



Setting Customer Expectations

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Setting realistic customer expectations helps a business win the customers' trust. If you can successfully manage these expectations, you can better meet and even exceed them, and as a result you get to have a long relationship with customers, some of whom will become advocates.

Setting customer expectations early-on is a good way to build trust and retain customers in the long term.

When a customer is dissatisfied or angry with a business, it is usually because something didn't happen the way the customer had expected.

Granite & Natural Stone

- Hard with resistance to scratching
- Primary minerals in slabs are resistant to most chemicals found in a residential setting; however, there may be trace minerals present in some natural stones that are vulnerable to some acids.
- Fissures occur naturally.
- Pitting is common.
- It is common to repair chips, fissures, or cracks where the slab is manufactured, in the shop, or at time of installation. According to the Natural Stone Institute, these are not considered defective in any way.
- Although stone is quite hard, chipping along edges with sharper edge profiles like Eased and Ogee is quite common.

Granite & Natural Stone

- Granite and Natural Stone are materials made by mother nature that have visible seams and variations in color and texture that makes each slab unique. Granite and Natural Stone have inherent natural features like pits, fissures and veining. They also have areas with different reflective properties known as “water spots.” These features may become more or less noticeable when the position (vertical or horizontal) of the slab is changed or when the lighting is changed. Granite and Natural Stone can chip or crack while being transported, handled or installed. It is common to repair chips or cracks using an epoxy or polyester resin at the time of installation. A polished finish is standard.

Fissures

- Occur naturally in many stone types
- Defined by the American Geological Institute as, “An extensive crack, break, or fracture in the rock, which may contain mineral-bearing material.”
- Visible separation along intercrystalline boundaries
- This separation may start and stop within the field of the stone or extend through an edge.
- A fissure differs from a crack in that it is a naturally occurring feature in the stone that may be found in other areas of the same slab or other slabs of the same material.
- Fissures do not make the granite less durable or otherwise inferior, and do not qualify the slab for replacement.



Quartz

- Even though quartz is more consistent than natural stone, we cannot guarantee color match to existing countertops with any product
- “Resin Pooling” is a normal occurrence and lends to its beauty
- Stain resistant, no sealing required
- Not heat resistant and can crack under heat
- Is not UV stable and is for indoor installations only
- Although quartz is quite hard, chipping along edges with sharper edge profiles like Eased and Ogee is quite common.

Quartz (Cambria, Silestone, Caesarstone, Viatera, Stonemark)

- Quartz countertops are fabricated from quartz slabs and can have pits due to raw materials of varying hardness. Quartz slabs are manufactured using a combination of crushed quartz, dyes, resins and silica sand fillers. On average, quartz slabs consist of 93 percent quartz, 6 percent resin, and 1 percent dyes and fillers. Existing quartz countertops cannot be matched to your new countertop.
- Quartz countertops have visible seams. They are non-porous, stain-resistant and have concentrations of colors or “pooling” that is a natural occurrence and lend to its beauty. Quartz countertops do not require sealing and can chip while being transported, handled or installed. It is common to repair chips using an epoxy or polyester resin at the time of installation. A polished finish is standard.

Resin Pooling



- Expect Resin Pooling in Quartz
- Resin Pooling is a natural characteristic of Quartz and lends to its beauty



Ultra Compact / Ultra Durable

- Non-porous, heat resistant, scratch resistant, UV stable, and stain resistant
- Best product for outdoor kitchens
- Pattern does not go all the way thru the material – this will be visible at cutouts and edges that are not mitered
- Brittle and difficult to repair if chips occur
- Radiuses are only available with an Eased Edge (not Sharknose or Miter)
- All inside corners require seams

