

## Thinking Outside the Kitchen Box

Last month we took a look at “thinking inside the box”, so it’s only fitting that we now turn our attention “outside the box.” This has become such a popular phrase, both in corporate cultures and in the advertising field, that it was just a matter of time until I found a way to relate it to kitchen cabinets. Going one step further, by thinking *way* outside the box, we can use those very same cabinets *outside* of the kitchen entirely.

Kitchen cabinets are not only for kitchens! Many people who have had their kitchens remodeled have had the old cabinets installed in their basement or garage. After all, it is a shame to throw them away. But what about putting *new* kitchen cabinets in other rooms? Granted, it does sound funny to put kitchen cabinets in rooms other than the kitchen, so let’s start by not calling them *kitchen* cabinets. Just lose the “kitchen” part. It doesn’t sound so funny to say you’re putting *cabinets* in your study, does it? Great. Now that it sounds better, why would you put ~~kitchen~~ cabinets somewhere else?

Dear friends of mine, who recently moved into a new home, told me that they were planning to build a cherry-wood wall unit in their den. They were appalled by the quotations they received when they contacted companies that specialized in this type of custom construction. When they described what they had in mind, I realized that the unit could be created by using a mixture of stock and semi-custom cabinets, at a considerable savings. So, they asked me to come up with a design for them.

Planning a wall unit is not much different than planning a kitchen. First, you need to decide what you want to put in it. A wall unit can house a bar, a television, stereo equipment, video, computer, DVDs, glasses, video games, etc.

Once you have the contents selected you should select specific models and get their dimensions. Then the designing can begin. The positions of some of the items will be based on the location of the furniture in the room. This is especially true for a television, if it is included in the plan. (It’s best to leave a little extra space for the television and frame it with matching wood in case you upgrade to a larger set in the future). If you wish the TV to be enclosed when it is not being used you may consider pocket doors which slide into the sides of the cabinet when in the open position. (If you have children I wouldn’t bother with doors at all because they’ll never close them).

The wall unit can go up to the ceiling or you can leave a space at the top and put a detailed crown molding, again, just like a kitchen. Although the space does catch dust, it can be used as a shelf for decorative items, enhancing the décor of the room.

So, why limit yourself to the den? These very same cabinets, with minor modifications, can be used in the bedroom. If you take a standard base cabinet, remove the toe-kick, and add bun-feet you have a nice dresser or night table. Add a little crown molding along the outside edge with a wooden top and you have a *very* nice, custom dresser! The possibilities are only restrained by your imagination.

I know it’s not easy, but once you can take the leap, and remove the “kitchen” from “kitchen cabinets” you’re beginning to **think outside the box**. These *unassigned* cabinets give you the building blocks of all different types of furniture that can be used in every room in your home.