

Kbbreview Industry Awards 2007

CATEGORY: Master Retailer Award for Kitchens

FINALIST: Kitchens International, Edinburgh

How would you describe your business to the judges?

THE FUSION OF KITCHENS INTERNATIONAL

Kitchens International were formed from the fusion of three of Scotland's most successful, respected and long established (a combined total of over 50years) kitchen retailers: Elegant Homes from Aberdeen, J.S.Geddes from Kilmarnock and Kitchens International from Edinburgh.

The director's desire was to create a luxury brand synonymous with quality, design and service, ensuring that Kitchens International would become market leaders by excelling client's expectations.

OUR SHOWROOMS AND DISTRIBUTION CENTRE

Showrooms:

Kitchens International are located in Aberdeen, Edinburgh (two studios) and Kilmarnock and display furniture by Poggenpohl, Kuhlmann (rebranded as 'The K.I. German Collection) Callerton and Leicht.

Distribution Centre:

A major part of our growth as a company was the need to be able to work from and distribute our products from a central base.

Within the centre we have computerised warehouse management, offices for all departments, a new trade showroom for architects and developers, and facilities for our Training Academy. By centralising our resources this allows us to use our showrooms as sales centres.

OUR DIRECTORS AND STAFF

Directors:

The five executive directors within Kitchens International are:

Jim Geddes and Gerry Watson:	Joint Managing Directors
Charles Stephen:	Installation Director
Sandy Park:	Administration Director
Paul O'Brien:	Creative Director

There are three non-executive directors who are involved at branch level:

Kevin Buchanan, Mary Geddes, Barrie Caw.

Our staff consists of :

General Manager, Project Managers, Installers, Order Processors, Surveyors, Sales Designers, Design Sales Technicians, Showroom Demonstrators, After Sales Manager, Contract Sales Specialist, I.T. Specialist. The total number of employees at Kitchens International is 86

OUR TRAINING ACADEMY

The future of our company is in the young people. We are currently developing our own Training Academy and have 18 trainees at various stages of their careers (all full time employees of K.I. Within Broxburn we have an area scheduled for training. Each trainee will have a written programme for their development. The ultimate aim is qualified staff for Kitchens International.

Our plans are to be able to offer a qualification at the end of their training and discussions have started with the CITB to develop this idea further.

We believe we are the only independent company within our industry that has taken a 'hands on' approach to the problem of lack of trained staff.

OUR PROCEDURES AND SYSTEMS

The directors have spent many years in the industry adapting and perfecting systems & procedures. At present our General Manager is developing a Procedures Manual for staff.

Our Procedure for a retail contract is:

1. Client arranges a Design Consultation with a salesperson.
2. Sales person surveys project.
3. Client is presented with designs and confirms order.
4. Sales person passes completed file to survey dept.
5. Surveyor contacts client to arrange after sales survey.
6. Installation details are produced and passed to Installation Dept. Client is sent an information pack with all information including start date.
7. Surveyor passes information to order processor to order with suppliers.
8. Installation Department contacts client prior to installation to confirm starting date.
9. Installers arrive on site and proceed with installation.
10. Project Manager visits at various stages throughout installation and arranges completion authorisation with client.
11. Sales Designer to visit client 2 weeks after installation to discuss 'How The Kitchen Works for Me' (This process to start Sept 07)

OUR MARKET PLACE

Kitchens International is firmly placed at the top end of the market. To confirm our market place the directors employed a branding company to ensure we were targeting the correct market for our products. It gave us an insight into who our target customer is, what they earn, where they shop etc. This allows us to reach our target market by advertising in the correct publications and marketing to the correct client base.

OUR MARKETING/ADVERTISING

The marketing of Kitchens International is about maximising our awareness at the minimum of cost. We market the company in the following ways.

1. Case studies within the glossy magazines.
2. A monthly interview with myself on the local radio station to discuss kitchen design.
3. One cook demo by celebrity chef Nick Nairn / branch / year.
4. A meal in the studio with invited guests (12-14 guests) prepared by a chef and involving professional waiter service.

Our advertising is mainly in glossy magazines and occasional local advertising.

OUR VEHICLES / UNIFORMS

All installers have a company vehicle (which is checked for cleanliness and tidiness) and a company uniform.

What specific evidence (including financial) can you give that your business is successful?

Our combined turnover before the merger was approximately £8million. Since the merger we are on target for our budget turnover of £10m with an expected profit of approx. £1m. Our budgets were prepared at the start of the year and management accounts are prepared quarterly.

All costs are achieved within budget.

Success is evident in:

1. Financial terms
2. The quality of our staff.
3. The enjoyment in being the force behind Kitchens International.

What strategy do you have for the future?

We aim to open two other studios in Scotland within 3 years,(we have an offer in for premises in one of our target areas). This will enable us to further develop our contract and retail business and reach our target turnover of £20m.

Internally we have started to proceed with our After Sale 'MOT' which will be a contract taken out with the client (first 2 years free) to service their kitchen yearly. This service will include eg. polishing worktops, adjusting doors, etc. This again will make Kitchens International proactive in the care of kitchens instead of being reactive to clients calls for aftercare.