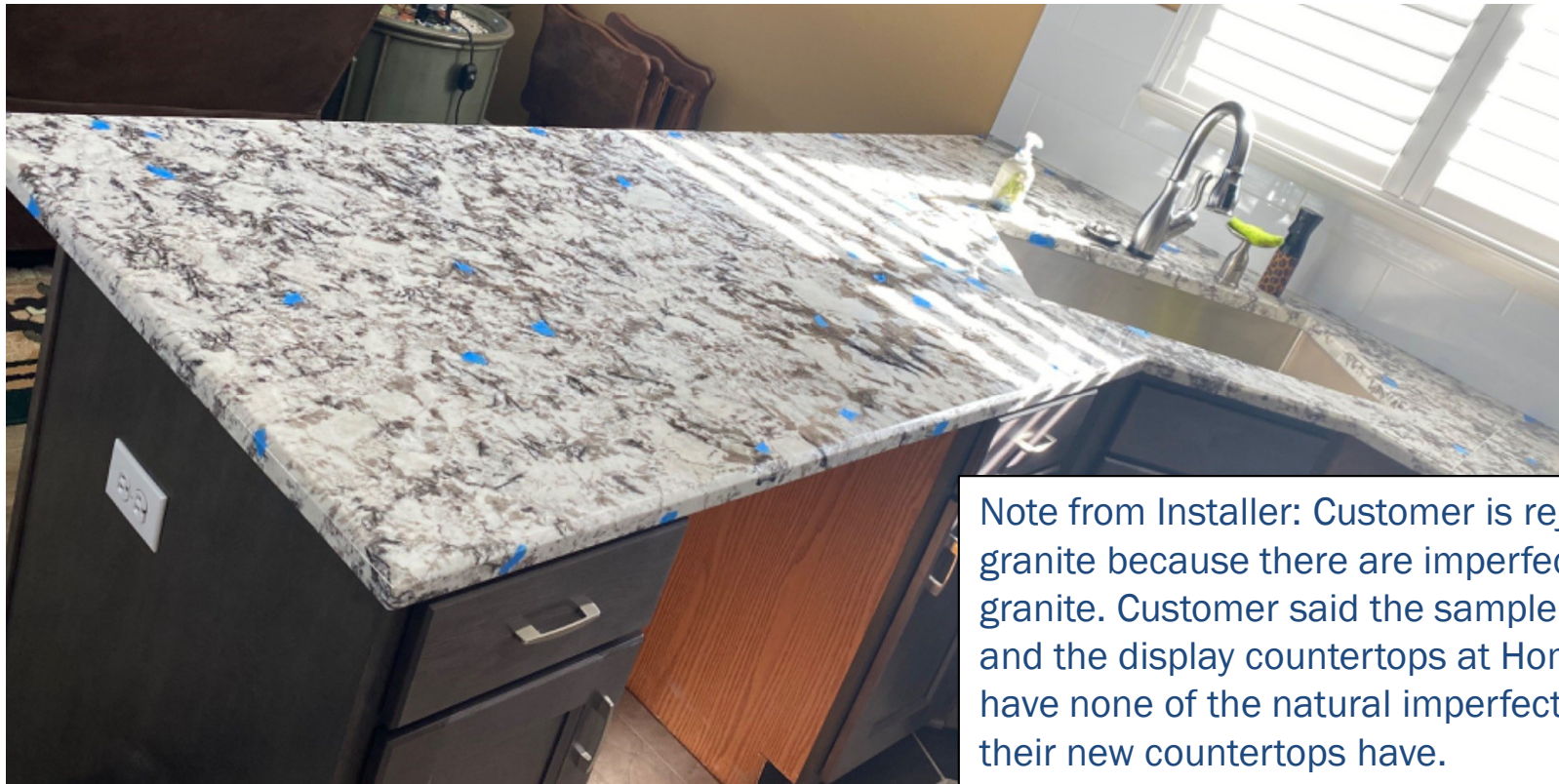


Ultra Compact / Ultra Durable

Dekton

- Dekton countertops are impact resistant, but can be damaged by strong impact to the surface or edge. Due to the material's high density, it will behave differently than other surfaces. While other surfaces may crack from strong impact, Dekton may have the propensity to shatter. Dekton countertops can chip while being transported, handled or installed. It is common to repair chips.
- Dekton countertops have visible seams. The base color is through-body; however, the pattern is not. A mitre-edge (which is a custom-quoted edge) must be used to continue the pattern from the surface onto the edge. Eased/Sharknose edges will only show the base color of the slab with a matte or polished finish. Slab viewing is highly recommended for colors with veining and movement. Mitre edges cannot be used in conjunction with radius corners or ends. Cutouts cannot be done onsite. Sinks, faucets and cooktops must be on site at the time of template. Dekton must be installed on a flat, level surface. Cabinets must be level prior to installation.
- Outdoor installation: Dekton is UV resistant and the preferred surface for outdoor application. When installing in an outdoor kitchen, extra precaution must be taken to ensure the surface is flat, level, and stable. If installing on outdoor cabinetry, the cabinets must be level, sturdy and completely stationary. If installing on another surface (frames, pavers, etc.), the countertops must be fully supported under the material and adhered to concrete/cement board such as Hardy Backer. Never use plywood or marine plywood for support outdoors. 90 degree inside radius on "L" shaped tops should be avoided. All cutouts should be radiused in the corners. BBQ Grills and appliances should not be set directly on the countertop. There should be at least a 1/16" gap between the grill and the countertop
- Care & Maintenance: Dekton requires very little maintenance. Simply wipe the surface with soap and water or any common household cleaner.

