

7 Crucial Things You Must Know Before Buying A Kitchen (Not Knowing Could Cost You £1,000s)

With over two decades of experience, Industry leading kitchen designer, Jason Potter, reveals the top 7 things you should know before buying a kitchen.

Buying a new kitchen is one of the biggest investments you'll make in your home. Yet many homeowners discover hidden costs, avoidable mistakes, and disappointing quality only after the project has started.

Before you sign anything, make sure you understand these seven crucial points that could save you thousands of pounds and years of frustration.

1. Kitchen Quality Matters More Than Most People Realise

Not all kitchens are built to last.

One of the biggest hidden issues in the kitchen industry is the widespread use of foil-wrapped doors. In fact, it's estimated that over 80% of kitchen ranges sold by major high street retailers use foil-wrapped doors. Whilst they may look attractive in a showroom, foil-wrapped doors are vulnerable to heat, moisture, and everyday wear. Over time, the foil can begin to peel away from the door, particularly around ovens, dishwashers, kettles, and other heat sources.

Unfortunately, many homeowners only discover this problem several years after installation, often finding that replacement doors are expensive or no longer available. In many cases, door delamination is not fully covered under standard guarantees.

Top Tip

Ask what the doors are actually made from. Painted timber, solid timber, lacquered finishes, and high-quality laminate doors generally offer significantly greater longevity than foil-wrapped alternatives.

Remember:

The cheapest kitchen can quickly become the most expensive kitchen if it needs replacing years earlier than expected.



2. Poor Design Decisions Can Be Costly

A beautiful kitchen isn't necessarily a practical one.

Many homeowners focus on colours, handles, and worktops without considering how the kitchen will perform over the next 10–20 years.

Common design mistakes include:

- Insufficient storage
- Poor appliance positioning
- Walkways that are too narrow
- Kitchen layouts that don't suit the way the family actually lives
- Choosing materials that aren't suitable for their intended use

One example is combining a Belfast sink with a solid wood worktop. Whilst this can look stunning initially, constant exposure to water often causes staining, movement, splitting, or premature deterioration if not maintained correctly.

Another common issue is inaccurate measurements. Even small measuring errors can create installation delays, expensive alterations, or compromise the overall finish.

Top Tip

Ask your designer to explain not only how your kitchen will look, but how it will function every day for the next decade.

3. Beware Of Scope Creep

One of the most common reasons kitchen projects exceed budget is something called scope creep. This happens when work, products, or services are added throughout the project that weren't included in the original quotation.

Examples include:

- Additional electrical work
- Extra plumbing alterations
- Wall repairs
- Decorating
- Flooring
- Appliance upgrades
- Additional cabinetry
- Lighting changes
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Many homeowners assume these items are included, only to discover extra invoices appearing during installation.

The Most Important Question You Can Ask

"Does this quotation include absolutely everything required to complete my kitchen?"

Ask for a written breakdown of exactly what is included and what is excluded.

A reputable company will be happy to explain both.



4. Removing Your Existing Kitchen May Cost More Than You Think

Many kitchen quotations do not include the removal and disposal of your existing kitchen. This can come as an unpleasant surprise when the project begins.

Items that may require disposal include:

- Kitchen cabinets
- Worktops
- Tiles
- Flooring
- Appliances
- Packaging waste
- General construction waste
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Some items are easier to dispose of than others.

For example, refrigerators and freezers require specialist disposal because of the gases they contain and often require council collection services.

Top Tips

- Many scrap metal collectors will remove old ovens, hobs, and metal appliances free of charge.
- Some charities may accept working appliances.
- Check local council collection charges before arranging disposal.
- Ask whether waste removal is included in your installation quote.

5. Don't Fall For Fake Discounts

Have you ever been offered 50%, 60%, or even 70% off a kitchen?

You should approach these offers with caution.

Many national retailers use inflated recommended retail prices (RRPs) to create the impression of huge savings. The "discounted" price may actually be close to the price they expected to sell the kitchen for all along.

This sales strategy often creates unnecessary pressure and encourages customers to make rushed decisions.

Common phrases include:

- "Offer ends today."
- "Management approval required."
- "This discount won't be available tomorrow."
- "Sign now to secure the saving."

Top Tip

Never feel pressured into making a decision.

Get multiple quotations, compare specifications carefully, and take time to review your options.

A genuinely good kitchen will still be a good kitchen next week.



6. Cheap Appliances Can Be A False Economy

Most people compare appliance prices.

Far fewer compare running costs.

The cheapest appliance often becomes the most expensive appliance over its lifetime.

Energy-efficient appliances can significantly reduce running costs whilst also offering better performance and reliability.

This is particularly important with wine coolers, refrigeration, and cooking appliances.

Many lower-cost wine coolers are not particularly energy efficient and can consume surprisingly high levels of electricity.

In some cases, homeowners are shocked to discover their wine cooler costs more to run than expected year after year.

Top Tip

Always check:

- Energy rating
- Annual energy consumption
- Warranty period
- Manufacturer reputation

The purchase price is only part of the true cost.

7. Choose A Company That Values You As A Customer

Perhaps the most important decision isn't the kitchen itself.

It's the company you choose to buy it from.

No kitchen project is completely perfect. Questions arise. Unexpected issues occur. Minor adjustments are often required.

The real test of a kitchen company is not how they behave before they get your deposit, but how they behave afterwards.

Many national retailers process thousands of kitchen sales every year. Whilst some provide excellent service, customers can sometimes feel like just another order number.

Independent kitchen companies often survive and grow through reputation, referrals, and customer satisfaction.

As a result, they frequently provide a more personal level of service and support when challenges arise.

Ask Yourself

- Who will I speak to if there's a problem?
- Will I have a dedicated point of contact?
- How are aftercare issues handled?
- What do previous customers say about their experience?

A company that genuinely values your business is often worth far more than a small saving on the initial price.

Final Thoughts

A kitchen is far more than cabinets and worktops.

It's an investment in your home, your lifestyle, and your daily enjoyment for years to come.

Taking time to understand quality, design, hidden costs, appliances, and who you're buying from can help you avoid expensive mistakes and ensure you choose a kitchen you'll still love many years from now.

Before signing any contract, ask questions, compare options carefully, and remember:

The cheapest decision today can often become the most expensive decision tomorrow.

Have more questions? Feel free to get in touch or visit our showroom.

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