

DIGITAL HOME TECHNOLOGIES

346 N. Northwest Hwy, Palatine, Il. 60067 (Ofc) 847-776-5063 (Fax) 847-776-1297 www.adigitalhome.com

The BIG Home Building or Remodeling Mistakes...and how to avoid them.

Making major changes in your home's design and structure can cost thousands of dollars. In other cases, fixing up your home is more cost-efficient and practical than moving. As more and more people take on the tasks of designing new rooms, choosing materials and hiring labor for the first time, they are more likely to fall into traps that cost them time and money. Here are the most common errors to avoid when renovation your home....

MISTAKE: Not seeing the big Picture.

When planning major structural changes, such as adding a room, many people do not take the architectural integrity of their homes into consideration. They need additional space or want their homes to look new, so their main concerns are that the work be done quickly and at a cost that is within their budgets.

Problems: Renovation work that is out of character with the rest of the home sticks out and will be a big turnoff to potential buyers if you decide to sell in the future. In addition, many people try to do too much without having enough money to do it right. The result is shoddy work.

Strategy: First determine how much you can afford to spend on renovating. Then draw up a wish list of what you want done, in order of preference. To find out what your money might realistically buy, invite two architects and two contractors to look around your home and provide you with ballpark estimates. They should do this for free.

Then plan on striking a proper balance between solving your needs and achieving an appropriate level of quality for your type of home while working within your budget. If you can't get to it all, postpone renovations on other parts of the house until next year or the year after.

TRAP: Spending too much on the renovation project and making your home the most expensive one on the street, thereby pricing it out of competition. Choose work that will truly improve your lifestyle and make your home more attractive without putting it beyond the reach of a potential buyer.

MISTAKE: Failing to wire for future needs.

If you are building or remodeling your home, wire it with a plan for future needs. While no one can guarantee what the future will look like, here at **Digital Home Technologies**, we make it our business to stay current in order to offer good advise about technologies that are on the horizon. Best of all, we are here to help you sort out the hype from the reality.

MISTAKE: Being excessively trendy.

As the number of colorful home-improvement magazines and TV shows increases, so do home owners wishes for² the fancy things they see. While many of these features may look great for a few years, you'll probably outgrow them faster than you think. In all likelihood, you'll also have to live with them, since the expense of redoing what you have done will be higher in the future.

Before you commit to the latest design fad or put a Jacuzzi in the family room, consider the long-term consequences. Ask yourself if you will be comfortable with this style for the next 20 years. When it comes to resale - conservative, timeless work such as elegant, functional spaces and generally neutral colors in kitchens and bathrooms - always hold up best.

MISTAKE: Assuming that you will pay what your neighbors did for the same work.

When home owners go looking for architects, contractors, carpenters, electricians, etc., they usually call their friends for recommendations. They also frequently ask what their friends paid for remodeling or renovations work that was done a few years ago.

With those estimates in mind, they are often shocked when they hear what the work will cost today. During the 1990-1991 recession, business was terrible for architects and contractors. In addition, the cost of lumber has soared in the last 6 years.

MISTAKE: Buying complicated systems.

Insist on a integrated system – As you buy new electronic components, make sure they that can be connected up together and operate as one, easy to use system. Contact **Digital Home Technologies** to arrange for a personal demonstration.

² Digital Home Technologies 847-776-5063 www.adigitalhome.com

MISTAKE: Buying yesterday's products.

Building or remodeling a home is a long project. We order your equipment just before you need it. Big Box and Warehouse stores are often selling previous year products.

MISTAKE: Ignoring HDTV.

High Definition TV is the new digital standard for enhanced picture quality for TV Displays. If you are buying a new TV or video projector, make sure you'll be able to enjoy the incredible sound and pictures that are part of HDTV. To get the best possible quality, you will need different cabling than is normally installed in homes.

MISTAKE: Getting Stuck with a Pile of Remotes!

Don't put up with hard to use, multiple remote controls. Easy to use, all-in-one remote controls are available for any system. You can even have these 'smart remotes' tailored to the way you watch TV.

MISTAKE: Not spending enough time hiring the right people.

Most home³ owners who set out to hire people to design or build for them wish the job were already finished. It's only natural to want your renovations completed shortly after you imagine them. But it's important to be practical and take the project one step at a time.

Once you've talked to a few architects and contractors, ask three of each for bids - no matter how inexpensive the project. Of course, the contractor's bids are solicited after the architect completes documents for bidding. The contractor will hire electricians, plumbers, etc.

Ask each for three references, and be sure to contact all of them.

Key Questions:

- Were you happy with the work and the working relationship?
- How long did it take to complete the job?
- Was it completed on time?
- Did the contractor ask for many change orders that boosted the cost of the work well past the estimate?

³ Digital Home Technologies 847-776-5063 www.adigitalhome.com

IMPORTANT: Don't automatically choose the lowest bid.

This is a major temptation, but beware - a low price may result in low-quality work, either because the caliber of the person is low, or because the person did not understand the actual scope of the work and bid too low.

Quality and long-term dependability are the most cost effective attributes that you can build into a home. The quality of a system comes from a solid design. Hire only certified and experienced designers. There is a reason the "Low Bid" stands out.

MISTAKE: Not deciding on the details early enough.

Many delays are the fault of the contractor. But some are caused by home owners who haven't selected fixtures, colors, etc. Avoid delays by selecting your faucets, tiles and stones early and making sure everything the contractor needs is in place.

Holding up a project for a few days because you have changed your mind about some element can add weeks to the timetable. You may save money by ordering and picking up finish materials yourself. Get a list of what you need from the contractor. Bring samples home to make sure the new tiles work with the rest of the room. Ripping up newly laid tile costs time and money.

MISTAKE: Assuming you can live in your home while work is being done.

If possible, homeowners should move out while extensive interior work is being done. It's not just a question of noise and workmen underfoot. There will be dust, debris, and furniture out of place. There may even be hazardous materials around.

STRATEGY: Arrange alternate accommodations at a residence hotel, which offers lower weekly and monthly rates than commercial hotels...or sublet an apartment. If you do continue to live in your home, be willing to make certain sacrifices.

MISTAKE: Not Consulting a Professional.

Designing and installing reliable, easy to use systems that add REAL quality to your lifestyle is the goal of the professionals at **Digital Home Technologies**.

Check to see if any company you're considering has Certified Professional Designers and Installers on staff. Ask how long they have been in business and a list of references. You would be amazed at how many part time companies work out of their homes and trucks, sound and look like professionals, but could be out business in a year from now.

MISTAKE: Ignoring Your Instincts

Your home electronics system is a big investment. Demand professionalism from your project team. Don't settle for anything less.

SOLUTIONS: With **Digital Home Technologies**, you get a one-stop shop capable of handling all your electrical, security, audio/video, telephone, network, automation, central vacuum, and lighting automation needs.

Using a full time company like **Digital Home Technologies** can save you warranty issues and coordination time. Every builder, architect and homeowner that we have worked with has enjoyed the reduced stress and smooth process that we provide.



Our mission is to help you maximize the enjoyment, comfort, and value of your new home through the design and installation of systems focused on

Entertainment, Convenience and Security.

You will greatly enjoy the quality of our systems, and how easy they are to operate.

"Creating Entertainment & Automation Solutions"

6-Jan-08