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Traditional bidding verses the latest design/build techniques

Asking for a bid on a project is a commonly accepted way to help select a contractor. The belief is that bidding will give us the best deal for our remodeling project.

This may be true if:

1. All planning and specifications are done up front and provided to the contractors as part of the bid packet.
2. All the bidding contractors are honest, reputable firms.
3. All bidding contractors have experience and expertise in your type of job.

If you have done your homework you will be considering only qualified, honest contractors. To make sure all the bids you receive are truly comparable you will need a set of written specifications, scope of work, materials list and complete set plans. The less detail you provide the more interpretation the contractor must do and the less comparable the bids will be.

The contractors will work up a price based on their interpretation of the project and their view of the best way to do the work. Each contractor is likely to look at the same project from a little different perspective but the finished bids should be somewhat comparable. The difficulty is that if all the bids are higher than your budget will allow, you have to go back, redesign the project and re submit it for bid. Unfortunately this adds more time and design fees.

When designers or architects create these designs and specifications independent of the contractor they often do not appreciate the costs and complexity to build some of the included details. While this may not be a problem in a high dollar luxury project, most homeowners need to maximize the value received for each dollars spent.

The Design/Build Option

Hiring a design/build contractor is one way to maximize what your dollars buy. Ideally you will select a design/build contractor based on their abilities, knowledge and their preliminary ideas on how best to design and build your project to meet your goals.

Your project will then be designed to meet your personal requirements, lifestyle and budget. Because the contractor has helped design the project he will be more likely to spot potential problems early and offer solutions before costly construction begins. This will result in a project that will truly meet your needs and enhance your family's lifestyle as well as staying on budget with a minimum of time and effort.

The design/build process was developed years ago in the commercial construction arena where time lines are critical and budgets are tight. The success of this process in commercial projects has meant some residential firms including RichArt Builders/Remodelers have adopted this time and money saving technique.

The advantages of design/build for remodeling are:

1. Minimizes design fees
2. Maximizes value for dollar spent
3. Reduces stress and misunderstandings
4. Reduces the number and size of change orders
5. Reduces the amount of time to complete the job
6. Reduces or eliminates design problems prior to construction
7. Increases efficiency in the building process.