

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO HIRING A METAL FABRICATION COMPANY



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FINDING A METAL FABRICATION COMPANY THAT IS A CUT ABOVE THE REST

As a highly educated, skilled professional who understands the many complexities of the specialty projects you manage, your goal is to complete every project effectively and efficiently every time. Years of experience have proven that doing things right the first time and not cutting corners is always the best course of action. However, finding a supplier that shares the same best work practices can be challenging.



Hands down, your job would be so much less stressful if you could find one single metal fabrication company that truly is the complete package; a one-stop shop for every aspect of your complex metal fabrication or assembly project. When you have complete confidence in your steel fabricator from the start, you can rest assured knowing that every project will meet or exceed all of your expectations when everything is said and done. At the end of the day, you deserve to go home and relax knowing that every project is in the most qualified hands possible.

The question you've probably asked yourself many times is, "Can you really avoid the incomplete projects, stressful complications, and failed partnerships that come with average welders?"

THE ANSWER IS ABSOLUTELY YES!

Before you bid out your next project be sure to closely consider the following:



1. DIVERSITY



2. COMPANY HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE



3. THEIR FACILITIES AND AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT



4. ADEQUATE WORKFORCE



5. REALISTIC PRICING



6. DEPENDABILITY



7. QUALITY OF MATERIALS AND LABOR



8. FINISHING ON EVERY PROJECT

CAN THEY REALLY HANDLE THE WORK YOU NEED?

In the past, you may have run into suppliers who failed to measure up to your expectations. Fortunately, this can be avoided. Be sure to request a comprehensive breakdown of their complete services and capabilities, industry specialties, and customer portfolio. This will help you to determine which suppliers are worth considering and which ones aren't even contenders.



A steel fabricator that takes pride in serving a diverse customer base will be well equipped to handle even the most complex fabricating, processing, and finishing jobs around.

A diverse customer portfolio may include:



Agriculture



Environmental



Oil & Natural Gas



Transportation



Steel



Industrial



Automotive



Solar



Military



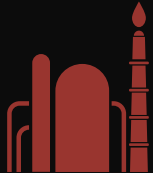
Utilities



Alternative Energy



Mining



Refineries



Medical



Paper



Clean Energy

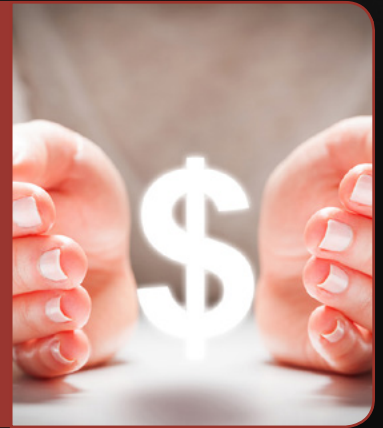
Many steel fabricators are limited in their capabilities and therefore wouldn't be able to fully handle the intricacies of your project. A great welding company will not only specialize in heavy steel fabricating but also in rolling and forming, processing, machining, and most importantly, finishing. Start to finish, you need to trust that your project is as good as done, right from the very beginning.

DOES THEIR HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE BACK UP THEIR CLAIMS OF SUCCESS?

When considering potential bid prospects, a supplier is only as successful as its past history will allow. If you want to be able to trust that your fabricator will handle your project with integrity and professionalism, just take a look at how their company is run. This will paint you a pretty clear picture as to what you can expect from your partnership together.

1

Look into their financial history. How stable are they as a business? Ask about their financial practices and policies, and how they manage complex situations when budgets are tight.



2

What are their relationships like with their steel vendors? Do they pay their bills to these vendors on time? Are they able to source necessary materials quickly and efficiently?



3

What are their relationships like with their other clients? Check their references and past work. Ask other professionals in the industry about a prospective bid's reputation.

4

Does this shop have a vision for future growth and success that drives their daily business practices? If they do, you can be sure that they won't settle for mediocrity on your next project either. In order to be the best in the industry, a fabricator must strive to always exceed expectations. If they exceed their own expectations, they'll probably exceed yours as well.

In the end, don't put your next project in the hands of a welder that is unstable and unprofessional in every aspect of their business.

DO THEY HAVE THE FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT TO GET THE JOB DONE RIGHT?

Most fabricators will do just about anything to sell you on a bid proposal. Their goal is to convince you to accept their bid for your project. However, one company's proposal may seem good on paper but might not work out in the end due to numerous limitations. When considering a potential fabricator for your job, don't forget to scale the size of your project to the logistical constraints of the company.

Ask the supplier these questions:

1

Do you have the essential equipment available to complete the job efficiently and effectively?



2

What kinds of technology have you invested in to advance your company within the industry?



3

Can you take a tour of the facilities to determine if the shop can handle the complexity of the project, on top of any other projects that may be on their agenda?



4

Will any work included for this project need to be sub-contracted to another party, or will this shop be able to handle every aspect of the job in-house?

