



REMODELING
Designs, Inc.



THE SEVEN SECRETS TO SUCCESSFUL REMODELING

WHAT CONSUMERS MUST KNOW
BEFORE GETTING STARTED

ABOUT REMODELING DESIGNS, INC.

**A legacy of quality,
craftsmanship, and
service**

Remodeling Designs has been a team with vision, purpose, and strong core values since our beginning in 1990.

Erich Eggers started Remodeling Designs with a vision to provide a streamlined remodeling service for the homeowners of southwest Ohio. Through the years, Erich and the entire Remodeling Designs team developed a stellar reputation for quality, craftsmanship, and service. This legacy continues to this day as Erich's daughter Christine and her husband Mark have joined as co-owners.

What started as smaller-scale home improvement projects has grown to extensive remodels and specialty projects. Today, Remodeling Designs is among the Miami Valley's largest, most respected, full-service design-build remodeling firms.

“An expertly designed kitchen remodel does far more than simply enhance the beauty of your home. It also simplifies your life, expands your living space, increases the value of your home, and frees you to enjoy the lifestyle you imagine.

ADDING VALUE TO YOUR HOME

People choose to remodel their homes for different reasons. Some are out of necessity, some because they want to add value to their homes, and others because they are looking for more personal comfort or space to accommodate a growing family. All are good reasons to take on remodeling projects ranging from small to large, elaborate to basic, and high-end to budget-conscious. Time and preparation are keys to a successful remodeling project. Taking the time to thoroughly identify what you want to accomplish and taking the proper steps to prepare and pick the right contractor for your specific project will ultimately lead to a finished result that will bring you satisfaction and enjoyment for years to come.

The following information will help you take the first steps in planning, designing, and remodeling your home. We believe that as a more informed consumer, the decisions you make today will ensure that you will enjoy the benefits for years to come, and potentially save thousands of dollars in costly mistakes. If you get stuck at any stage of the process, don't forget our team is here to help you make an educated decision. All you have to do is ask.



1 ENVISION THE FUTURE

Envisioning how your remodeled space will improve your lifestyle and family's comfort can be very exciting. Thinking of a redesigned space with greater functionality, more room for entertaining guests, and added features that increase the value of your home can give you a great deal of personal satisfaction. Depending on the reasons you are remodeling your home, different factors need to be considered. If you are remodeling to prepare your home for resale, you may only want to take care of obvious problems and repairs. If you have structural damage to your home, addressing immediate safety concerns may be necessary. When remodeling for aesthetic reasons or updating the features of your home, design considerations are more critical, and determining what may or may not be necessary is based more on personal taste.



START WITH A WALK AROUND

Having a general idea of what you have in mind when starting a remodeling project is important. Start with walking through your home and making a wish list of what needs to be done. Look beyond just the visual appearance and try to take into account any structural elements as well. Nothing will disrupt your remodeling plans more than finding out later that there is a huge, costly problem that was overlooked.

Of course, some underlying problems will not be easily visible and will have to be dealt with when they arise. But by taking into account as many potential factors as possible, when it comes time to draw up a timeline and budget, the potential for future surprises is minimized.



06

	Room/Area(s) to Remodel	Thoughts on Changes	Priority
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

DEFINE YOUR PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Once you've completed your walk around and started to create a mental image of what you want to improve, the next step is to define your remodeling project objectives.

- How do you see yourself using the remodeled or new space?
- Are there features of your home that have bothered you over time?
- Do you like to entertain?
- Are you wanting a new look?
- If there were no budget constraints, what would your ultimate space look like?

Asking yourself these questions can provide significant insight into the features you want and the look of your new kitchen, bathroom, lower level, or addition. By compiling a complete "wish list" you can then move to the next step and begin prioritizing your wants and needs in a way that will move you closer to your end goal.



I really cannot recommend Remodeling Designs enough. They do quality work, are super friendly, are so easy to work with. I would not go with any other company!!

Dawn B.

