



KEY INTERIORS

INTERACTIVE WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS

# How to Renovate Your Office While Staying On Schedule & On Budget

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An office renovation is more than an opportunity for a business to start a fresh and exciting new chapter. It is also a practical investment that delivers ROI and improves the bottom-line.

Specifically, an office renovation – whether relatively minor or a major re-invention – significantly contributes to the following key business objectives:

- ✓ **Increased efficiency**, as employees take advantage of optimized space utilization and smarter workflows to get more done in less time.
- ✓ **Better collaboration**, as employees take advantage of new “open” spaces to interact, cooperate, and work together as part of a high-performance team.
- ✓ **Reduced operating costs**, as offices make better use of natural light, and in which HVAC system efficiency is not diminished by inadequately deployed empty offices, and oversized workstations.
- ✓ **Enhanced morale**, as employees feel energized by a modern, functional and work-friendly environment – and express their feelings by working harder, smarter and happier.
- ✓ **Improved recruitment**, as new hires find their future office impressive, and perceive it as a perk that is part of the overall package.
- ✓ **Boost image**, as customers are impressed by the office renovation, and perceive it as a signal that a business is strong, successful and heading in the right direction.
- ✓ **Environmental leadership**, as renovated office spaces are more efficient, and can even help businesses earn LEED points towards certification.
- ✓ **Increased real estate value**, as offices increase in value thanks to the renovation.

In light of these bottom-line advantages that include – but go beyond –dramatically improved appearances and aesthetics, it is clear that an office renovation is as rewarding and important as any other key business investment.

In fact, compared to investments in new technology, equipment, or systems – which can be risky and take several months or years to generate ROI – an office renovation is arguably the simplest, smartest and most practical way possible to move a business ahead.

# Addressing Key Issues



Given that an office renovation makes sense on every level, the question becomes: why doesn't every business make renovating their office a top priority – or perhaps their #1 priority?

There are essentially four reasons for this, and the first has already been addressed above: some businesses have not yet grasped the bottom-line benefits of an office renovation. Yes, they certainly appreciate the value of making aesthetic improvements (e.g. re-painting walls, refurbishing furniture, replacing worn-out carpet with easy-to-maintain polished concrete, and so on). But linking an office renovation to increased production, quality, efficiency, and profitability is an almost revolutionary idea.

Hopefully in reading the above, you have started to embrace this new – and quite inspiring awareness, and are seeing the idea of an office renovation in a new light: one that is about measurable business benefits, and not just aesthetic improvements.

The other three reasons are also quite practical, because they have nothing to do with decisions and conceptual considerations. In fact, they have everything to do with scheduling, logistics and project management. These reasons can be phrased as questions that are both common and critical:

- *"How do we ensure that our office renovation stays on schedule?"*
- *"How do we ensure that our office renovation stays on budget?"*
- *"How do we start our office renovation?"*

In the remainder of this section, we will answer each question, and share some insider "tips" on how to ultimately reap the rewards of a thoroughly successful office renovation.



# How do we **Ensure** That our Office Renovation Stays on Schedule?

Before you start mulling over various materials, colors, and other creative aspects, scheduling issues must be addressed and resolved. This is because your chief concern is often minimizing, or better yet eliminating, the need to shut down your office during renovations.

*There are a number of tools and strategies that support this critical objective, including:*

- **Understanding All Scheduling Variables**

It is vital to understand and accurately estimate all of the variables that combine to create a robust and reliable schedule. These variables include (but are not limited to): material lead times, building permit requirements, engineering issues, lease stipulations, building code standards, weather considerations and potential tenant disruptions.

- **Choosing the Optimal Time of Year**

It is also important to schedule your office renovation at a time when it will cause the least amount of disruption to your normal business operations. For example, if your customer activity surges in the fall, then it is likely wisest to schedule the renovation for the spring. Or if you need to move your staff during the renovation (more on this below), you may want to schedule the project at a time when it is easier and less costly to find temporary office space. Further, if you are planning on items such as window changes it is best to do this at a time of warmer weather when outdoor elements are not as extreme.



- **Taking Advantage of Temporary Space**

As noted above, you may find it beneficial to move your staff to a temporarily space. If so, then you may be able to find a “turn key” office, that has all of the infrastructure set up and ready to go (e.g. phone, networking, internet, Wi-Fi, furniture, equipment, etc.). Many of these temporary work spaces offer additional corporate services as well, such access to meeting and boardrooms, receptionists, customer waiting areas, and more.

- **Deploying Remote Workers and Teams**

Another option is to allow some of your employees to work remotely. Indeed, these days many activities and tasks can be handled online via the cloud. In fact, you may even notice an increase in efficiency as employees get more done in less time, as there are fewer dreaded “status meetings” to attend!

- **Aligning Vacation & Training Schedules**

It may also be practical to schedule employee vacations and off-site training to coincide with your office renovation project. Obviously you cannot have you entire team away at the same time. But even if 10 percent can be relaxing or learning while the renovation is taking place, that means you have fewer staff to temporarily re-allocate.

- **Carry Out a Multi-Phase Project**

It is also possible to implement your office renovation in multiple phases. Be assured that this does not mean that you will have dangling wires and broken walls to contend with. Each phase will have a proper wind down and clean up process.

As you can see, there are a several strategies and tactics that will enable you to keep your office renovation project on schedule, while minimizing or eliminating disruptions or down-time for your employees.