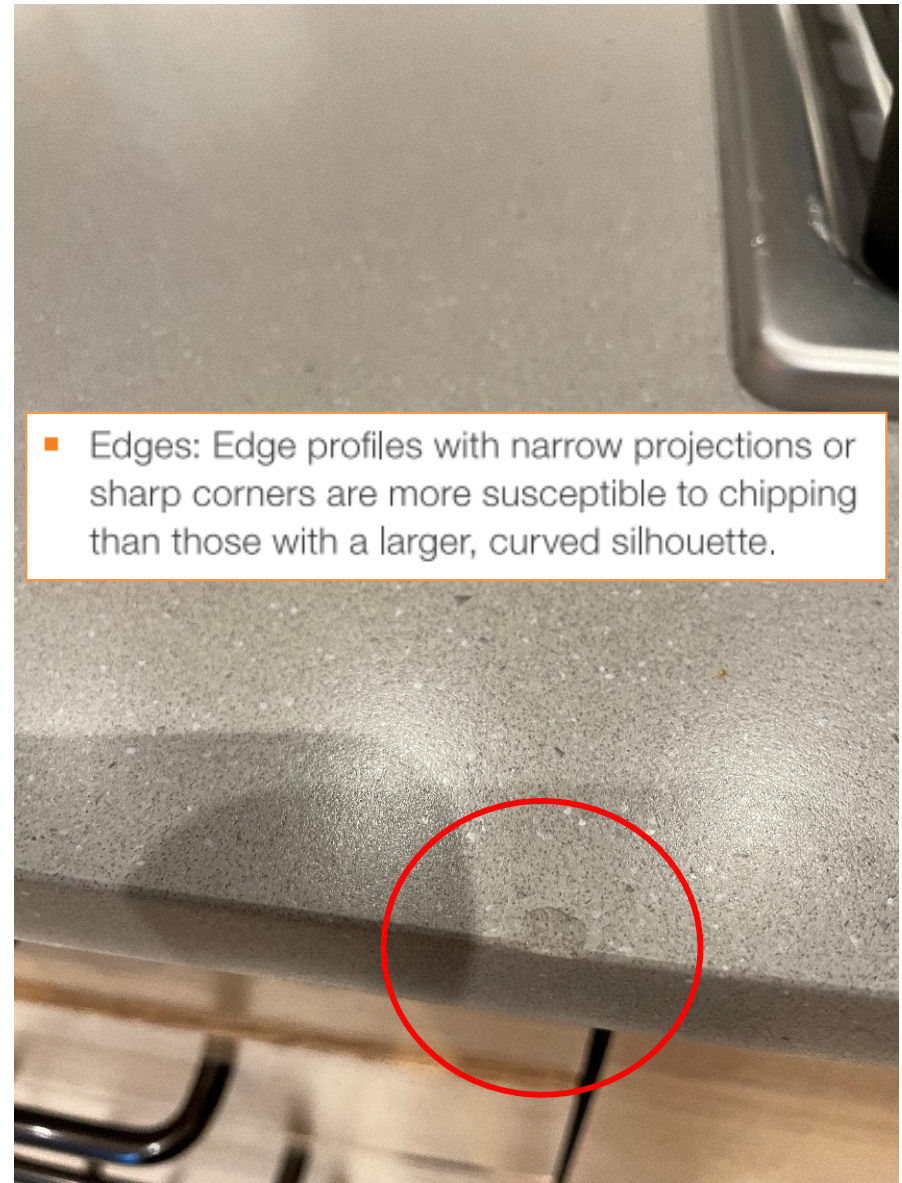
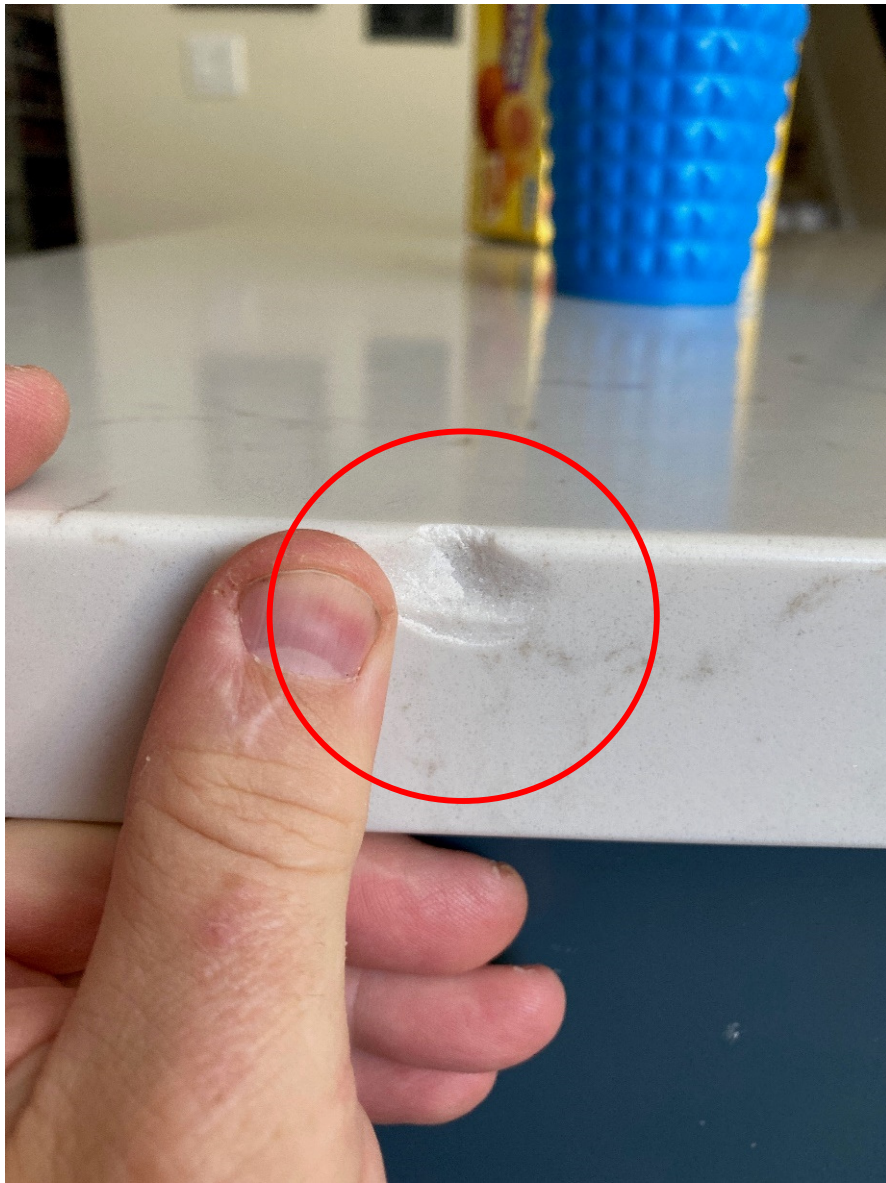
Pitting



Note from Installer: Customer is rejecting her granite because there are imperfections in this granite. Customer said the sample they got and the display countertops at Home Depot have none of the natural imperfections that their new countertops have.

