

BALANCING AND COMPARTMENTALISING YOUR KITCHEN BUDGET

When putting together a budget for a new kitchen many consumers focus the majority of their spend on the aesthetics – how pretty the kitchen will look. But, this is not always sensible as you may end up sacrificing longevity, functionality and ergonomics for aesthetics. As such it is important to know how to compartmentalize your budget so that all important aspects get equal consideration.

LET'S LOOK AT CUPBOARD INTERNALS

When discussing the kitchen plan and layout with your consultant, it is important to get as much information as to the cost, quality and warranty of the items and materials to be used. This is often forgotten when it comes to the carcass material, hardware and internals.

Carcassing:

It is vital you know what is being used to make your cupboard carcasses, who is supplying the board, how it is being edged and where is the board manufactured. Downgrading board quality, simply because the interior of the cabinet will seldom be seen, could lead to problems and headaches in the future. Lower quality board is less dense than the higher A-Grade products available. Screws could easily pull out of lower density boards -leading to doors falling off, sagging and misalignment. There is also a possibility of lower grade board having a higher formaldehyde content than A-Grade board.

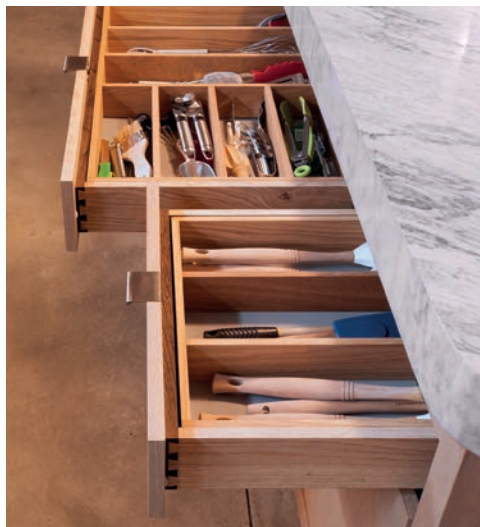
Hinges & Runners:

KSA members supply some of the leading brands of hinges and runners available in the world. Most of these come at different price points. When discussing your quote, ask your consultant to show you the differences between types, functions, and longevity. Side-mounted, vs bottom-mounted, soft close vs standard. Choose a durable guaranteed runner or hinge, that will suit your needs and

budget. You need to consider the weight the runners will have to bear based on what you plan to put inside the drawers and the right number of hinges to support the door finish you have chosen. Many consumers happily sacrifice their hardware spec to bring the cost of the quote down and this is not necessarily a smart idea, especially if your plan to have a hard working kitchen that lasts.

Inserts:

Although the look and design of the kitchen is very important, the functionality and personalized use of the cabinets can really add benefit to the daily use of the space. There are various inserts and organizational accessories that can be added on as optional extras to your quote. Placing a pull-out spice rack next to your cooking area, having a pull out pantry or a corner storage unit or even cutlery organisers can help make the kitchen space more organized and tidy. But, these very special optional extras do cost so it is vital that you take the time to assess what you really want from your new kitchen. If organization, optimized storage and accessibility are key then you will need to set aside part of your budget for these special items.



LET'S LOOK AT THE EXTERIOR - THE AESTHETICS

Door, drawer and panel finishes:

With ever increasing product variety and availability, it is very easy to attain your desired look and feel, using different products in various price ranges. This is why it is vital that the designer understand how much you have to spend as there is no point discussing achieving your desired look with Duco and timber finishes if your budget only allows for melamine finishes. Ask your consultant to show you the various options for achieving the look you want and then you can make an informed decision. The industry has changed a lot and melamine, wrap and laminate products that used to be considered outdated are now offering high end aesthetical solutions and a lower price point than solid and veneer timber or paint finished products. This is not to degrade the beauty of timber, veneer and paint finish -they remain synonymous with the height of style and sophistication, but you will need the budget to match.



