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## **The design-build advantage: Integrated interior design solutions - by Parker Snyder**

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Parker Snyder

When it comes to corporate interior spaces for both commercial and industrial projects, partnering with a design-build firm with in-house interior design services can offer clients many benefits. Unlike traditional delivery methods where interior designers operate independently from the design and construction teams, often creating a longer project timeline as cost negotiations and revisions ensue, a design-build approach seamlessly integrates these functions from the onset.

**Balanced Budget & Aesthetics:** From the earliest stages of the project, design-build interiors teams are involved with clients to understand their vision and/or goals and align these with a predetermined project schedule and budget. While traditional interior design services are budgeted separately, design-build interior design costs can be included in the overall project budget, eliminating unforeseen fees.

“As part of the design-build team, we work within the project’s established budget, eliminating the risk of developing a design that can’t be achieved due to cost constraints,” said Jennifer Otta, senior interior designer for ARCO National Construction’s integrated design firm, GMA Design Group. “Our early involvement allows us to focus on the key design features that have a strong impact on the human experience and present clients with options that achieve their goals and fit within their budgets.”

Corporate space within a 150,109 s/f cGMP manufacturing facility completed by ARCO National Construction for Scannell Properties and Watson-Marlow Fluid Technology Solutions in Devens, MA. ARCO’s integrated interior design team provided services for the 39,135 s/f, two-story office with a contemporary interior design, featuring custom wood slat space dividers throughout, luxury vinyl tile flooring, carpet, acoustical baffles, and a custom reception desk design.

Rather than focusing solely on aesthetics, design-build interiors teams work to find a cost-effective way to achieve the desired design intent for clients. Project layouts and overall designs are created with a comprehensive understanding to optimize the client’s space. Accustomed to working within set budgets, design-build interiors teams have vast knowledge of materials and their costs, enabling them to offer alternatives without compromising quality. Additionally, large, national design-build firms offer stronger buying power, helping reduce overall costs. This ability to accommodate various levels of budgets and aesthetics streamlines the process for clients, prioritizing style and cost savings.

Turnkey Solutions: Beyond standard interior design services, design-build interiors teams can assist clients with selecting furniture, lighting, and artwork, thereby streamlining communication and associated costs and eliminating the need for outside consultants. This integrated approach ensures consistency in style and quality across all elements of interior design, as well as efficiency and functionality.

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Enhanced Constructability & Communication: Interior designers in a design-build setting also offer expert knowledge and resources to ensure feasibility and constructability are at the forefront when developing a design. Compared to outside firms, design-build interiors teams have a more comprehensive understanding of construction details and how designs are executed in the field. The ability to have constant contact and collaboration with the same contractor allows for the fine-tuning of construction details up front. This reduces the risk of design plans that are deemed unfeasible once construction begins, a common occurrence in traditional settings.

Direct communication with the construction team, including the design-builder's field personnel, is vital in ensuring constructability, especially that of custom or complex design elements. Designers can make real-time adjustments, and design elements can be verified, ensuring they fit within the spatial and structural constraints of the building.

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"The streamlined communication that design-build offers is incredibly beneficial during the

construction phase of a project,” Otta said. “If issues arise, we can communicate with the field team and address them immediately. When working through solutions, we have the benefit of an integrated team that has a comprehensive understanding of all disciplines involved. This allows complex designs to be achieved much faster than they would when working with an outside firm.”

Partnering with the Right Design-Build Company: From commercial office buildings to industrial facilities, partnering with a qualified design-build contractor with in-house design capabilities is essential for ensuring the most efficient interior design solutions. Unlike traditional methods in which interior designers work separately from the design and construction teams, full-service design-build companies, like ARCO National Construction, offer clients seamless solutions that prioritize both cost and schedule without compromising aesthetics. Design-build interiors teams offer the benefit of a complete understanding of the project’s budget and schedule, helping clients make informed decisions to ensure feasibility and constructability.

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