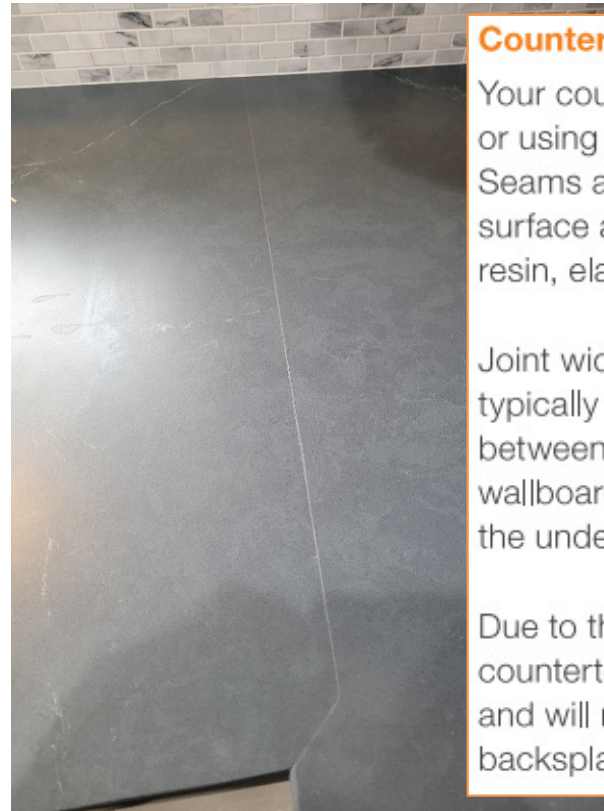
- Pits are common granite and quartz and should be expected when dealing with a polished stone containing several types of minerals with different hardnesses.
- It is usually best to not attempt repair of pits, as most repair techniques will not cosmetically improve the countertop.
- Pits do not make the granite less durable or otherwise inferior, and do not qualify the slab for replacement.

Chipping



- Edges: Edge profiles with narrow projections or sharp corners are more susceptible to chipping than those with a larger, curved silhouette.

Seams



Countertop is Positioned

Your countertop is positioned into place either manually or using commercially available counter-alignment tools. Seams are typically filled to the level of the top of the surface and are typically filled with polyester resin, epoxy resin, elastomeric sealant or grout.

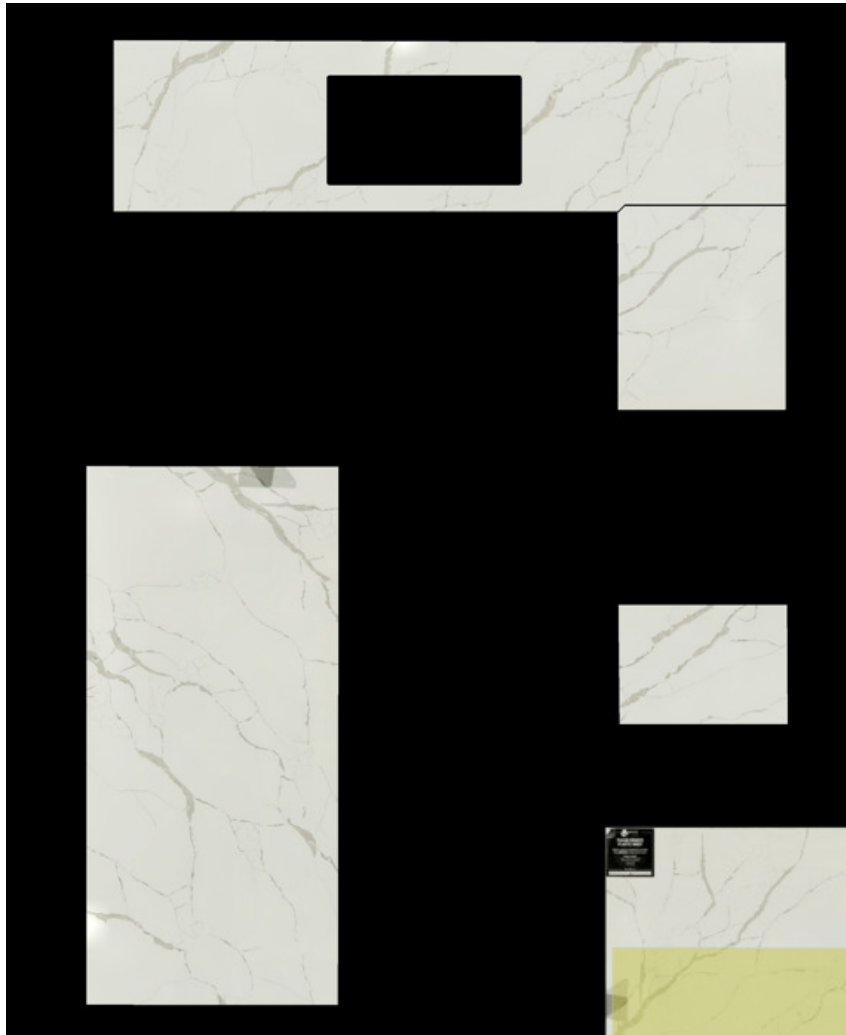
Joint width at seams and visible material transitions is typically 1/8 inch. Material transitions include the joint between countertop and other materials like cabinets and wallboard. The joint between a full-height backsplash and the underside of the upper cabinets may be 1/4 inch.