5

Will the location of this shop allow for convenient meetings, conversations, and quick turnaround deadlines? If workers can't get to your site quickly to address an emergency, potential problems could go from bad to worse in the blink of an eye.

MANPOWER IS A MUST; CAN THEY JUGGLE NUMEROUS CLIENTS WITH EASE?

Realistically, you probably won't be the only client that a top-notch metal fabricator is serving. The great ones are in high demand. They know what they're doing and the proof is in the end results of their work. Before hiring a metal fabricator for your next project, it's important to know that they have enough skilled workers available to actually complete the job at hand on time, every time without compromising deadlines and other projects' integrity.

Ask about qualifications of the various professionals employed for the shop.

1

WHAT CREDENTIALS, CERTIFICATES, OR LICENSURES DO THEY HOLD?

2

WHAT DOES THE SHOP HOLD?

3

HOW MANY MEN WILL LIKELY BE ASSIGNED TO THIS PROJECT?

4

WHICH SKILLED WORKERS WILL BE HEADING UP YOUR PROJECT?

Find out as much practical information as you can up front about who will be working on your project. If they're workforce is stretched too thin, then you can be fairly certain that aspects of your project may be compromised along the way.

PRICING THAT'S FAIR, PLAIN, AND SIMPLE

Not all steel fabricators are created equal. You've probably witnessed that through your experiences with numerous welders in the past. But when it comes down to it, one of the first things you probably look at when comparing bids on a project is price. After all, you are working within a budget and you need to find a fabricator that can perform the work within the confines of that amount. More than likely, you'll be receiving numerous quotes from various fabricators in your region, offering similar capabilities at differing prices. But in reality, a price quote reflects much more than just a dollar amount.



Before signing a contract with a steel fabricator, look for these things:



AN ITEMIZED BREAK DOWN OF THE MATERIALS AND SERVICES INCLUDED IN THE ESTIMATE

This number should represent every aspect of the project from start to finish, and should allow for unforeseen expenses. You don't want to be sidetracked by hidden costs that delay project deadlines and completion dates.

AN APPLES-TO-APPLES COMPARISON OF PRICE VERSUS SKILL AND EXPERIENCE LEVEL BETWEEN FABRICATORS

Project estimates should be relatively similar between fabricators within your location. If a company provides you with a low-ball price quote, chances are they're either desperate for work, willing to compromise on quality, or lack experience and skill.



Some fabricators may try to inflate the projected cost of a job and offer you estimates that are outrageously overpriced. If this happens, you'll be able to identify these discrepancies quickly through such detailed comparisons and breakdowns.

DEPENDABILITY FROM START TO FINISH, GUARANTEED

The success of your company rests in part on your ability to do your job and to do it well. Your teams are depending on you to locate the ideal suppliers to fulfill the needs of each project with discernment and accuracy. Careful research and planning up front can prevent many potential complications down the road.

As was stated before, it's always a good idea to ask for references before signing any contract with a welder or fabricator. Check out their website, look for BBB ratings, and learn what others in the industry have to say about them. Chances are, if they've worked on other projects within the area, you've seen whether or not these fabricators can stay on schedule, or heard whether or not they can stay on budget. If they have a questionable reputation, then you may not want to give such companies your consideration.



Also, be sure to ask them about:



COMMUNICATION

How often will the fabricator keep in contact with you throughout the project, and with whom will you be in contact with primarily?



DEADLINES






What kind of priority does the company place on punctuality and adhering to calendars and timelines? Do their references confirm this?

Your supervisors and bosses are depending on you to make sure every aspect of every project is completed efficiently and exceptionally every time. You should expect nothing less from the suppliers you contract with.

HIGH QUALITY METAL FABRICATION THAT'S SECOND TO NONE

It's one thing to talk about a commitment to quality and it's another thing to actually live it out through every aspect of a company's business practices. A company that is committed to exceptional quality work and materials on every job will be a company that is growing and expanding along their way. Their commitment to excellence will drive them toward innovative thinking, new technologies, and greater services for their customers. Taking a look at a welding company's history, growth plan, and mission statement can provide you a clear sense of how they view their place in the industry. The efficiency and safety of every project you bid out depends on fabricators who are committed to high quality materials and work. Never settle for less than the best.

The screenshot shows a website navigation menu with links for HOME, SERVICES, PROJECTS, GALLERY, LOCATIONS, and COMPANY. A sidebar on the left contains links for ABOUT US, HISTORY, LEADERSHIP, CAREERS, and CONTACT US. The main content area is titled "HISTORY" and features a vertical timeline of key events:

- 1960:** Swanton Welding and Machining was started in 1960 by George Kern. Mainly serving the farm community, George never realized what the future would hold for his one man welding business. 
- 1985:** Swanton Welding and Machining was purchased by George's son-in-law, Norm Zeller. Under Norm's leadership and innovative thinking we have grown from a one man welding shop to one of the best equipped custom fabrication shops in the Midwest and Southeast. 
- 1997:** Swanton Welding and Machining purchased the Pilsod Machining Co. who was the inventor of the Steyer Steam Valve. 
- 2000:** Swanton Welding and Machining purchased an 85,000 sq. ft. building in Griffin, Georgia and opened a production facility equipped with state of the art lasers and robots while maintaining the capabilities to fabricate custom fabrications. 
- 2004:** Swanton Welding and Machining purchased a 50,000 sq. ft. building in Swanton, Ohio for the production of truck beds and installation. 

