

The 11 Biggest Mistakes People Make When Choosing Cabinets!

Mistake #1. Being sold "custom cabinets" and actually getting "stock cabinets".

There are two types of cabinets you'll encounter on the marketplace: stock cabinets and custom cabinets. These two types of cabinets are worlds apart. I'll take a moment and reveal the differences between both of them. I'll start with...

Stock or "Pre-fabricated" cabinets: Stock cabinets are made by machine and mass-produced. They are "cookie cutter" cabinets and are literally forced to fit into your home. These types of cabinet are typically sold in giant home centers and are generally the cheapest option.

But here is the trap: many home centers sell "stock cabinets" as "custom cabinets". This is a pitfall you have to avoid because you don't get your money's worth with "stock" or "prefab" cabinets.

Why do some unscrupulous home centers and cabinet shops do this? For one simple reason: profit. You see, most consumers don't know how to tell inferior quality cheap stock cabinets from authentic custom cabinets (but YOU will soon!). As a result, this makes it easy for some cabinet shops to pass off stock cabinets as "custom cabinets" and charge more than they really should. This is the "dirty little secret" of the cabinet trade. Some shops charge you for a "Lexus" and deliver a "Yugo" instead.

Also: contractors prefer "stock" cabinets because if the job comes in cheaper, they make more money. Stock cabinets are generally cheaper than genuine custom-made cabinets.

Now, let's talk about the best option for your kitchen..."custom cabinets".

Custom Cabinets: Custom cabinets are made by hand - by skilled craftsmen with an attention to detail. They are custom-fitted to your home. Buying custom cabinets for your home is like buying a fine custom-tailored suit rather than an "off-the-rack" special. They simply "fit" your home better than stock cabinets. And here's the reason for this: every home is unique. Some homes have oblong kitchens, others have "L" shaped kitchens, and most/all homes have kitchens that aren't exactly square.

Custom cabinets take all the small details of your home into account. On the other hand, "stock", one-size-fits-all cabinetry simply cannot "fit" your home, with your home's special needs taken into account. Custom cabinets satisfy the typical homeowner more than stock cabinets because they are designed with YOU AND YOUR HOME in mind.

Plus, because custom cabinets are made by hand - one at a time - you get a wider range of options to match your home. You can match styles, colors and existing looks much more easily. Another benefit: Custom cabinets are NOT

mass-produced and therefore last much longer than machine-made cabinets. So, avoid the very common mistake of purchasing "stock" or "prefabricated" cabinets.

Mistake #2. Going with the cheapest bid only to find out that one shop's necessary add-ons are another shop's standards.

Did you know the way cabinet shops build their cabinets varies greatly from shop to shop? It's true. Reputable shops include items such as drawings, installation, finishing and delivery as standard items in the total price of the cabinets...others don't. So it's important for you to avoid the trap of quickly signing a contract - only to find out later that you need to add other items to finish your kitchen. Take the experience of one couple (Bob and Judy) who complained to me recently:

"We thought we were getting such a good deal when we signed the contract for our new kitchen. Only later did we find out that installation was extra. The large home center we thought was so reputable turned out to be the biggest nightmare we've ever experienced. They gave us a simple choice: pick up the cabinets and install them ourselves...or pony up the extra dough for installation. Even worse, we found this out after they had finished building our cabinets. By then it was too late to find another shop that included installation as standard. In the end, what we thought was such a 'good bargain' ended up costing us a lot more than it should have"..

How can you avoid the mistake Bob and Judy made? Easy: Find out exactly what is included with your job...and what isn't. A simple way to do this is ask your prospective cabinet shop this question:

"Is every necessary part of my job included in this price? Am I going to find out I need something else to complete the job? Is this 'turn-key'?"

And watch their reaction. You'll know you're dealing with a reputable cabinet shop that deals with you openly and reveals all aspects of the job - *before you sign an agreement.*

Also: don't forget the time-honored advice...*"If it's too good to be true, it probably is".*

"Lowball" quotes are designed to appeal to your greed. Unscrupulous cabinet shops and giant home centers are notorious for leaving necessary parts out of the contract. Believe it or not, some even leave out hardware, installation, toe kicks, moldings, cabinet backs...even shelves! It's usually the lowball quote that you need to watch out for. TIP: Beware of the lowball estimate.

Mistake #3 - Falling for the trap of "I'm only going to be in the house for a couple of years, then I plan to sell" and settling for poor-quality cabinets.

Did you know that quality custom-made cabinetry is an investment in the truest

sense of the word? It's true. Studies show that upon the sale of your home, **you can get up to 166% of the purchase price of your custom cabinets back in your pocket** - as a return on your investment. Just like your home, good quality cabinets appreciate and actually *increase* the value of your home.

However, "stock" cabinets are a different story: They can actually *decrease* the value of your home on resale. This is yet another reason why informed homeowners avoid stock or prefabricated cabinets. I'll say it again: prefabricated or "stock" cabinets actually devalue your home - you rarely recoup your purchase price.

Even worse, many homeowners who bought stock or prefabricated cabinets eventually find that to sell their home, they have to replace their stock cabinets with custom cabinets anyway - and end up spending more than they would have if they had started with quality custom cabinets in the first place. So the moral is: do not buy cheap "stock" cabinets. This is especially true if you plan to sell your home in the near future.

Mistake #4 - Choosing good quality cabinets in the kitchen and then turning around and choosing cheap cabinets in the baths and rest of the house.

