



UNDERSTANDING YOUR KITCHEN QUOTE

When it comes to planning a new kitchen your quote is one of the most important documents you will receive. Reading it, understanding it and comparing one quote against another is not as easy as you may think. Many companies try and pull the wool over your eyes by giving you a short concise document with a few line items and buzz words but very few specifics. While this kind of quote may be easy to read and less stressful to work through it leaves you, as a consumer, very exposed.

Detail is the most important part of a quotation. The more specifics your quote contains the more the company is empowering you with specific information and details that you can later hold them to. By giving you details the company is also making it easier to compare one quote against another. While receiving a five to ten page quotation may seem daunting, this detailed document will allow you to properly understand what you are getting for your money and what you can expect to find in your home. It will also afford you protection later down the road if you find that you have not received what you believed you should be getting.

The biggest mistake consumers make is when it comes to comparing quotations. This is something you will have to do as it is recommended that you get two to three quotations before making your final choice. Because there are so many options on the market when it comes to materials, finishings, hardware and tops a specific kitchen design can be done for price A, price B or price C depending on the quality of materials and products used. If the quotes you are comparing are not for the exact same design, using the exact same materials and products then the quotes are not being fairly compared. Here are some things to consider when comparing your quotations:

▲ Are the designs identical – pay particular attention to the amount of drawers as drawers

are more expensive hence the more drawers, the more material, the more hardware = the higher the cost.

- ▲ What hardware has been quoted on? Have they given you the brand and product codes? Hardware comes in all shapes and sizes and all different quality brackets. Are you getting a cheap import with no known name and no real guarantee or are you being quoted on a well-known international brand with a long standing guarantee. Also, while all three quotes may be quoting on the same brand are they quoting on the same level of product within that brand's range? Most brands offer ranges from a basic entry level to more high tech products. Double check if you have been quoted on any extras like drawer and cupboard inserts.
- ▲ Is the quality of board consistent between the three quotes – check where the material for your carcasses is coming from and who has manufactured it? Has provision been made for water resistant material to be used in the 'wet' areas: Scullery, sink and prep bowl units.
- ▲ Is the finishing material of the same quality in all the quotes? Ensure your laminate, duco or timber product is coming from a reputable company of similar quality. There are always companies that will opt for cheap knock offs and tell you that they are the same as the reputable brands.
- ▲ Do all the quotes give you the same brand / option for your countertops and who is the fabricator? When it comes to stone or quartz there are many brands on the market, some may be more expensive due to the prestige of their brand or the track record in the market, while some may be cheaper because they are not a well-known brand or because the fabricator does not run a professional business and is not legally compliant. It is vital that you know who the fabricating company is, visit their premises

and be involved in selecting your stone, quartz, timber, solid surfacing etc. in an informed manner. Ensure you understand the terms of their warranty offered and if there are any applications of the product which would render your warranty null and void.

Another misunderstanding often linked to quotations is the exclusions. It is vital that you know what exactly is included / excluded from the bottom line price. Many people assume that the quote will include the removal of the old kitchen or changes to plumbing and electrics. The more detail that is in the quote the less the chance you will mistakenly assume something is included when it is not. The benefit of a detailed line item quote is that you will be able to clearly work through it with the designer and confirm line by line exactly what you will and will not be getting. Bear in mind that if you ask the kitchen company to do something or supply something after you have signed the quote or after they have arrived on site this extra will not fall into the quoted amount. It will be an extra and the company should put an addendum to the quote for you to sign with you agreeing to the price before the work is carried out – some will require full payment for these additions before commencing with them. It is also vital that you are a hundred percent sure that all items on the quote either include or exclude vat. Technically a retail quote should always include vat but it is best to double check before signing if it is not specified to avoid any nasty surprises.

A well prepared comprehensive quote should give you full details of all items and materials to be used in your kitchen with colours, brands and codes where applicable. If the tops are being outsourced then the fabricators quotation should be attached and in equal detail. If the quote covers several rooms each room should be quoted in a separate section detailing the specifics for that part of the job. Attached to the quote and referenced in the quote should be the necessary floor plans and perspective drawings. The company is not obliged to provide you with 'to-scale' plans and drawings (with or without measurements), until such time as the quotation is signed and accepted or you have paid for them. The quote should be the preamble to the contract of sale and should inform you about the terms of sale you will be agreeing to. It should also state an estimated lead time, an idea of manufacturing times as well as an agreed to installation timeline. If you have chosen any products off specific samples these samples

should be referenced in the quote to ensure your selection of sample and what you receive are the same. However, it is vital that you have taken the time to see the material, colour, product in full scale use and not just in a small sample as all colours, patterns; textures look very different when installed to what they do on a small sample.

Signing acceptance of your quote is also vitally important. Many consumers postpone doing this thinking that by not signing they will not be held to the terms and conditions of sale but this is not correct. Payment of the required deposit is tacit acceptance of the quote and its terms. By actually signing your quote and returning it to the company you are protecting yourself. In the event of a dispute the Consumer Protection Act will refer a mediator or the court back to the legal documents like the signed quote and drawings. They will hold the company to supplying the items specified on the quote. It is here you can see how important a detailed quote is. If there are no specific details on what the company will be supplying you in the quote then there is nothing specific the mediator or a court can hold them to. Vague quotes allow the company leeway to supply you what they can afford or get stock of at the time not necessarily the exact materials they have shown you or discussed with you, and as you are not an industry expert, you may be none the wiser.

In short, don't avoid signing and accepting your quote once you have made your choice of supplier. Ensure the quote is properly detailed and that the company has taken you through it confirming in detail what they will be supplying. If the quote is vague demand a detailed version, it is your right to know exactly what you are getting for your money. Remember you usually get what you pay for and if there is a vast difference in price between two quotes you are probably not being quoted on the same thing. Be informed, empower yourself by researching the company and materials. While you may be dealing with a company who is supposed to be an expert in their field you as a consumer also have a responsibility to have done your research and understand the limitations of all materials you are considering.

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