



Creative Design KITCHENS





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Introduction

Designing a new kitchen is an exciting experience for any home-maker, on any budget. As the busiest utility room of all, it's likely that you spend as much time in your kitchen as you do sleeping. When you add up the several hundred hours over a year spent on your feet in this small space, it makes sense to create a room that is both aesthetically attractive and highly functional.

People who are new to styling a kitchen can find the choices and decisions involved pleasantly overwhelming.

Selecting themes, colours, surface materials, appliances and accessories can be fun and is certainly interesting.

A professional kitchen designer has the expertise to guide you through the many necessary selections painlessly, while helping you stick your goals on looks, layout, lifestyle and cost.

In practical terms, no matter your ability in cooking or interest in entertaining, the more efficiently your time is used daily in the kitchen, the better. Seeking professional advice about kitchen function can reveal contemporary ways to save time.

This e-book is a guide to a stress-free kitchen renovation. We give hints and tips to help make the project rewarding and avoid disaster, whether you are on a DIY mission or opt for a supply and construct contract.



Starting your kitchen renovation project

It's a small room that's big on detail, but the effort and expense is worth it for a kitchen you'll want to spend time in for many years to come.

Planning a new layout, choosing colours, styles and surface materials with your kitchen designer is exciting, but the real foundations for a great result are in choosing a professional team with the experience to co-ordinate tasks without delays that provide a high quality finish.

You'll have the chance to make many creative decisions about the way your new kitchen will look and feel during the design stage. After that is complete, you need to decide how to manage the project to fit your available resources.



Take the lead on your design

Accessing a designer's inspiration is exciting on any kitchen renovation project. Just remember to insist on the key elements you really need or have always wanted. The reasons you decided to indulge in a new kitchen in the first place will give your designer the lead to follow.

Kitchen designers provide expert insight in making the most out of small spaces and injecting 'wow factor' into what is truly the busiest room of your home. At consultation they will help you review current colour and style trends and contemporary fittings, fixtures, accessories and appliances within your budget that you may never even have imagined having the chance to use every day.

Non-standard fixtures

While a kitchen will contain many standardised installations, if you mention special needs during consultation, your designer will be able to give advice and suggest simple alternatives. For example, you might want the convenience of a customised benchtop height.

The standard is 900mm, but we've had clients who find this level too high. It's no problem to plan a kitchen to meet the desire for a tailored and more comfortable bench height, with cabinetry built to suit, that fits the client's stature.





Designing around kids

If you have young children, kick off your design by taking additional child-safety measures or special cabinet layout options that avoid the risk of accident at their low heights.

For older children, if you have the room, a multi-functional kitchen can include an area to cater for study and homework while under parental supervision, including storage devoted to stowing laptops, gadgets and other resources.

Take clues from your old kitchen

Working with a professional kitchen designer means the planning starts with a list of what you like most and least about your current kitchen. This is when you might be pleasantly surprised at how easy it is to request basic elements that are

more conveniently designed to make life easier for your daily lifestyle. A kitchen designer's best clues for a great solution to any existing problems usually come from a heartfelt chat about what drives you crazy about your current kitchen.





Project manager or DIY?

It's a small room that's big on detail, but the effort After consulting with a designer on layout and materials and finalising your new kitchen's look and feel, your dream kitchen is ready to be created in one of two ways:

1. Using a kitchen project manager

This option leaves all aspects of kitchen reconstruction and finishing in the hands of your consultant.

OR

2. By DIY contracting

You contract and co-ordinate tradespeople yourself, using your kitchen design as their blueprint.



Three essential tips for a stress-free kitchen renovation

Your experience, available time and budget will determine the way you progress with your finalised new kitchen design. These tips are a guide to what's involved in a stress-free kitchen renovation and will help inform your decision about how to proceed if you're doing the job yourself and the role of a supplier-installer.

