

A DETAILED GUIDE TO A

SUCCESSFUL COMMERCIAL FITOUT

10 STEPS TO SUCCESS

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Building Design ❖ Interior Design ❖ Project Management

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WELCOME

This guide was prepared after seeing so many people struggle with understanding the design and construction process, particularly as it relates to the fit-out of shops, offices and commercial spaces. This process can seem like a complex and frightening road block for those who haven't been through it before. The first and most important step is to find and hire your building design professional.

You may be wondering: how do I find the right building design professional for my fit-out project? Do I really need to hire a building designer? What about builders? And most importantly: what are the key, critical steps I need to take to ensure that I hire the building design professional that is the perfect match for my project?

In the following pages, you will discover the answers to these questions – and more.

We hope you enjoy this guide and look forward to your feedback on the contents.

01. CREATE A PROJECT TIMELINE

One secret to a successful commercial fit-out project is proper scheduling and following the project outline *strictly*. You don't want to leave yourself short of time.

A timeline looks like this:

Day 10-14 – Initial concept design and cost estimation

Day 15-30 – Detailed design and approval process (may take longer than expected)

Day 30-90 – Construction

Day 90 – Handover

It is essential to set a timeline for your commercial fit-out team. This kind of project is time-specific. The earlier your team finishes, the earlier you open for business.

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02. DRAFT A DETAILED DESIGN BRIEF

This is one of the most important things to accomplish. Your design brief is a complete list of your needs and preferences. It sets the guidelines that will help you find a space for your space. It also enables you to determine the ideal size of your stall or office.

Here are the things that you need to describe:

- The look and feel that you want to achieve. When possible, show your designer photos of the design features you want.
- Your business' size and the growth potential of your company. We want to know the number of people that you wish to fit into your space. The best commercial fit out design is flexible and sustainable. It must accommodate your ever-changing needs.
- Allocation of private and open workspaces. Your staff needs both in the workplace. It varies depending on the industry, business type, style, and branding.
- Seating, storage, back house areas, fitting rooms, and more.
- Meeting/conference rooms, board rooms, training rooms — if your office requires one.
- Staff equipment and facilities
- Your branding and messaging. The designer needs the inspiration to create a space that truly mirrors your business.

After completing the design brief, you will have an idea of the type and size of space that you'll need. You will be confident when you start looking for your location.

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03. FIND A SUITABLE BUSINESS LOCATION

Go to commercial real estate websites and scout for available workspaces for lease or sale. Make sure that the site is:

- Large enough for your growing business
- Accessible and an excellent spot for business
- In good condition

Also, read the landlord's terms and conditions. You don't want to rent a commercial space that hinders the operation of your business.

Once you landed on the *perfect* business location, it's time to find your building designer.

04. FIND A FITOUT DESIGNER AND BUILDER

Most people search online for the best designers and contractors. Our suggestion? Do not be fooled with nice photos and websites you see. Do some research. Read online reviews and feedback from their previous clients. There are a couple of sites you can check like Product Reviews, Houzz, or simply Google the business. You'll find online reviews there.

Also, speak to the designer and builder via phone or face to face. Meet and discuss the project. Trust us, you will know if they are fit for the project after meeting them

Extra tip:

Make sure that the builder you want to do business carries a builder's registration number. Otherwise, they can't carry out the work. Always check the company's credential and whether they are members of institutions such as:

1. Master Builders Association
2. Housing Institute of Australia
3. Green Building Council of Australia
4. ISO 9001 or other similar quality assurance
5. Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

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At Project Works Design, we can connect you with the most qualified builder for your project. We have worked with many, and we can tell you who's the best and who's easy to work with.

05. ASSESS THE PROPOSALS OF THE DESIGNERS

After selecting the suitable commercial fit-out designers, provide them with the design brief and ask for a quote. From there, you can assess which one is worth buying. Make sure you are comparing apples with apples and if necessary, ask the building design to clarify their fee proposal and revise if necessary.

