

Transcription Number 1 Problem Promo

Hi, I'm Curtis Lawson with Shepherd Construction Advisors and crafted custom Homes. I've been building and remodeling homes for nearly 20 years and as a construction consultant, I get hired to come in for the trouble-projects and get them turned around. The number one problem that I see over and over is an absence of a complete plan and scope of work in place before starting a project.

The intentions aren't bad, it's just that people get in a hurry and homeowners have been brainwashed to think that they should get fast free estimates from contractors. Because of that, too many builders rush to get an estimate in front of their potential clients to make them happy and get them locked into a contract quickly. But you can't base your construction contract on a set of drawings and guesstimates.

Even for smaller projects like a bathroom remodel, you need a full set of plans and a list of all the products to be used, and a description of how they're going to be installed. This may seem like overkill, I know, but so many things are interconnected that the dominoes will start to drop when one seemingly small change happens.

Let me give you an example of a situation that I've unfortunately seen several times. In order to get pricing for your bathroom remodel, the contractor draws up a quick floorplan himself and gives you a free bid. You like the price, and he gets to work, he gets his permits, does the demolition and everything seems to be going great.

His framer puts up those walls just like he normally would. The plumber roofs in the water, the drain lines at a standard height, the electrician wires for one standard light fixture right over the mirror. Then the drywall gets installed, tape floated, and primed. But now you start talking to your interior designer friend and decide that you want a wall-mounted faucet over a vessel, sink with a floating vanity cabinet.

You pick out two sconces to go on each side of a backlit mirror and you want some LED lighting under the floating vanity cabinet. But since all of that didn't get fleshed out during design, here's what's going to go down there. Waterlines for that wall-mounted faucet have to be moved up above the countertop in a special rough in-valve has to go inside the wall. Hopefully you've already selected a vessel sink and countertop so that you get the height exactly right. The drain line for the sink has got

to be moved up because the bottom of the P-trap is going to hit the bottom of the vanity cabinet. The electrical also has to get relocated from a single sconce on the top to two on each side of the mirror, and the power has to be added for the backlit mirror.

The low voltage wiring has to be put under the cabinet for the toe-kick lighting. For that floating vanity cabinet that you wanted, the framer has to install additional blocking to properly support the weight, since it now won't be sitting on the floor. So now all of that means that the drywall has to get removed from the wall and probably the adjacent walls as well.

That one change order easily costs thousands of dollars and at a minimum it's going to add several days to the schedule. The city might even require an amended permit and additional fees because now you're changing the number of fixtures being added. So let's say that after hearing all that news, you're still set on doing this, you suck it up and fork over the few thousand dollars in extra costs and change order fees to make this happen.

The builder gets it all done and now you can see the light at the end of the tunnel. But now you and your designer decide that you want tile on that whole wall from the countertop to the ceiling behind the mirror. She says it's an easy add-on, and should just be a few hundred more dollars in materials and labor.

No big deal at this point. So you tell them just to get it done. But now the plumber comes to trim out that wall-mounted faucet. Remember that roof involved he installed in the wall? Well, since he didn't know what the tile that valve is now, three-quarters of an inch too far back inside the wall and he can't install the faucet, it won't reach. The new tile has got to come back off, the valve gets moved and the tile gets put back on - a few hundred more dollars down the drain. Next, the electrician comes to install the lighted mirror in the sconces and to do that, he has to drill holes through your tile to install anchors to hold the heavy mirror and in doing so, he cracks the tile. I've watched the electricians work and no offense to them, but they are generally not equipped to be drilling holes through fine finished surfaces like that, nor should they be expected to. So now you're doing another tile repair. By the time it's all said and done, that one little vanity area has rung up \$6,000 worth of changes orders, which is probably like 15% of your budget.

I know all of this might seem far-fetched, and there's no way that one small area like a bathroom vanity can get so screwed up on one project. Right? But I promise you, I've seen it happen over and over again and this is just one wall in one little bathroom.

Now, picture a 5000-square-foot custom home. You very well might be expecting details like this in every single room. Imagine the debacle when this scenario unfolds 20 times on one project.

So now that you've seen it all go wrong, let's dream about the right way to approach the same bathroom. We start by involving all the team members from the very beginning: you, the builder, the architect, the interior designer. Everyone is sitting around one table. You and the designer talk to the whole team about your visions for the bathroom. The lighting and plumbing get picked out right away. The builder gets all the exact dimensions and requirements from the beginning, the tile and countertop get selected, and everyone knows exactly how thick they are. The plans show, blocking the walls to support the way to the floating cabinets. Elevation drawings get made for every wall showing electrical plumbing, cabinets, and tile. Now the builder can start construction, and every tradesperson has a full set of drawings. They know exactly where their work should be and how it's supposed to be done and even they can see the vision of the final product. There are no change orders and things happen on time and on budget.

It's magical.

Which of these two scenarios do you want for your project? If option one's cool with you, hey, go for it. Plenty of people do. But if the second scenario sounds like a less stressful way to live and a better way to spend your money, you need to approach your project like this simple drawing of a house.

[House Animation]

The foundation is planning the left wall as your team. The right wall is communication, and the roof is proper execution. If this sounds appealing to you, click the subscribe button below and join me on the Your Project Shepherd Construction Podcast on any of the major podcast platforms. You can also find us at yourprojectshepherd.com and on and on all the social media sites @yourprojectshepherd.

