



The Definitive **Consumer Guide**

to Buying Kitchen Cabinets



***R**emodeling your kitchen is more than just a fun way to increase your enjoyment of your home: it's an investment. And like any investment in your property, a kitchen remodel can take time and rack up expenses. With the countless options available to you in designing your new kitchen including finishes, colors, styles, and construction materials you need to scrutinize brands and prices carefully.*

Navigating through the many uncertainties which can crop up while searching for your ideal cabinets can be a harrowing experience without educated know-how. This comprehensive guide has all the data you need to make a knowledgeable purchase decision for your dream cabinets while avoiding costly pitfalls.

Our Best Tips for Kitchen Cabinet Shopping

Don't Be Exploited: Avoid These 4 Common Tactics for Swindling You On Kitchen Cabinets

Revealed: 5 Unsavory Practices of Most Kitchen Cabinet Wholesalers

Learn About the 6 Most Expensive Mistakes In Buying Kitchen Cabinets

7 Clear Signs of a Bad Kitchen Designer

Don't Be Exploited: Avoid These 4 Common Tactics for Swindling You On Kitchen Cabinets

Exploit 1: Suggesting Brand Name Is Key

Brand names carry strong connotations of quality and reliability, in virtually every industry. Marketing departments and an increasing wave of questionable quality in products have driven this demand for known brands, often to the detriment of consumers. Exploiting your reliance or trust in big brand names is a frequently used exploit to disguise quality or service issues. Products sold at a premium can almost always be found at other distributors under generic names for more affordable costs.

Additionally, some big brand stores capitalize on convincing potential customers that their inventory carries anything they could find at other online stores. Convincing the customer that their cabinet inventory carries every available option confines their remodel to only the limited supply on their shelves rather than the massive array of styles and colors you can find online.

Some online cabinet wholesalers even deliberately disguise the name or identity of a particular cabinet line in an effort to sell at an inflated price. We have discovered knock off brands of some of our shaker lines at other RTA cabinet retailers with fancy names at much higher cost! Ensure that you thoroughly review the description, quality, and price details of cabinets while you shop, and when in doubt: order a sample door!

Exploit 2: Particle Board Versus Plywood

Whether you find yourself shopping for new kitchen cabinets through the well lit aisles of a local brick and mortar store or at any of a multitude of online stores, the material of the cabinets is frequently the LAST thing mentioned in their literature. Their marketing pitch for the cabinets will revolve primarily around how the cabinets look or their impressive styles while skirting the issue of their construction. You may ask yourself at this point: Now why would they avoid discussing something as seemingly crucial as the qualities of the actual material the cabinets are comprised of? The answer is simple: Because many cabinet retailers and wholesalers provide cabinets made from much cheaper materials such as fiberboard or particle board. Cabinets made out of these low quality substitutes are still sold at premium prices, but will not last long as they warp or swell from moisture that is all too common in kitchens.

Additionally, fiberboard and particle board are not well known for their durability; nails and screws have a tendency to find their way out of them, loosening cabinets and posing a danger both to your family and your dinnerware. If you want to reinforce these cabinets, you'll almost certainly need to create new unsightly holes as the old screw or nail holes can't be trusted to hold properly.



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Exploit 3: Custom Made, RTA, Pre-Assembled, & Semi-Custom

Cabinets are not all created equal, and that is a certainty. However, the question of quality has become quiet muddy territory due to fierce competition between different schools of thought in the cabinet market of kitchen remodels. Providers of a single type of cabinet will say virtually anything to get an edge and draw the attention of a consumer, even if it may be to the detriment of that potential customer.

An important rule of thumb when it comes to the question of custom made cabinets, RTA cabinets, pre-assembled cabinets, and semi-custom cabinets: These terms have nothing to do with relative quality--they only describe the method of production.

Many stores and online shops that specialize in custom cabinets will want to justify high prices by positioning their cabinet quality as a cut above the rest. In reality, the materials and construction quality of pre-assembled, semi-custom, and RTA cabinets often meet or even exceed that of custom cabinets. In shopping around, focus on the materials being used and measurements of thickness--those are some golden details regardless of how the cabinets are promoted.

