Great Kitchens! Expert Ideas to Improve your Kitchen:

A- AGING IN PLACE design includes multiple height counters, a place to sit and work, right-height appliances, easily accesses storage, generous and adjustable lighting and more.

B- BUDGET consists of cost breakdowns, budget discrepancy reports and change orders. These are all important documents for keeping accurate budgets for firms, clients and projects.

C- COOKTOPS are available in a variety of shapes and power sources to meet specific needs. The most efficient and easy to clean tops are Induction tops that use magnetic energy to heat the pan.

CABINET styles are becoming more contemporary with simple straight lines and cleaner details. Dark woods and soft white are preferred and a mix of wood and color is still in trend. Every detail in more subtle with clean open shelves found in wall, base and tall cabinets.

D- DESIGN DETAIL of the year is the backsplash, as it can be the anchor and unifying element of the design, trend continues in stone, tile, and glass, new options including lighted glass tiles or pattern, carved wood, leather—all about texture and color layered for depth.

DRAWERS are everywhere including refrigerators, dishwashers, ovens, and both on their own and behind doors in cabinetry. Aesthetically, they emphasize/strengthen the horizontal line, and functionally, they are the simplest, most straightforward way to improve access.

DESKS in the kitchen trend to no place to sit, but lots of organized and often out of site storage for the charging station, the keys, the mail drop/store, the grocery list, even the cookbooks and the calendar, sometimes a place for the laptop, more for storage than for use.

E- EATING AREAS shrinking from 3 to 2, but flexible, go beyond straight-line seating so diners can socialize, consider building in some of the seating or table to create interest and save space.

ENTERTAINING requires careful separation of cook’s area from serving/socializing area, generous clearances for multiple cooks and gathering, multiple appliances when possible such as for beverages or clean-up, flexibility in space.

F- FAUCETS and sinks are now considered a workstation rather than separate elements. Faucets pullout, pull down and articulate are now expected. Large sinks with fitted accessories make prep and cleanup easier.

G- GREEN KITCHEN NEWS includes special nod to induction cooking, motion/touch control water use, increased product options with higher recycled content and lower/no VOC’s, improved availability of manufacturer’s green practices and policies, LED lighting availability, increase in deconstruction and reuse of products and materials, access to expert advisors.

GLASS-huge opportunity as design statement, think backsplash, counters of various thickness/texture, look for recycled content, depth of color and pattern, moving to a longer linear format, watch for technology integrated through glass.

H- HEALTHY- in the kitchen, think air, water, with appropriate water filtration options, ventilation sized to cooking appliances and compatible with the whole house HVAC (consider return air), selection of quiet appliances and sound-absorbing materials.

HARDWARE options are a limitless chance to personalize, with long-standing brushed/matte nickel joined by oiled bronze and a return to chrome, even some brass, gold, and an artisan look. Size and shape is all over with a trend to longer pulls, especially in more contemporary spaces.
I- INSIDE/OUTSIDE-Bring the outside in with windows and glass doors in opportune places. Consider the view from the inside. Allow passage from the kitchen to a convenient outdoor space. INTEGRATED appliances, furniture and materials keep the great room kitchen from being too utilitarian looking.
ISLANDS allow for more comfortable work zones and direct traffic in the larger great room setting. Consider building a banquette into an island to soften the effect.
INTERIOR ACCESSORIES allow cabinets to hold more in an organized fashion. Pullouts, drawers and organizing inserts make work in the space easier on the body.

J- JUXTAPOSITION creates visual and tactile interest by layering different types of materials within the same space. Consider not only how the material looks and feels but also how a specific material is associated with a style such as stainless steel, typically considered modern with more traditional white painted wood

K- KITCHEN CENTRIC is absolutely IT, with the long-loved open plan and the kitchen as the core of home life, accessible to and from all public areas of the house, dictating that clearances in the kitchen be more generous, prep and cooking zones be designed to conceal the mess but allow the cook to join the gatherers, materials and finishes blend and accent the adjoining spaces and strengthen architectural bones of the home.

L- LIGHTING should be layered and operated with separate switches. Include ambient, task and accent lighting in combination for the most flexible lighting. Dimmers allow for the versatility of increasing light as one ages.
LAUNDRY should be considered in designing a kitchen whether in the same room or in a separate laundry area. It is a functional space that is often used while working in the kitchen. Many laundry rooms can also serve as additional pantry areas for kitchen needs.

M- MULTI-CULTURAL – Who is your buyer? Finding your buyer is important for any business, here we've focused on boomers, single women and minorities. By honing in on what your buyers consider important such as forgotten common courtesies, feeling included or being family-oriented, you can entice different groups to come to your business

N- NEW NORMAL-The new normal is heading towards smaller, already existing homes that are perfectly sized for families. A smaller home can be made to feel spacious by reducing sight lines, exercising double duty dining, using monochromatic color schemes, and creating multi-purpose spaces.

