

To: Dan Rooney
From: Diane Wilson
Date: April 7, 2009
Subject: Proposal for Determining What Features Are Feasible for a Kitchen/Dining Room Remodel

Background Information

Since moving into our home 5 years ago, my husband and I realized that eventually a kitchen update would be needed. We have discussed many ideas and have realized that we want to undertake a kitchen/dining room remodeling project. However, we often begin a project without thorough research and organization. I am proposing to organize and research this project to minimize pitfalls we have had in previous projects. The primary purpose of this research project is to determine which features we can feasibly include.

Following are several reasons that will answer both why our home needs a kitchen/dining room remodel and why research is necessary.

Update our kitchen appliances.

- All of our appliances are at a point of replacement.
- The options are limited based on space constraints in our current kitchen.

Determine if a “great room” flow can be created between the kitchen/dining room and the living room area.

- Our current dining room space is more formal than our household needs.
- Can the kitchen be expanded into the dining room space to increase the “great room” flow in this area and increase the floor space of our kitchen?

Increase my base-knowledge of kitchen features and designs to a consumer-wise detailed level.

Pinpoint the features to pursue in the remodel.

Determine the financial aspect of the remodel.

- Are we at a financial point of obtaining and taking on a home improvement loan?

Determine any legal issues that should be addressed.

Project Description

Having a game plan on paper will help us focus on elements of the project and decrease project pitfalls. Following is a list of elements to research or steps to take to complete the project.

1. Make a dream kitchen idea box.
 - a. Gather all the loose pictures of design ideas I've collected over the years.
 - b. List features (on paper) that I would like to see included in the remodel.
2. Find a designer and/or contractor that can help us get from idea level to reality level.
 - a. Determine the scope of the project.
3. Visit area showrooms. This could include kitchen/design centers, lighting centers, cabinetry showrooms and appliance stores.
 - a. Learn the trade jargon - create a glossary of commonly used terms in kitchen remodeling.
 - b. Prepare standard questionnaires to use as a comparison tool.

4. Research legal issues. The following legal issues to be aware of are suggested by Susan Maney Lovet in her book, The Smart Approach to Kitchen Design, pp 16-19.
 - a. Review contractual law.
 - b. Does the contractor have a license, current liability insurance and worker's compensation?
 - c. What steps are necessary for obtaining a permit for a remodeling project?
 - d. Check our homeowner's insurance regarding our liability if a worker is injured on our property.
5. Research any tradesperson we might hire.
 - a. Contact state agencies or trade associations to check credentials.
 - b. Develop a reference checklist.
6. Establish a working budget.
 - a. Determining the scope of the project will help determine a budget.
7. Finance the remodeling.
 - a. Meet with our banker to determine our loan options.

Course of Action

Following is a list of steps to be taken to complete this project. Dates of completion are included when known, along with space that I will use to check off when a task or step is completed. One separate section, Step 5, will identify elements of research that are not necessarily date-specific.

Step 1: Organize my kitchen idea box. Pinpoint and list features (minimum of 10-12) that I would like in my dream kitchen.

_____ Done by Thursday, April 9.

Step 2: Meet with a minimum of 2 designers to formulate my idea box into a working medium – a drawing or blueprint of sorts.

_____ Meeting 1 - scheduled for Thursday, April 9.

_____ Meeting 2 – to be scheduled.

Step 3: Develop questionnaires and checklists necessary to complete my research.

- ✓ Develop a standard questionnaire to use when interviewing tradespeople that we might consider for hire.
- ✓ Develop a reference questionnaire to use when checking references of tradespeople.
- ✓ Develop an appliance checklist form to use when comparing appliance options.
- ✓ Develop a financial questionnaire to use when meeting with our banker.

_____ Done by Tuesday, April 14.

Step 4: Begin the primary research.

_____ Visit area showrooms (minimum of 3) prepared to complete the questionnaires and checklists developed in Step 3.

_____ Set up a meeting with our banker. Complete the financial questionnaire.

_____ Begin the primary research the week of April 13, after surveys are returned to me.

Step 5: Secondary ongoing research

- Hard copy research – Use 2-3 books on subject matter (see works cited list) as both a resource and an idea book.
- Online website – (ConsumerReports.org) I have only briefly looked at this website and have seen a great wealth of knowledge on appliances as well as kitchen remodeling.

Primary ongoing research

- Call the local trade association – La Crosse Area Builders Association - to become familiar with the services they provide.
- Contact the county office for permit information.
- Talk to our tax man for any tax related questions.

Step 6: Complete a progress report.

_____ Due week of April 20.

_____ Schedule a conference with instructor to review progress report.

_____ Attend conference prepared to discuss project.

Step 7: Complete the research report.

_____ Due week of April 27.

Step 8: Present my research project to the class.

_____ Week of May 11.

Conclusion

By completing the proposed research and collecting all the project information, I hope to establish a plan of action for acquiring my dream kitchen. We will learn what features we can include in our kitchen/dining room remodel. A possible secondary outcome of this research will be the development of a guidebook called "The Project Workbook" our household can refer to when planning future projects.

Thank you for your consideration of this research project. With your approval, I will begin the research.

April 7, 2009