



Designing your office kitchenette

A place where employees come to relax, connect and share ideas in a more casual environment, the office kitchen or kitchenette is the heart of the office. Morning coffee break, lunch, afternoon coffee break, Friday knock offs – you know the drill. As culture and employee wellbeing is so important in business today, it's essential to get the design of the office right.

The heart is pretty important right? So when it's time to upgrade your existing office or move into a brand new premises you need to put some thought into the kitchen design. It needs to be functional, practical and welcoming. The space needs to cater for the right amount of office users, contain clever storage solutions to maximise space and needs to fit in (or stand out) with the rest of your fit out.

We've put together five design tips for when designing a new kitchenette.

1. Zoning and Flow

A great kitchen or kitchenette should have everything exactly where you need it and zoning should be split into four main zones: storage, cooking, preparation and washing.

This may sound obvious but each zone should be fully functional within each area. For example, storage zones should contain pantry storage sections, the fridge etc and similarly the cooking zone should contain not just the cooktop but cooking utensils in easy reach.

Back in the day (the 1940's) kitchen design was formed around a 'magical triangle' which connected three items; the sink, the fridge and the cooktop. The laws of the triangle are that each length of the triangle should be between 1.2 and 2.7m and when you add all sides of the triangle up the total length is between 4 and 8m. Designers today still use this when starting to pen together kitchen design and this creates what we call flow.

Kitchenettes are a little different as space saving kitchenettes don't contain a return run of cupboards so won't have a triangle. The most important thing is to keep them in zones.

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2. Storage

If you're limited with space it's important to get creative. Clever storage solutions can really maximise the use of small spaces and as kitchens take up valuable office space they generally tend to be on the smaller side, hence the term kitchenette. Luckily there are lots of clever solutions that can be fitted into cabinets.

Say goodbye to out of date pantry items with pull out pantry units to avoid items getting lost at the back of shelves. Fridges, microwaves and bins can be built in and appliance cupboards to keep kettles and toasters hidden to free up bench space and give the kitchen a sleek look. Building appliances into the cabinetry can give a much more bespoke feel and overall a higher quality result.

3. Benchtops

It's a pretty crucial element of the kitchen, don't you agree? It's where you prepare the lunch you've been counting down the minutes for.

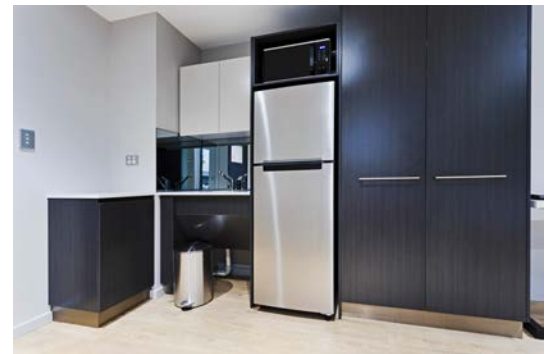
Choosing the right benchtop is important for a couple of reasons; aesthetics and durability. Of course budget comes into play but generally you get what you pay for and cheaper benchtops don't tend to have the longevity of other benchtops.

Options include:

- Laminate
- Engineered Stone
- Solid Surface
- Timber
- Real Stone

Deciding on the right benchtop is dependent on budget as mentioned but also the space you have to work with and the right design to go with the rest of the office. There are pros and cons to each, for example laminate is versatile and more cost effective whereas solid surface benchtops are more expensive but much more durable. See our article on Corian vs Caesarstone for more information on solid surface benchtops.

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4. Materials

Will your office fit out reflect your company's branding? This question will help you decide what materials and colours to turn to when designing your new kitchenette. If you aren't matching your kitchen design with the rest of your office, websites for inspiration such as Pinterest will be your best friend.

Laminate finishes on doors is a great cost effective option and there are many many different colour and texture variations that can suit a huge array of design styles. From popping colours to beautiful timber grains, there is something to suit everyone's taste. If you are looking for a sleeker finish, a spray applied 2 pack paint gives a really high level of finish and can be mixed to practically any colour.

Splashbacks are an opportunity to add a bold splash of colour or add some texture to the space, too. Options include various tiles, stainless steel, coloured glass or Metaline; an aluminium based material similar to glass but with superior cost efficiency and versatility.

What material the kitchenette is made from also matters. Ensure that the carcass material (the board material that the cupboards are made from) is moisture resistant and they are low chemical boards. The standard in Australia is recommended to use E0.

To create longevity it's essential to use quality fittings. When it comes to hinges, drawer runners and handles, sticking to a well known brand like Blum guarantees the moving parts of the kitchen are going to be moving smoothly for years to come. Blum hinges and drawer runners are fully adjustable and hard wearing.

5. Appliances

Kitchenettes won't necessarily contain the same full size appliances as a normal kitchen. You can get smaller ovens, dishwashers and fridges that take up less space. Deciding which appliances you will want or need in your kitchen should be done at the planning stage so that the zones can be set. Minor items like toasters, kettles and coffee machines will be used more in an office kitchenette opposed to stovetops and ovens.

If there's anything else you'd like to find out about designing an office kitchenette send us an email at hello@croudaceconstructs.com

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