



The recent volatility in the housing market has reminded homeowners that modifying their current homes to accommodate changing needs and wants can be a practical solution. It is also clear that with more inventory to choose from, it has become increasingly important for sellers to ensure their homes stand out to potential buyers. Now is a great time to remodel, as many contractors are seeking new projects and can offer discounted rates. In addition, tax breaks increase the allure of making energy-efficient improvements sooner rather than later.

### MIDRANGE PROJECTS

#### GREATEST ROI

Entry Door Replacement—steel	128.9%
Attic Bedroom	83.1%
Deck Addition—wood	80.6%

#### LOWEST ROI

Backup Power Generator	58.9%
Sunroom Addition	50.7%
Home Office Remodel	48.1%

### UPSCALE PROJECTS

#### GREATEST ROI

Siding Replacement—fiber cement	83.6%
—foam-backed vinyl	79.0%
Window Replacement—vinyl	76.5%
—wood	71.5%
Grand Entrance—fiberglass	68.8%

#### LOWEST ROI

Bathroom Addition	57.9%
Garage Addition	55.9%
Master Suite Addition	55.7%

Generally, any upgrade that brings a home's characteristics to the level of surrounding residences will be a sound investment. However, returns begin to diminish once amenities surpass the neighborhood norm. When in doubt, consult your trusted real estate professional.

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Complete regional and city data from the Remodeling 2009 Cost vs. Value Report can be downloaded for free at [www.costvsvalue.com](http://www.costvsvalue.com)

## What Are Today's Homebuyers Looking For?

Having awareness of the current trends in potential buyers' preferences can be beneficial when you are considering upgrades. Highly desirable attributes, while not necessarily giving you the greatest ROI, will make your home more attractive when you are ready to sell. A recent survey of homebuyers, including first-time, move-up, empty-nester, second-home, custom and displaced (relocation due to change in employment or family situation), revealed the specific upgrades that were rated highest in the "must have" category.

### Make your home your own

Renovation financing can help you make value-enhancing improvements on your home.

*Call your local home mortgage consultant today.*



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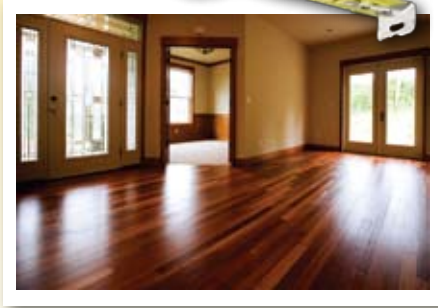
### "Must Have" Features

- ▶ Window Efficiency
- ▶ Main Floor Master Suite
- ▶ Home Office/Study
- ▶ Outdoor Living Room

Source: Avid Ratings, What Homebuyers Want in 2010

While vinyl siding and fiber-cement exteriors showed a high return on investment, homebuyers rated this attribute as least important.

# Do It Yourself vs. Do It For Me



Giving your home a minor facelift may equate to a larger investment than you are willing and able to make. This prompts the decision of whether to complete the project yourself or hire a professional for the job. To help you make the decision, consider how much time you have available for each task, the level of skill required and whether you have access to the tools you need to get it done right the first time.



## How to Hire the Help You Need

Here's how to go about hiring the right professional for the job:

- Ask neighbors, friends and family who have completed similar improvements for a referral. Also, check with your trusted real estate or mortgage professional for recommendations. Meet with several different companies and get written estimates for your specific project, but don't feel compelled to act on the lowest bid. Before making a decision, ask for an explanation of any price discrepancies; you may find a justifiable difference in the quality of work or materials.
- Interview each contractor that you are considering and find out if they are licensed or registered in your state. Check their references, or even go a step further and visit a job in progress. Ultimately you will want to select someone who listens well and answers all of your questions clearly.
- Make sure your chosen contractor obtains any permits that your project requires. The company should also have liability and property damage coverage as well as worker's compensation insurance, so ask for proof of their current policies. As work progresses, request lien releases from any subcontractors to ensure they were paid.
- Try to limit your down payment, and make subsequent payments only as specified benchmarks are completed. Know in advance how change orders will be handled and how they will affect the final cost and completion schedule of your project.



Bring your homeownership plans to life

*Call your local home mortgage consultant today.*

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