THE JOB ISN'T COMPLETE IF IT DOESN'T INCLUDE FINISHING

As you know, there is more to metal fabrication than just welding, rolling and forming steel. Finishing is the final piece of the puzzle to make your manufactured project complete. This is one industry service that separates all-inclusive fabricators from those with average capabilities. Not every company has the expertise to truly complete a project on their own. Often, the finishing work is sub-contracted out to another company to be completed. This can lead to communication, project delays, and added expenses that you're ultimately responsible for.



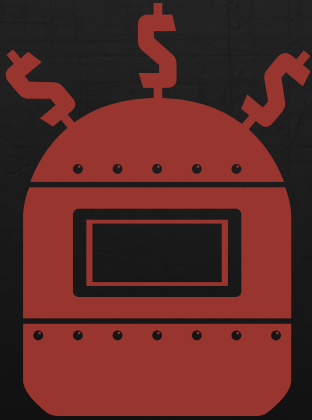
With only one manufacturer handling your fabrication and finishing work, there can be greater ease for accountability regarding the safety, procedures, and quality of the work. If you want to avoid potential setbacks and save yourself time, money and other valuable resources, choose a manufacturer that is not only capable of fabricating steel for your project, but also blasting, painting, and finishing it, too.

THE PROBLEM OF SETTLING FOR LESS THAN THE BEST



As a Project Manager, you work tirelessly to make sure you perform your job efficiently and effectively in order to help your company remain profitable and successful. Your job is not an easy one; it's filled with many complex responsibilities that all fall on your shoulders at the end of the day. Your job would be much less stressful if you didn't have to worry about so many crucial aspects of the day-to-day. These are things you **SHOULD** be able to trust your sub contractors and vendors to do automatically, however, past experience tells you otherwise. That's the problem when you partner with a metal fabrication company that's simply average.

In the past, you may have chosen *average* and regretted it in the end; or, you've heard frustrating reviews about such companies that make big promises and yield far less promising results. With these other suppliers, you've probably had to face common issues such as:



UNREALISTIC PRICING that is either so cheap that the work is virtually a loss or over-priced for mediocre quality results. Many of these contractors are often unwilling to negotiate on pricing to compensate for these discrepancies, too.



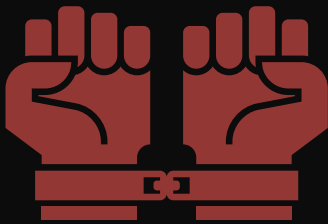
LOW QUALITY WORK AND PRODUCTS. How can you trust that the work and products you're relying on for the completion of your job if you suspect low quality materials are used? Were unqualified workers sub-contracted in to complete work that weren't within their expertise? The integrity of your work and your company are put into question when your contracted metal workers cut corners.



UNRELIABILITY that shows itself through missing deadlines, slow progressing services, inconsistent project quotes, or here-today-gone-tomorrow companies that seem to vanish before the work is complete.



POOR COMMUNICATION which makes managing timelines, overcoming product delays, and ensuring all aspects of the complete project are aligned, next to impossible.



LIMITED CAPABILITIES that force you to bid out projects to multiple suppliers. This often leads to unnecessary confusion, deadline complications, and communication errors.

These kinds of complications can cost your company valuable time, money and client trust, all resources that you can't afford to lose.

What you need is to find the right metal fabricator from the start that can help you complete your projects with confidence and ease. You need to find a metal fabrication company that's a cut above the rest.

WHY CHOOSE SWANTON WELDING COMPANY FOR YOUR NEXT PROJECT?



Since 1956, Swanton Welding Company has been proudly partnering with our customers nationwide with high quality welding and fabrication services and customer-driven business practices that today allow them to lead the way as innovators within the industry.

Over 60 years of experience and out-of-the-box thinking has driven Swanton Welding Company to exponential growth throughout the Midwest and Southeast United States, making them one of the best equipped custom fabrication shops around.

Always focusing on the future while never forgetting their past, Swanton Welding Company is a diverse, specialty steel fabricating company that is fully equipped to handle some of the most complex projects around the globe. Their commitment to high quality steel manufacturing and customer satisfaction will not be beat by their competitors. Contact them today at 419-826-4816 or check out their website at WWW.SWANTONWELD.COM to discover more about how Swanton Welding Company is the right choice for all of your metal fabrication needs.