

Cabinet Maker Photo Checklist

Cabinet making and installation involves custom fabrication, precise fitting, and a finished product that lives in a client's home for decades. Wood species, joinery methods, finish coats, and installation details all determine the quality and longevity of the work — and most of them are invisible once the cabinets are installed and the doors are hung. When a client disputes a finish defect, a measurement discrepancy, or a warranty issue, the question is always the same: **can you prove the material was correct, the construction was sound, and the installation matched the approved design?** This guide covers every phase from shop to site.

THE 7 PHASES

Document Every Phase, Protect Every Job

01 PHASE Design & Material Selection

- Approved shop drawings — all sheets
- Signed client approval on drawings
- Wood species & grade — label in frame
- Sheet goods — brand, grade & thickness
- Door style & profile sample approved
- Hardware selections — brand & finish
- Finish sample — approved color & sheen
- Specialty features — glass, lighting noted
- Material delivery — condition on arrival

02 PHASE Shop Fabrication — Carcass

- Sheet goods cut — labeled & organized
- Dado or rabbet joints — depth & width
- Face frame — species, size & joinery
- Face frame square & flat before glue-up
- Pocket screw or dowel pattern documented
- Cabinet box assembly — square confirmed
- Nailers & hanging rail installation
- Back panel — material & fastening
- Carcass complete — all units wide shot

03 PHASE Shop Fabrication — Doors & Drawers

- Door material & panel construction
- Door dimensions — width & height measured
- Rail & stile joinery — mortise or cope
- Panel float clearance confirmed
- Door flat — warp check on flat surface
- Drawer box material — dovetail or dowel
- Drawer slide type & extension noted
- Soft-close mechanism installed & tested
- Doors & drawers complete — wide shot



04 PHASE Finishing

- Sanding progression — grits documented
- Stain applied — even coverage confirmed
- Finish coat — sheen level confirmed
- Wood filler or putty — areas noted
- Sealer coat — product labeled
- Final sanding between coats noted
- Stain — product & color labeled
- Paint or finish coat — product labeled
- Finished cabinets — wide & detail shots

05 PHASE Pre-Installation Site Assessment

- Installation space — wide shot before work
- Ceiling height at all points measured
- Pre-existing wall damage documented
- Wall condition — plumb & flat noted
- Stud locations marked & photographed
- Appliance locations confirmed
- Floor level — high & low points measured
- Existing plumbing & electrical locations
- Approved layout drawn on walls

06 PHASE Installation

- Level line snapped — wall & base
- Cabinet-to-cabinet fastening
- Island or peninsula secured to floor
- First cabinet set — plumb & level confirmed
- Filler strips & scribe molding fitted
- All cabinets hung — level run wide shot
- Screws into studs — pattern documented
- Corner cabinet alignment & clearance
- Toe kick installed & level

07 PHASE Final Fit & Closeout

- All doors hung — gap consistent
- Soft-close tested — all doors & drawers
- Touch-up finish on site damage
- Hinge adjustment — reveal uniform
- Hardware installed — pulls & knobs aligned
- Client walkthrough — every door & drawer
- Drawer fronts aligned & even gap
- Interior of all cabinets — clean & clear
- Signed delivery & acceptance documented

HOW TO USE THIS IN THE FIELD**Turn This Checklist Into Your Daily Workflow**

- 01 Photograph Signed Drawings and Material Approvals Before Fabrication Starts**

A photo of the signed shop drawings and approved finish sample — taken before a single board is cut — is your proof that the client approved the design, dimensions, species, and finish. These shots are the foundation of every dispute defense when a client claims the cabinets were not what they ordered.
- 02 Document Joinery and Construction Details Before Assembly**

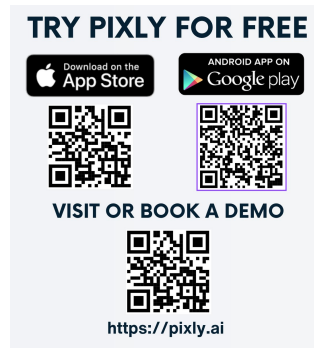
Dado depth, face frame joinery, drawer box dovetails, and panel float clearance are all invisible once the cabinet is assembled. A close-up of each joinery method before glue-up proves the construction quality your shop delivered — and backs up every warranty claim about structural integrity.
- 03 Capture the Installation Level Line and First Cabinet Before the Run is Complete**

The level line snapped on the wall, the stud marks, and the first cabinet set plumb and true are the foundation of every installation. A photo of these before the remaining cabinets are hung proves your layout was correct from the start — essential if door alignment or drawer operation issues come up after completion.
- 04 Wide Shot of Every Completed Run Before Doors and Drawers Go On**

A photo of every cabinet run with doors and drawers not yet installed shows the box construction, fastening pattern, and level installation clearly. Once doors are hung and toe kicks are on, these details are hidden. Take this shot before you start hanging hardware on every job.

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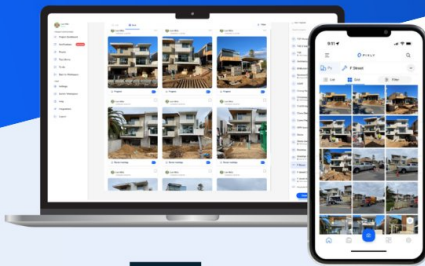
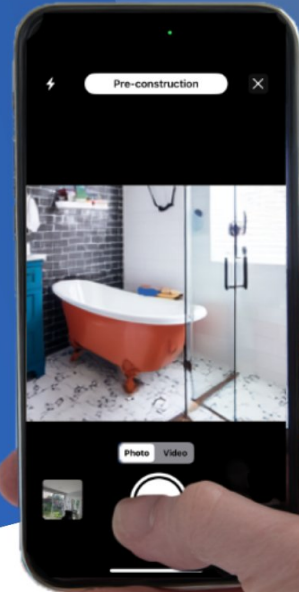
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