

The Top 7 Mistakes

**Uneducated Homeowners Make
with Their Home Remodeling Project**





Introduction:

You're looking to get your home remodeled.
And you've heard the horror stories.
So you're thinking to yourself, "...*what if something goes wrong with MY remodel?*"

That is why we wrote this short but handy E-book.
To put your mind at ease and show you **how to avoid the 7 worst pitfalls in the industry.**

Because everyone thinks that getting their home remodeled has to be stressful.
Some people even think that remodeling mistakes and delays are unavoidable.
But this is simply not true.

If you make the right decisions in life, you have a much higher chance of getting the right outcomes.
The remodeling process done right will be better for your family, better for your finances, and it will just make the process a whole lot more fun.

But what ARE the right decisions when there is just so much conflicting information?
That's what we're here to help with.

This E-book is organized to make it easy to understand and impossible to misinterpret:

1 mistake on each page: with each mistake broken down into 3 sections:

- Section 1 – What the mistake is.
- Section 2 – What will happen if you make this mistake.
- Section 3 – What to do instead.

Uneducated homeowners make these mistakes all the time. But you won't.

Because you have a guide to help you. So you are well ahead of the curve when it comes to getting educated about what it takes to successfully remodel your home.

Now let's dive in...

1. Choosing the Wrong Contractor

- **THE MISTAKE: Picking the cheapest or the first contractor you meet**

Picking the cheapest or first contractor you meet with is setting yourself up for disaster. Cheaper prices often go hand in hand with lower quality and bad workmanship. If you want your remodeling project done right, go with someone that you feel comfortable with and trust to do a quality job... even if it means paying a little more. It can save you a lot of money and headache in the future if your project is done right from the beginning. It's almost always a good idea to pay 10-30% more up front to avoid 95% of the problems down the line.

- **WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU MAKE THIS MISTAKE:**

Everything could go smoothly. Or not. Choosing the cheapest or first contractor you meet is an outright gamble. In reality, your project could go just fine. Or it could result in a botched job with multiple mistakes, delayed project completion, extra expenses, and frustrating communication that will leave you stressed and confused about the progress of your home remodel.

Is that a risk you're willing to take? Professional contractors will keep you in the loop of things and walk you through the process of a remodel to help you understand what they're doing and why. They'll also do quality work that will last much longer than the work of a less-experienced or less-trustworthy contractor. Cheaper contractors will cut corners on a project to help save them money, which is why they're able to give you a much cheaper quote.

- **WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:**

Choose someone you trust to do a good job even if it means paying a little more. Always talk to at least two contractors before deciding on which to go with. Do your research on each one by reading online reviews, visiting their websites, and making sure they are insured. Some more tips:

- Pick based on the project manager, not the sales rep.
- Ask for proof of general liability insurance and worker's compensation.
- Remember: the project is not over just because it's complete. Take into account what kind of service they offer after the job is complete. What if something breaks in 3 weeks? Do they have a warranty or guarantee their workmanship? Bad contractors will often only have a 6-month to 1-year guarantee, or even not have a guarantee at all!

2. Choosing Looks over Functionality

- **THE MISTAKE: Basing your material and design choices solely on aesthetics**

Don't get me wrong – aesthetics are important! But when it comes to rooms that serve a specific function, it is usually best to choose materials that perform better for your needs rather than materials that LOOK better at the time. This is because if you choose the wrong materials for an important selection, you can add hours of monthly maintenance to your to-do list from now until you move!

- **WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU MAKE THIS MISTAKE:**

Following this rule is critical especially for kitchens and bathrooms. Kitchens serve a very particular function: they exist as a space for food preparation. Now, food preparation can be messy business, especially if you're cooking for a large crowd. Clean up can be a hassle if your kitchen is made with materials that are difficult to clean.

Take the countertop for example: There are many kinds of materials a countertop can be made of. Some materials are more porous and easily stained than others. If you wanted to use marble for its looks and installed it as a kitchen countertop, you'll soon realize that marble will absorb liquids easily and will stain.