1. Only use licensed suppliers

Of all the rooms in your home, the kitchen usually requires the most tradespeople during its renovation, making contractor selection and management a high priority. Depending on the scale of the task, you may need the services of a licensed builder, a plumber, an electrician, a cabinet-maker and a gas-fitter. You may also need the services of a tiler and a painter.

In New South Wales, kitchen renovations come under the Building section of the Fair Trading Act and for your protection, jobs valued at more than \$1,000 require all tradespeople to hold a builder's licence*.

As a DIY renovator you will need to be familiar with the legal requirements of licens-

ing and ask all of your contractors for proof of certification before work commences.

Using a supplier-installer means all paperwork will be checked on your behalf, but in most cases, the kitchen company will be able to call on trusted tradespeople to do the work at short notice.

**Source: <http://www.licensedtrades.com.au/licensed/kitchens>*





2. Beware of quotes that seem 'too good to be true'

Unlicensed contractors may offer what looks like a great deal, but they are likely to be inexperienced in the specifics of kitchen construction and renovation. A common risk of using non-specialised or unlicensed builders is drilling into pipework or electrical wiring behind plaster walls.

Inexperienced kitchen installers may also overlook small fitting details during installation that can make a big difference to a job's efficient completion or to the smooth functioning of your kitchen when completed.

As a DIY renovator you may find that after an unlicensed contractor has moved on, they have no obligation to address defects. If left with problems, you may have no choice but to start the job over or pay a new contractor to repair the job professionally.

Using a supplier-installer means you receive one central 10-year warranty through your kitchen supplier on workmanship, separate to cabinetry guarantees, so any defects will be repaired or replaced and future issues will be addressed with no problem.



3. Don't risk under-insurance

Whether you are co-ordinating your kitchen renovation contractors or using a project manager, comprehensive insurance must be a priority.

No tradesperson sets out to flood an entire apartment block when reconnecting your water services or to damage common property while handling bulky deliveries, but sometimes costly accidents happen.

Make sure the kitchen company you choose to manage your renovations – or the contractors you personally select – are comprehensively insured. If not, any unexpected dramas could become your costly problem.

Under-insurance of any party contributing to your project is a risk you can't afford to take with kitchen renovations. If a supplier lacks full cover, it may indicate that other details aren't being taken care of thoroughly enough, either.

As a DIY renovator:

... you will need to check the insurance coverage of each individual supplier used, for both trade services and products.

Using a supplier-installer:

... means you are automatically covered by a comprehensive insurance policy covering all contractors and participants in the renovation process.



You've chosen a design. What happens next?

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So your planning consultation went well and you've accepted your kitchen renovation quote and paid your deposit. The next exciting stages of your project are final kitchen measurement and confirming your new appliance checklist. Other than any items you are supplying yourself, your project manager will now order your stove, dishwasher, fridge, oven and cooktop, with delivery timed to the final stage of your renovation schedule.

Cabinet manufacture

Cabinetry production takes from three to six weeks, depending on the materials selected and size of your kitchen. During this time, you will have nothing to do if your kitchen renovation supplier is organising the entire project. If not, you may have some shopping to do, such as for light fittings or other items not required until the final stage (usually electrical) that you are taking care of yourself.

Going DIY?

If your contractor is only supplying the custom-made cabinetry, you'll need to use the time spent waiting on manufacture to contract tradespeople, including fielding quotes and checking licences. As a cabinetry-only service excludes benchtop and splashback supply, you will also need

This is also the time you will inspect your new kitchen layout in 3D format and make any necessary final adjustments before approving final plans.

Here are some of the next actions and priorities to prepare for after the final contract is signed:



to order these items while waiting on your kitchen cabinets.