2 PRIORITIZE YOUR WISH LIST

Organize your future construction plans by reviewing your “wish list” and prioritizing each feature as to how important it is to meet your overall objective. Put your highest priority item at the top of the list and then rank your other items in order of importance. You must realize that when budget and design considerations are taken into account, the items at the bottom of the list may not be included.

After you consider the different tastes and wishes of those involved in making the decisions on this project, highlight those items that you feel are a “must”. After this step is completed, you will have made significant progress toward a sensible plan that will accommodate the desires of all those involved.



GETTING THE MOST VALUE

Almost all remodeling projects will add value to your home. Not only will a project increase your resale value, but just as importantly and sometimes more importantly, it will increase the enjoyment you and your family will receive from your investment. According to Remodeling Magazine, the projects that recoup the largest amount of their original costs are kitchen remodels, bathroom renovations, and enhanced master suites. These values can vary depending on your home's location. Regardless of where you live, any decision to remodel your home should be based on both the increased value and the personal satisfaction you will obtain from having new features and comfort added to your home.



3 DO YOU NEED A DESIGNER?

You're now ready to begin translating your "wish list" into a functional and visually striking floor plan. Depending on the scope of your project, you may need to seek the professional services of an architect or designer who specializes in kitchens or bathrooms. Full-service contractors have design/build capabilities in-house which offer a more complete solution. Remodeling Designs is a design/build full-service contractor. (See #5 "Picking the Right Contractor" on how to choose someone to help you in this phase of the project.) Focus your search on firms with specific expertise in the design and construction part of the home you are planning to remodel.

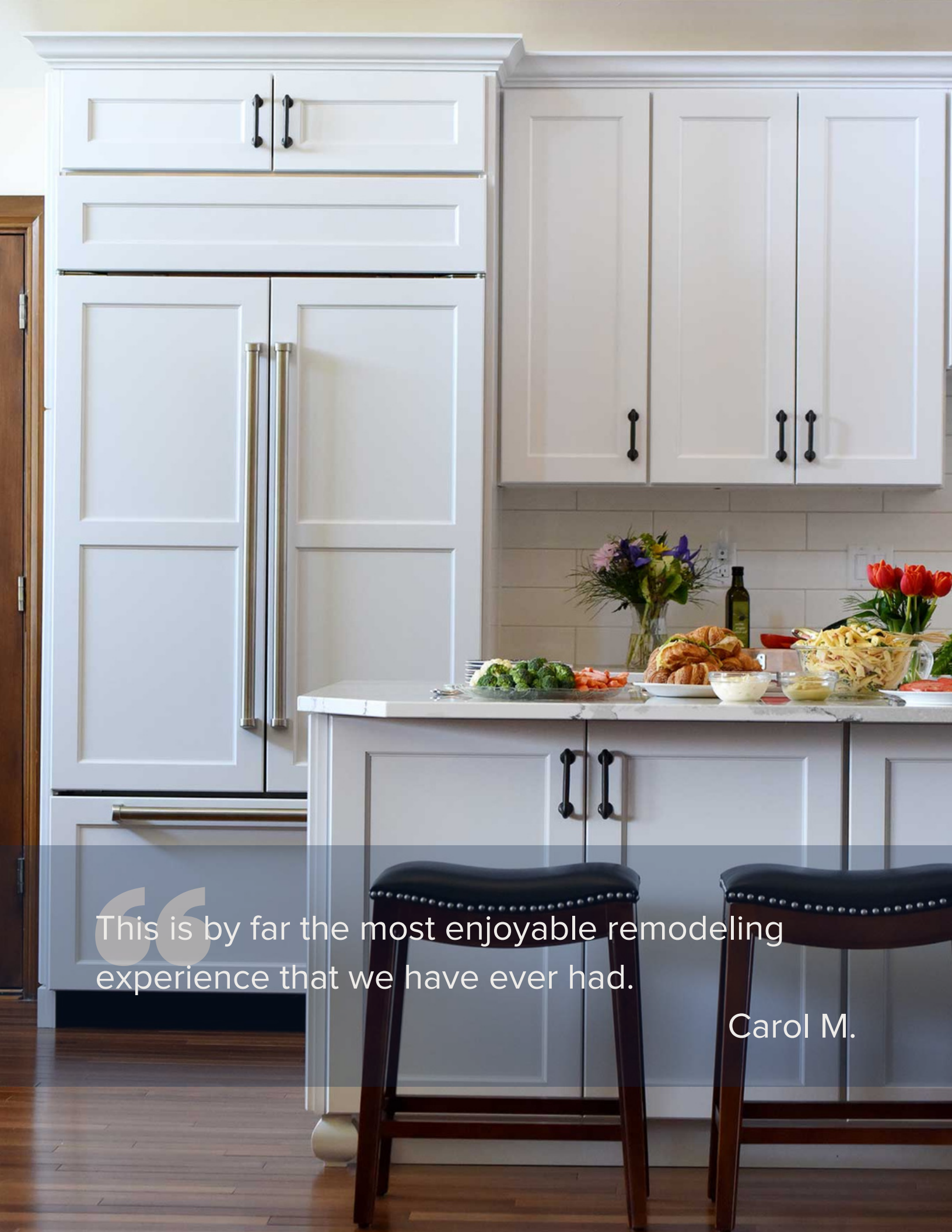
Choosing someone who can guide you through the design stage is vital to coming up with a floor plan, schedule, and budget that is right for you. Most of these professionals will have fees for their design ideas and the time they spend with you.



