

# BUILDERS POINT OF VIEW

## SEQUENCING.....

By Alex Guthrie

The old expression about putting the cart before the horse has true meaning when remodeling a house. The proper sequence of work and timely ordering of materials make a huge difference in the ability of the contractor to finish the job timely.

The first thing to consider is the outside plan, if you are relocating or upgrading gas, water, or electrical service, how will it affect future plans for landscaping, swimming pools, or out buildings such as cabana's and garages. Relocating these services can be costly so you only want to do it once.

Check for old septic tanks that may be buried in the yard and remember that those old systems usually were fed with clay sewer lines that will need to be replaced if they haven't been already. Most cities now require that upgrades be made to water lines, sewer lines, and sidewalks, confirm your cities requirements and make sure you are budgeted, this can be an expensive surprise.

It is very tempting to start a project before the plans are completely finished but it can be very costly to make changes after the start of the project. A seemingly small change can and usually does affect the project from start to finish touching all the trades in one way or another and the contractor loses control of cost and scheduling when he or she has to constantly change course and decisions aren't timely. Some clients actually believe their contractor has some ability to influence the vendors, we used too, but those day's are long gone, everybody's equal in the eyes of the manufacturer and labor isn't cheap; nobody's giving it away.

Waiting on decorative fixtures such as faucets and lights holds up construction projects more than any single delay. Unfortunately, a simple question like "Is it available?" would help avoid this problem 90% of the time.

The fact is, suppliers don't stock many of the items we choose, and actually many times the fixtures aren't even fabricated until the order is placed often requiring weeks or months to get. Sometimes we get lucky and we can "Red Label" or express ship items and have them in 5 or so days, however, if it has been shipped "Snail Mail" it's probably too late. So always remember to ask when ordering about the availability of the items you want. The new emphasis on exotic finishes on these fixtures also costs time and extra money, so confirm these delivery dates prior to making deposits and placing orders.

### Some tips:

Natural stone countertops are beautiful and everybody wants them, but there is some important planning that needs to take place when considering them. Are you using a drop- in or under- mounted sink, have you selected the faucet and decided on a backsplash? These decisions are vital and need to be made in the initial planning phase. Under counter sinks need to be installed at the fabricator's shop when the countertops are being made, drop-in sinks can be installed when the countertops are delivered. If you want granite backsplashes you need to plan on available space for the faucets, many times there's simply not enough room between the sink and backsplash for everything to fit;

**make sure you can get behind or around the faucet for cleaning. A good alternative is to use a tile backsplash.**

**Deciding on a color palate can be a torturous prospect for many of us, as this process involves flooring, countertops, walls, and cabinet colors. This plan should start at the very beginning of the project since it might change many times and get very confusing. A good plan is to get samples of the colors and finishes you are considering, most vendors will gladly give you samples free of charge or you can give them a small deposit pending their return. Your painter will be more than happy to put color samples on the walls to help you with these selections, remember to put the samples on more than one wall and look at them at different times of the day as the natural light on the wall changes.**

**Appliances should be selected at the beginning of the project; you may need to purchase them ahead of schedule if they go on sale. Keep your list at hand and watch for deals, some vendors will store them for you at their warehouse. When you're making these selection be sure to ask the vendor about any upcoming price increases or model changes; sometimes you can get a floor model for a great deal also, ask about their scratch and dent deals.**

**At this point of the project your contractor is juggling an enormous amount of people and schedules, he or she needs all the help you're willing to give them. Processing and answering all the questions from the subs and various trades is mind-boggling and requires our full attention. Rarely does a day go by that some small crisis doesn't arise that needs immediate action. Having decisions made in a timely manner by our clients and the rest of the design team is crucial for our success.**