Exploit 4: "Everything In Stock"

Maintaining a substantial inventory is a tremendous measure on the part of any business. It demands a ready and well coordinated supply chain, understanding of demand, and well oiled shipping arrangements. A ready stock of your most desired cabinets says a great deal about a cabinet store, so it's no surprise that this is heavily promoted.

The exploitative lie here is fairly straightforward: most cabinet stores on the web which position themselves as cabinet wholesalers are not. They are cleverly concealed resellers who drop ship inventory from entirely other businesses and importing items of questionable quality that they have not themselves investigated. As you might have guessed, in these cases the need for replacement parts can be quite high when orders are not verified by all of the different companies ACTUALLY reviewing your single order with these stores.

Best Online Cabinets is unique in a sea of online cabinet stores: our warehouse is fully stocked with products quality checked by our own team, and our kitchen designers regularly inspect hardware on orders. In addition to our large inventory, we also provide top name brands to satisfy every customer. This personal touch is what makes our service award winning for many consecutive years, and we don't plan to change.



Revealed: 5 Unsavory Practices of Most Kitchen Cabinet Wholesalers

Unsavory Practice 1: Displaying Digital Images Instead of the Real Thing

In the Internet age, it has become commonplace for images that you see in promotional materials and advertisements to be cleaned up and to present a product in the best possible light. There isn't an issue with this, so long as it doesn't cross over into deceptive practices promoting advantages or product qualities that don't actually exist. After all, a customer wants to really see what they're buying!

Since so many cabinet stores online are not true wholesalers, they don't have direct access to the products they sell. Without a true accessible inventory, they resort to promoting their cabinet selection with digital images that aren't even real photographs of the cabinet styles or designs. While they MAY appear to be real cabinets, on second look it will become clear that you're looking at something whipped up in Photoshop. Sadly, this issue can be an alarm that your order could arrive with all kinds of issues demanding replacement parts.

A true cabinet wholesaler provides a large variety of high quality photographs that show the quality and detail in each kitchen cabinet.

Unsavory Practice 2: Not Disclosing Cabinet Details

Your new kitchen cabinets shouldn't just look pretty and "tie the room together"--investing in new cabinets should also guarantee sustainable hardware that will stand the test of time for years to come. Buying low quality cabinets that need to be replaced or fixed soon after installation is a nightmare you definitely want to avoid.

A hallmark aspect of cabinet stores that aren't true wholesalers with an intimate knowledge of their products is vague product descriptions. No details on actual storage dimensions such as drawer depth, thickness of panels, materials used, or even the safety standards of cabinet production are provided, or are extremely limited. Sometimes these are shown as interchangeable elements between two different cabinet styles, where it is clear that the panels are of differing thicknesses!

Make sure that cabinets you are interested in display all relevant details on their product pages, and that sample doors you order match up with the info available.



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Unsavory Practice 3: Marketing a Distributor's Product as Their Own

Online cabinet stores and even brick and mortar stores without their own manufacturing or direct supply have a dozen ways of obscuring the fact that they are only a middle man. One technique in a saturated marketplace of cabinet sellers is rebranding a product from a true wholesaler as their own unique kitchen cabinet offering. Where possible, they will copy and paste any relevant descriptive text or product details directly from the original manufacturer's page in order to increase the air of legitimacy.

At Best Online Cabinets, we manufacture our own kitchen cabinet lines in addition to providing brand name cabinet lines. Full control over materials, quality control, and reduced stages in product delivery mean that we can pass savings on to you, the customer.

Unsavory Practice 4: Lack of Real Stock Affects Replacement Parts

In a perfect world, it would go without repeating: many online cabinet stores and local shops do not host their own inventory. Beyond the numerous other problems this leads to, it makes getting replacement parts difficult and in some instances near impossible. Cabinets that these shops are selling you come pre-boxed from the factory supplying them, and the only way to get replacement parts is to strip them from a cabinet set. These stores without their own direct line to manufacturing must isolate the part you require and then you may need to wait months for the part to arrive at the store you ordered from, then to get to you. In the meantime, your entire kitchen remodel is held up! Depending on the parts you're awaiting, this could mean upwards of 10 weeks without even your kitchen floor installed. Talk about problems!