12

They will tailor a plan that will address your wish list and find ways to incorporate as many items as possible by recommending different materials, looking at various construction options, and proposing budget-conscious alternatives. Good designers will be creative, provide multiple solutions to accomplish your design objectives, and their goal will be to give you a plan that you can both live with and afford. A nice advantage of having a 3D virtual walkthrough of your remodeling project is you can often highlight changes you may want to make. At Remodeling Designs, our design team allows you to ‘experience’ your space virtually through our design software. Being flexible will allow you to find ways to create that new “space” that will be just right for you and your family.





“This is by far the most enjoyable remodeling experience that we have ever had.”

Carol M.

4 SET A REALISTIC BUDGET

As part of the Design Process, the topic of how much you wish to spend will come up frequently. Balancing your overall remodeling project goals with what you feel comfortable spending, will guide the recommendations and final design presented to you. Formal plans by an architect, designer, or design/builder remodeler will be needed in order to provide a firm, accurate quotation. Knowing what to budget can be challenging. That's where your professional design-build remodeler can provide guidelines that will help maximize your investment and also make recommendations that will assist you in stretching your remodeling dollar.

Remodeling projects can be very costly, even if you do some of the work yourself. Having a solid budget is essential to avoid having your project turn into a significant financial burden. By setting a budget in advance, you'll be able to track your expenses and make any necessary adjustments as your project progresses.



ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN A REMODELING BUDGET

- Contractor Costs – These costs will cover the labor costs of all those involved including management time. In many cases the contractor's fees also cover the material used on the job.
- Permits – Depending on where you live, the cost of building permits can vary, but almost all remodeling projects will require them. Getting all the proper permits is important to avoid potential problems later. Make sure the costs of any required permits are included in your budget.
- Materials – All materials for your project need to be accounted for. The price and quality of materials can vary greatly, so be sure to specify what grade and quality levels you need so your pricing accurately reflects what you expect. Be sure to allow for unforeseen expenses in this area to account for incidental supplies.
- Tools – If your project requires additional tools like scaffolding, dumpsters, or other special equipment, be sure to include these costs.

- **Clean-Up and Repair Costs** – In some cases when the demolition of walls or other structures takes place, costs for repairs to the surrounding area will need to be factored in. Clean-up costs associated with the project must also be determined.
- **Living Expenses** – The inability to prepare meals on a regular basis may lead to eating out more frequently. Depending on the scale of the project and the season in which construction is taking place, it may be necessary to allocate some funds for extra living expenses.
- **Finance Costs** – For major remodeling projects, some homeowners turn to finance these costs through home equity loans and/or mortgage refinancing. Any upfront costs associated with setting up these loans need to be included in the remodeling project budget.
- **Tax Credits Available** – On the plus side, tax credits are usually available that can help offset the cost of a number of energy-efficient home improvements. Or perhaps you are doing your remodeling project to accommodate medical needs such as handicapped accessible spaces. Contact us to find out which items in your project might qualify.

