



WRITING A GOOD KITCHEN BRIEF

Before you visit a kitchen company, you should take the time to write them a brief. This document will help the designer better understand the aims and objectives of the project, your needs, likes and dislikes and how best to spend your budget. The purpose of a brief is to allow the designer a quick understanding of who you and your family are and what you are looking for in a new kitchen. A well written brief can save hours of time where the designer needs to try, over numerous meetings and redesigns, to understand what you want.

Your brief should start by explaining why you are undertaking this project and what the objective is. You may have been living with the same old kitchen for twenty years and it's time for that dream upgrade. You may be needing to better organise the space to facilitate more storage or more workspace. You may be looking for a fast and cost-effective facelift to allow you to sell your home at a good price, or, you may be putting in a basic new kitchen to rent out the space. Knowing why you are doing this project and what you are wanting to achieve will help the designer make key suggestions. If you are looking to rent the space out, they will recommend low maintenance and durable finishes. If you are looking to sell the property, they will suggest you go with clean lines and neutral, natural colours,

as these will have the widest appeal to potential buyers. If you are putting in your dream kitchen, then the designer will know that particular attention needs to be paid to the detail – how you use the kitchen, how you clean it and how it should look to harmoniously blend with the rest of the house.



The next thing your brief should do is explain your lifestyle. This is a particularly important part if you are planning to stay in the home. You need to explain to the designer how you and your family live and what part the kitchen plays in your lives. Do you like to cook? What type of food do you like to cook? This information sounds trivial, but will allow the designer unique insight to ask specific questions about your appliance preferences and recommend whether you should have an extractor. It also helps to ascertain how much workspace you need and determine clear zones or workstations to ensure all function needs are met. People who enjoy to cook will need a lot more prep-space. Do you entertain much? If so, the designer will need to look at how to optimise the flow from your kitchen to your entertainment area as well as how to facilitate guests crowding in the kitchen area to keep you company; and how best to house those

non-standard crockery items, serving platters and hot trays. They may also suggest a scullery space or integrated appliances to try and keep visible mess to a minimum when you have guests. Does the family gather in the kitchen? Do you eat there? Do the kids do homework there? This will help the designer know whether or not to incorporate an eating space in the design and whether you need power points for phones and computers easily accessible in the general work area of the kitchen. If your family are true kitchen dwellers a TV may even be a suggestion for the new kitchen.



Your list of 'must have' items comes next. Here you should list any items you are certain you want in your kitchen. If you already know the appliances you are wanting, they should be listed here with make and model. If you have already done your research on appliances and have the dimensions of the goods you are selecting, include that information as

well. Knowing your appliance preferences gives the designer a very clear indication of what they can or cannot do with the design as they know they have to accommodate an eye-level oven, or a freestanding range cooker, or a double door fridge.



If you have specific items you want the designer to create storage for these should be listed here. Many people specify that they want specialised storage for their small appliances, display cabinets for their crystal, or a specially designed space for dog food and trays. Where possible give detail on the items and sizes.

Most homeowners have identified a select few items they absolutely must have in their new kitchen to make it special. These should be noted for your designer, and clear indication given as to whether part of your budget needs to be allocated



to cover these specific items or if they have been pre-purchased and merely need to be included in the design or specifications. For example, do you have an antique dresser that needs to be utilised? Do you want quartz counter tops, soft-close hinges and runners, a pull-out pantry or drawer organising inserts? The designer can then allocate budget to these items and have a clear idea of what is left to play with for the other finishes.



The final part of your brief should be your budget. While you might not know what a kitchen costs, you do know what funds you have available and how much you are prepared to invest in this project. Don't be afraid to give your designer a budget. If they don't know how much you are prepared to spend, they cannot recommend the correct finishes that will achieve the look you want in your price bracket. They also won't know how to design. A larger budget can accommodate lots of drawers and specialised smaller cupboards while a tight budget will mean that there needs to be fewer drawers, and more cupboards based on standard sized carcasses, usually in 600mm integers. By giving the designer

your budget, they can realistically tell you whether they can design what you want in the finish you want or not. It is very possible your tastes exceed your budget, and if this is the case, the designer can advise you how you can be innovative and adapt the look you are wanting to fit your budget.

It is always helpful to both parties, to put together a mood-board or book to accompany your brief. This should include images you have found of kitchens and finishes you like. Spend some time online, or looking through magazines, and pick images of full kitchens and detail images; make notes on what you like about them and why. This will allow the designer quick access to your aesthetic preferences and ensure they don't waste your time looking at options you find unappealing.



A good brief can be the key to a successful kitchen revamp and a successful relationship with your kitchen company. In the long run, it will be well worth your while to invest a little time in research and preparation before chatting to a kitchen company; it opens the lines of communication from the start and gives valuable insight from the get go to avoid disappointment later down the line.