Due to the unevenness of finished walls, gaps between the countertop surface and backsplash may not be consistent and will not exceed 1/2 inch. Additional seams in a full-height backsplash may be required where the wall is not straight.

Seams will always be visible to some degree

- Industry standard: seams should be inconspicuous from 6' away
- Lippage: variation in the slab thickness can result in some unevenness at seam – this is called lippage. This can make the seam more noticeable to the touch. Industry standard is within the thickness of a business card.
- Width of a seam: 1/8" (enough for glue)

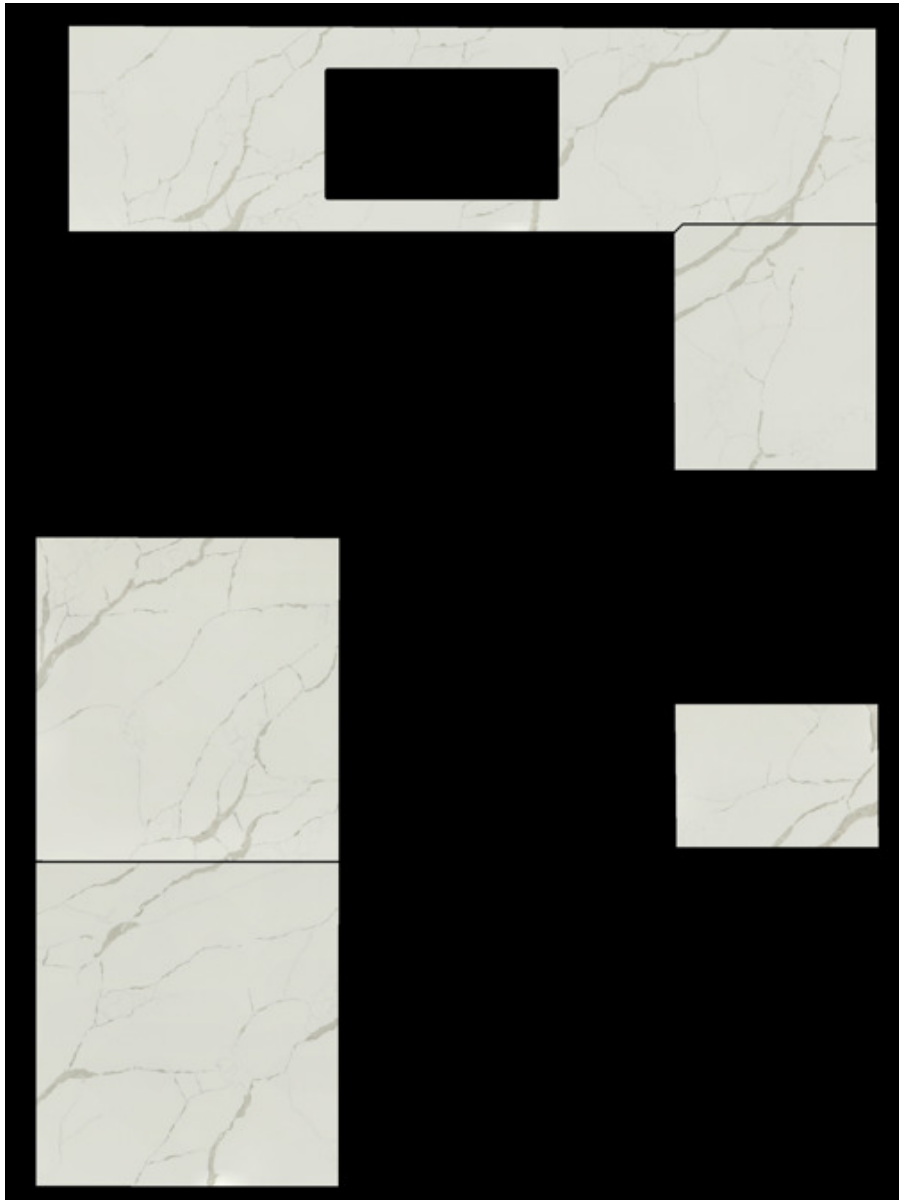
Adding a Seam for Vein Direction



Veining on Island is going opposite direction as the veining on the Perimeter



Adding a Seam for Vein Direction



Veining on Island is going the same direction as the Perimeter with the additional seam



Vein Matching



- Picture from Cambria's website showing realistic expectation of vein alignment
- We can't always make veins match up

Naturally Occurring Vein Misalignment



- Vein misalignment occurs naturally in some stones.
- At some point a shift in the tectonic plates disconnected the vein and caused a shift in the pattern of this Calacatta Quartzite slab.

Vein Matching at Backsplash



We try to match the backsplash up with the deck as closely as we can but oftentimes it's not possible to get the veins to line up for a few reasons including:

- We can't cut the backsplash directly next to the deck
- When we install the backsplash, the veins are lined up 1 ¼ inch from the back of the countertop

Lead Times

- Depends on material availability, payment, and change orders after template.
- Once we have Material and a Change Order it takes 2-3 weeks in today's environment.
- Material delays won't be known until we order the material.
- It's helpful if you can tell the customers that the lead time is largely out of our control.

Things you can do to help shorten the lead time:

- Sending us a cabinet layout or drawings (knowing the Sq. Ft. isn't enough)
- Processing change orders after template quickly
- Communicating clearly to the customer the things they need at time of template (appliances, sink, farm sink set in place, cabinets permanently installed and perfectly level, etc.)

Pricing

- Price is based on material and labor; both depend on the size of the job. If the job is templated larger than originally quoted, the price could go up. It could also go down.