Here's how to be prepared and avoid a renovation disaster:



Your kitchen renovation trades checklist

The work to be carried out during a standard kitchen renovation might include:

- ☒ removal and disposal of existing cabinets, appliances and fixtures by a licensed builder
- ☒ Installation of new kitchen cabinets by a licensed carpenter
- ☒ Water supply disconnection and reconnection to sink, tap and dishwasher by a licensed plumber
- ☒ Gas disconnection and reconnection by a licensed plumber/gas-fitter
- ☒ Electrical service disconnection and reconnection for oven, cooktop and relocation of power points and light fittings by licensed electrician
- ☒ A pre-fit of canopy range hood, if required
- ☒ Rendering or plastering of splashback areas or where patches are exposed on walls from behind removed fixtures
- ☒ Tiler for splashback, and flooring, if required
- ☒ A stonemason for cutting benchtops, if required
- ☒ Rubbish removal, as required

Check availability and references

For each tradesperson, make a note of their availability on your first contact to make sure they can meet your project timeline.

Check their references or published testimonials, if available, to help determine if each contractor has a reputation for reliability. Look for those who have started and finished their work as promised.





Four standard kitchen layouts

As exciting as today's many different kitchen creations appear when complete, there are just four standard layouts that form the basis of their practical function. If there's enough in your budget for structural work, you can expand your available space by removing walls, opening the way for major interior redesign and dramatic change to your home and your lifestyle.

The most practical plan will depend on the number of walls and your available floor space. However, no matter the final size of your new kitchen, its basic work area needs to meet some standard rules for efficiency.

Which layout is the best match to your home?

Note: The samples for each of the four layouts shown on the next pages are just one of the many ways that appliances and decor can be placed.



1. The L-shaped Kitchen Layout

The L-shape kitchen is popular and versatile for apartments and in smaller houses where other living space is limited. It's a solution that prevents compromising your kitchen floor space while maximising bench areas. In some cases, the L-shape layout leaves room for a dining table that can double as a kitchen preparation area, just like an island bench.

The L-shape design has no 'traffic lanes' flowing through the work area, making it user-friendly when there are two people using the kitchen.

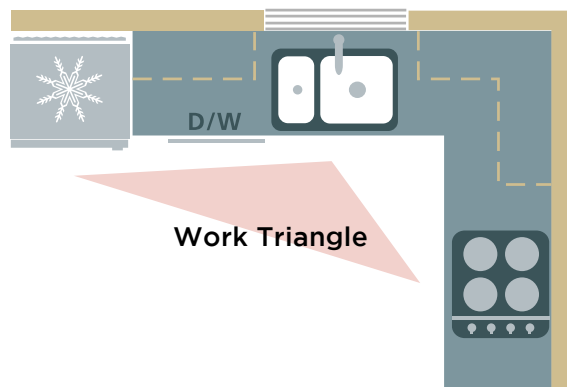
An L-shaped kitchen can be as long as there is space available on either side. Usually one side is longer than the other and the longest side is divided into different work areas to maximise its use.

L-Shaped Kitchen Benefits

- ✓ Great use of a corner space
- ✓ Efficient for a small to medium kitchens
- ✓ Can adjust to any length
- ✓ Divides into multiple work sites
- ✓ No through traffic to disrupt work zones
- ✓ Can add eating space

L-Shaped Kitchen Drawbacks

- ✓ Inefficient for large kitchens
- ✓ Not practical for multiple cooks





2. The Galley-Island Kitchen Layout

The galley design is popular because it enables the kitchen to become part of the family area. In this layout, the feature is an island bench as your preparation and casual dining area.

The galley island format works well in any size and is ideal for entertaining for its isolated bench space that can be used for both preparation and as a servery.

This solution is ideal for kitchens with one wall. Its two work areas are parallel, with one bench freestanding and accessible from three sides.