5 PICK THE RIGHT CONTRACTOR

Trying to complete a remodeling project on your own that goes beyond painting and wallpapering, may seem like a good way to save money. However, unless you have the skills and experience to manage and complete a remodeling project, you are likely to spend more money and stretch the work out for an extended period of time.

When you undertake a remodeling project, you should have the peace of mind that comes from being in complete control and working with someone whom you feel understands your needs and your goals. Picking the contractor that is right for you and your project takes a concerted effort to identify and qualify someone that will manage your project and meet your expectations.



GETTING STARTED

Finding a contractor that fits your needs and one that you can feel comfortable with takes time, but this step is ultimately the most important to a successful project. Start out by talking to friends, neighbors, or co-workers who have had home improvement work done. Get their opinions on who has done good work for them. Depending on the size and complexity of your project, you may choose to work with a number of different professionals.

- General Contractors manage all aspects of your project, including hiring and supervising subcontractors, getting building permits, and scheduling inspections. They also work with architects and designers.
- Specialty Contractors install particular products, such as roofing and siding.
- Architects design homes, additions, and some major renovations. If your project includes significant structural changes, you may want to hire an architect who specializes in home remodeling. A word to the wise: Most of the time they do not have experience in doing estimates for remodeling. Therefore, you may be steered in the wrong direction to design a project that is over or under your intended budget.
- Designers have expertise in specific areas of the home, such as kitchens and baths.
- Design/build Remodeler provides a one-stop service. They see your project from the design phase through the construction phase. Some firms have architects on staff; others use certified designers. Remodeling Designs is a design/build remodeler that has a certified designer on staff.



“Remodeling Designs did an extensive renovation of the first floor of our home that included a completely renovated, more functional, and spacious kitchen, a new powder room and flooring throughout most of the first floor. Everyone at Remodeling Designs was great to work with.

Kathy

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When a group of NARI (National Association of the Remodeling Industry) remodeling contractors were asked what questions homeowners asked most frequently, the group unanimously agreed that their most popular queries were:

- When can you start?
- When will you be finished?
- What time will you knock on my door each morning?
- What time will you quit for the day?
- Are you going to work every day?
- Can you finish before (insert any major holiday or significant family event)?
- How much will it cost per square foot?

Unfortunately, these are not the type of questions that are going to tell you much about a particular remodeling contractor.

THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO ASK

You can increase your chances of having a successful project by conducting qualifying interviews, following up on references and credentials, and considering all aspects of the remodeling project. You need to look for the professional remodeler you feel will provide the best all-around service available above and beyond the necessary construction skills. It is also important to learn as much as possible about the reputation of the remodeler and that you feel treated fairly and with respect when dealing with them.

Here are some suggestions that will help you determine the qualifications and reputation of the contractor/remodeler best suited for your project.

How long have you been in business?

Look for a company with an established business history in your community. Are they members of their local business and industry associations? Companies with established reputations and those that have professional operations are proud to be active in their communities.

THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO ASK

What is your approach to a project of this scope?

Small or large, projects vary in scope and complexity. You'll want to be assured that your contractor has managed projects similar to yours. A contractor's response to this question should also give you an indication of their project management skills and work ethic.

Is your company a full-service or specialty firm?

As noted earlier, different projects may require a different type of contractor. If your project is small or specific to one area of your home, you may be fine with hiring a firm that specializes in that type of remodeling. If your project involves multiple changes, entire rooms, or additions, you should consult a full-service design/build firm that will manage everything for you.

Do you use subcontractors?

What are the job descriptions for your employees? What area of the project are they responsible for and which parts of the job are being subcontracted out? Do you use a project supervisor or lead carpenter to oversee the project? Whom would I contact if the supervisor is not available?

THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO ASK

Will a permit be required for this project?

