

Find the Right Partner for Your Project

6 Tips for Choosing a Design Firm That Won't Go Over Budget



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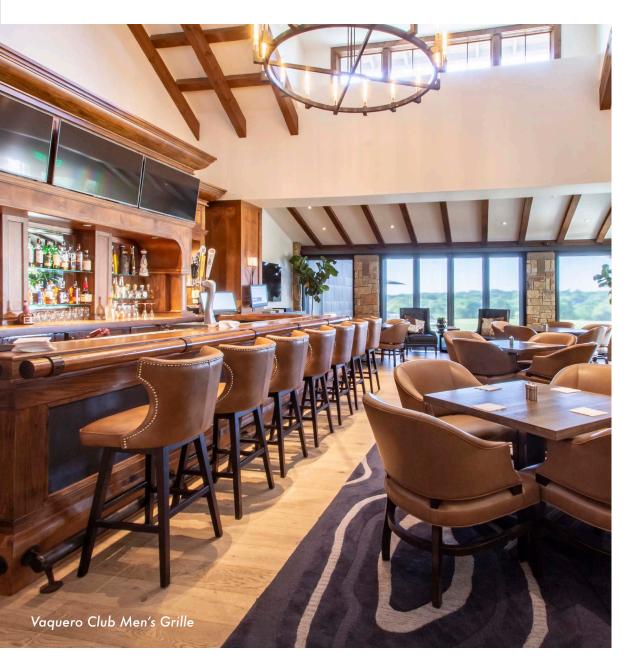
When it comes to choosing an architecture and interior design firm, the saying "you get what you pay for" couldn't be more true – or more crucial to keep in mind.

However, when feeling the pressure to provide a beautiful space for guests and residents while satisfying board members with a long-term investment, hospitality and multifamily businesses are sometimes tempted to take the least expensive solution. Often, this choice ends up costing them in the long run.

Whether you're looking to construct a new space or transform an existing one, getting results you love can be a challenge. To pull it off, you need a designer with deep experience, exceptional agility, and a clearly defined process for finishing projects on time and on budget.

These six tips are designed to get you an experience you'll enjoy and a partnership that will last.





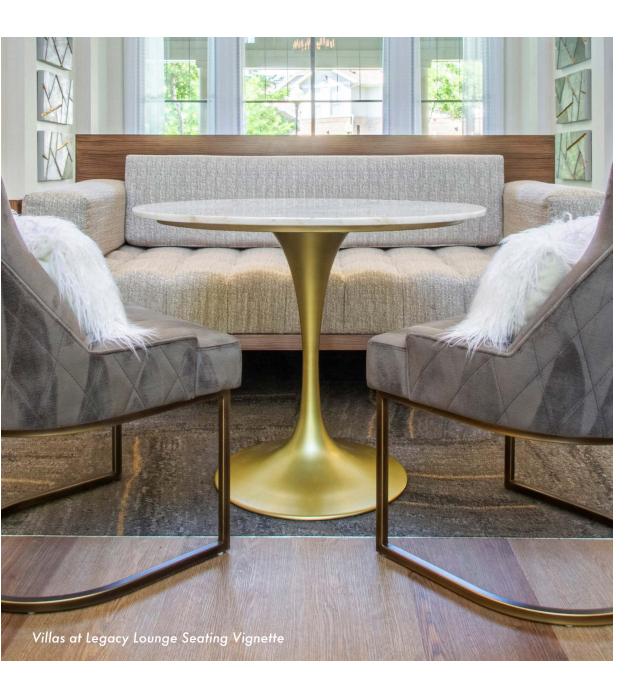


INVEST IN THE RIGHT DESIGN TALENT

One of the biggest challenges design firms face is sourcing top talent at a price they can sustain. Design professionals are in high demand, and the truly talented come with a higher price tag.

Whether your property is a new development or a valueadd deal, the most enticing amenity spaces are the ones that will beat the competition every time. Ask yourself: Do you want an average designer designing your asset or the best of the best? Making an investment in the right designer will give you a space – and a partner – that continues to deliver results.