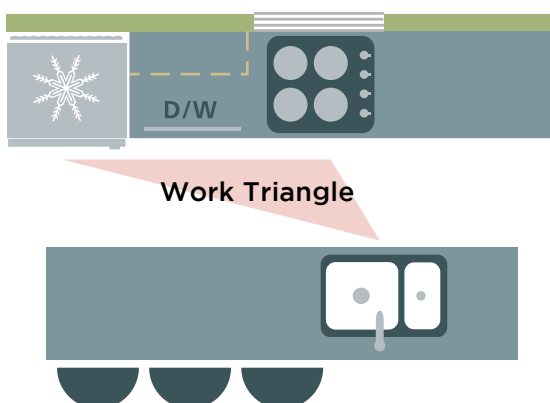
The length of a galley-island kitchen is limited only by the amount of wall and living space available, though if too long, the overall traffic area becomes inefficient. The ideal width is four to six metres, with a recommended distance between work benches of 1.2m. One metre is tolerable in small homes if necessary, though can be confining.

Galley-Island Style Kitchen Benefits

- ☑ Ideal in open plan living
- ☑ Great for rectangular spaces
- ☑ Efficient as a small kitchen solution
- ☑ Can adjust to any length
- ☑ Can easily divide the kitchen into multiple work sites

Galley-Island Style Kitchen Drawbacks

- ☑ Through-traffic can cause congestion
- ☑ Inefficient for large kitchens
- ☑ Not good for multiple cooks





3. The U-Shaped Kitchen Layout

This type of kitchen is the design used in a home that is not open-plan, ie. a layout to fit between three walls, with one entry/exit. The U-shaped kitchen maximises storage space as there can be lower and upper cupboards against three walls. This layout depends on good design of the internal circulation space as there are no traffic lanes flowing through the space.

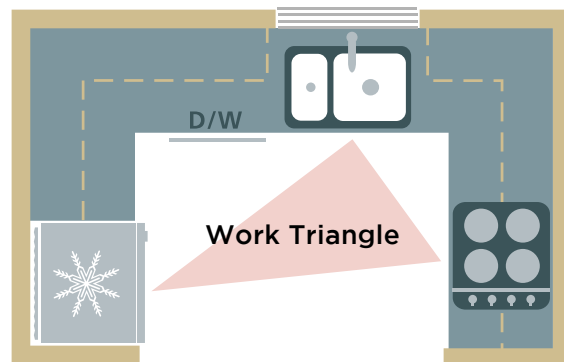
All three work areas are divided into specific purposes for the most efficient use. A U-shape kitchen should ideally be between three and five metres wide at the base. A wide U-shaped layout can allow for an island bench at its fourth side, as additional preparation space or for entertaining.

U-Shaped Kitchen Benefits

- ✓ Efficient in any size
- ✓ Easily divided into specific work zones
- ✓ No disruptive through traffic
- ✓ Lots of counter space
- ✓ A wide 'U' design can fit an island bench

U-Shaped Kitchen Drawbacks

- ✓ Inefficient for large kitchens without an island bench
- ✓ Inefficient for kitchens under 3m wide
- ✓ Lower corner cabinets can be difficult to access





4. The Galley or Corridor Kitchen Layout

This kitchen design is located between two parallel walls, usually with an opening at both ends.

This design gives you more wall space than a typical galley-island kitchen, with more storage space as you can have upper and lower cupboards on both sides. If you have a long, narrow kitchen space available this will be the most efficient kitchen layout to use.

The ideal width for a galley kitchen is two to 3.5 metres. The open corridor space should be a minimum of one metre between cupboards, but 1.2m or 1.5m is more comfortable for use by more than one person at a time.

Galley Kitchen Benefits

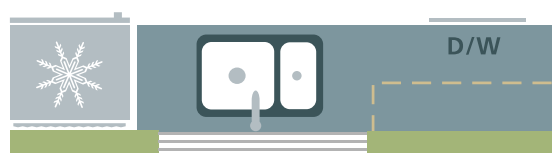
- ✓ Great for rectangular space
- ✓ Efficient as a small kitchen
- ✓ Can adjust to any available length
- ✓ Easily divided into multiple work sites

Galley/Corridor Kitchen Drawbacks

- ✓ Through traffic can cause congestion
- ✓ Inefficient for large kitchens
- ✓ Not good for multiple cooks
- ✓ Not suited to open-plan living



Work Triangle





Bringing your new kitchen to life

Experience and information makes all the difference between a no-fuss result and a disastrous kitchen renovation.

