



eBook

# The Top Ten Questions to Ask When Choosing a Hotel Furnishings Vendor.

How to Choose an FF&E Vendor.



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# So, You Need to Select an FF&E Vendor to Provide Furnishing for Your Hotel.

This critical decision will impact the happiness of your guests and the overall performance of your property.

HFD (Hospitality Furnishings & Design) is honored to present this powerful online guide to help you make the best choice when selecting your FF&E vendor. In this guide, you will find best practices which walk you through this critical decision step-by-step. You will also find key takeaways that you can use while negotiating with each individual vendor.

For HFD, the following questions aren't only guidelines, they're foundational to the systematic process that we use with each of our successful FF&E customers. Regardless of which vendor you choose, these guidelines will ensure that your project is a win.

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### Question 1:

## How Experienced are They with Your Brand's Standards?

As a hotelier, you rely on upholding your brand's established level of consistent quality in your rooms. Brand standards are not just loose recommendations, they're strict codes which need to be followed to ensure your hotel upholds the brand's integrity.



When choosing an FF&E vendor, look at their project history - often available on their website - to make sure that they have extensive experience with your brand's standards. Choosing to work with an inexperienced vendor will result in the use of unapproved products and longer submittal periods. This can lead to delays in opening rooms, expensive and unpredictable updates, and remodels being required after each inspection. To avoid these frustrating and costly mistakes, ask your vendor for references from previous clients they've assisted. By choosing a vendor that is experienced with your brand's standards, you are choosing a protected project.

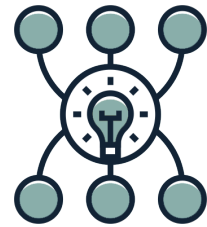


**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Always make sure that any vendor you work with has a proven and extensive level of experience with your brand.

## Question 2:

# Do They Have a Proven Systematic Process?

Having a proven process is key to completing your project in a timely and efficient manner. With so many parties involved, it can be overwhelming to juggle everyone's responsibilities. As a hotelier, you should never have to manage the processes of each individual party you hire. You've hired them because they are the experts at what they do, right? Hire vendors who have a proven process in place. These vendors will understand and systematically execute all of their individual responsibilities and tasks, letting you rest assured that your project is in good hands. When your vendor's process creates accountability across all involved parties, you will be one step closer to a protected project.



**KEY TAKEAWAY:** *Insist that your vendor has a process, and make sure they share it with you before you make your decision. Doing this will ensure your project runs tightly - minimizing the gaps in accountability where errors incubate.*

### Question 3:

## Will You Partner with a Dedicated Project Manager?

From managing inventory to coordinating contractors, it seems there are endless tasks to oversee when furnishing a hotel. These tasks can easily overwhelm a hotelier, and this becomes a problem when you are taken away from your important, high-level responsibilities. Project managers serve as a simple yet indispensable solution to this problem. They'll minimize stress for you and will oversee the entire FF&E process from start to finish. Once assigned to you, your project manager will also become your main point of contact between you and your FF&E vendor, creating a seamless flow of communication and accountability between your organization and theirs.



Effective communication is critical to launching a successful FF&E project. Vendors who understand this will provide a project manager, and you can feel confident knowing your project is being looked after and protected.



**KEY TAKEAWAY:** *Having a dedicated project manager makes communication much easier and limits the opportunity for errors and mistakes.*

#### Question 4:

## Will They Understand Your Budget?

Sticking to a budget is one of the biggest challenges facing a hotelier. Delays not only cost money, but they inhibit your ability to sell rooms and bring in revenue. Time is money, especially in this industry, and this makes the cost of the product as well as the time it takes to receive the product both equally important. It can be extremely frustrating for a hotelier to be given predicted open dates only to find out their project is months behind schedule. By establishing a realistic budget and maintaining honest communication, you can avoid the terrible realization that your project is delayed and over budget. Choose a vendor who has experience developing cost-saving mechanisms. This will not only save you time and money but, better yet, will save you from feeling frustrated and overwhelmed by not meeting your targeted opening date.



**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Focus on cost-saving mechanisms. Make sure your vendor understands your budget and has a systematic process of value engineering to meet the brand's standards and open date.

### Question 5:

## How Will They Protect Your Project?

A successful FF&E installation all comes down to how well your project is protected. You need to know that your project is in good hands, not only so that you feel confident giving your FF&E vendor the autonomy that they need to complete their tasks, but also so that you as a hotelier have the time to uphold your operational responsibilities. A tool, such as an accountability matrix, that holds all parties responsible for their individual tasks and timeframes, is key to protecting your project. With each party individually responsible, you can then collectively complete a successful FF&E installation. In short, if you choose a vendor that can properly schedule, communicate, and deliver according to the accountability system they have in place, you will have a protected project.



**KEY TAKEAWAY:** *With so many moving parts and parties involved, choosing an FF&E vendor with hotelier minded knowledge of your day to day operational needs can prevent unexpected costs in upkeep, maintenance, and replacements.*



### Question 6:

## Will They Hit Your Target Open Date?

Hitting your brand's declared target date requires a special set of skills and experience from your FF&E vendor. Not only do you need your product to be on time and in the correct order, but you also need it to arrive at a job site that's prepped and ready. Receiving product too early increases the risk of it becoming damaged or going missing, leading to rooms not being rentable while you're waiting for the replacements to arrive. These risks can become just as costly as the fines associated with missing your brand's declared target opening date. A valuable asset is a skilled FF&E vendor who can communicate with all parties involved and coordinate deliveries at the right time in the right order. This caliber of vendor will help you maintain your relationship with your brand and meet their declared target date.



