

Remodeling Your Home

What will my remodel cost?

BY Roy Bryhn, CR

Might be on your mind if you are planning a remodel? What is the cost of an addition for your growing family? How much would it cost to update the kitchen, add a great room for entertaining or perhaps gain a mud-room to keep order of the kids shoes and sports gear. So, what will my project cost?

It is not uncommon for the real cost of a project to be 50%-100% above “perceived cost” in the eyes of the average homeowner and some designers/architects.

It is difficult for some contractors to stay up on the cost due to ever-rising material and labor cost. This has caused many homeowners to set out and go down the road of no return. With thousands of dollars invested into designs for a project that is 50%+ over budget, the options are limited to:

1. Go ahead and spend more money
2. Don't go ahead and recycle your plans as one of a kind wrapping paper
3. Spend more time and money on design, despite the fact that you have spent 6 months +, and everyone is suffering from design fatigue. As a consequence the re-design often resembles an amputation.
4. Find a “reasonable” contractor and play “Contractor Roulette”. Just like in Russian Roulette, the odds are in your favor! Remember 96% of contractors go out of business in the first ten years, and the worst offenders that end up on the evening news can come with great referrals. It is rare that contractors prices varies more than 5% if one compares apples to apples unless one plays Contractor Roulette!

Here are some realistic average bottom line budget guidelines to assist with your planning:

Addition (family room type – no plumbing, minimal structural work) \$200 to \$300 /sq. ft.

Addition (multi story, some structural work, mid grade finishes, systems work, good deal related work in existing structure) \$225 to \$325 /sq. ft.

Addition (substantial tie into existing structure, new mechanical systems, complete kitchen/bath renovations) \$250 and up

Kitchen Upgrade \$30,000 to \$80,000

Kitchen Remodel \$50,000 to \$125,000

Bathroom (upgrade to moderate) \$25,000 to \$40,000

Bathroom (high end remodel) \$45,000 to \$100,000

Finished Basement/Attic \$75 to \$150 /sq. ft

Average Design Fees: 5%-12% of construction budget.

These square foot prices are illustrative, but are by no means absolute. Square foot costs vary substantially from project to project due to the endless variables. Size, configuration, scope, finishes, structural work, energy efficiency, etc....

One reads in home magazines that one should budget for 10%-20% for “unforeseen” change orders! Take for instance if one is putting on a kitchen & master suite addition, it might make sense while the walls are open to replace the old furnace with a new energy efficient split system with a media air filter to ease the allergies along with upgrading the insulation with state of the art soy-based spray foam insulation for years of savings for energy. The trick to stay on budget is to do a thorough analysis of the existing conditions in the earliest planning stages and apply value engineering throughout the design. At our company using this model we have been able to keep cost over runs to less than 2% over contract.

Author & Company Bio



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Bryhn Construction was founded in 1998. Roy Bryhn is the President of the Central Jersey Chapter of NARI. They were elected into the “Remodeling Magazine” Big 50 class of 2006. You can contact Bryhn construction at (908)806-2961 or visit their website.

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