

DESIGN IS GOOD BUSINESS

It doesn't just add value; it multiplies it.



Design is Good Business Firm Toolkit | Blank DIGB PDF Template

Your building can do much more than keep the rain off your business; it can advance your business plan. To capture the full value of your capital program, you will do well to engage your architect in a discussion of your business goals, with your business leaders.

Qualifications Based Selection: Why It's a Good Thing

You're hiring an architect, choosing from a short list of candidates. Surely, one of the factors to consider should be their fee, right?

You might think so, but experience has demonstrated that selection based on qualifications and competence—*followed* by the negotiation of fees—is most cost-effective in terms of the total, life-cycle costs of capital development. That's over four decades of experience since the passage in 1972 of the Brooks Selection Bill, which mandated qualifications based selection (QBS) for federal building projects. It's a proven process at the federal, state, and local level—in California it is required under law for state projects, and many local municipalities have adopted it by statute, as well—and savvy businesses employ it as a matter of course.

The logic behind QBS is that, before design begins, too little is known about the project for design fee proposals to be comparable. Construction documents can be put out for bids,

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- [Savings by Design](#)
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because they describe in precise detail what's being priced. Such precision is impossible for prospective design services. Design fee proposals are a red herring.

Instead, the reliable approach is to rank the short list based on qualifications and then to enter into negotiations with the highest ranked firm. If a mutually agreeable fee can be determined, the process is complete, with the best qualified firm retained. If not, you move on to the next most qualified firm and so on down the list until fee negotiations are successful.

You'll recognize this process as similar to that of hiring an employee: you offer the job to the best person, then you see if you can agree on a salary. In the same way, qualifications based selection assures that your project is designed by the best firm you can afford. Which is exactly what you want.

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2015 AIACC Merit Award for Architecture, U.S. Coast Guard Waste Water Treatment Facility, Petaluma, CA, Marcy Wong Donn Logan Architects. The facility reuses 100 percent of the training center's sewage for irrigation, reducing potable water demand by an estimated 20 million gallons annually.



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