

DIY or Buy? Here's When to Call The Pros

If you lack the skills and supplies necessary to complete a project on your own, consider hiring an expert.



Before deciding how to approach a project or purchase, consider your budget, time and expertise.

Over the years, the do-it-yourself, or DIY, approach has gained a reputation for always being the cheapest option when you're about to tackle a project. While there can be a financial benefit to DIY over paying for a service or buying a ready-made product, there are a few other things to consider as well.

Before you decide how to approach a project or purchase, consider three things: your budget, time and expertise.

Figure out your budget first. Once you know how much you can spend, you can compare the costs of outsourcing the project versus buying the item, making it yourself, et cetera. The next thing to consider is the value of your time and your level of expertise for your chosen project. Is it something relatively simple to do, with plenty of tutorials available to walk you through when you DIY? Or is it a project that would take hours of education and potentially still not result in the quality you were hoping for? These are more considerations that may result in hiring a professional within your budget or looking for a deal on a finished product.

Let's apply these guidelines to a few "DIY versus buy" scenarios.

Maintenance. Most homeowners will tell you that owning a home often means a series of never-ending projects and upkeep, especially if you bought a "fixer upper." When something breaks, there is no landlord or building maintenance that will repair it – it's up to you. If someone in your

household is handy or works in the home repair industry, consider yourself lucky. For everyone else, repair and maintenance around the home require a few key decisions.

Does the project revolve around a household necessity, such as the toilet, shower, sink or furnace? If you're not skilled in the craft already, it's wise to consider consulting a professional.

Costs can get even higher if you attempt to fix it – and make it worse.

Don't automatically assume that hiring an expert will cost an arm and a leg. Make sure to get multiple quotes and ask neighbors and friends for references. You can also consult online resources, such as Thumbtack, to get estimates that are in your budget. Make sure to read reviews, check references and qualifications.

Home decorating. If your project is more on the aesthetic side, you may have some wiggle room in your options. As long as time isn't an option, you have some flexibility for how to approach your project. Another thing to consider is space. If you want to commit a couple of hours to something every weekend and chip away at its completion, make sure you have the appropriate place to store your materials in the meantime.

The internet is an amazing resource for DIY projects. In many cases, DIY means you have more options for customizing a piece to be exactly what you want. Pinterest is a great search tool to find the exact tutorial or photos to inspire your next project.

Painting is a relatively simple way to change the look of a room or upgrade various items in your house. However, don't bite off more than you can chew. Test one room or piece of furniture first and see how it goes before you buy enough paint and supplies to redo the entire house. It does take time and effort. Reading up on a few best practices and tips beforehand can't hurt.

Wedding planning. A new trend in the wedding industry is the "DIY wedding." Many future brides and grooms are opting to save money by creating favors, decorations and even floral arrangements themselves for their big day. This is a smart approach to cut costs, as long as you compared the price of your materials to the finished product and found it to be a significant discount.

One last consideration: Sometimes the time and stress involved in constructing 200 paper cranes just isn't worth it, especially among the hectic few months before your wedding. Browse Craigslist or Tradesy and see if another couple's hard work can be purchased for your own event. Giving new life to items that were only used for a few hours is the perfect way to save time, money and stress.

<http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/my-money/articles/2016-08-11/diy-or-buy-heres-when-to-call-the-pros>