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Unsavory Practice 5: Some Companies Are Just Small Laptop Shops

Websites don't always show you the whole picture; a nicely designed site may lead you to believe you're dealing with a large company that has roots and knows what it's about. While it may make perfect business sense for an aspiring entrepreneur, customers are not typically served well by the illusion that they are buying from a large established store when it is in fact just one individual with a laptop.

Let us say that your order with one of these tiny shops goes through 99% correct, but you need a replacement part. That small establishment could lack the resources to quickly solve your issue and wind up spending days or weeks in hot debate with the factory they ordered from, or their shipping company about fees they need to pay. If they can't fix your problem, they may just disappear as a small operation has less accountability to its customers than an established cabinet wholesaler.

Your best option is the one that ensures you get your remodel done on time and with no headaches: choose a trusted company with plenty of detailed and excellent reviews from existing customers. Even if there is an issue with your large order, you can rest assured that they will make you whole **fast**.



Learn About the 6 Most Expensive Mistakes In Buying Kitchen Cabinets

Mistake 1: Higher Price = Higher Quality

You've been reading a lot about the finer points of what to look for in a cabinet at this point. And if you have a lot of money to throw around, you may consider that you could avoid many of these pitfalls simply by spending more. Even if your budget is limitless, however, we want to make sure that you avoid a very obvious trap: that the more money you throw at your remodel, the more you're guaranteed to love the end result.

This ties in to the earlier section on avoiding the illusion that brand name is key. It is an impractical and ultimately valueless concept to throw your money into. Inflated prices are attached to perception across all markets and products, cabinets being no exception. In many instances, these high priced offerings are still constructed from low quality materials such as particle board or fiberboard.

Similarly, the style of a cabinet should not be its final selling point. Between two cabinet stores with similar styles available, consider the service you will receive along with the sturdy construction of each. Would you buy a car with a beautiful body but an engine made out of cardboard? Of course not. Look at all the details of cabinets you're interested in, and qualify the price based on those!

Mistake 2: Assuming \$40k+ is Always the Right Remodel Cost

There is always going to be a friend or neighbor looking to brag about how much money they sank into their remodel. They walk their guests through the space, pointing out each item while you can almost envision price tags popping up from the countertops and cabinet sections. That is their prerogative, but there is something far greater to brag about: how much you saved on a kitchen that looks exactly the same as theirs.

When you shop high quality RTA kitchen cabinets, you could get the same beautiful kitchen at a ***fraction of the cost*** without sacrificing cabinet lifespan or hardness. Touring your guests through your amazing new kitchen while pointing out how little you spent shows what a savvy buyer you are--and how much money you had left over for whatever you want!

Now that's something worth bragging about.

Mistake 3: Buying Kitchen Cabinets Online is a Big Risk

The history of purchasing online is a mixed one. Without the trust of a large name like Sears had with its catalog, many people can be reluctant to buy something they've never directly seen or touched from a salesperson they've never met. One crucial element to having a positive experience buying online is to find a wholesaler with a large volume of testimonials that indicate their support experience is consistent throughout. Buying RTA cabinets for your kitchen remodel isn't the same as picking up a t-shirt; you will likely be dealing with a designer and going back and forth over the dimensions of your kitchen. Assure yourself that you're dealing with professionals who care and know their stuff. Experienced staff and a large stock translate to faster order fulfillment and, even if you end up requiring replacement parts, quick turnaround.