One advantage of using a professional kitchen installer is their attention to detail during any reconstruction and a commitment to achieving the best workmanship and finishing touches from all involved.

If you're taking on the project yourself, be prepared to spend time closely monitoring daily construction activity. Be available to inspect progress closely at the various job milestones. Make it known you're aiming for a high-standard result in both durability and appearance, without needing to be re-done in the short-term.

Below we share some tips for smooth progress and some of the processes involved in a typical kitchen renovation.

Clear the way

If they are managing your entire renovation project, your kitchen contractor will make sure the way is clear for your cabinets to be delivered and installed, without any risk of damage. There should be no debris from your old kitchen in the way to scratch or dent your perfect new cabinets when they are delivered for installation.

Professional contractors are experienced working in confined spaces, but the risk of damage to new cabinets and doors increases if there are obstacles left in the way.

If you're managing your own renovation, be sure to have all of your old kitchen items and rubbish removed from the premises before your new kitchen is delivered, to avoid harm to your cabinets before they are even installed.

If your contractors' terms include rubbish removal, check in person or confirm with them by phone that this has occurred by the scheduled date – at least a day before cabinet delivery is ideal. If rubbish removal is not part of their terms, you will need to book a waste contractor, or arrange to remove the items yourself.

Special fittings

Once your cabinets are installed, it's time for the special finishing touches, which vary for every kitchen.

Stone benchtops

If you have selected stone benchtops, a stonemason will visit to take measurements as these cannot be made from a plan. The reason is that some interior walls are out of square. A site visit ensures your benches will sit flush to the wall, with no gaps showing. Allow five to seven working days for stone bench installation.

Laminated benchtops

This less complex style of benchtop can be installed at the same time as your cabinets, by the same crew as part of a one-two day job.

Glass splashback

Final splashback measurement also takes place onsite. This will be done after benchtop installation and may take a further five to seven working days to be completed.

Electrical and plumbing

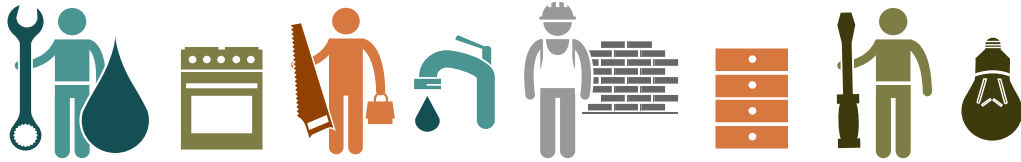
Preparation for wiring and pipes is made during the first stage of kitchen renovation. However, both trades will need to return after the benchtops and splashbacks are in place, to connect these services to your appliances and fittings.

Tips and traps for going it alone

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Kitchen supply only

There are advantages and disadvantages to choosing a kitchen design company that only supplies your kitchen cabinetry. It's certainly not impossible to complete your own kitchen renovation, but you can be prepared for what's ahead with this list of pros and cons for managing the job yourself.



You may save some money being able to shop around and bargain-hunt for kitchen items, eg. if you shop around you find a discounted stone off-cut to fit your benchtop, or glass for a splashback, particularly if the style has been discontinued.

Choosing your own trades teams gives you flexibility to use the contractors of your choice. You may also be able to negotiate a deal directly with the tradesperson.

