

Countertop Training Flyer

When talking countertops, it can be easy for a customer to choose one based on looks alone. However, there are a number of other factors they should consider before choosing. A materials durability, maintenance and cost are all important when discussing countertops. This flyer will serve to cover the different types of countertops and how to help a customer make a more informed choice when purchasing one.



Countertop Materials:

There are many different types of materials used when manufacturing countertops. This section will detail the most common types and some advantages and disadvantages to each.

Granite:

Granite is a very durable material with an elegant look. When talking granite it is important to talk about the “grade” of the granite. Granite is classed into different grades based on thickness, colors, veins, marking and pitting, the country where it was quarried, and the amount of soft minerals it contains. The cost of granite can vary dramatically between different grades of countertops. Lower range granite has recently been dropping in cost to around that of a high-def laminate top. Thickness can drive the cost up dramatically. Granite is on the higher end of the cost spectrum relative to other materials.



Granite is porous and needs sealed. The most concerning problems with granite can occur when it is not sealed properly. The sealant also wears off over time and needs to be resealed. For this reason, granite may not be the best option for customers with very active lifestyles. If a customer is careful with spills and good with home maintenance, granite may be a good option. Granite can be purchased with a lifetime sealer or a 15 year sealer. It's important to ask for that service when quoting tops with your fabricator.

Quartz:

Quartz countertops are made by crushing Quartz and forming it with a resin. Quartz is similar in appearance to granite and is available in a larger range of colors. Prices are comparable, sometimes more. The nonporous surface resists scratches and stains, and manufacturers generally offer a warranty. We have Cambria Quartz available to us. Because Quartz is non-porous, it never needs sealed or resealed and is very stain resistant. It also won't harbor germs like other surfaces. Quartz can also be field repaired in the event of a chip.

There aren't many downsides to quartz. The biggest concern is the price of quartz. For an upscale look with very little maintenance required quartz is a great option.



Jeff Cannata, former president of the National Kitchen and Bath Association, said that Quartz countertops are "just bulletproof," when discussing their durability.

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Marble:

Marble has a very elegant appearance and has been available since ancient times. The appearance of marble and its utility as well as heat resistance are great advantages. Marble is usually found in higher-end homes. Granite is more durable than marble.

The main disadvantage of marble is that it is porous and can be easily stained. For this reason it needs to be sealed and maintained. It's much softer and will patina (greenish film on the surface) and etch over time if not maintained regularly. It is also about as expensive as granite. Marble countertops are sometimes thought of as not durable enough for use in a kitchen. Because of this it is advised to use marble primarily in areas outside the kitchen. Quartz and High-Res Laminates are meant to imitate the look of Marble.



Laminates:

The surface known as Formica is plastic-coated and available in a range of colors—including high-def laminate surfaces that resemble granite. One of the biggest advantages to a laminate counter top is the cost. They are among the least expensive types of materials for counter tops. They are also lighter weight than other countertop materials and easier to install.

One of the main disadvantages of laminate countertops is the durability. Because they are formed by layers glued together they can damage easier than other types. Also, laminate countertops do not add much value to a house when reselling.



Solid Surfaces:

This is another man made material. Otherwise known by the popular brand-name Corian, solid surfaces offer a seamless, non-porous look. However, they are not as resistant to stains and scratches as other types. In appearance it is similar to quartz but it is not as heat resistant or durable. Corian is on the lower end cost-wise.

Other Types:

There are many other materials that countertops are made of but the types above are more common. Some of these are soapstone, ceramic tile, concrete, and stainless steel. Below is a chart detailing some of these types and their features of each type. In all cases, be willing to educate the consumer on the range of prices along with the features and benefits. If they know what they are buying, it will help them determine where they want to spend and how they expect the material to perform.

	Formica	Ceramic Tile	Concrete	Slate	Limestone/Travertine	Marble	Wood	Recycled Glass	Corian	Stainless Steel	Soapstone	Quartz	Granite
Heat Resistant		x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x
Scratch Resistant		x	x	x				x				x	x
Seamless									x	x			
Undermount Sinks				x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Integrated Sinks									x				
Coved Backsplashes	x								x				
Easily Repaired					x		x		x		x		
Non-Porous									x	x	x	x	
Low Maintenance	x	x		x				x		x		x	x
Affordable	x	x											
Wide Range of Colors	x	x	x					x	x			x	x
Stain Resistant										x	x	x	x
Genuine Natural Stone				x	x	x	x				x		
Resistant to Chemicals				x				x		x	x	x	x
Solid Structure			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
True Green Product							x	x					

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On the Edge:

Square edges are standard on most countertops, but decorative edges like radius, bullnose, bevel, egg and ogee — while a bit more expensive — are another way to customize a kitchen. Availability of edges varies based on countertop materials. If you read this, email Brandon to be entered into a drawing for a Lee polo. Below are some of the different Cambria edges available.



Other Notes on Cambria:

With Cambria, all colors are the same price, this is not true with other quartz companies which have several price groups.

Cambria includes the cost of edges available for the same thickness of material sold.

Example: The most commonly sold thickness is 3cm, so all 3cm edge profiles will be covered in the cost of the top. The upgrade occurs if the consumer would like to build-up to the edge. Example: The customer has a 3cm top but wants a 4 or 6cm edge detail.

Next Steps and a Couple Questions:

The next steps are to learn more. Below are links to three Cambria videos.

Bryan Cranston Reviews Cambria:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZdMn41G8zQ>

Choosing the right surface:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=2&v=dqI_VGtHBj8

Getting Started with Cambria:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7018KSmh53M>

TRUE or FALSE: Quartz is more expensive than Granite

TRUE or FALSE: Granite is more prone to chipping than Marble

TRUE or FALSE: Quartz is similar in durability to Granite but requires less maintenance.