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Mistake 4: Thinking Factory Prices Don't Really Exist

Kitchen design centers and big box stores supply a tremendous amount of kitchen remodelers, there's no ifs ands or buts about that. The reality is that people getting their cabinets and hardware from these sources are missing out on major savings. Cabinet wholesalers pass on savings to you in a number of ways:

Knowledgeable staff with direct access to stock understand their inventory better, and how to best take advantage of the space in your kitchen for maximum effect

By skipping the middleman, you avoid the added reseller costs

Increased know-how from a wholesaler's kitchen designer reduces turnaround time on your initial order as well as any potential replacements

Buying from a legitimate kitchen cabinet wholesaler is as direct as you can get, with the true advantage of factory pricing and a faster remodel. It's a no-brainer.

Mistake 5: Being Convinced RTA Cabinets Are Lower Quality

You read earlier about custom made vs pre-assembled vs RTA vs semi-custom cabinets. It's worth emphasizing the point: operating under the blanket assumption that ready to assemble options for your remodel will be lower quality would be begging to lose money needlessly.

An important component in the cabinet industry is that unless you are tapping a woodworking master to craft you true custom cabinets for your remodel, every other manufacturer is still assembling your final product from a number of pre-cut components. Functionally, these are already "ready to assemble" cabinets that have simply been pre-assembled. You're simply saving on the labor cost--possibly quite considerable, since labor constitutes the lion's share of most remodel jobs.

Materials for ready to assemble cabinets are constructed with care to ensure the simplest procedure for assembly by even a total novice. In the rare cases where included instructions don't provide the complete picture of putting your cabinets together, you can always find extremely detailed videos online.

The fact of the matter is that RTA cabinets do not vary in quality one bit from most cabinets you can purchase online or in a local store, though they're certainly cheaper by a large margin.



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Mistake 6: Guessing All Online Cabinet Stores Are the Same

Given the meteoric rise in popularity of inexpensive alternatives to custom cabinets, it should come as no big surprise that there are a thousand and one different sites claiming to sell the absolute highest quality options for your kitchen or bathroom. We love a good bit of competition, and numerous available options is beneficial for you, the consumer, too. But appearances can be deceiving when it comes to just how many options you're really seeing.

In actuality, the number of true cabinet wholesalers is significantly smaller; most of the websites and even local stores you will find while searching for your remodel are just extra "storefronts" for the same locations with a different coat of paint or affiliates of those sites looking to make a couple of bucks passing through your business. And here is where a potential pitfall awaits you: if you select one of these "phantom" cabinet stores that operates as a passthrough, and the smallest thing goes wrong with your order or needs clarification, it can translate into weeks of resolution while your needs are translated through multiple people to get to the original manufacturer. Meanwhile, your whole remodel is put on hold.

Finding the right cabinet store that provides excellent and timely service is important; take advantage of every available option to determine the right one for you:

- Order sample doors to investigate quality while also seeing turnaround time on delivery. Sample doors that arrive fast are most likely coming from a cabinet store with direct access to its manufacturing.
- Talk on the phone with one of the store's designers: do they communicate with impressive understanding about their products and how they will work with your kitchen specifically?
- Investigate their customer testimonials: do they appear honest and realistic? Some sites may have fabricated testimonials in order to create an image of a large customer base, and a hint of that would be seeing only extremely positive reviews with no specifics about the customer's kitchen or ordered cabinets.

We want you to find your best fit in getting the most out of your kitchen. That won't always be the dirt cheap option, as sometimes the lowest prices lead to extremely poor service and botched orders.



7 Clear Signs of a Bad Kitchen Designer



Sign 1: They Aren't a Full Time Designer

One issue we hear about time and again from our customers is having dealt with a part-time designer who had been responsible for slowing their remodel or introducing multiple problems in the kitchen. Professionals in a number of satellite areas (architecture, interior design, contractors working on other aspects of the kitchen, even your real estate agent) may have lofty ideas about what to do with your kitchen space that translate into catastrophe in practice. Designing is not just about having a keen eye for aesthetics, it includes strong engineering comprehension and spatial reasoning. You want the whole package in dealing with a designer when you're spending potentially tens of thousands of dollars and need to get it right.