- You won't know the quality of the suppliers you are using for the stone and glass and whether they can meet the time-frame organised with your kitchen supplier.
- Tradespeople working for individual property owners have less incentive to commit to schedules than those contracted to professional renovation companies. Your 'one-off' job may take a low priority to those offered by regular clients with more connections. Your work could even be postponed or cancelled.
- It is your responsibility to research and check the licences and insurance policies of every trade you contract and to keep records in case of future problems.
- Your warranty will only cover the kitchen cabinets and it is difficult to make a claim when multiple trades have been involved in the kitchen renovation. Eg. if the cabinets swell due to a leak, the plumber will fix the leak but not replace the cabinets. Or if cabinet doors are damaged during installation, it is difficult to assign responsibility for their replacement. In a supply-only situation, there is no central responsibility to cover replacement or repair. Using a kitchen design company for supply and install provides a warranty on all work for at least 10 years.
- Unnecessary additional expense is a risk without specific kitchen project management experience. For example, if your trades are not scheduled correctly and some of the work is done out of order, you may pay for visits by trades that could have been avoided with better organisation.
- Having no prior relationship with tradespeople or their various industries, your renovation could take longer than necessary and cost more – or cause more inconvenience as you live without a kitchen while waiting for completion.
- The likely warranty per trade is for a few months' on the work carried out by each individual, rather than for longer if project-managed by a kitchen company. You won't have redress on defects that become apparent over a longer time.

Supply and install package

A complete supply and install contract means you hand over every aspect of your kitchen renovation once the design has been finalised and your new appliances selected. Taking this option has the following advantages and disadvantages.



An experienced kitchen renovator knows exactly how to time each trade for an efficient installation schedule.

Kitchen renovation companies use a set of professional and proven tradespeople on a daily basis. These contractors give a high priority and offer good rates in exchange for receiving regular and specialist work from a trusted source.

As the client, you only need to record the licence and insurance details of your primary contractor – your kitchen renovator. It is your project manager's job to record and administer all warranty details of your trades and suppliers and take action on any claims on your behalf.

Your kitchen renovator will warrant all work for up to 10 years. They are your one point of contact not only for all communication during your kitchen renovation, but for all warranty information and any future action that may be required.

Money is potentially saved by requiring fewer trade visits during your renovation because of the kitchen supplier's job scheduling experience and professional knowledge of each contractor's role. Preventing unnecessary or duplicate trade hiring is one of many ways your sticks to its budget.

Renovating kitchens is your project manager's daily job, giving you access to expertise that ensures the efficiency and economy to reach project milestones on time and complete the full job to your deadline.

As the individual tradespeople have usually worked together on previous jobs for your kitchen supplier, they will have formed relationships that encourage each other to work together as a team onsite.

- Your renovation project may
- be cost slightly more than
- doing it yourself, as you
- will need to budget for the
- services of a project manager
- to oversee contracting,
- scheduling, installation, quality
- control, administration of
- warranties, trouble-shooting
- and final inspection.

- Although many kitchen
- companies are flexible in
- allowing you to use some of
- your own trades, you won't be
- able to negotiate on price with
- each trades person used by
- the kitchen company as they
- are usually paid pre-set rates.



Kitchen quality

One way to avoid a kitchen renovation disaster is to avoid compromising on quality, just to save on upfront costs. Using high quality cabinetry makes the difference between a durable kitchen

that can stand years of the inevitable daily knocks such a busy room takes for a decade or more, and a kitchen that looks shabby after just a few years.

Set your budget with the long term in mind

When planning a new kitchen, you'll see that many product samples have the same appearance, even though they have vastly different costs. When brand new, some

cheaper kitchen manufacturing materials are indistinguishable from high-end products, but the differences in durability and appearance will show over time.

Beware of 'cheap' finishes

Vinyl is a good example of a material used in new kitchens that saves money during renovation. The problem with this choice is that its appearance deteriorates rapidly. Foot-traffic, heat and moisture are present daily in any kitchen and your selections for cabinetry and benchtops need to take into account the toll of this environment over the long term.