- Price could also go up based on any add-ons or options agreed to at template.
- Sq. Ft. program allows the fabricator to add seams for better yield – if a customer wants to remove a seam that results in Accent buying another slab, we will charge the customer for the additional waste.
- Home Depot's program is a Countertop and Backsplash program, anything else will need to be custom quoted (fireplaces, shower surrounds, bathtub surrounds, thresholds, any type of flooring, tables, outdoor firepits, wall cladding, etc.)

Pre-Template

Common Reasons for Missed Templates:

- Cabinets are not fully installed
- Cabinets are not level
- Farm sink is not set



Preparing for your **in-home template appointment**

In preparation for your template appointment, please make sure all items to be installed/mounted on or adjacent to the countertop are on-site at the time of the appointment. This includes sinks, faucets, dispensers, appliances, etc. Your countertop should be clear of all items for an accurate measurement. Additionally, please be sure to consider and address the following:

Overhangs

Supports are required for overhangs over certain sizes (depends on type of surface; see individual surface sections under All Products). If you elect to install your own overhang supports, you must install brackets or corbels prior to the in-home template appointment.

Sinks

Farm-style or apron front sinks must be installed in the cabinet prior to the template appointment. For undermount sinks, review the choices and ensure your paperwork reflects the sink reveal you select.

Plumbing

The Home Depot advises against reusing old plumbing fixtures with your new countertop because of the possibility of damage upon removal. This includes but is not limited to the sink, faucet and disposer. No warranty is provided when you reuse the old fixtures. Changes to existing plumbing locations are not part of the standard reconnect.

Window and door casings

Window and door casings will not be altered to accommodate the new countertop. The countertop will be notched to accommodate the casing. If you do not want the countertop notched around the casing, the casing must be altered prior to the in-home template appointment.

Cabinets

All cabinetry and end panels must be completely and permanently installed, structurally sound, plumb, level and secured to the wall and/or floor. Level is defined as to within 1/8 inch in a 10-foot span.