Sign 2: "You Have Limited Design Possibilities"

Remodels can run a broad spectrum, from maintaining the essence of your existing kitchen while upgrading the cabinetry to total overhauls. In any scenario, calculations for space and materials need to be accurate to save you money and eliminate time waste. If a designer expresses that there is only one way to accomplish what you're looking for, you're talking to the wrong person. Excellent designers can look at the dimensions of your space and craft numerous end results to please the eye and provide increased functionality. A poor designer will "phone it in" and more often try to just get you to spend money on new cabinets without improving accessibility in your updated kitchen.

Sign 3: They Don't Have a Solution for Your Problem

Perhaps the single greatest indicator that you're dealing with an unprofessional designer is being told that there's no real way around an issue with your final kitchen. Experienced kitchen designers are well versed in the recommended measurements and guidelines for positioning as set forth by the National Kitchen & Bath Association. These rules ensure that kitchens are safer, easier to use, and provide better cooking experiences no matter the space or dimensions in your home. A designer who unknowingly violates them by, for example, not providing minimum workspace to the sides of your sink or placing a cooktop immediately next to a doorway is going to leave you with a kitchen that has problems.

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Sign 4: Your Cabinets, Fridge, or Oven Can't Open Fully

Tying in to 3 above, another clear case of a designer who is poorly educated in kitchen utility is a design that places moving parts without complete clearance. Unless your proposed kitchen is being designed in a broom closet, the designer should be placing components so that everything can be fully opened and accessible; if your fridge is within a foot of a side wall, one door likely won't fully open. If your corner cabinets are butting up against side molding then you may not be able to productively access them.

Sign 5: They Don't Know How A Kitchen Is Used

Your kitchen designer isn't just invested with the responsibility of guiding you towards a visually appealing space or one with plenty of generic storage. New and inexperienced designers will often fill the design out with regular cabinets, ignoring the valid uses of a kitchen and not providing you with options that increase your kitchen's functionality tenfold. Spice drawers and large pullouts for accessories to use with your range, corner cabinets for strainers and large bowls, glass cabinet doors to display your fine glassware, the list goes on and on. An excellent kitchen designer has not only a keen eye for what looks great, they help you to craft a kitchen that feels great to use.

Sign 6: Not Fully Utilizing All Available Space

A kitchen designer who throws maximum effectiveness out the window in favor of fun or novelty cabinets is spending your money poorly, full stop. Many kitchens will have sufficient space for perhaps a single corner cabinet with interesting pull-out shelves; seldom will it make sense for more. Cabinets containing lazy susans require a large amount of surrounding space, meaning fewer adjoining cabinets. Enough of these interesting storage solutions and you may have dramatically reduced storage space altogether.

Sign 7: Too Much Focus On Symmetry in Kitchen Design

Alignment of your base and wall cabinets may seem like a no-brainer, but small adjustments for your cooking range, your refrigerator, or corner cabinets can create serious offsets when added together. This is well understood by experienced designers, and a completely acceptable route to give you the best available storage. A fresh designer who is too attached to a vision of symmetry virtually guarantees that you lose out on storage space. The visual appeal of your kitchen is improved more by its usability than by a lot of empty space at corners just to make all lines meet.





Get Your Dream Kitchen Without Overspending

We hope that in reading this guide you feel more equipped to approach your kitchen remodel with a keen eye for picking out the right kitchen cabinets. The process doesn't have to be a difficult or intimidating one when you know what mistakes to avoid in selecting the best cabinet store [online](#).

Do your research, and don't take anyone's word—even ours! We would be doing our customers a disservice if we didn't make sure that they were confident in our products, our prices, and our service. We encourage every potential customer to check out our sample doors to see and feel what our cabinet doors can do for their kitchens. Our designers enjoy talking through remodel ideas to make you comfortable and knowledgeable about the possibilities available to you.

Need tips or ideas about how to get your bathroom done instead? We're no slouches when it comes to remodeling other areas of the home. Give us a call and let us help you avoid overspending. On behalf of the entire team at Best Online Cabinets, we want your remodel to be amazing.



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