path on how you want your remodeling experience to play out. If this is your first time doing a home remodel then you are having to wrap up and this section will be the change. Finding out you needed team experience than what you've already hired is never good for the end result. Doing the research on your options, understanding the different roads to a successful remodel will make it so much clearer for you to stay in control of the process.

I believe there are three factors you should consider to influence your decision on who to hire:

1. How much time do you have to do the leg work involved in selection, planning, then coordinating the to-do's and site questions?

2. Is what you want to have done a Major, Moderate or a Minor project and do they have the skills, license and insurance.

3. Have comfortable do you feel after talking with the candidates that they understand Why, What and How much based on the information they have provided you. (Don't worry we will get to the How much in this section).

How much time do you have for selections and planning?

Evaluating your time investment is key to the success of your project in a number of ways. First, all remodeling projects have dozens of decisions that will need to be made. Each decision builds onto the next. If you have plenty of time to check out local showrooms and a good sense of what will look good then not having any design and planning assistance may work for you. Second, if you have plenty of time to do the research, then you may be able to find a good contractor without any assistance. Starting an experienced designer and team dedicated to putting together the options for you has value, as the saying goes, don't let someone and pound foolish.

It's not just the selections and planning, ordering, and coordinating all will take time from your already busy days. Even once the project gets started there will be ongoing decisions and a question that needs attention everyday.

Provider types:
Full service Design and Build
General contractor/contractor with job site supervision
A la cart such as Design, Tile, Electrician, Plumber, Paint and Drywall
Handyman service vendors

There are 95 general provider types, full service design and build, general construction services with supervision, a la cart and handyman service and they all operate differently and with more or less cost.

The biggest mistake you can make is not doing the research to understand which of these "models" you should be hiring for your project.

Attached to this will is Worksheet #2 with a list of questions to ask yourself about how much time you have available. These will help you identify where you need help to you can recognize the right fit for a team.

How much work do you need done: Major, Moderate, or Minor?

I like to categorize remodeling into three categories:
Major Remodeling: Class A State Contractor's license and full Liability, Workmen's Compensation Insurance and Umbrella Policy is an absolute must.

Major scopes: Additions, Moving walls, making structural changes, relocating and adding plumbing fixtures and relocating and adding electrical systems

Moderate Remodeling: Class A or B State Contractor's license and full Liability, Workmen's Compensation Insurance is an absolute must.

Work scopes: Removing all old finishes to the studs and altering existing electrical, plumbing, heat, fixture locations. Minor load bearing wall modifications such as pocket doors, widening openings, adding a window or a door.

Minor Remodeling: Class B or C State Contractor's license and liability insurance is a must, Workmen's Compensation Insurance if not a sole proprietor.

Work Scopes: Cosmetic changes such as adding on the old flooring, cabinets, countertops and replacing in the same location. Paint, wallpaper, tile, flooring as stand alone projects.

By determining which category your project fits you will narrow down the type of remodeling service provider you should hire. You wouldn't hire a design and build firm to just re-tile your shower, similarly you wouldn't hire a tile company to design and build your new bathroom spa.

How to find the best candidates and How much is it going to cost?

It is impossible to know how much most remodeling is going to cost before you select your products to be installed. Anyone telling you otherwise is lacking information. But it is essential you have a way to understand what your budget range with the projects you want to complete.

You might be asking "how do we do that?"

The industry standard has always been to get an in-home estimate, having someone come out to your home and discuss your remodeling ideas and give you an idea of what cost to expect. The problem with this method has always been there are too many variables and too many unknowns to give a firm cost.

I want to offer you another way to find price.

When providing a budget range or speaking with my clients I break it down for them into three parts:

Estimates are made up of three costs:
Labor + Building Materials
Customer selections/cost items
General Overhead and Supervision (design and planning included.)

I believe this is the best way to discuss and see your costs for these reasons;

1. It is so much easier to understand where the cost is coming from.
2. If you have to compare one company to another it's easier to spot where one company is low hanging the Customer Selection Cost.
3. It allows you to understand what components are driving the cost and what you can do to control the cost.
4. Where it comes time to value engineer the cost of your project it's easier to see where the cuts come from.

Here's my twist on the estimate:

Do a Phone or video consultation before inviting someone to your home.

I use that as a time "filter" to see if I can help you or not (information without coming to the house)". Focusing too much on cost in the early stages can be disastrous to your project. You can get so excited and feel like you know the person that you hired to check the basics of business paperwork. This has led to homeowners being tricked into paying for work that never was done. Or, they hired someone who they felt they could control and ran into problems with their home but you can't fire them because you have let your guard down and allowed a non-pro chance of their project to a lead that wasn't one chance if they are not going to be a good fit.

Your goal for the Phone Consultation is to get the following information before having anyone come to your home:

1. Confirm they are the right type of provider from your homework (from getting up your free time at home)
2. Get actual cost information on projects they have recently completed
3. Speak to them about your investment range and if it is realistic based on your Why section.
4. Discuss your ideas and see if they have any suggestions that would fit your budget or help you with you during this call.
5. Discuss photos of projects they've completed (testimonials and reviews, or if no website and no reviews get photos and call past customers. (Note: unfortunately calling with or without photos has become the least reliable verification)
6. Verify licenses and insurance

Once the phone consultation is complete then you can decide whether to schedule an in-home visit. Once you've made your phone calls, narrow them down to three, four at the most, and candidates to come into your home to discuss the scope. Have a schedule noon if you need to.

