



# Homeowner's Guide to Full-Service Remodeling

How to work with a Design-Build team to create a better life at home.

# Committed to Building Better Lives at Home

Neal’s Design Remodel has been a staple in the Cincinnati remodeling environment for over 50 years. We’ve learned a thing or two about how to work with our clients to transform their spaces and positively impact their lives. Our robust remodeling process prioritizes planning and client experience and then delivers top-notch design and carpentry work that lasts.

Neal’s is proud to be a family-owned and operated company (going on 3 generations now) along with employing some of the best talent in the region in project management, design, and construction.

We invite you to learn more about our company and work on our website at [NEALS.COM](http://NEALS.COM)



# Let's craft a home that works for you.

Janet never intended to stay in the the home she and her husband bought ten years ago. "It's just a temporary house," she thought at the time. As the years went on, however, she and her family grew to love the yard, the neighborhood, and the lifestyle that their home provided. It just wasn't Janet's style. So rather than leave it behind, the couple chose to convert their "temporary" house into their forever home with a remodel.

Maybe you're in the same boat as Janet, or perhaps your home story is different. In either case, remodeling offers the chance to change your home to meet your needs without having to give up what matters most to you. Whether you're in need of a better master bathroom, a new room addition for your growing family, or a more functional and beautiful kitchen, a home remodel can be a rewarding investment.

*"We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us."*

**Winston Churchill**







# What is Design-Build?

We've written this guide for homeowners (or the curious) who are considering working with a professional full-service remodeling team that provides both design and construction renovation services in one package. We feel it's important that you understand what that means to help you determine if this option is right for you.

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## Complete project management

A full-service remodeler will typically offer a robust project management plan that handles project pricing, ordering, and logistics, and also monitors and manages your entire project.

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## Design services included

An important part of the custom remodeling experience, your designer is part of your full project team and remains connected with and invested in your remodel all the way.

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## Dedicated carpentry team

Most design-build companies will maintain an organized team of full-time carpenters and other specialists who are assigned to your project and will see it through with you.

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## Total package pricing

Design-Build remodeling is typically offered as a package with custom design and project support built in. This typically requires a larger investment than less complete remodeling services and options.

# Remodeling At-a-Glance

At the highest level view, the process of custom home remodeling is comprised of three major phases.



## Scope & Pricing Phase

Your Project Consultant will work with you to understand the scope of your project in order to develop an estimate. You'll begin working with your designer to assist with accurate pricing and to ensure that you and the team remain aligned on your budget and plan goals.

## Design Selections Phase

After committing to the project, you'll work with your Designer to fill in the details according to the needs of your project plan. This is when the style and materials used in your project will come together. Then everything will be ordered to be ready for your construction start.



## Production Phase

After all the pieces are in place, it will be time for your project to come together for real. The construction portion of your project will bring a team of carpenters, specialists, and trade partners along with day-to-day project management and quality assurance. When this phase is complete, your new space is ready!



# Gaining Alignment on Project Scope and Budget

For your remodel to have the greatest success, it needs to be fully understood. Every home and goal is different, and there's no such thing as "one-size-fits-all". That's why most credible design-build remodeling partners won't be able to give you concrete pricing up front and the budget ranges they give early on should be considered ballpark estimates only.

In-home consultations and early design meetings allow your remodeling team to get their hands around your project. They'll be looking not just at what you know you need, but also the things you don't know or can't see, including the underlying time, labor, materials, design solutions, and construction details.

These meetings are necessary to get the pricing estimates for your project correct so that you and the team can move forward in a clear direction.

## Meetings in this Phase:

### **In-Home Consultation**

Usually offered for free, your Project Consultant will schedule a time to come see your space and discuss what you'd like done. They'll share additional process information and begin to discuss budget numbers.

### **Design Measure**

To be able to start creating options for your project plan, your Designer will come to your home to measure the space and hear from you about your needs, goals, and preferences.

### **Design Plan & Contract Meetings**

Depending on the company you're working with, these meetings may go different ways, but by the end of this phase, you'll have made some design plan decisions and have the opportunity to review the contract and pricing for your project.



