

### **Function:**

Make a list of what you like and don't like about your kitchen the way it is right now. Does the kitchen meet your family's needs? Perhaps what worked when you had young children does not work as well now that they are older. Is it easy to navigate your way around the kitchen? A good designer can take your list and apply it to the space you have, space you may add on, and come up with a layout that functions the way you need it to. This layout should address storage needs, seating, computer or desk space, appliance types and locations, electrical and phone outlets, lighting, wiring for appliances, and plumbing and HVAC re-locations.

### **Budget:**

Now that you have your layout, it's time to establish your budget, so that what follows can work for you and not disappoint you. A good designer / builder can guide you through this process, and that's what we do. We've done enough kitchens to know how to help establish a realistic budget with a real chance of producing an end product that will fit your needs and make you happy.

### **Design:**

This is where the magic happens. The trick is to take that functional layout and make it come alive. Light, texture, color, shape, materials, and finishes should all come together in the way that reflects who you are and what you like. The blend of all these elements should please you and excite you. I can tell you that we get excited during this process! One of the most exciting things for us is to find lower cost alternatives for materials, finishes, fixtures, and appliances that deliver maximum excitement for minimum price. I find myself on eBay, as well as visiting out of the way sources I've found over the years, searching for and finding those all important elements of style and function.

The bottom line on design for me is this: Good design is about creating a sense of "home" that reflects the needs and the personalities of the client. It's about the balance between what works and what feels right, both for the house and the people living in it. Details are very, very important. It's about listening, and being clear about the needs and expectations of the people I work for.

Next time we'll be talking about the actual "Build" part of the process. See you then!

**Chris Gage**