

Planning Your Personal Shopping List



Whether it is a small cottage retreat or a large estate property, the budget must always be respected. And the single most important piece that will define whether or not you meet or beat your target budget is your choice for finish selections. Finish selections include the following items:

- kitchen and bath cabinets
- countertops
- finished flooring such as carpet, ceramic and hardwood
- fireplaces, mantles and stonework
- plumbing fixtures such as sinks, toilets, showers, bidets and bathtubs
- plumbing hardware such as faucets and shower heads
- lighting fixtures
- Int/Ext Rails
- Ext. cultured stone
- Type of heating system, AC
- All Int/Ext Hardware

It is these finish elements that can greatly impact the cost of the project. All of these elements vary greatly in price. For example:

- countertops can be as little as \$8.00, or as much as \$150.00 per linear foot
- toilets start at \$60.00, and run as high as \$1,500
- hardwood flooring ranges from \$3.00/ft to well above \$20.00/ft
- ceramic tiles start at \$1.00/ft and can go as high as \$15.00/ft

The good news is that you have lots of control on your budget using the PM process, as all personal shopping - the fun part of the shopping experience - will be up to you. Your PM will provide you with recommended places to shop, and will encourage you to augment that list with your own personal choices for shopping venues. In some instances, a contractor's discount may be extended to you.

Costs will be exposed to the penny, and you will be able to make good, informed decisions. But diligence in shopping is very important. Here are some important tips for ensuring that your needs are met when you are shopping for personal finishes:

1. Do plenty of comparison shopping so that you can make good, sound decisions
2. Get all quotes in writing and ensure that the material is identified on the quote
3. Ensure that all quotes include materials, installation, if required, and all taxes
4. Always bring plans with you such that the estimator can provide a proper quote
5. Float some questions to see if the vendor will negotiate

Having a Plan B

Always make sure to have a Plan B in every instance. For every selection, you should have an idealized choice, and a secondary, less expensive option. When the budget is summarized you will then be able to do "what if" scenarios with your PM to determine what your final choices will be, while respecting your budget. For example, you may wish to upgrade your hardwood flooring and consequently reduce your budget for lighting fixtures.

A Plan B option for every selection is crucial. If you allow all selections to creep even a little, the end impact on total cost will be a lot. We have tools to help you get away from this. The simplest one is the Plan B rule - always make 2 selections for everything - the preferred choice, and the acceptable one. Then adjust accordingly as the final budget is uncovered.