Most cities and towns require permits for building projects even for simple projects like decks. Failure to obtain the necessary permits or to arrange for required inspections can lead to legal issues. In some cases, if a project violates a zoning law or some other regulations, it may have to be demolished if there is no way to comply with the law. A qualified remodeling contractor will know the permit process. They should be willing to obtain all permits before initiating any work.

When can you begin my project?

It is important to understand the contractor's timeframe and work schedules. What is the estimated time to complete my job? How early will your crew normally begin work? When will they normally quit for the day? Who will contact you about delays or changes in the schedule?

What percentage of your business is repeat or referral business?

This will give you a good indication of the company's customer satisfaction. According to research conducted by NARI, most remodeling business attribute over 50% of their annual volume to customer referrals; some even claim up to 90% or more of their total annual sales.

THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO ASK

Could I obtain a list of references for projects you have completed which are similar to mine?

The contractor should be able to supply you with a minimum of three references, including names, telephone numbers, and addresses. As a follow-up to this question, ask how long ago the project was completed and if the contractor can arrange a visit to see the finished job. You should also ask for professional references from suppliers, financial institutions, or subcontractors to verify sound business practices.

What guarantees do you offer on your work?

Will the contractor guarantee his work for a period of time to ensure any problems are addressed once the job is complete?

How comfortable do they make me feel?

One of the most important questions is: "Do I feel comfortable with and trust the person I am about to hire?" Having a level of trust with the remodeler of your choice will help you comfortably work through the details of your project. The appearance of a company's employees, office, trucks, and equipment can also be a good indicator of how professional and organized a firm is. And most importantly, you should never feel pressured when making a decision.

“Rare gem of an honest, trustworthy, top quality remodeling/renovation company!”

Dave P.



FOLLOWING UP ON REFERENCES

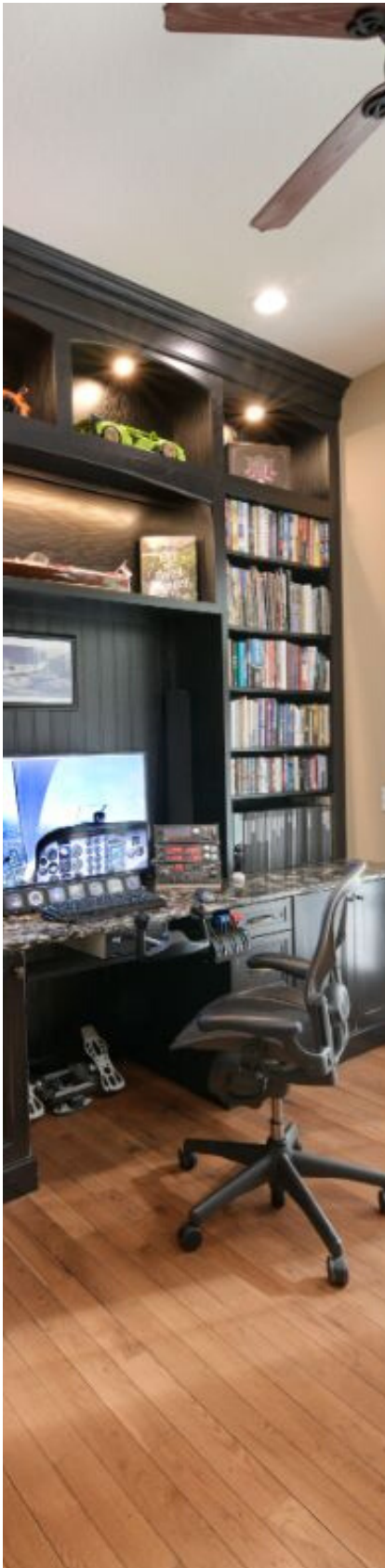
It is a good idea to check and visit a remodeler's references to talk with their customers and to see their work. Although this can take some time, it is essential in qualifying the right firm for your project. Here are some questions to ask former customers.

