



## A NEW KITCHEN WHAT HAPPENS, WHEN AND BY WHOM...

**When people start planning for a new kitchen they are often unsure about the process they should follow and how things will proceed on site.**

Before you visit potential kitchen contractors you should ensure that plans are drawn up for any structural work that needs to be done to make the space ready for your new kitchen. All building work must be totally complete before a new kitchen can be installed. Kitchen contractors cannot guarantee their workmanship if they are having to operate on a wet site.

Due consideration must also be given to any changes you might want to make to your water and electrical points as this work will need to be done by the appropriate contractors before the kitchen company comes to site. It is, however advisable to involve your kitchen designer in the process of planning the relocation of these points as their optimal design for you may well involve moving both electrical and plumbing points. It is important to note that the kitchen company does not take responsibility for these points and will reflect these points on their design and plans as instructed to by you. It is vital that any plumbing and electrical work is undertaken by a qualified professional who can issue with the necessary certificates and who is registered with the necessary industry associations.

**Before you actually start chatting to possible kitchen contractors you need to do three things:**

- ▲ Set a budget – this is vital for the designer to be able to do a proper plan with the correct materials to fit your budget,
- ▲ write a brief of what you need in your kitchen and what you are trying to achieve with this renovation,
- ▲ finally, put together a mood board or booklet of images that will give the designer an idea of finishes, details and colours you like.

It is advisable to get quotes from more than one company. It is important to ensure that the companies you consult work within your budget parameters. There is no point going to see a company that specialises in high end kitchens priced at over R300 000 if your budget is only R80 000. When comparing your quotes ensure you are comparing apples with apples as there are many variables that can change the cost of a kitchen and the lower quote may be compromising something you are not aware of. It is also vital to allow each company to take their own measurements and produce their own design. This way you will see various interpretations of your brief and ensure you are not infringing on anyone's intellectual property. It is common for a kitchen company to charge for their drawings and plans. This fee is often deducted from your final account if you opt to appoint them to do the job for you.

Once you have selected your contractor you will be asked to accept and sign off the plans and quote and pay the deposit. Remember that once these are signed this is what the company will legally be held to. If you have signed off a mistake the Consumer Protection Act is unlikely to hold the company responsible. If there are any aspects of the design the company has advised you against and you however choose to proceed with it the company will not be held responsible and will usually request you sign a disclaimer before they proceed with the job.

Next, the old kitchen needs to be removed, walls cleared of any tiling, new flooring installed and all plumbing, gas and water points set. Remember you will have to appoint your own contractors to do this as kitchen companies do not take responsibility for the removal of the old kitchen or other building related changes. Only once all plastering is done can the kitchen company take final measurements. Doing this ensures the kitchen fits into the new space as best as possible, but if your walls or floors

are out of square there is only so much they can do to make the fit precise without fillers of some kind.

The production time of your kitchen will depend on the materials chosen, the availability of the materials, the time of year and the efficiency of the kitchen company. Normally this is a two to four week process.

When the time comes for the kitchen company to be on site the kitchen area needs to be clean and clear with a sealer coat on any new plaster. You will be asked to make your second payment (usually 40% of the account) either before or when the carcasses are delivered to site.

The average length of a kitchen installation will vary depending on the skill and size of the installation team as well as the complexity of the installation. An average size kitchen should take two to four days to install all the carcasses, this would exclude the tops, doors and drawer fronts and appliances. A lot of companies hold back the installation of the doors and drawer fronts until after the worktop installation to avoid them being damaged by the stone or the stone installation process. Remember that once the kitchen installation team are on site any changes you make to the job or additions you add to the job will add at least two weeks to the completion date per change.

Once the carcasses are in and level and the doors are on, the tops can be installed. Postform

or Formica tops can usually be fitted almost immediately. Granite, engineered stone, solid surfacing or timber tops however, take longer. The fabricator needs to take templates. Once templates are made the tops can be cut and polished. You should allow one to two weeks delivery depending on the product chosen and the time of year.

The installation of the worktops should only take a day or two depending on the scale of the job. All appliances, sinks and accessories like pop-up plug and countertop waste bins that require a cut out, must be on site. Once the worktops are installed they may need to be sealed. New worktops should be given 48 hours to settle before use. It is important that you are on site to sign off the worktop installation so that the fabricator can take you through the care and maintenance and ensure you are satisfied with their work.

Once this has all happened the kitchen can be snagged. During this time you should take a day or two to walk through your kitchen, with your designer or project manager, and take note of any areas you feel need adjusting. Ensure you compile a written snag list from which all parties can work, to avoid confusion. Completing the snags can take anything from a day to a few weeks depending if anything needs to be remanufactured or reordered. Once the snags are complete you will be asked to sign off the job and make your final payment – usually the last 10%.

