

Portfolio: Collaboration

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Kitchen/bath designer:
Jackie Smith, *senior designer*
Dream Kitchens, Nashua, NH

Collaborative partner: Village Homes, Windham, NH

Project specifics: This kitchen was part of a whole-house remodel that included three bathrooms and previously unused attic space that was turned into an office. "This was such a big project, with many moving pieces and parts, so collaboration with other people was exceptionally important," says Smith.

Project collaboration: Preliminary observations indicated that removal of an arched walkway was possible. However, after demolition began, it was determined that the wall contained a structural post, which meant at least a portion of it would have to remain.

"We had an emergency collaboration meeting onsite," Smith recalls. "We discussed the options, made some concessions, purchased a couple of new cabinets and finished the project. There was a lot of back and forth, and without great collaboration, there's no way this kitchen would have ever been installed. We would have had to go back to square one to redesign it, rather than making a few tweaks and adjustments. It turned out to be a fantastic kitchen!"



Benefits of collaboration: "Designers can create a lot of fantastic designs, but they can't necessarily all be built," she says. "Sometimes we need someone to tell us what we can and can't do, especially structurally."

"I am also not an expert in everything. I know a lot about a lot, but I don't know everything about everything. For example, I collaborate with my tile supplier and installer because I don't know everything about the world of tile. I do my own designs, but I rely on my supplier to take my thoughts and turn them into products, from which I'll make final selections."

"I consider myself the 'keeper of the vision.' It's my job to understand my clients' style and to determine the direction they want to take their projects, making sure the pieces and parts fall into place so the end result is what they want. From there, I can convey that message to others I've brought into the job, other professionals who I trust and have a good relationship with to help carry out the design."