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LOOK TO THE FUTURE

**Where's the KBB
market heading
and what does
it mean for your
business?**

**The industry
has its say...**



INSIDE
TRACK
RICHARD
EDMONDSON



‘The kitchen designer of the future needs to be proactive, better informed and supported...’

The owner of **Edmondson Interiors** believes the key to a successful future is meeting clients' needs and taking responsibility for all aspects of a project

Today's better-educated client has a host of information at his or her fingertips. This is a mixture of TV programmes on home improvement, social media increasing the awareness of what is available, newspaper and magazine articles, competition between architects and information put forward by our own industry.

Our clients realise that coordinating a number of trades is not for them and is better done by one company with a depth of experience and a wealth of tried-and-tested subcontractors and in-house personnel.

And so the kitchen designer of the future needs to be proactive, better informed and supported. Perhaps the largest difficulty will always be explaining how increasingly complex demands increase cost. The kitchen designer needs to be open and explain this from an early stage to avoid any later embarrassment. Most people want to know exactly what the cost is from as early as possible in any project.

With certain projects, it may be a good idea to add a lighting specialist to the mix – someone who can work with an interior designer and a kitchen designer to find exactly the right wall lights, pendants down-lights and concealed lights for the project along with the ability to create different mood settings for different uses.

That aspect is so important for tomorrow's kitchens, where dining, homework and cooking will increasingly have to be taken into account. The 21st century kitchen is a multipurpose space for all the family – not simply an area in which to cook.

Clients naturally are, and always will be, the initial catalyst for any project. A Pinterest board or a picture, or just a well-voiced idea, may kick things off, but the kitchen designer has to build on this initial concept. Consumers can and should, as they expect, enjoy the process and be utterly thrilled at the end result.

Too many people accept a compromise, but this is changing. And rightly so. How many kitchen designers have taken a pride in their efforts just to see a white plastic front used on switch plates and double sockets? If they are responsible for everything from day one, the design is gradually worked up to finish with a very happy client. And a happy client makes a happy workshop.

The companies that respond to their clients' demands, and who deliver on all these fronts, will build strong relationships with their customers. Repeat business is guaranteed, friends of clients come in on a regular basis, Facebook and social media spreads the word further. Clients return for projects to be done in other areas of their homes, often many years later. That's very satisfying for me as a business owner.

Clients are ever more demanding in all aspects of our work, which enables us to rise to the challenge and push ourselves further to meet their wishes. For me, it's not a negative. Challenging, yes. Interesting, yes. Stimulating, yes.

After 35 years, I'm still learning and developing as a professional. There are not many lines of work you can say that about. I love it.

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