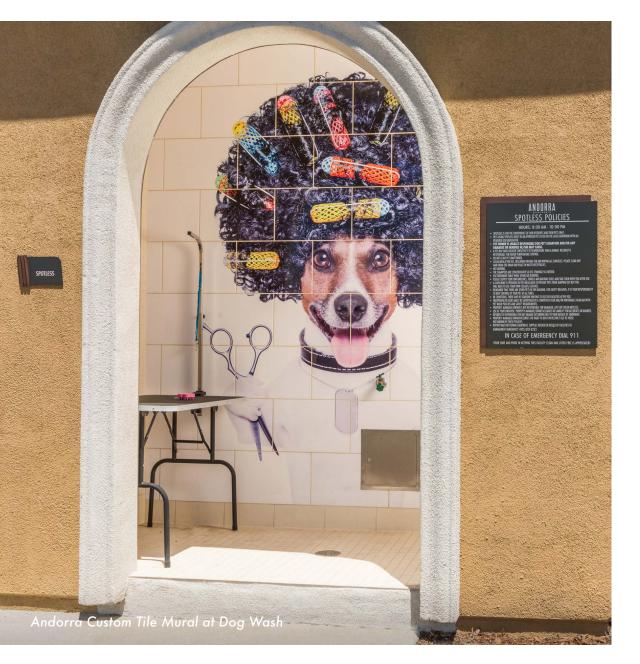


LOOK FOR PROOF OF ACCOUNTABILITY

While surprise is a natural part of experiencing stunning design, it shouldn't be a part of the design process. From the beginning of your engagement, the agency you choose should demonstrate transparency through clear communication and expectation-setting. For example, be sure you get a dedicated point of contact who can answer questions.

A commitment to disciplined delivery can look many different ways, but you should expect guarantees around target budget and scope. And don't be worried about your firm using every dollar of your budget just because it can: The best designers hold themselves accountable not just for the quality of the project, but the quality of your partnership as well.







EXPECT FLEXIBILITY

Design firms should demonstrate more than just discipline around your budget and timeline. They should also be agile and take feedback to adapt to your needs. Be sure the agency you choose scopes in specific checkpoints for providing updates and soliciting constructive criticism, such as by producing digital mood boards and renderings.

One pro tip for determining flexibility:

Ask your agency about its procurement services – or whether they're even available. Truly flexible designers can provide options at different pricing levels when it comes to sourcing materials.



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GET TO KNOW YOUR TEAM

Don't make the mistake of hiring a new firm based solely on your confidence in its upper management. While good leadership goes a long way, an enjoyable and award-winning project takes a village to finish.

Make sure any firm you're interviewing has a team of talented people. Request a list of individual team members who will be dedicated to working on your project, along with images of completed projects they've worked on. Firms that are proud of their people will be glad to introduce you to team members.







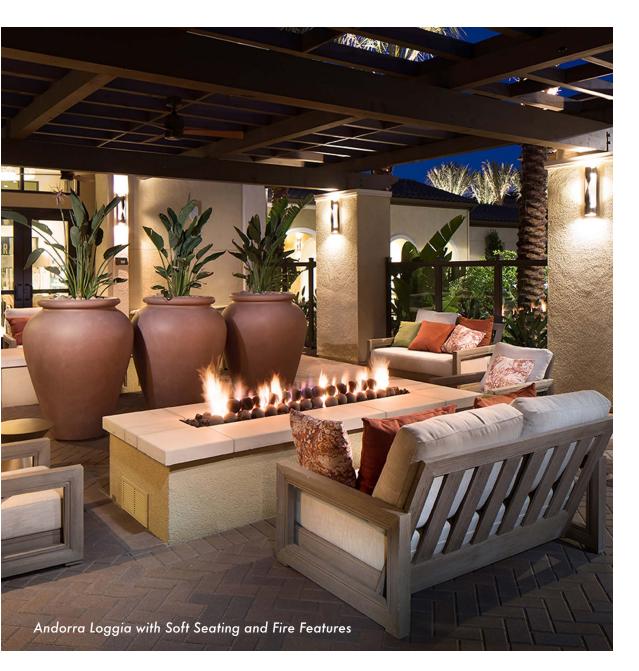
BEWARE OF RED FLAGS AND EAGER BEAVERS

You know what they say about jacks-of-all-trades. While these "masters of none" may talk a big game in the sales process, you should be suspicious of any designer who claims to do it all. Plus, while time-to-market is crucial, some timelines can be too good to be true.

With so many designers to choose from, find a firm that knows your industry. Such an agency can often anticipate inconsistencies in your goals and help you to solve them early in the process. On the other hand, designers who jump at any job that comes their way will uncover these problems deep into the project, when it's too late to make changes.



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ASK THE TOUGH QUESTIONS

Just like in any relationship, the courtship process for choosing a design agency is full of promises – and disappointments. Instead of falling for a compelling proposal, ask direct questions about cost, experience, and process. If a firm can't provide good answers or guarantees, look elsewhere.

While getting the answers you need takes discipline, asking the tough questions and establishing early expectations helps to mitigate uncomfortable conversations and costly change orders.



While pulling off a great design project can feel like a magic trick at times, the right agency can help you pull back the curtain on the processes that get results. Take advantage of these tips to choose a designer with the flexibility, experience, and communication you need to finish on time, on trend, and on budget.

READY TO FIND A DESIGN FIRM WORTH PARTNERING WITH?

> LET'S GET STARTED

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