

HomeTech Renovations

by Erica Bauwens

Making the decision to move forward with a bathroom redesign or remodel is no small feat. It takes commitment and dedication. But it also takes a clear understanding of existing infrastructure, the length of time one anticipates remaining in the home, and budget considerations. David Cerami, certified kitchen and bath designer and president of HomeTech Renovations, Inc. knows this all too well, and works with clients on a daily basis to understand the decision behind bathroom—and kitchen—remodels. Here, Cerami shares his expert tips on firming up a budget and understanding the cost and time that goes into a beautiful new bathroom.



David Cerami, senior designer & president



What is the biggest misunderstanding in bathroom remodeling?

How often does one do a major kitchen or bathroom remodel? Not too many times in their life. So if you get someone who's a rookie they're used to working as they do with smaller projects, picking up the phone, getting a quote and going from there. One of the things homeowners need to really understand is that when they call a professional for any substantial project it's different than calling to get an estimate on a new fence or to paint a room. There are many design and material alternatives that can dramatically influence the cost of a major project. A true design/build professional will truly help sort out what choices are best for any circumstance.

Are there things people need to consider before diving into a project of this size?

A design and remodel has to be respectful of one's budget, include specifications of real materials of what homeowners really want in their rooms—rather than a bunch of

meaningless allowances—and include a timeline. Through our 32 years of experience and our practical design process, we can help with permitting and materials and explain exactly what we're doing so you understand what you're getting. It's really important to develop projects that includes materials and alternatives so they really understand the value of their redesign. If a homeowner doesn't understand the materials and the various methods of related installation, they can only hope that what they want is what they will get in the end.

Do you see a return on investment in the cost of a pre-remodel design?

The money that homeowners save through our experience is saved multifold. We can guide people to products that aren't represented on a major showroom floor and explain why it's a good option and why it can save money.

Should a homeowner be prepared to commit to an immediate remodel when taking the plunge?

When people call us it's important to have a general understanding of timing. Is this a project they can do in two to six months or are they planning this further down the road?

You want an idea of timing, how extensive they want to go, and a good idea of what they want to commit to as far as a budget is concerned. We have a project planning guide on our website HTRenovations.com, which is completely free and gives people three parts to look at. It looks at your style and design, what to consider before you buy and project metrics, which are uploaded every year from *Professional Remodeler* magazine that calls out the cost of renovations across the Mid Atlantic. People can see from actual numbers and building permits what average projects cost and gives them a sense of what to expect.

What should someone look for in a designer?

You hear about nightmare stories of projects taking forever because parts don't fit, materials don't integrate and the relationship isn't working. It's the last thing you want when your bathroom is torn apart in the middle of major remodel. You want an experienced certified professional who will put the time into picking the right materials, designing the right floor plan and someone who will use their experience to help the homeowner get what they truly want. Experience does count, and it generally equates to a sense of overall value and a project that is executed above and beyond expectation. **H&H**