O- OBSCURE (the hidden kitchen) has found its home in some open plans. Many want the working kitchen space to share the living room demeanor so it virtually disappears from sight. Integrated appliances are an essential part of this design.
OUTDOOR KITCHENS increase the usable space in a home. It can be attached to the home with access to the indoor kitchen, be a completely separate area or even its own room. Materials should be compatible with the exterior of the home and can also reflect the inside kitchen.
OVENS are available in many configurations. Convection ovens are now main-stream with many options for faster quality cooking available...steam and speed being the most common. Warming drawers can proof and slow cook as well as keep food warm without degrading the result.

P- PAINT is one of the many products that are becoming eco-friendly. Specify paints that emit little to no VOCs and have a limited amount of heavy metals.
COLOR is the simplest way to bring emotion to any space. By paying close attention to current and upcoming color trends a business can help clients make savvy, timeless decisions. The colors of 2012 are bright, optimistic and offer a sense of security and stability.

WALLCOVERINGS offer variety to a space. To capitalize on current trends, consider finding classic patterns with contemporary colors or clean lines. Soft and refined metallics and grass cloth are also becoming more popular, as technology has reduced cost of production.

Q- QUANTITY and QUALITY: The Resized Kitchen-By focusing on quality of products versus quantity, a kitchen can be not only beautiful but also functional and can maximize the utility of every available inch of a smaller footprint.

R- REMODELING and REPURPOSING can update an outdated kitchen and increase the value of the home. Repurposing renews a kitchen with an already successful layout. Repurposing is more economical in pricing and the amount of time spent on a project. Remodeling can vary widely in cost based on client desires. Remodeling may improve functionality, but is more disruptive.

REFRIGERATION is a very broad category. By watching consumer purchasing trends, an informed business can specify current products. At present, French door refrigeration is the most specified type by NKBA member designers, while freezer-top refrigeration is the least specified type. Under-counter wine refrigeration has fallen sharply.

S- SURFACES include floors(wood trending to laminates, reclaimed or brushed look, bamboo, or tile in huge format, growing interest in linoleum and cork-absorbs sound, easier on the cook’s back and on the environment), counters with granite forever but trend to quartz (look for recycled content), glass more available, incredible green offerings, creative look-alikes from laminate world, walls with organic look, ceilings as design statement.

STORAGE-never enough, design it within reach and at point of use, evaluate carefully best design for pantry (walk-in, closet, or cabinetry), drawers or accessorized base cabinetry expected (especially corners), new lighting options, use every inch of found space.

T- TRAFFIC FLOW depends on the combination of placing work zones in appropriate places, allowing the appropriate clearances for working and walking and considering adjacencies to the working kitchen within the great room and the rooms that connect to the great room.

TRANSITIONS should be considered when different materials come together. Floor transitions must be as flat and seamless as possible. When mating different countertop materials you might consider changing the elevations to make the area easier to clean. Consider how a tile backsplash creates a transition from the countertop to the wall cabinets.

U- UNIVERSAL DESIGN-beyond aging-in-place, at tipping point, new course from NAHB, “UD/Build,” check it out and take it, good for your soul and your sales.

V- VOLUME CONTROL...Consider what the combination of certain elements, beautiful as they are, do to the sound levels of the room. Homeowners consider sound when choosing appliances, particularly dishwashers and hoods. In rooms with high ceilings and many windows, softer floor and seating options help to absorb errant noise.

VENTILATION must be considered, especially as the envelope of the home is tightened. Consider the elements of ventilation-proximity, power, canopy, capture area and cleanability and how the elements work in combination.
W- WINE REFRIGERATORS are popular for people who entertain and are available in many shapes and capacities. Consider an entertainment zone so those providing refreshment don’t interfere with the cooks.

WASTE RECEPTACLES and RECYCLING continue to be issues for most homes. Organizing the waste temporarily in the kitchen until it can be taken to a larger receptacle is a convenient use of cabinetry.

WINDOWS open the kitchen to the outside affording light and ambience to the room. Make the most of bringing the outside in.

X- GENERATION X-Born in the timeline 1965 through 1980, they are a more ethnically diverse, educated and self-sufficient generation. Selling to this generation involves gaining trust, allowing them to educate themselves and focusing on concrete benefits such as cost savings and quality.

Y- GENERATION Y-Born from the mid 1980s onward, this generation is tech savvy, meaning they prefer contact through electronics versus face to face. They are an achievement-oriented generation with confidence and high expectations, have less fear of authority than older generations. Focus on social media and avoiding high pressure sells, but be efficient with their time while focusing on long term planning.

Z- ZONES-The concept of the work triangle has grown into work zones. These areas include the appliances, counter space and storage for essentials for each job to be done. They can overlap each other or be completely separate and can be used by a single cook or multiple cooks together.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR BAD PERFORMANCE is the mantra of customers today. They are savvy, knowledgeable and quick to change when they are not getting the service they feel they have paid for. Products and people must measure up to expectations or customers will find alternatives and spread the work through social media.