Surfacing:

Your choice of surfacing can also have a huge impact on the budget. In South Africa it has become standard that any kitchen worth its salt has stone or similar countertops whereas elsewhere in the world only the top percentile of consumers can afford this. Formica or laminate surfacing has come a long way and can give a very durable pleasing aesthetic

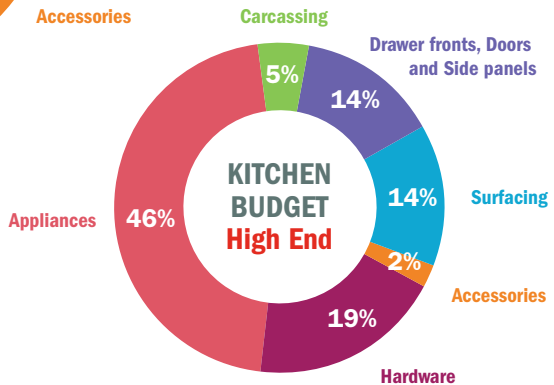
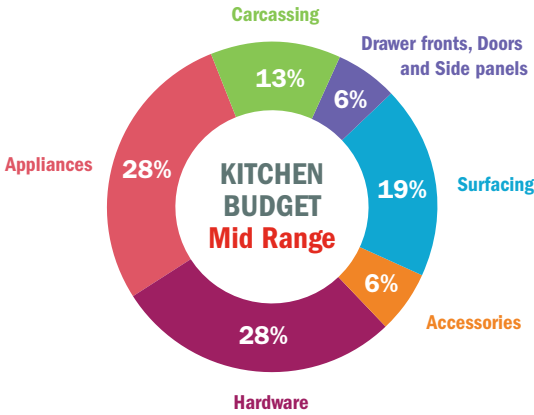
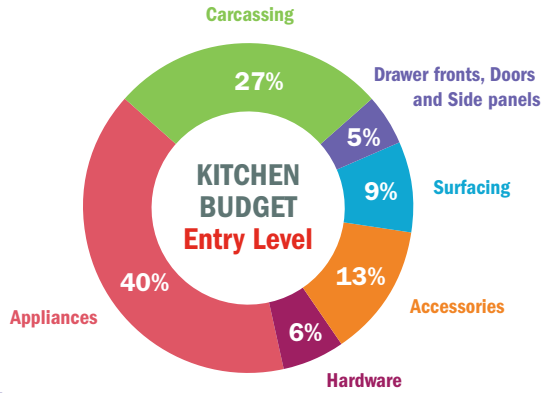
especially now that there are various profile options for you to choose from – so don't write it off as an option. Natural and quartz surfacing come in a very varied price range depending on where the material comes from and its quality. Be very careful about being told it is all the same, as it is not and a good rule of thumb here is that if the price is too good to be true it usually is and you may live to regret the choice when you are dealing with marked, chipped or pitted surfaces. Work with reputable brands with a decent warranty. If you opt for sintered or solid surfacing you must know that you are opting for the more expensive options on the market not just because of the material but also because of how it is fabricated and the fact that it needs additional substrate support.



A good way to keep your surfacing budget under control is to combine finishes – Formica in the pantry and quartz surfacing in the kitchen, combining a material with timber, or even combining two colours at various price points that may compliment one another. It is vital that you talk to your kitchen designer and your fabricator as there are ways of tweaking a design to optimize the material in question and ensure you make full use of the stone using one or two slabs instead of three.

There are various opinions on the percentage breakdowns of your kitchen budget. See overleaf our recommended guidelines.

GUIDELINES TO HELP YOU FAIRLY DISTRIBUTE YOUR BUDGET



The kitchen is the biggest financial investment you make in the interior design of your home. The functionality, practicality, and longevity of a new kitchen is just as important as the design and completed look. To create a beautiful kitchen is to create a beautiful home, keeping in mind that you still want to have full use of the kitchen in 20 or more years.

With thanks to Blum for their assistance with this article.