In just a few years, vinyl surfaces can become unsightly. In lighter colours, it will turn yellow, with white vinyl particularly being susceptible to showing an uneven

appearance in a relatively short time. Lower quality vinyls also tend to peel away from their surfaces, ageing a new kitchen prematurely with a tattered look.

Cheap kitchens are more affordable with good reason. The materials provided are not made to last. You will pay the same for design and trades, but the savings provided are in the manufacturing. A replacement kitchen may be required sooner than you desire, for example when you decide to sell your home.

Plan for a 10-20 year investment

By contrast, investing in good quality kitchen cabinetry and benchtops increases your property's value because it will retain its appearance without maintenance over several years of daily use. Even if you're not planning to sell your home, it's a good idea to budget with a kitchen's potential lifetime in mind.

Spread your project's cost outlay over the time your new kitchen is likely to look good and function well. If the materials and surfaces you want to use will give you up to 20 years of enjoyable use, the need to compromise with cheaper finishes takes a new perspective.



Cabinetry checklist

Over their lifetime, your kitchen cabinets will withstand daily use amounting to tens or hundreds of thousands of openings and closings along with other regular wear and tear. When manufactured to last and installed professionally, you'll get many years of maintenance-free use out of a new kitchen and it will keep its good looks, too.

Here's what to look for in reliable, durable cabinetry that will keep its looks:

1. Internal carcass

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Choose a material made from scratch-resistant and highly moisture resistant (HMR) white particle board. Designed for use in areas of high humidity or where there is a chance of occasional spills, your internal cabinetry is susceptible to trapped moisture, with its impact hidden from view and easily overlooked. All cabinets should have 16mm solid backs.

2. Cabinet construction

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Some kitchen builders use plinths to support the underside of cabinets. Creative Design Kitchens uses adjustable legs. This method gives greater adjustability at installation, such as when flooring is slightly uneven. Using legs also provides greater strength and prevents seepage, should the cupboards be affected by a water leak. The legs are concealed by a kickboard.

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3. Quality hardware

A lifetime warranty is the sign you're using highest quality drawer runners and hinges. Creative Design Kitchens use Blum fittings, one of the industry's best brands. It can be tempting to reserve your extravagances for the showpiece items, but backing your renovation with top quality hardware avoids future problems, such as cupboard doors that have dropped out of position with use over time. Low quality runners will eventually stop your drawers from closing properly and may need replacing. Assigning the right budget to unseen quality hardware means you can forget about future maintenance problems.



Are you being served?

When selecting a kitchen supplier, attention to detail and personal service are crucial for a worry-free experience and a result within your budget.

While it may even be possible today to research and buy kitchen cabinetry on-line and install much of it yourself, the

advantages of professional, face-to-face advice and support through the renovation are unbeatable. If you're seeking a genuine investment in your home and trouble-free enjoyment of the busiest room in your home for a long time to come, a one-stop kitchen supply and install service delivers both - and with a 10-year guarantee.



Details make the difference

There's a lot to cover and manage to achieve a good renovation result and it all starts with solid early planning. Kitchen renovation disasters are most common when inexperience and a learn-as-you-go approach ends in budget blow-outs and costly repairs from poor construction or inferior product selection.

A professional who has a passion for kitchen planning will inspire you with design solutions tailored to your available space, needs and your tastes; you'll be guided through the overwhelming multitude of product materials and available accessories and learn the benefits of each against their cost.

If you use a kitchen consultant, they come with a valuable network of suppliers and support, built over many years. They know the legal specifications for appliances and their installation; they understand trade licensing, contractor warranties and administration; they bring practical experience in managing onsite demolition and reconstruction effectively and organise the logistics of project scheduling to avoid wasted time and expense.

In short, at the end of the project, you'll have the kitchen you want at the agreed price, in the allocated time.



What makes an ideal kitchen supplier?

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We hope that you have found this information to be useful.
If you are planning to renovate your kitchen and would like
some advice or a free design and quote contact us today on

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