

Branded Environments: Concept to Completion

The Value of Finding a True End-to-End Partner

Designing, developing and installing optimized branded environments is a complicated process, particularly at scale.

Often retailers, quick-serve restaurants, banks or other types of branded environments hire several companies that specialize in one area or the other. Sometimes that works. But more often, it misses the opportunity to elevate the entire project in terms of process and results.

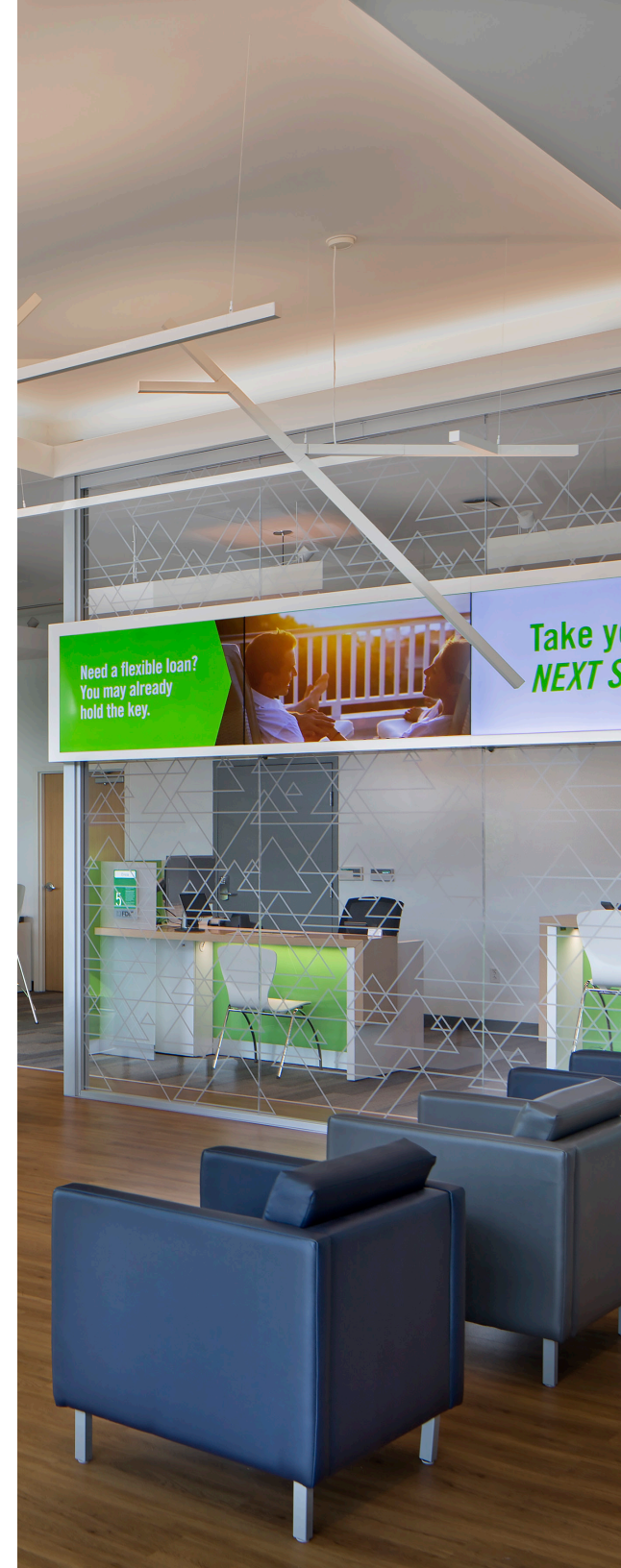
The process for powerful branded environments starts with research and strategy and then moves into creative services and design development. Prototyping allows you to implement, test and measure different solutions before adopting at scale, while value engineering makes sure the highest quality is obtained at the lowest cost.

Next comes production and rollout, which requires project managers who are masters of every link of the supply chain: manufacturing, distribution, logistics/transportation and delivery/installation.

A true partner with end-to-end solutions and comprehensive oversight can do all of that and understands how to connect in-store experiences to app development. They can also flawlessly execute your promotional calendar, procuring, delivering and installing high-quality fixtures, signage and décor on time and on budget.

Some companies claim they offer holistic solutions but really don't. So you need to ask the right questions, review the track record of accomplishments and understand the details, requirements and complexities of going from idea to execution.

