

"I could see the potential in Cabinetmaking" EREZ Kitchens.

Erez Kitchens M.D. Ben Heo has had an unconventional path into Cabinetmaking.

"My training is in Computer Engineering but when I decided to start my own business I could see good potential in Cabinetmaking both in reducing labour costs and producing the allied products like doors and tops."



Ben first came to Australia 10 years ago but on trips back to Korea he saw Cabinetmaking in large factories with high levels of automation and consequently very low labour costs. "I know the Australian market is not the same but when Homag showed me 'nest based' methods and what their machines could do I immediately saw the potential for a business based around CNC."

To use an old saying 'the rest is history' but in EREZ kitchens case, very recent history. In February this year EREZ got underway with a BHP200 from Weeke, the CNC specialists of the German Homag Group. Edgebanding was covered with a Brandt, also from the Group. "Looking at local companies already using Homag machines and the Groups leadership worldwide gave me a very strong impression of Homag and the confidence to invest with them. I also wanted to develop my business beyond carcass manufacture so I needed stronger machines to deliver both the output I planned and the precision I needed. In my view and from the investigation I did my simple conclusion was the Homag machines produced better products, faster and had the German engineering to keep on doing this over time."

Ben had well established contacts with major developers like the BGC Group and Hanssen Group and when they saw the new setup they had no doubts in his ability to deliver the quality levels they demand and meet their 'on time every time' expectations. EREZ now produce 6 mid to top end kitchens a week with 70% to commercial clients and the remainder direct to the public."

"I also invested in Teowin design software and was actually their first site here in Australia. It's a powerful and easy to use package and combined with the Homag machines we are now very efficient producers. Of course I have qualified Tradesman but I estimate my labour is already half that of conventional methods - and it's easy!"

"My growth plan is to drive forward with further automation and the first step is adding automated push off and cleaning to the Weeke which will increase our capacity around 50% I believe. While the machine easily handles our existing work without this I take the view that saving the time now is good for me but also for my existing customers. If I produce more efficiently we all benefit."

EREZ are already producing their Face routed doors 'in house' straight to paint or wrap without need to sand. "That's a big advantage right there and part of the reason we invested in the best machine and I have confidence to also produce Tops with the same good results." Erez have the capacity and willingness to produce components and overflow work for other Cabinetmakers and this is already underway. "These customers are just like my others, they want a very good product, on time and at a good price. I can do this and in just 12 months time my plan is for Erez to be producing 2 or even 3 times more than we are now. With the right machines, software backup and some further automation I know I will achieve this even more efficiently than now."

While that sounds ambitious anyone who looks at how much Ben has achieved in such a short time and how focussed he is on his business would never doubt his chances.