Where can we find reliable candidates for our projects, check:

NARI Listings for your Area (www.nari.org)
Family and Friend Recommendations
Google or other of search listing and service oriented companies
Houzz
Angie's List (between of and listings without back-up reviews)
Facebook
Houzz.org

The purpose of this in-home consultation is to get a rough estimate and further verify that you are comfortable working with and having them do work in your home before taking the next step.

At this point I recommend you download our "Hiring the Right Team" guide for step by step instructions with worksheets for keeping notes from your phone calls. Put the reports in your binder so you don't lose track of the research that's done.

We've come to the end of this guide. If you decide to work with us at Murphy's Design our Project Development Process will walk you through these steps so together we can create a plan that fits your budget and your lifestyle. We want to be your trusted advisor and we can't wait to be your trusted advisor. Our mission is to be the most trusted home remodeling company. Our core values are to be a team that is honest and fun and we're working in your vocation day in.

If this guide was helpful to you, you may want to check out my next guide: Design and Planning: Getting the help you need for any project and every budget.

WRITTEN BY: MURPHY'S *Design* TEAM

MURPHY'S *Design*

CELL/FAX: 1.855
info@murphysdesign.com

Vienna, VA 22182
Virginia, USA

Areas We Served

Murphy's Design LLC is proud to serve most areas in Northern Virginia. Including Fairfax County, Fairfax City, Falls Church, Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Vienna, Springfield, Burke, Clifton, Herndon, Reston, Great Falls, McLean, Annandale, Alexandria, Centreville, Chantilly, Clifton, Ashburn, Sterling, Leesburg, Lorton, Oakton, Falls Church, Tysons Corner, Fairfax Station, Lake Anne, Great Falls, Fairfax Station, Lorton, Springfield, Fairfax, Vienna, Reston, Herndon, Leesburg, Ashburn, Sterling, Chantilly, Centreville, Alexandria, Annandale, Falls Church, Arlington, Burke, Clifton, Fairfax, Vienna, Springfield

BEAUTIFUL REMODELS, SKILLFULLY PLANNED

MURPHY'S *Design*

WORKSHEET 1:

Why do we want to do this Project

We need to do this project because	
We would also like to change…..	
We would also like to change…..	
Currently this space makes me feel	
It also makes me feel	
I would like this space to make me feel….	
I would also like this space to make me feel….	
We don't have enough….	
We also don't have enough….	
If I were to describe my current bathroom I would say	
If I were to describe my perfect bathroom it would have….	
The reason we would like to do this now is….	

We will have to replace ….	
It would be nice to replace…	
We would like to add ….	
We would also like to add …	
We will not need…	
We also will not need…	

BEAUTIFUL REMODELS, SKILLFULLY PLANNED

MURPHY'S *Design*

WORKSHEET 2:

Pulling together your Swipe File

Find a quiet place to do this exercise. Using your phone, tablet or laptop computer you will begin looking at pictures of projects in the same category as yours. If you are researching a Bathroom, you will look for Bathrooms, Kitchens look for Kitchens, you get the idea.

Where can I find pictures of similar projects easily?
There are several places you can look. I recommend:

1. Houzz
2. Pinterest
3. Google + Images
4. Magazines that you have collected
5. Bookstores

Once you decide which platform or place you will begin to look use the Search tool on the Internet or Magazines or Books on the topic.

Example: Master Bathrooms

You will see lots of images populate. The more specific your search, the better the results;

Example: Master Bathrooms with freestanding tubs
Example: Master Bathrooms with white tile
Example: Master Bathrooms with large showers
Example: Gray Master Bathrooms
Example: Modern Master Bathrooms

Now capture the image of the visuals you like. Here is how;

1. Google. Screenshot the picture
2. Houzz. Start an ideabook and save to the folder (instructions are on the site)
3. Pinterest. Start a Pinterest Board (instructions are on the site)
4. Tear out the Magazine page if you own it
5. Bookstore. Take a photo of the page or if several ideas buy the magazine or book

Also begin to record what you like.
Houzz. Make notes when you save to your folder.
Pinterest. Make notes when you pin it to your board or have a board for each item. Such as: tub board, faucet board, vanity board, color board.

Books, Magazine photos and tear outs: I recommend keeping a stack of sticky notes and write what you like and why on each when you print them. In the meantime name the photo what you liked, such as;
Great faucet1, Great faucet2, white tub.

You would be amazed how quickly you will forget why you liked something after time has passed and you go back to look. It's a very effective test to collect this information then wait a week or two and go back. If you still really like the photo then it's a keeper if you can't remember why you liked it in the first place, discard.

Remodeling is like any other information dependent business; the more clear and detailed the information given, the better the information you will receive back. On the next page make a list of what you like. It's as easy as that to prepare for your home visits with contractors.

Item	What you like

BEAUTIFUL REMODELS, SKILLFULLY PLANNED

MURPHY'S *Design*

WORKSHEET 3:

Questions to ask yourself about how much time you have available.

- I/We are available multiple times during the week to visit showrooms?
- I/We are available for evening and weekend appointments?
- I/We enjoy visiting showrooms in our free time?
- I/We are confident in our ability to coordinate multiple types of finishes?
- I/We can accept delivery of packages safely?
- I/We can supervise workers during the week while they are working?
- I/We can provide access to the house as needed?
- I/We travel for work regularly?
- I/We have room to store materials in our home?
- I/We have flexible work schedules to meet with workers?