

# ***Kitchen & Bathroom Makeover Budgets***

By Alison Macpherson

A 25 year old car is considered a “classic” among car experts. This distinction is proudly advertised by owners of these aged beauties but when your kitchen or bathroom hits a similar vintage, it’s anything but “classic”.

## **How Much Should You Sink into Your Makeover?**

According to Statistic Canada, more than two thirds of Canada’s 11.5 million private homes were built before 1980. That’s a lot of kitchens and bathrooms with chipped countertops and cracked vinyl flooring. If yours is one of them, sharpen your pencil to work through some numbers before you take a sledgehammer to anything.

If you’re in the market for a makeover of your kitchen or bath, no doubt you’ve pondered many times what you would like to do if someone happened to drop a big bag of money at your door. If your budget is going to be of any use,

it’s time to take those visions and make some decisions. Going through the list of possibilities and doing some real planning in writing is step one of your plan. Measure, sketch and list in as much detail as possible, what you’re going to do and how it’s going to get done.

Now you’ll need to break that down into fixtures, cabinetry, materials, supplies, trades and other labour. If a new kitchen is in your future, add appliances near the top of the list. List the components of your makeover in detail, starting with the big ticket items and working your way down. For a bathroom makeover, it might include; vanity, sink, oak hardwood flooring, light fixtures, mirror, paint, painting supplies, plumber (install sink and shut-off under the sink) and electrician (install new ventilation fan and light fixtures), carpenter (install vanity, flooring and new baseboards). Don’t forget to add the cost of having the trash hauled away too.

Once your list is complete, it’s time to start pricing out the costs of the project. If you want to have a bit of fun with it, make your list then put numbers beside everything *before* you go shopping so you can check back later and see how well you did with your guess. It is *not* recommended that spouses make a contest out of this budget guessing game but if you get caught up in such a wager, make sure you can live with being on the losing end. Now get online, visit the retail shops and get estimates from the professionals you’ll need to complete parts of the project. Write your figures down beside each component and (gasp!) add it all up. You’re not quite done yet. It’s widely advised that you also tack on a 10% cushion for unforeseen expenses.

At this point, if you’ve gone over budget, at least it’s only on paper instead of on your credit card. There’s still time to compromise if a bit of budget trimming is needed. You’ll be glad you crunched the numbers now rather than waiting to find out that your guessing game was not very successful and you can’t afford to get the plumber in to hook up the sink!

Once your compromising is done, make a nice clean copy in ink to remind yourself throughout the project, why you made a budget in the first place. That was the easy part. The hard part is sticking to it.