**KEY TAKEAWAY:** *It takes a special set of skills and experience to make sure that your project is protected and that you meet your brand's declared target date.*

### Question 7:

## What is Their Design Approach?

Experience and attention to detail are important components of every FF&E project, but they are especially important when it comes to the design. As an initial step in the process, the designer must meet the brand's standards while also addressing the unique challenges of your particular hotel. When considering a vendor, you should ask yourself, "How will their design approach protect me?" It can be extremely costly to redesign, re-submit, or even worse, reinstall if your project is poorly designed. It is vital for your FF&E vendor to be forward thinking when it comes to the design, and you can inspect their design approach to ensure it follows a proven process. An engineered design process can guarantee the desired guest experience with a maximum return on investment for your project. Choose a vendor with the right experience, attention to detail, and a proven process that best protects your project and saves you from costly redesigns.



**KEY TAKEAWAY:** *Design is a component that should be taken very seriously. Insist that your vendor has dedicated and experienced designers to work on your project.*

### Question 8:

## Do They Use Trained Professionals?

Unprofessional and unqualified vendors will result in costly delays, heightened frustration, and stress. There are countless ways for untrained professionals to disrupt your project. From damaging goods to creating an unsafe work environment, untrained professionals induce risk for you and your project. It is common practice for vendors to hire local contractors, but that doesn't mean you have to hire contractors with little to no experience handling hospitality FF&E products. Choose a vendor with an in-depth employee hiring and training process and make sure that you ask your vendor for their installer recommendations. Keep your project protected by choosing a vendor that is territorially well connected with trained and experienced install professionals.



**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Many vendors aren't connected with well-trained professionals to carry out the job. Make sure you are comfortable with the entire team working on your project, and ask your FF&E vendor for installer recommendations in your area.experienced designers to work on your project.

### Question 9:

## How Large is Their Pool of Experts?

Compounding on the importance of hiring trained professionals, having a deep pool of experts to choose from across all aspects of your project creates the stability and reliability needed to deliver your vision. If your vendor has qualified and trained experts to choose from when delivering your project, there will be less of a chance for untrained professionals to influence your vision. This will not only minimize the chances for mistakes and delays but will also bring a higher level of quality to your hotel. It's important to feel confident handing your project over to your vendor of choice. Ask vendors about their pool of experts to see if they are capable of protecting your project.

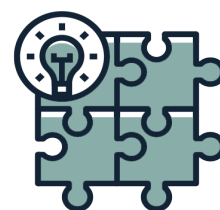


**KEY TAKEAWAY:** *Make sure your vendor has the right internal pool of talent to support the entire scope of your project.*

### Question 10:

## Will They Have Your Back When Problems Arise?

Have you ever struggled with getting a true indication of what stage your project is really at? No one wants to admit that they are running behind schedule, and vendors will do whatever they can to keep your business. In the end, though, delays are unavoidable, and it is better to be informed from the beginning so that you can adapt your schedule. This is a common problem and the way a vendor resolves it says a lot about their integrity. You want to find a vendor that addresses problems head-on and is transparent about where they are with your project. Ultimately, waiting does not make the problem go away, it just makes the delay more costly to you! You can best protect your project by finding a vendor who is proactive about preventing problems and intentional about solving them.



**KEY TAKEAWAY:** *Be sure to examine how the vendor resolves problems and issues and make sure to check references to find out how issues were resolved with previous projects.*

## Selecting the right FF&E Vendor is Critical.

It's a decision that can have a dramatic impact on your hotel's budget and success. We hope that this guide will help you more effectively evaluate vendors by giving you step by step support.

These accountability guidelines are standard for HFD, but regardless of the vendor you choose, these guidelines should be upheld to ensure that your project is protected throughout the entire design, procurement, and installation process.

# HFD's Expert Team can Assist you with Your Hotel Furnishings.

HFD's award winning team will ensure that all of your FF&E questions are answered, including those you don't know how to ask. Please see examples of our designs below, as well as on our website <http://www.hfdcorp.com/>



**Best Western Plus - Winston Salem**  
Winston Salem, NC



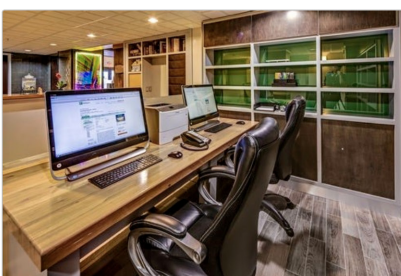
**La Quinta - Lynchburg**  
Lynchburg, VA



**Holiday Inn Express - Cleveland Airport**  
Brookpark, OH



**Comfort Suites - Berlin**  
Berlin, OH



**Holiday Inn - Mentor**  
Mentor, OH



**Holiday Inn Express & Suites - Clearfield**  
Clearfield, PA



**Holiday Inn Express & Suites - Fond Du Lac**  
Fond Du Lac, WI



**La Quinta - Morgantown**  
Morgantown, WV



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