



Must-Ask Questions for Designers & Fabricators

As a Designer or Fabricator, choosing the right partners is essential for achieving the desired outcome of any project. Not every pairing equates to a good working partnership. Use these questions to vet vendors in the design and fabrication space, establish expectations, and result in a satisfactory experience.

QUESTIONS DESIGNERS SHOULD ASK

- What is the in-house capacity of the fabricator?
- Can the fabricator provide a list of employees and their biographies?
- Can I meet the project manager?
- What is the fabricator's relationship with other contractors and fabricators?
- Does the fabricator have an ingrained network of vendors? Can the designer vet them as well?
- Does the fabricator have construction documentation samples?
- Can the fabricator produce the sample on-time with the bid?
- Do they use a system for vetting schedules like Wayfindit or another cloud-based software?
- Has the designer worked with the fabricators before. What size project?
- Does the fabricator understand what facilitation means?
- Does the fabricator have a workflow-based construction program?
- What is their history of bidding and pricing? Do they price consistently too high or low?
- Does the fabricator understand color/material palette transition?
- Is there a digital/lighting team and what are their credentials?
- Does the fabricator have a systems-based approach?
- If there is a product specification, how does the fabricator approach matching or changing the specification?

QUESTIONS FABRICATORS SHOULD ASK

- Does the fabricator have an existing relationship with the designer?
- Has the fabricator worked with the designer on smaller projects?
- Does the designer have a specific project manager and what is their experience?
- Is the fabricator allowed to adjust material sizes?
- If the designer is an architecture or interior design firm, can the fabricator be part of the design development stage?
- If the designer is a graphic or branding firm can the fabricator be part of the prototype and design guidelines process?
- If the designer is an experiential graphic design firm what do their design intent documents look like?
- Is the fabricator allowed to provide alternatives to raw materials? How early in the specification process?
- Is there enough money available for weekly meetings?
- Has the designer asked for educational input before bidding?
- Is there enough money available for samples and mockups?
- Is the designer responsible for final message schedules?
- Is the designer also the construction administrator? What is their budget for administrator?