

Guide to selecting a retail **shopfitter**

Choosing a professional, experienced shopfitting company to carry out your fit out should be a carefully considered decision.

The following points will hopefully help you with selecting a shopfitter to negotiate a contract with, or to invite to tender with other similarly selected prospects:

1. Research the market for appropriate suppliers and invite them to join your selection process. To assist, click on the link at the bottom of the page to research the NZRIA & Red Awards websites, and links to potential suppliers.

Satisfy yourselves that the invited list of retail suppliers, have the following:

- A dedicated Account Manager and a separate Project Manager. It's extremely difficult to manage high level outcomes if you are the one who has to deal with the trades turning up to the job on time.
- A network of accredited installers. Consistent installation and a quality assurance system through accredited installers will ensure your project is completed to the correct standards.
- Roll out strategies especially for nationwide projects. Understanding the priorities and crucial deadlines is the key to keeping to a time frame and communication amongst all of the stakeholders.
- 'Asset Management System'. It is important to have access to specification and cost information as soon as you need it, especially when you have multiple supplies across many sites.
- Maintenance and small works management. As much as you need to ensure you major projects are taken care of, it is equally important to ensure your day to day, small works and reactive maintenance needs are satisfied.
- In house manufacture when relevant to maintain control of the process. A great opportunity for innovation can be found at the manufacture stage and if your supply company has control over this you can ensure you are receiving the best value.
- Warranties on all products and work.
- A focus on the importance of security and confidentiality at their premises. Commercial advantages can be lost at any stage.
- A great track record - Ask for references and speak with their best customers, and their worst.
- Strong credit rating. To ensure they'll be around still when you need them again.
- Proven skills at getting 'buy in' from all the people that will be affected by major fit-out projects is a bonus. A supplier that can assist you to obtain the necessary buy-in will ensure compliance right across your network.

- An obvious focus on long term partnerships. The best way of identifying for this is if your supply company is trying to talk you out of some of your scope because it is an unnecessary expense in their professional opinion. They will ask a lot of questions about your business so they truly understand it. And they will give you helpful ideas on a regular basis.
- Undertake an interview process providing them a clear scope or understanding of your expectations. Ask them to submit prices plus invite variations to allow for their professional experience. It isn't wise to share this experience across the other suppliers as they may not have a true understanding of it and obviously don't have this experience.
- Request a sample to check for quality and confirm your expectations.
- Prototyping and testing will ensure fitness for purpose. Ask your supplier about their prototyping process.
- Once you are happy with all aspects of your assessments make sure your final selection is with a supplier who will work with you. Long term relationships go a long way to achieving great value, delivery and service. Regular price checking should be carried out, but ensure you listen to the value explanations as there are many cheap options available that do not deliver the same outcomes.

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For further information please contact the NZRIA on (09) 411 8677.