



How 'Real' are reality TV shows?

Reality TV not what it seems

by Heidi Sherratt Bogart

A great feeling of gratification follows the completion of a remodel job that successfully transforms an outdated home into a beautiful space which meets all of the homeowner's expectations. Contrary to what you may see watching reality TV, this does not happen overnight with a budget of \$1,500 — it is just simply not possible!

So what is reality? Home improvement reality television shows are a great way to inspire ideas and be educated on the newest trends and

products, but they can also be very misleading.

The popularity of HGTV is significant — it is the second most watched channel on weekend cable programming for viewers age 25 to 54 (ESPN is the first). Statistics show viewers are mostly highly educated women, earning more than \$75,000, and the majority are homeowners.

Almost every client we meet will reference a show they saw on TV and how they were able to pull off incredible feats in a matter of days with no money. Yes, there really are shows

that do this, but don't be fooled into believing that anyone else in this industry can pull off that timeline or budget.

For example, on one episode of the show "While You Were Out," a crew of five contractors transform a master bedroom and bathroom, which consists of tearing out carpet, installing wood floors and wainscoting, refinishing furniture, designing and sewing custom drapery and bedding, building new furniture, and installing tile and plumbing fixtures including a steam shower. All this in two days for

less than \$2,000.

□ e truth is, this is not possible in real life. The reality behind “reality” TV is important to understand. □ ese shows glorify quick timelines and low costs, but what you do not see is that labor and material costs are not accurate.

The materials they are using are often donated or purchased at an extremely low cost in exchange for national TV exposure. Choosing and researching products takes a lot of time and quite often the cool new products we see highlighted on TV are low quality or do not perform.

The amount of time spent to pull off these projects is huge and there is a large crew of behind-the-scenes people who have spent endless hours planning, ordering materials and designing the space.

Complete kitchen or bath remodels do not take one week. Something that takes two days to complete on TV could take more than six months in reality, and it will de□nitely cost more than \$1,500. □ e cost of labor is often not included in these unrealistically low budgets. Labor costs alone can be 40 percent of a kitchen remodel and 60 percent of a bathroom.

It just looks so easy on TV!

Don’t be fooled. Remodeling is dirty, invasive, time consuming, expensive and lots of things can go wrong. At a minimum there can be 10 subcontractors on a remodel job — even a small one. It is unrealistic to have all of your subcontractors working on the job at the exact same time like they do on TV. □ e subcontractors are not going to work around the clock tripping over each other, nor is this a good plan if you want quality work to be done on your home.

So how can you learn from all this? Before you start your project, set clear realistic expectations, decide what you really need and what you can really afford, do your homework on the products you are choosing, ask lots of questions, listen to the professionals, do not rush decisions and use local resources.

(Heidi Sherratt Bogart is the owner of Interior Visions at 313 Elk Ave. in Crested Butte and has been doing interior design work and cabinetry sales for 10 years in the Gunnison valley.) □

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