# Seeing the Details Come Together in Design

When you and your Designer start to put the pieces of your project's design together, you'll begin to see your new space come to life. You'll be selecting the specific appliances, materials, cabinetry, and details that will make your remodeled space what you want it to be.

Some homeowners come into this phase with no ideas, while others have a very clear vision. Professional Designers will be able to provide their experience and knowledge to your project, ensure cohesion, and fill in the areas you aren't sure about. Designers also have tools to help you visualize your project and can help you if you feel unsure and stuck.

Should you change your mind about some parts of your project in this phase, you'll typically be able to adjust the details through budget reconciliation or change orders.

## Meetings in this Phase:

### Design Selection Meetings

The majority of this phase will be spent with your Designer on picking out the things your project needs. Depending on the way the remodeler operates, you may be doing this at a showroom or with your designer at vendors in town.

### Preconstruction Meeting

When all the selections are made and material orders have begun, your remodeler will begin shifting your project into the next stage. This is likely to include at least one in-home meeting with those who will be involved in the construction phase.





# Short-term Disruption for Long-term Results

Finally, the day arrives when your production team starts your project. You'll go through a demolition phase to prepare the site for the new design, followed by the installation phase where any new walls or structures will be built. Your design selections will begin appearing as well. It will be a busy time at the job site!

Communication is the most critical component of this part of the project. Your team will be communicating with each other and you with schedules, issues that may arise during the project, and of course to report on the progress being made.

Out of all the members of the remodeling team you'll meet, you'll have the closest and longest contact with the team at your project each day. When they're all done, they'll leave you with the brand-new space you've been waiting for.

## Production Team Structure:

### Project Manager

At the managerial level of your production team, the Project Manager is typically in charge of scheduling your team and trade contractors and ensuring the project stays on track.

### Lead Carpenter

Also sometimes referred to as a Field Supervisor, the Lead Carpenter will be your main on-site contact and is in charge of ensuring the scheduled tasks are completed each day.

### Carpenters, Specialists & Trades

Your project will require the talents of many others who will come and go as the needs of your project progress. Some of them you may see daily, while others will be there only for a short time. Your full-service remodeler will manage each of these folks for you.



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# Markers of a Quality Team

You may be looking at a variety of services and companies for your project. Whether you're looking exclusively at design-build services or across the spectrum at all your contracting options, it's important to understand what sets a quality team apart from those who may not be as invested in you and your remodeling experience. Here are some of the things we believe make for a great remodeling partner.

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## Ordering Handled In-House

A lot of pieces go into a remodeling project. When the company has staff working behind the scenes to order materials and get your project ready to start, there will be less burden on you to make sure this is happening when and how it's needed.

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## Written Scope of Work

Without the scope of your project in writing, along with a signed contract, it becomes impossible for you or the contractor to know when your project is complete and what your expectations are.

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## Communication & Scheduling

No one wants to get stuck wondering when the next thing will happen on their project. A quality team will be able to communicate with you about exactly what's happening and what's coming up next.

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## Cleanliness & Respect

Even if your project is likely to be a messy one, a great team will prioritize keeping the site confined and tidy so that your life is minimally disrupted.



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# Answers to Common Questions

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**I like the design work the remodeler is doing, but I have my own contractor. Can I hire just the designer?**



A full-service remodeler will offer design and construction together and not typically *a la carte*. You may be able to negotiate a price for design work only, but this is not an expected practice.

**Is the cost of my project expected to be paid up-front? What if I change my mind during my project?**



A standard you may expect is a “draw schedule” outlining when payments will be due during your project. Your remodeler will typically have a process to adjust pricing if you change your mind as you go.

**I've heard that the timeline for design-build projects can be very long. Why is that?**



Longer timelines allow for fewer errors and issues during production. By taking longer to start your project, a design-build team can include quality assurance at every step.

**I have a friend who is an electrician/painter/tile installer/etc. Can I use them on my design-build project?**



Generally, your Project Consultant will collect bids from all subcontractors needed for your project, including any you would like to recommend. Your friend will likely need to complete a legal form before their bids can be accepted.



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Request a Consultation Online  
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