06. READ THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EVERY CONTRACT

Prior to working with any designer or builder, you must read and understand their terms and conditions within every contract before signing it. The agreement must protect both parties, which is you and the company. It must not appear one-sided. We recommend getting legal advice when you don't understand the contents of the contract.

For smaller projects, look for the following information in the builder's contract. State these in a clear and concise way:

1. Obligations (each party)
2. Project timeline with an exact start and completion date
3. Detailed scope of works and cost estimations
4. How to deal with variation and when additional costs incurred
5. Insurance
6. Payment terms
7. Snagging and retention
8. Liability periods, dealing with defects
9. Dispute, suspension, or termination of the contract
10. Other assumptions and exclusions

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For larger projects, request an Australian Standard contract. Your chosen builder must provide you with one, and we recommend seeking legal advice to check it thoroughly before your sign.

07. GET DETAILED DESIGNS AND PLANNING APPROVAL

At this stage, your designer must provide you with the complete set of drawings for you to submit to the local council. The approval process is the most exciting part; it's the scariest because it's an essential stage. Without approval, the building works will not commence. All commercial fit-outs must be compliant with the Building Code of Australia (BCA), current building regulations and standards in the country, and the local council requirements.

You also need planning permission in case the building is changing; is heritage listed, or external works are required. You might need consent from the Heritage Council. Also, you must furnish your landlord with a copy of the drawings, specifications, insurances, and builders' information. Make sure that you have the landlord's permission before any building work.

08. MONITORING THE PROGRESS OF CONSTRUCTION

As mentioned earlier, the builders must create a detailed project timeline with an exact start and finish date. Apart from that, the schedule must indicate all the significant milestones of the project. It must depict when each trade must be on site. The best way to monitor the project's progress is through regular onsite meetings. When you hold these meetings, you ensure communication between all parties. Try to discuss the following:

1. Project's progress
2. Design issues encountered during construction
3. Design variations
4. Additional information and documents needed
5. Health and safety issues

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6. Extra costs and payment
7. Obligations that are not met like the standard of work, legal roles, and supply of materials and services

09. PREPARE A DEFECTS LIST

A defects list is a document that states all the repairs and incomplete work that the builder needs to finish prior to final payment. This way, you know that the work is 100% complete and satisfactory. This list must be compiled prior to handover and all contents must be agreed by you and your contractor.

10. SCHEDULE HANDOVER AND AFTER COMPLETION SERVICES

When the builder hands over the project, you only need to do a few things to make sure that it is ready for business.

First, call trades who can install locks and security cameras. Then, invite people who can help you set up all your products and marketing materials inside the office.

Also, make sure that the builder hands over the following as well:

1. As Built Architectural drawings
2. Test certificates
3. Instructions on how to take care of furniture pieces
4. Instructions on how to operate equipment
5. All obtained statutory approvals

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THE NEXT STEP

Congratulations! You now have the key information that will help you lay a successful foundation for understanding how to successfully undertake a commercial fit out project.

Unfortunately, I can't include every important piece of information about this very important step in the fit-out design and construction process successfully in this guide.

Actually, that would be impossible because each project is unique and the requirements differ based on a multitude of factors. But with this guide, you have the critical information that will ensure that your project is a success.

If you are in the process of looking for a building designer for your fit-out project, let's talk. I can help you wade through the necessary requirements and make sure you aren't overlooking a crucial factor that could doom your project to failure. I offer a custom **initial consultation** where I will provide a needs and options review and identify the specific requirements pertaining to your project and your available options.

Typically, the **initial consultation** saves my clients thousands of dollars and weeks of lost time, not to mention the stress and headache of getting something wrong.

To read more about the **initial consultation** as well as the price for this service and why it is critically important to your project's success visit my website. If you are ready to talk now, please give me a call.

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Best wishes for the success of your project!