Backsplashes

Wall surfaces that are receiving backsplashes must also be plumb and within 1/8 inch of a true plane when measured across a distance of 10 feet.

Pre-Install

Common Reasons for Missed Installs:

- Cabinets are not level, and we couldn't determine they were out of level during template due to existing countertops
- Plumbing is not disconnected
- Other trades are in the way

What to-do before your appointment:

✓ **Prepare the location**

All appliances must be on-site but NOT installed. You must also provide power and applicable climate control at the installation site and ensure that your in-home installation appointment does not conflict with other work being done in your home.

✓ **Cover other areas**

Cover living areas and adjacent doors.

✓ **Clear the installation area**

Remove all base cabinet contents, drawers and breakables from the installation areas (including but not limited to lamps, vases, mirrors and wall hangings).

✓ **Create a path**

Create a clear path from your driveway through your home for easy access to the installation area.

✓ **Plumbing, gas and electric disconnection**

If you elect to coordinate your own plumbing and electrical disconnect/reconnect, plumbing, gas and/or electrical connections must be disconnected prior to the in-home installation appointment.

⊘ **Things not to do before installation:**

Final wall preparation should NOT be completed prior to installation as scratches to the wall may occur during installation. This includes painting, installing wallpaper, final sheetrock sanding, etc. Care will be exercised during the installation but scrapes, punctures, and/or dings to wall surfaces may occur. Scratches and/or scrapes to cabinetry may also occur. Any existing backsplash may also be damaged; this is your responsibility to repair.

During Install

- Some cutouts will be made partially or completely in the home (top mount sinks, cooktops, faucet holes, etc.). This ensures safe handling and minimizes breakage. Dust is to be expected.
- Shims are commonly used to level countertops. If shimming causes a gap between the cabinet and the countertop, the customer will need to add trim molding.
- There will be odor during installation from adhesives and solvents used.
- Gaps between backsplashes and walls are common due to walls being out of square. Standard practice is to fill with paintable caulk.

The installation process takes an average of 1 to 3 days to complete, including any plumbing disconnect/reconnect. The typical countertop installation requires 3 to 6 hours.

Shims

Shims are commonly used to level the countertop. Shims may be wood or plastic. In some situations, trim molding may be required to cover exposed shims. This is your responsibility.

Countertop is Secured

Your countertop is secured to the substrate using common construction adhesives like caulk or silicone. There may be odor from the caulk and solvents used to clean your new countertop.

Plumbing

- Plumbing disconnect and reconnect are options at an extra charge and may not always be available
- Our ability to provide plumbing depends on our installers, the complexity of the disconnect/reconnect, and our license restrictions
- Unless plumbing has been specifically paid for, the disconnect and reconnect will need to be the responsibility of the Customer

Incidental Damage

Incidental Damage Includes:

- Minor damage to cabinets and walls during tear out and install.
- When we place the stone on the cabinet and move it into position, and parts of the cabinet chip on the top of panels/face frame.
- If we are sliding, setting or just installing and their cabinets crack.
- If we must cut a part of the cabinet for sink to fit and the cabinet cracks.
- If laying down a top and we accidentally scratch a panel.

Demolition Process

If you elect for your local, licensed and insured professional to remove and haul away your old countertops, this is a demolition process. Some minor damage to walls, existing tile backsplashes, and/or cabinets may occur. This is your responsibility to repair.

Minor Wall Damage



- Nicks and dings on the walls are possible
- Final touch up painting should be done after countertop install

Tile Backsplash Removal



Tile backsplash removal will require drywall repair.

Plywood & Farm Sink



- Plywood needs to be removed
- Farm sink needs to be installed flush with top of cabinet or no more than 1/16" below

Cabinets Need to be Level



- Cabinets need to be level within 1/8" over eight feet

Can I keep my Sink Cutout?



Cutouts

Some cutouts may be partially or completely created in your home after installing your countertop. This is done to ensure safe handling and/or the best placement of the cutout.

Material from sink and cooktop cutouts are not part of the finished product due to possible breakage and will not be made available.



- While we would like to accommodate this request, sink cutouts break during the fabrication process, keeping it is not an option
- Customers can purchase additional Sq. Ft. if they are wanting to use it as a cutting board or trivet