Marble is also very soft and easily scratched/chipped. If you aren't careful, a beautiful marble countertop can become less pleasing to look at after it's been discolored by stains and marred by scratches. Cleaning and repairing this countertop will be expensive and difficult. If you aren't prepared for maintaining a marble countertop in your kitchen, it probably isn't the best choice despite its looks.

- **WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:**

Choose functionality over aesthetics when possible.

To save you work and frustration in the future, think carefully about what you want your remodel to do. Do you want a kitchen able to withstand a lot of cooking mess? Choose materials that can withstand the mess that goes along with cooking. Do you want an easy to clean and water-resistant bathroom? Pick material options and appliances that fulfill that end. And if you do decide to go with a less functional and more aesthetically pleasing material choice, make sure you understand the functional downsides that come with it.

3. Forgetting or Ignoring the Permit

- **THE MISTAKE: Forgetting or purposefully not getting permits**

Do you love walking into the local municipal building and giving the government your money, just to earn the privilege of having them raise your property taxes?

Yeah we don't either.

Let's be honest - having to get permits is a pain... but they're there for a reason. Permits come with inspections, and inspections ensure that your work is being done safely and to all local code requirements. This can save you a LOT of pain in the future when you go to sell your house.

There is some good news though, because not all projects require a permit. Ask your contractor if your project will require a permit. They might even file it for you!

- **WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU MAKE THIS MISTAKE:**

What if I "forget" to obtain a permit?

Going through a remodel without a permit can make your house difficult to sell. This is because a project that is not done to code or with an associated permit will have to be brought up to code in order for you to legally sell it.

Not only that, but unpermitted projects such as decks can make you vulnerable to litigation if the new owner of your house becomes injured due to unpermitted work.

Keep all your bases covered by getting all permits necessary for your remodel or else prepare for problems and stress in the future when you decide to sell your home.

- **WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:**

Find out if a permit is necessary for your project, and make sure you get one. Having the correct permits will keep your remodel moving forward as well as ensure that things are built to code. It will make your home easier to sell in the future as well as keep you safe from litigation if a person injures themselves while inside your home. To be as safe as possible, do a little bit of research on your own on which permits you may need in case your contractor forgets something.

4. Being Indecisive After Start of Project

- **THE MISTAKE: Changing your mind in the middle of a remodel**

Remodeling projects often become complex and include a lot of hard-to-make decisions. We understand if your choice of countertop or deck railing material isn't completely anchored in your mind. However, sticking with your initial decision will save you time and money.

- **WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU MAKE THIS MISTAKE:**

When you change a big decision in the middle of a project you start an infamous process known as ...*"The Scramble"*.

You're scrambling to make a decision.

The Supplier has to scramble to get the materials to you.

The Contractor has to scramble to get a new installation price together and change their schedule around so that the project doesn't get delayed.

All of this scrambling means time crunching or rushing.

And rushing means **mistakes are more likely to happen**.

Changing your mind in the middle of a remodel can cost you money and time, especially if it is something the contractor is in the middle of working on. You can do it, but know that it will cost you more for labor and materials as well as drag the project on as the contractor gets everything together for your new project decision.

- **WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:**

Have a solid and decisive plan before going forward with a remodeling project. Be certain of your choices before you go forward with your project to avoid any delays and added expenses. Plan things out carefully and make any changes you need before the contractor begins working on your home otherwise you'll frustrate yourself, as well as the contractors working on your home. Take your time with material choices and design ideas until you are fully satisfied with the final plan.

You CAN change small details during the middle of the project. But you're much better off taking a little bit of extra time in the design phase of the project to really make sure you're happy with your choices. Keep in mind: **Any changes - big or small - mean price changes**.

5. Bad Budgeting

- **THE MISTAKE: Innacurate pricing assumptions, or having insufficient cushion**

Having a budget is incredibly important when going through with a remodeling project. A remodel isn't possible without paying for materials and services, so staying within your calculated budget is crucial. However, it can be difficult to stay within your budget boundaries if you don't know how much things are going to cost you. One common mistake people make when planning a remodel is underestimating the cost for their project.

