



Designer FYI

By Kris Linder



Using Professionals

If you are embarking on a building or remodeling project, hiring skilled, dependable professionals is the single most important step to carry out your plans in a timely, gratifying and cost-effective manner.

One of the more convenient options is to go with a “design/build” company. This is a single company where the designing and building processes are integrated, saving you from having to hire separate firms. Another increasingly common method is for people to create their own design team, compiling their choices of an architect (or residential planner), an interior designer and a general contractor. This arrangement gives one more latitude to select the background, experience, knowledge and creativity of each person, rather than being assigned a single staff person to handle the entire project.

Finding a good design team and establishing an effective working relationship with are keys to a successful project. Try not to base your

decisions on price alone — in the long run, a good working relationship with your contractor, and satisfaction with their work, is worth the few extra dollars you might pay.

There are several professional designations that will help assure you that you are working with qualified specialists. An *architect* is licensed to do both public work and residential projects. But this does not mean you always need an architect to create and implement your residential plans. The American Institute of Building Design (AIBD) allows for qualified *residential designers* to create drawings for construction, obtain permits and have your plans engineered.

Pre-planning with your interior designer, contractor and architect will help you create a system of checks and balances, as well as inspire new ideas. Defining the scope of the work is a collaborative effort. This is why independent professionals working together toward your best interest help to avoid a con-

flict of interest or design stalls that one might get with a design/build company.

You use doctors, attorneys and financial planners for their expertise — as the saying goes, “you wouldn’t do brain surgery on yourself” — so bringing professionals in from the beginning your design or remodeling project benefits everyone. Early on, these professionals can participate in cost estimations, help determine realistic budgets and minimize the mistake quotient.

Time frames? Revisions? Costs? Sometimes people will tell you anything you want to hear to get your business. A professional design team can be held accountable and will be up front about the time and costs for your project. ↑

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