



## **CHECKLIST : CHOOSING THE RIGHT OFFICE DESIGN AND FIT OUT PARTNER**

Your step-by-step guide to checking out your contractor's credentials,  
and asking all the right questions



# CHECKLIST :

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT OFFICE DESIGN AND FIT OUT PARTNER

Whether you are relocating, refurbishing or fitting out new office space, the company you hire is one of the most critical choices you can make.

Get it right and you'll have a smooth transition, with no disruption or budget over-runs. Get it wrong, and it can be a nightmare of escalating budgets and business disruption.

The following checklist is designed to help you separate the good from the not-so-good, enabling you to have a successful project.

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### Checking their REPUTATION »

Reputation is everything. A design and fit out company will live or die on it. Whoever you choose to deliver your project, take time out to talk to their past clients and look at projects they've delivered. **It will be time well spent.**

- Have they provided references?
- Have they managed projects of a similar size?
- Do they have a solid track record in your sector?
- Will they arrange site visits for you to see:
  - one of their finished projects?
  - projects they have in progress?
- How long have they been in business?
- Do they have case studies for you to read?
- Do they work all over the UK?
- Is the company part of a nationally recognised organisation?
- Have you determined who owns the company?

## Assessing their FINANCIAL STABILITY and your RISK »

The health of the company you hire has a direct relation to your financial risk.

For example, if your project budget is £1 million, and the company has an annual turnover of £5 million, then you could put them out of business by hiring them. How will they afford to purchase resources for your project? [Choose carefully.](#)

- Will they guarantee to deliver on budget, with no surprises?
- Will they guarantee to deliver on a fixed date, with no delays?
- Will they guarantee to deliver a snag-free project?
- Do they have the purchasing power to negotiate for materials, furniture, etc., on your behalf?
- Do they have a formal feedback process at the end of the project?
- Do they have the financial backing to complete the project?
- Do they have a healthy balance sheet (with evidence)?
- Is the total cost of your project a small percentage of their annual turnover?
- Do they offer a JCT 'design and build' contract, taking on total responsibility for the project?

## What SERVICES are included? »

Make a list of everything your contractor will provide as part of their service and those things that it won't. Comparing companies on this basis will determine true value for money. Many companies will quote a lower price in full knowledge that you will need additional services later on. [Beware.](#)

Which of these services do they offer in-house? For which ones will you have to hire additional contractors and manage yourself?

### CONSULTANCY

- Workplace appraisal (to work out how much space you need)
- Accommodation summary (to see if your staff can fit well into the new space)
- Management interviews (to determine individual departmental needs)
- Electronic surveys to gather staff input
- Building appraisal (to see if your site is really suitable)
- Detailed cost estimates (so you can create an accurate budget)
- Technical appraisal of buildings, surveys of:
  - Air conditioning
  - Heating and ventilation

- Telecoms
- IT
- Plumbing
- Electricity

## DESIGN

- In-house team (not subcontracted)
- Interior design
- Space planning (to determine the exact layout)
- Concept drawings (so you can get the overall feel and flavour)
- 3-D visualisations (so you can see exactly what you'll get)
- Test fit drawings (to make sure you'll fit in your new space)
- Selecting finishes and fittings
- Working drawings (for construction)
- Furniture (true independent procurement and advice)

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Project co-ordinator to manage design and estimating process
- Detailed cost estimates
- Detailed programme
- Dedicated site manager, single point of contact / responsibility
- Day-to-day co-ordination of your project
- Weekly update meetings
- Extranet (secure online space to share project information)
- Liaising with landlords
- Arranging planning permission
- Managing change control procedure
- Regular reporting on cost, programme and quality
- In-house mechanical & electrical experts (to manage air conditioning and electrical installations)

## OFFICE RELOCATION AND MOVE MANAGEMENT

- Move management services
- IT installation and relocation
- Experience in moving and installing comms rooms
- Furniture installation
- Telecoms installation (liaising with BT, etc.)
- Testing & commissioning
- Snag process - do they guarantee no snags?
- Move-in day - do they guarantee on time move-in?

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

- In-house environmental team
- Do they comply with environmental regulations on site (evidence provided)?
- Do they have environmental complaint logs on site (evidence provided)?
- Will they register the site with the Environment Agency?
- Do they keep copies of waste carrier's licences for all companies that remove waste from the site (evidence provided)?
- Do they provide the proper waste transfer documentation for all site waste (evidence provided)?
- Do they offer **CarbonNeutral®\*** fit out and construction?

## Evaluating their CREDENTIALS »

Is your contractor serious about the environment, quality, and health & safety? If they really are, then they would have picked up certain credentials along the way.

Use the checklist below to make an informed comparison.

Which of these respected credentials can they show you?

## ENVIRONMENT

- ISO 14001 Certified (evidence provided)
- Company Environmental policy (evidence provided)
- Company environmental management system (evidence provided)
- Environmental management team in-house (not subcontracted)
- BREEAM®\*** licensed assessors in-house
- LEED®\*** accredited professionals in-house
- FTSE4Good\*** constituent company

## QUALITY MANAGEMENT

- ISO 9001:2000 Certified (evidence provided)
- Company Quality Management policy (evidence provided)
- Perfect Delivery™ or other client satisfaction scheme
- Client satisfaction interview process

## HEALTH & SAFETY

- Member of Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
- Health & Safety team in-house (evidence provided)
- Health & Safety policy (evidence provided)
- Insurance policies (evidence provided)
- Construction Skills Certification Scheme (evidence provided)
- CDM (Construction Design & Management) policy statement (evidence provided)
- Safety incident record (provided)

## THEIR TEAM

- Team members' credentials
- Project histories for all team members
- Evaluations of designer's previous work
- Project manager in permanent employment (not subcontracted)
- Accessible management team
- Biographies of management team provided

## Glossary

- **CarbonNeutral®** is a scheme that allows you to invest in environmental projects (like planting sustainable forests, or developing greener energy) to offset the carbon dioxide your business generates.
- **BREEAM®** (BRE's Environmental Assessment Method) and **LEED®** (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design's 'green building' rating system) are the two most recognised and authoritative systems for rating how 'green' or 'eco-friendly' a building is.
- The **FTSE4Good** Index Series is the benchmark for listed companies that are committed to ethical business and socially responsible investment.