



SELECTING your IDEAL DESIGN PROFESSIONAL



Planning a new kitchen that will serve as the heart of your home can kindle excitement and nervousness in equal measure. Whether you're starting from the studs or reviving your current space, you face many decisions in creating a space where life meets design and style meets performance. **That's why we recommend finding a trusted design professional who will partner with you and guide you on your design journey.**

STEP ONE

UNDERSTAND the DESIGN PROFESSIONAL'S VALUE

The right design professional holds the key to a beautiful and functional kitchen—and will save you time, money, and endless frustration. They'll share trends and possibilities you never considered, like coffee systems and convection steam ovens, or the ability to seamlessly connect your appliances to your smart systems. They know how to make the most of space and flow, and free you from managing the complicated building process. They are trained to make your extraordinary vision a reality.



STEP TWO

IDENTIFY PROSPECTS



To find candidates to design your kitchen, start by asking friends, family, and other trade professionals for referrals. Look at their work on Instagram, Pinterest, Houzz, and design publication websites. If you're building a new home, your architect may either work with you to design your kitchen or recommend a trade professional. If you're renovating your existing kitchen, ask your remodeler to help or to suggest a kitchen designer. Also check the listings for certified professionals on the trade association sites for [kitchen and bath](#) and [remodeling](#). Additionally, we would be happy to suggest trusted design professionals—just contact your local [Sub-Zero, Wolf, and Cove showroom](#).

STEP THREE

PREPARE

Before you interview design professionals, prepare. Give thought to how you use your kitchen. Consider how your kitchen functions and flows now and what you'd like to see after its transformation. Make note of the styles, colors, materials, textures, and features you like and create a list of must-haves and if-onlys. Finally, decide on your budget and timeline, which will help your design professional set expectations.



STEP FIVE

CONSULT REFERENCES

Schedule a time to chat with each reference and ask insightful questions. Did the design professional meet deadlines, respond promptly to concerns, and provide regular updates? How was the working relationship with the design professional and between the design professional and other trade professionals? Are the references delighted with their new kitchens? What do they love—or not? What would they never do again, and what do they wish they had done? If the references are willing, see their kitchens in person.

STEP FOUR

MEET *with the* CANDIDATES

Your initial consultation should help you gauge whether a design professional is a good fit. You need to be confident that they'll produce a design that looks and feels organic and reflects you. Compatibility is also important—kitchen projects can last six months to more than a year. Ask questions that will help you assess how you'd work together:

- *Would you show me your portfolio?*
- *What is your favorite style of kitchen?*
- *How much input will I have in the design process?*
- *How involved will you be in recommending products, materials, and finishes?*
- *Will you work with our contractors and suppliers or only those you approve?*
- *How many designs will you produce?*
- *How will I see designs—on paper, using computer-aided design software, or in animations?*
- *What do you consider a realistic project schedule and budget?*
- *How do you structure your fees—paid hourly, on a retainer, or a flat fee for a specific number of hours?*
- *How do you coordinate and oversee the kitchen installation?*
- *Do you have any partnerships with leading kitchen brands, like Sub-Zero, Wolf, and Cove?*
- *Would you provide three references for your services?*

STEP SIX

EVALUATE the COSTS

The overall project costs will include the design professional's fees. Although these vary by design professional, design fees can run up to 15 to 20 percent of project costs. The investment may seem high until you realize that just one misstep—a cabinet that doesn't fit, a gas line that must be moved—will cost you far more than the design services.



UNDERSTAND THE WORTH OF DESIGN PLANS

As you can imagine, design plans are one of the most critical components of a kitchen design project. They are also proprietary information, prepared exclusively for your project. Keep in mind that until you secure your partnership with a design professional via a retainer, those design plans won't be handed over. This also safeguards the integrity of the design professional's work and keeps it from being shopped around to competitors for a reduced price.

STEP SEVEN

CHOOSE your PARTNER

The final decision when choosing your dream design professional will come down to portfolio, reputation, and personality. If you find their style unique and compelling, hear only rave reviews about their work, and look forward to collaborating with them, you've found your ideal design professional.



— SHOWROOM —

Start your kitchen design journey here.

Visit a [Sub-Zero, Wolf, and Cove showroom](#) to explore kitchens in action.