Many homeowners commit this very common mistake. But did you know "mismatching your cabinets" is bad for the value of your home? Here's why: Because good quality cabinetry in the kitchen makes the stock cabinets in your bathrooms and other areas of the home seem even cheaper by comparison. For example, a guest walks into your home, sees beautiful custom cabinets in the kitchen, then turns the corner and - yikes! - She comes face to face with cheap stock cabinets. In this scenario, it's obvious to everybody that you cut corners.

Any good interior designer worth their salt will tell you that **consistency is a key** in interior and home design. Don't undermine the gains you made in the kitchen by installing cheap cabinets elsewhere in your home.

Mistake #5 - Buying cabinets from a company with limited options.

Limited options means limited satisfaction. Stock cabinets typically give you only a few choices to pick from. Stock cabinets are usually limited in: design, style, function, shelving, drawer slides, hinges, types of material (wood), configurations, stains and finishes, quality, etc.

Choose a cabinet shop that has the ability to customize any particular approach you want and will match your existing or new home's decor.

Mistake #6 - Signing a contract with few details and lots of hidden loopholes.

This is a very serious and potentially deadly mistake to commit. And

unfortunately, it's where all too many homeowners get taken to the cleaners when it comes to choosing cabinetry for their home. **You should avoid signing a contract with few or little details.** That leaves lots of "wiggle room" or "loopholes" for the contractor. Be absolutely certain the shop you are dealing with...

- 1.) Puts every phase of the job in writing,
- 2.) Provides a detailed written estimate - without any extras to be added later,
- 3.) Gives you a detailed 3-D drawing of exactly what your cabinet job will look like in your home. No surprises.

Without items like these on paper (and in detail) it's very easy for "misunderstandings" to occur. Plus, it also leaves the door to overcharges wide open. Protect yourself: deal only with a reputable cabinet shop that gives you detailed estimates in writing...and doesn't leave any loopholes.

Mistake #7 - Not being educated on materials and methods of construction

Knowledge is power. When you're not educated, it's easy for somebody to take advantage of you. Just think of auto repair mechanics - some actually make a living based on the fact that very few people can actually verify the work they've done. As a result, they can charge you for needless repairs.

This is true of any industry - and unfortunately, cabinet shops are included. If you can't verify and "hold your own" in conversations and negotiations with cabinetmakers, you may fall prey to the few bad apples that use dishonest sales practices and overcharge.

Here is a very common example: For instance, did you know some dishonest cabinet shops actually use lesser-quality wood instead of the more expensive wood you ordered?

It happens all the time: **maple can be stained to look like more expensive cherry, ash can be stained to look like higher quality oak, and cheap 'bayneck' can be stained to look like more expensive mahogany.** This is another "dirty little secret" of some cabinet shops.

Don't take the purchase of cabinets lightly. Get educated. Hopefully, this report will help you do just that. It's purpose is to educate you - and by doing so, empower you on the process of purchasing cabinets for your home.

Mistake #8: Buying cabinets without first seeing an in-depth portrait of your purchase before starting the job.

It's very important for you to be able to "see" your job before you start it for two reasons:

- #1.) It's usually hard to envision exactly how your job will look without first seeing it on paper before the project starts...

#2.) You avoid potentially costly errors of design - in advance.

So, the question is, how do you "see" your job before it's actually finished? Simple: through contacting a cabinet shop or designer who uses a 3-D cabinet graphics program that "draws" your new kitchen and prints out various copies of designs for you to choose from. Here is what 3-D design software does for you:

1.) It gives you the ability to choose different options in your kitchen or bath design before you make the commitment - and the really good programs do it in full 3-D color. You can see precisely how your new cabinets will look in your home. It looks like an actual photo!

2.) The software ensures everything fits perfectly. It helps you avoid unseen difficulties.

3.) It gives the exact dimensions to your cabinet shop so it saves them time in the construction process. This in turn saves you time and, most importantly, money.

Find a cabinet shop that uses a specialized 3-D kitchen design software program. You'll save time, money and regrets down the road. Oh, and by the way, once you've contracted with them, they should NOT charge you to give you printouts of the designs of your job.

Mistake #9: Purchasing cabinets from one of the "home centers" that has no local dedicated customer service and no personalized attention.

Large home centers are notorious for this. They keep costs down by reducing their labor costs. This means they are frequently understaffed and provide very little customer service - their "customer service" usually consists of pointing where to find an item. Or they have you stand in line (like a bakery) to get an answer to a simple question. (Ever find yourself wandering the empty aisles of a home center?)

Remember: time is money. If it's difficult to get adequate help on simple issues...can you imagine if something truly important goes wrong with your cabinet job? It could be a nightmare. TIP: Find a cabinet shop that answers their phone and takes pride in their customer service. You want a shop that is responsive to your needs. Cabinetry for your home is a big investment. Don't cut corners when it comes to service - you'll regret it later.

Mistake #10: Purchasing cabinets from a middleman instead of an owner.

When you purchase from a middleman or dealer and NOT the actual manufacturer, you're limited on the options you get for your money - they aren't the final decision maker. Also: sales reps have very little bargaining ability since

they are simply selling a product for someone else. They generally want the job on their terms and certainly won't bend over backwards to win your business.

So if possible, find a cabinet shop where you can actually talk to the owner who is manufacturing the cabinets for you. This extra personal service goes a long way when you are planning your new kitchen.

Mistake #11: Purchasing custom cabinets from an unlicensed and uninsured cabinet shop.

This mistake can be the most costly of all. A legitimate cabinetmaker will have a license to build and insured against any on-the-job related accidents. Hiring a shop without these credentials could end up costing you more than 5 times the original bid.

So, that's it. Avoid these eleven most-common mistakes and you'll be far ahead of any other homeowner when it comes to finding quality cabinetry