# How do we **Ensure** That our Office Renovation Stays on Budget?

In business, staying on budget is always a key consideration – whether the discussion is about office renovations, or where to hold the staff holiday party.

While each office renovation project is unique, generally speaking the smartest and safest way to stay on budget is to clearly, thoroughly and competently identify all budgetary factors, and then cost them accordingly based on hard data – rather than best guesses.

As with scheduling, there are several factors that must be included in this proactive costing analysis, including:

- **Materials & Supplies**

Your office renovation budget is directly informed by the type, amount and availability of required materials and supplies. These items can include (but are not limited to) furniture, fixtures, doors, carpeting, flooring, lighting. In addition, as part of your project you may want or need to upgrade your HVAC or lighting system. It is vital to have all materials specifically selected and approved before starting the project. Key Interiors designers work with every client to develop this plan.



- **Contractors & Specialists**

Generally, a larger office renovation project will require more contractors and specialists. The costs will vary based on several factors, including the marketplace (i.e. contractors and specialists in large urban marketplaces typically charge more than those located elsewhere).

It is vital to identify all of these costs, and ensure that all contractors and specialists are proven and professional. Otherwise, the estimate that you base your budget upon will be unreliable or even un-usable. Key Interiors can assist in getting multiple bids for your project to make sure you getting the best market cost for specific trades.

- **Geographic Factors**

As noted above, contractors and specialists in large urban centers tend to charge more than their counterparts in small cities or rural areas. However, there are other geographic factors as well that will impact the budget. For example, large cities tend to have relatively more strict zoning laws, and permits are pricier. In addition, renovations may be subject to more stringent – and therefore more costly to achieve – standards (e.g. flame-retardant ceilings, etc.).

In light of the above, you should never use a budget template for an office renovation project that is aligned with your vision, but took place in a categorically different geographic location – because the cost to do the work elsewhere may be tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars more/less than in your area.



## ● Building Height

Another key – and perhaps surprising – factor that must be included in your robust, realistic office renovation budget is the height of your building. Many 5-20 story buildings have standardized HVAC units and service equipment needs. As such, office renovations are generally about 15 percent less costly per square foot than low-rise buildings (2-4 stories). On the other end of the scale, buildings that are higher than 20 stories are typically more costly to renovate, as extra work must be done to ensure stability.

## ● Value Engineering

In addition to properly analyzing and estimating the cost factors noted above, it is also highly beneficial to use value engineering to keep your office renovation project on budget. Value engineering is a systematic method of lowering life cycle costs, but without sacrificing function or vision. While value engineering should be applied throughout your project, leveraging this approach early in the process will allow you to make value-related decisions that have the highest cost impact.

Ultimately, the key to successfully controlling costs during your office renovation – and ensuring that there are no unwelcome surprises – is by creating a robust and reliable budget that embraces the factors described above. It is also vital to have ready-to-implement contingencies and workarounds, just in case obstacles or opportunities emerge.





# How do we **Start** our Office Renovation?



Understanding the bottom-line benefits of an office renovation is critical, as is grasping that there are high-impact strategies and tools to manage schedules and control costs. However, there is still one final issue to address: how do you start?



Basically, there are two options here: one that is safe and proven, and one that is risky and dangerous. We will start with the latter.



## • Taking the “Do-it-Yourself” (DIY) Route

Obviously, this approach does not involve trading in business attire for overalls! Rather, it refers an attempt to manage an office renovation project internally by hiring contractors and specialists, handling purchases, and so on.

Unfortunately, while this approach may seem worthwhile from a cost-savings perspective, and may even seem like a “simpler” way to proceed, it is almost always regrettable. Even businesses that have a high degree of project management experience (such as in IT, engineering, or other industry) find that soon after launch, they are besieged by array of unforeseen problems and risks including:

- **Cost Overruns**
- **Missed Deadlines**
- **Conflicts with Contractors and Specialists**
- **Inadequate Resource to Select the Dozens offfinishes and Materials Needed.**
- **Building Code Compliance Violations**
- **Lack of Proper Permits -- which can completely shut-down a project until rectified**

Essentially, what started out as a simple and straightforward office renovation can – and usually does rapidly devolve into a chaotic and costly ordeal. That’s when businesses have to call in pricey specialists on an emergency basis, or shut down the office renovation project entirely to “cut their losses”.

# Hiring a PROVEN Interior Solutions Partner

Without question, the smarter, safer and more successful approach and the one that truly is an option vs. a recipe for disaster – is to hire an experienced and proven interior solutions partner like the team at Key Interiors.

With over 30 years of experience and more than 300 successful projects, Key Interiors is a “one-stop shop” that manages your ENTIRE office renovation project from concept through to completion. You can depend on us to:

- Introduce you to creative and impressive renovation ideas including many that you did not think possible or affordable that will impress your employees and ‘wow’ your customers.
- Help you utilize and maximize all of your available office space, which increases productivity, efficiency and quality of work.
- Involve your employees in the design process, which is great for morale, team building and buy-in.
- Use sustainable construction materials and design features to reduce your operating and maintenance costs.
- Build and manage robust and realistic schedules, which minimize or eliminate downtime.
- Track all costs and manage all budgets at every phase of the project, while applying value engineering to uncover hidden cost-saving opportunities.
- Broker and manage all relationships with trades, specialists, consultants, city planners and all other stakeholders.
- Ensure that all required permits are obtained ahead of time, and that all renovations are in compliance with governing codes and rules.
- Empower you to start a fresh new chapter in your business’s history: one that reflects your strength and success!





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