

# MY NIGHTMARE USING A NON-KSA MEMBER

At the KSA we hear so many horror stories of people being left in the lurch by kitchen companies that are not registered with the KSA. Because of this we decided to implement a new pay-for service of site inspections on kitchen installations done by non-KSA members. Mr.X (we have opted not to divulge his real name) was just such a consumer. We asked him to share his story with you.

KITCHEN SPECIALISTS ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 2014

ATT: National Manager

Dear Stephanie

Part of our planned home renovation in 2013 was a new Kitchen. What should have been one of the more pleasant experiences of a renovation soon turned into a bit of a nightmare that dragged on for more than a year.

I won't bore you with the details of the poor workmanship and work ethic of the company, but we ended having to seek out protection under the Consumer Protection Act (CPA).

We thought we had done our homework by having three suppliers draw up designs, in the same price range. When we had decided on a preferred supplier we didn't just accept their nice showroom and business record, we also did a Google search for negative comments before we committed.

The Kitchen company in question charged us with breach of contract when we refused to pay the final 10% payment. This, because of a very long snag list still existing after eight months of them working on the Kitchen.

It was at this point that we approached the office of the Consumer Protector. Apart from the obvious problems there were a few other nasty surprises in store for us, most of which were only brought to our attention after we decided to get a second opinion from the KSA with their new 'non-member site inspection' service. Many of the mistakes and corner-cutting that the Kitchen company had made were ones we, as consumers, would never have seen or known to look for and not only affected the aesthetic of the Kitchen but the structural integrity and longevity of it too.

Despite the KSA's report which stated that the cost to bring the Kitchen up to an acceptable standard would be over R40 000.00 the Consumer Protector's office were only able to get the Kitchen company to drop the final payment of around R9000.00. It was a shock to us that the Office of the Consumer Protector could only act as a mediator and did not have any power to demand financial compensation from the Kitchen company.

We now realise that had we selected a KSA member we would have had more backup (from the KSA) than we received from the Office of the Consumer Protector as their members volunteer to be registered and agree to abide by any ruling handed down by the KSA or risk suspension or even expulsion which is listed on their web site. Had we appointed a KSA member to do the work their mediation service and assistance would have been free of charge and I would have had access to their holding account facilities for my payments.

I don't want to make the mistake of saying that there are not many good suppliers out there, but unless they come highly recommended by people you trust, I would recommend you rather choose the more intelligent option. It will be cheaper in the end and you are likely to end up with a good quality product and less risk of it turning out like ours and being R30 000.00 out of pocket.

Sincerely

Mister X