- **WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU MAKE THIS MISTAKE:**

If you don't budget your remodel correctly, you're going to be hit with unplanned costs that can carve deep into your bank account. And once demolition has started, cancelling or changing things out after realizing how much things will cost will lose you money and time. It's incredibly stressful when a project you thought you could afford ends up being thousands of dollars over your expected budgeting. And getting costs reigned in after the realization is difficult if not impossible.

- **WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:**

Always tell your contractor your intended budget as soon as you are comfortable doing so. Then they will be able to steer you clear of materials that may take you way out of your range, or let you know if the project is not feasible to complete with your expected budget.

You see, salesmen at the front counter or in material showrooms aren't always the most up-front about the final cost of installing different selections. Your contractor who has years of experience with the industry can usually tell you very quickly what it will cost to purchase and install certain materials.

And keep in mind the installation cost. If you're planning a kitchen remodel and you have \$30,000 budgeted for it – you CANNOT pick out materials over \$20,000 and expect to have the final finish cost come in under your budget.

As for the cushion, it is usually a good idea to have around 10-15% of the total budget set aside for unexpected surprises such as rotted studs in load-bearing walls, or necessary rewiring to bring an outdated circuit up to code.

6. Being Too Trendy

- **THE MISTAKE: Following trends too closely**

Trends are fun looks that can add some pop to your home. However, they aren't recommended if you want your home to sell for as much as possible in the future. So don't go overboard with what's currently popular!

- **WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU MAKE THIS MISTAKE:**

What if I make my house super trendy?

Following modern trends too closely can be detrimental to the future value of your home. If you plan on selling your house at some point in the next 5-20 years, and you want your home's value to be as high as possible, sticking with tested and proven design choices is the safest route. Current trends can become tacky and tasteless in the future, so keep that in mind if your home's resale value is important to you.

- **WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:**

If you want some trendy touches, keep things subtle.

It's safer to add a few trendy touches here and there during a remodel, than basing your entire plan on a trend that will become outdated in the next decade. If home value isn't something you're too concerned about... then going all out with quirky and less traditional design choices is no problem.

Also if resale value is an important consideration for you, note that there are some trends that won't be going out of style. For example, modern kitchen design features 3 elements: white cabinets, an island, and undercabinet lighting.

These are expected to stay valuable for a long time, as they're just plain useful for food preparation or brightening up the space.

For decks, the current trends of wood or composite flooring with aluminum rails will be sticking around as well. This is because the aluminum rails are sturdier and much higher quality than composite railing systems, and they look and age much better as well. They even cost about the same!

7. Trying to be the DIY Master

- **THE MISTAKE: Trying to do things yourself if you aren't an expert**

There are some things that are best left to professionals. Even if you think you can get something installed on your own but have little to no experience with what's involved in the remodel, it'll save you a lot of stress and money to get things done by a licensed professional.

- **WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU MAKE THIS MISTAKE:**

Despite saving on labor, your DIY portion of the project might be done incorrectly or not up to code. This makes it costly to fix in the future. It might also delay the rest of the remodel work if you have contractors working on other parts of the remodel. Work that relies on your portion being finished will be greatly delayed if you don't finish on time due to the tight scheduling of professional contractors.

Even worse, **you or your family could get injured** if you make a mistake or forget an important detail.

- **WHAT TO DO INSTEAD:**

Leave it to the professionals. We suggest only doing things yourself if you're experienced with the work. Trying to do things you aren't trained for can lead to costly mistakes and hugely delayed schedules. Here is a small list of things Homeowners without industry experience can do themselves:

- Painting
- Sanding
- Purchasing some materials
- Staining
- Insulating/Soundproofing
- Some demo

CONCLUSION:

Following these guidelines will help keep your remodeling process smooth and stress free! After reading this article, you should be prepared to make better decisions and plan properly before setting out on a large remodeling project.

If you want to see what a true professional can do for YOUR project, call us at (513)800-4144. Or if you're not from Ohio but you'd like assistance finding a professional remodeler in your area, send a quick email to patrick@mccanncustomremodeling.com