

Cooking up a storm

Re-designing your kitchen

Where should you start when it comes to refurbishing your kitchen? Do you work around the counters and kit that you already have or scrap the lot and start from scratch? Modernization has commercial advantages when it comes to efficiency and fitting in with new regulations, but it may also help you keep up with trends in food and expand your menu.

And how can you do the job within your budget? Is leasing an option? Here are a few hints and tips that might make the job easier...



Kitchen shelf life

Andrew Scott, Managing Director of Victus Consultancy, reflects on return on investment

Every aspect of hospitality has a shelf life, none more so than when it comes to the kitchen, so optimising how and when to redesign is the key for longevity.

All operators have to understand the time frame for the return on their investment regarding kitchen design. One must begin with the end in mind, and understand how long the newly designed kitchen will last and ensure that the effective finance is in place.

Purchasing all new kitchen equipment should only be done if a business can comfortably qualify the return on investment. With an expected lifespan of approximately 10

years for the average piece of equipment, it makes little sense to update more frequently unless an absolute necessity. What businesses can do is ensure that when they design their kitchen they incorporate a flexible approach so equipment can be updated and replaced when needed. Allow yourself that margin of error between surfaces and so that machinery of slightly varying sizes can be installed. Businesses should also ensure that they are following a comprehensive training programme and best practices to increase the longevity of their appliances.

How much you budget is simple; buy cheap and buy twice. You get what you pay for regarding equipment, there are so many entry level brands that many catering retailers are reluctant to service or fix. Reconditioned equipment operators have to be weary regarding the purchase and obtaining parts as many pieces become obsolete and sourcing parts become futile.

Leasing is a viable option, especially lease purchase as you end up with the kit after the agreed time span but you will have paid considerably more for the item. If you can afford it buy outright, have a warranty and spend the most amount of money available to the business.

Establishing who your clients are along with your unique challenges will enable you to make informed choices when it comes to updating and modernising your kitchen. Innovation is essential to staying competitive, but to do so effectively you need to understand your market segmentation which will then aid your decision when choosing new technology. A rural hotel with WiFi and network difficulties shouldn't overinvest in cloud technology, just as city hotels with limited space should invest more in innovative storage solutions. Any kitchen redesign should ultimately address existent problems and therefore improve the experience of your guests.



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