- Can I visit your home to see the completed job?
- Seeing a completed job is always helpful to evaluate the final product. See a project in progress can give you a very good feel for how conscientious a contractor takes his work.
- Did the contractor keep you informed about the status of the project, and any problems along the way? Were you able to communicate easily with the remodeler?
- Were you satisfied with the project? Was the quality of work to your satisfaction?
- Was your project completed on budget and on schedule?
- Were there unexpected costs? If so, what were they?
- Did workers show up on time? Did they keep the job site clean during the project? Did they clean up after finishing the job?
- Would you use the contractor again without hesitation?

6 GET IT IN WRITING

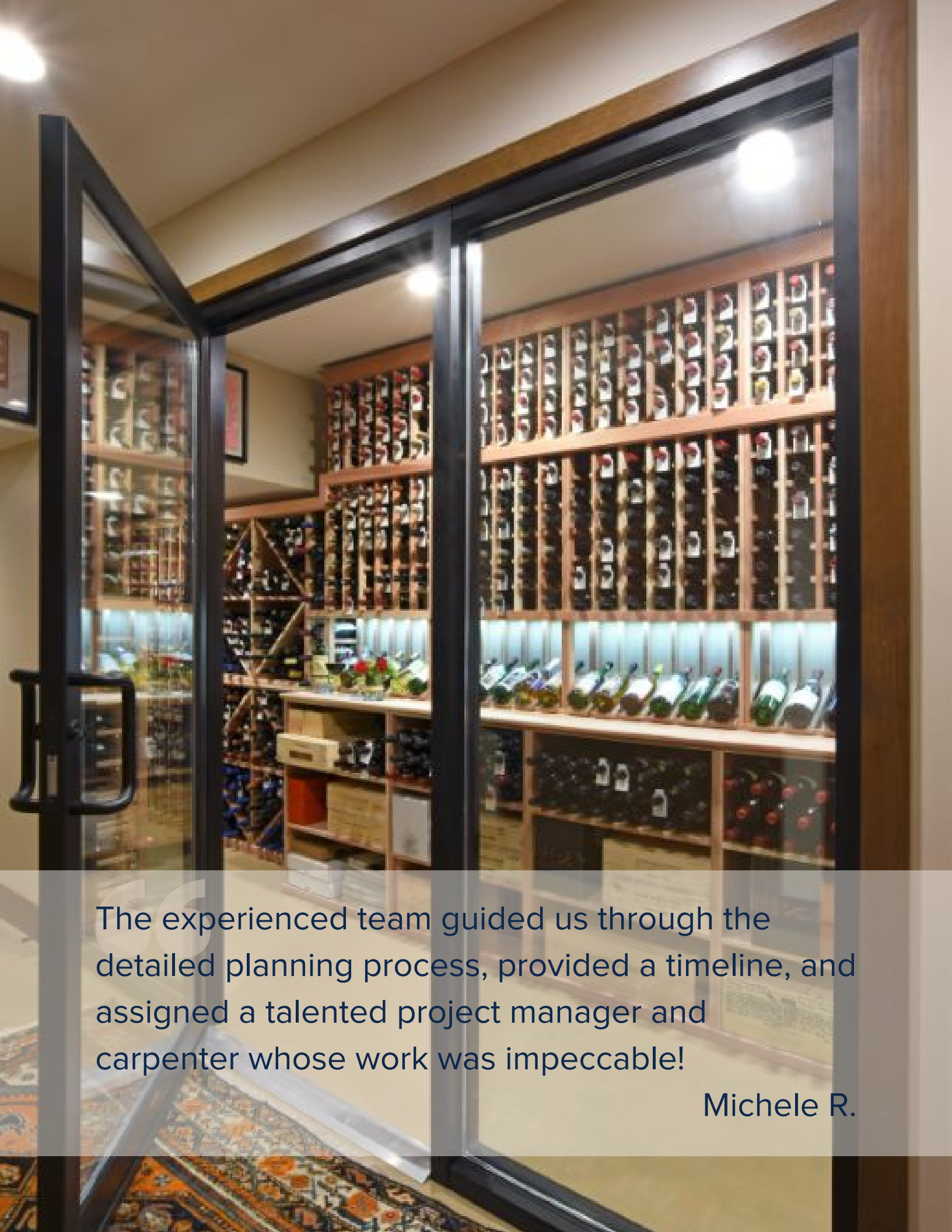
Contract requirements vary by state. In Ohio, contractors are required to obtain a signed written agreement. Your contract spells out who is responsible for specific actions, where and when these actions will take place, and the cost of your project. The agreement should be clear, concise, and complete. And you shouldn't begin any work without a signed contract. Before you sign a contract, make sure it contains:

- The contractor's name, address, and phone.
- The payment schedule for the contractor, subcontractors, and suppliers.
- An estimated start and completion date.
- The contractor's obligation to obtain all necessary permits.
- How will change orders be handled. A change order – common on some remodeling jobs – is a written authorization to the contractor to make a change or addition to the work described in the original contract. It could affect the project's cost and schedule. Remodelers often require payment for change orders before work begins.



- A detailed list of all materials including color, model, size, brand name, and product.
- Warranties covering materials and workmanship. The names and addresses of the parties honoring the warranties – contractor, distributor, or manufacturer – must be identified. The length of the warranty period and any limitations should be noted.
- What the contractor will and will not do. For example, are site clean-up and trash hauling included in the price?
- Oral promises also should be added to the written contract.
- A written statement of your right to cancel the contract within three business days if you signed it in your home or at a location other than the seller's permanent place of business. During the sales transaction, the contractor must give you three copies of a cancellation form (one for each person to keep and one to send back to the company) and a copy of your contract or receipt. The contract must be dated, show the name and address of the seller, and explain your right to cancel.





“The experienced team guided us through the detailed planning process, provided a timeline, and assigned a talented project manager and carpenter whose work was impeccable!”

Michele R.

7 MANAGE YOUR EXPECTATIONS & STAY INVOLVED

Prepare yourself for the challenges that any major renovation project can pose. These projects involve noise, dust, and disruption to your normal routine. Anticipate the inconvenience will last longer than you expect and that some aspects of the work will move along faster than others. By managing your expectations, you'll find that you and your family will handle the frustration that comes from unexpected snags, delays, and the inevitable inconveniences that come from living in a construction zone.

Maintain good communication with your contractor throughout the project. This will allow you to provide input as questions arise and allow you to adjust your schedule if the contractor's timetable changes due to material or labor availability.

Stay involved and inspect what is going on from time to time. Ultimately, you are the one who has to live with the end result, so stay engaged as the project progresses and if you have questions or concerns about anything address them immediately.

Be a good boss by treating your remodeler well. Everyone enjoys doing work for someone who is honest and has an appreciation for the work they do.



KEEP GOOD RECORDS

No one ever expects problems with a project or contractor, but disputes do arise. Therefore, it is especially important to keep all paperwork related to your project during and after the project is concluded. This includes copies of the contract, change orders, and any correspondence with your contractor or subcontractor. Keep a log or journal of all phone calls, conversations, and activities. Taking photographs as the job progresses is also a good idea. If problems or questions do come up, you'll have documentation to refer to in your discussions.



THE FINAL SIGN OFF

Before you sign off and make the final payment, use this checklist to make sure the job is complete.

- All work meets the standards spelled out in the contract.
- You have written warranties for materials and workmanship.
- The job site has been cleaned up and cleared of excess materials, tools, and equipment.
- You have inspected and approved the completed work.

As is apparent, there is a great deal involved in any remodeling project. Small or large, each project will require the homeowner to pay attention to many details. The most important is choosing a contractor wisely who fits their specific project and works well with them. This can insure that your remodeling project experience is both rewarding and satisfactory.

AMAZING HOMES START HERE

YOUR MIAMI VALLEY HOME REMODELING EXPERTS

information@remodelingdesigns.com

(937) 438-0031

3720 Benner Rd. Miamisburg, OH 45342

Showroom Hours

8am - 5pm Monday - Friday



IMPROVE YOUR
HOME

Improve your life