What follows is a guide to understanding what constitutes a true, value-driven, end-to-end partnership.

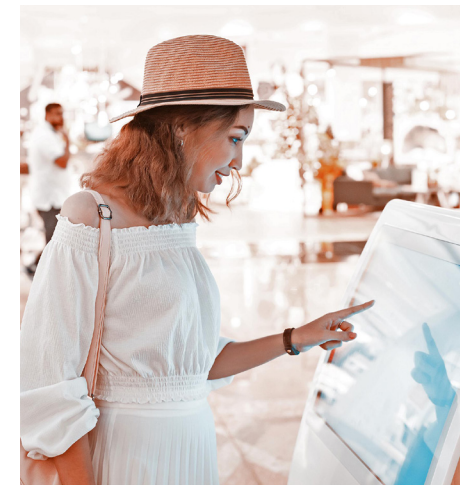


“NOT OUR NORMAL SCOPE OF WORK”

A bank was in a pickle.

It hired a company for project management of a branch refresh. One of that company's vendors supplied a millwork cabinet that required a 65" monitor. The millwork vendor did not supply the monitor, however, as it was not part of its normal scope of work. The project management company reached out to the bank's other vendors, who do spec and digital, but none wanted to supply or install the digital monitors for this fixture.

This failed handoff doesn't happen with a true end-to-end partner.



Design & Design Development:

Great design must start with research

There needs to be a “why” for every aspect of your branded environment. That’s often not the prime directive for many environmental design companies that prioritize art over customer experience.

Design should not only be beautiful and impressive, it must also be purposeful and customer-centric. Great design starts with research and strategic thinking — exploring your unique needs, particularly the wants and needs of your customers.

The design process must aim to present your branded environment at its aspirational best, but it also requires a laser-like focus on providing ROI. A design team with direct access to experienced strategists, engineers, procurement specialists and program managers introduces efficiency into the process.

Further, if your designers aren’t talking about taking site surveys, it’s worth asking, “Why not?”

With that in mind when choosing a design partner, ask questions about:

Material Selection

Fixture Assembly Methods

Life Cycle

Freight

Packing

Ease of Installation

Maintenance

Environmental Impact

ADA Requirements & Other Codes

End-User Ergonomics

Unit Costs

VALUE ENGINEERING FOR SCALE

A retailer hired a design firm and received some impressive conceptual drawings for its flagship store. It looked great, but it was too expensive to produce at scale. The design shop didn't know how to value engineer. The retailer, therefore, needed a new partner who could transform striking pictures into precisely engineered fixtures and displays and then install them.

The project was complicated and required re-engineered drawings for fixtures, furniture and displays. The timeline was tight and quality was imperative. An end-to-end partner with engineers, program management and expert store walk-throughs would have saved time and money from the beginning.



Proper site surveys include:

360-Degree Panoramic Views

2D Floor Plans & Elevations

Detailed and Scaled Placement of Every Store Element

This ensures you stay informed throughout the entire design process. Envisioning the endgame at the beginning lets you create optimal use of every square foot of your space.

Further, a walk-through of an executed store prototype enables you to implement, test and measure different solutions before adopting at scale. You can offer feedback to ensure you get the most purposeful design that best meets your needs prior to rollout.

In the end-to-end picture, the dots need to be transparently connected between research, strategy, design, design development, engineering and prototyping, particularly in advance of executing at scale.

Before you green-light your project, it's wise to ask who will connect those dots.

Production & Rollout:

Comprehensive oversight ensures ROI

Every link of the campaign management process and the complexities of the supply chain must be mastered so project execution is delivered on time and on budget.

In other words, it's risky to rely on a series of handoffs between multiple vendors who are more likely to pass the buck than solve problems when things get complicated.

The solution? A single point of contact and accountability who becomes an extension of your team, one who understands your internal processes and focuses on providing solutions, efficiency and cost savings.

Great project managers provide a diverse range of expertise, connecting the dots between print production, fixture production, logistics, installation, technological skills and administrative duties, such as order generation, invoicing and inventory management.

Complex rollouts require great communication, whether that's with your marketing team, general contractors or store general managers. It's more than just providing an optimal supply chain strategy. Great project managers suggest cost-saving ideas and are proactive with creating efficiencies during the process.

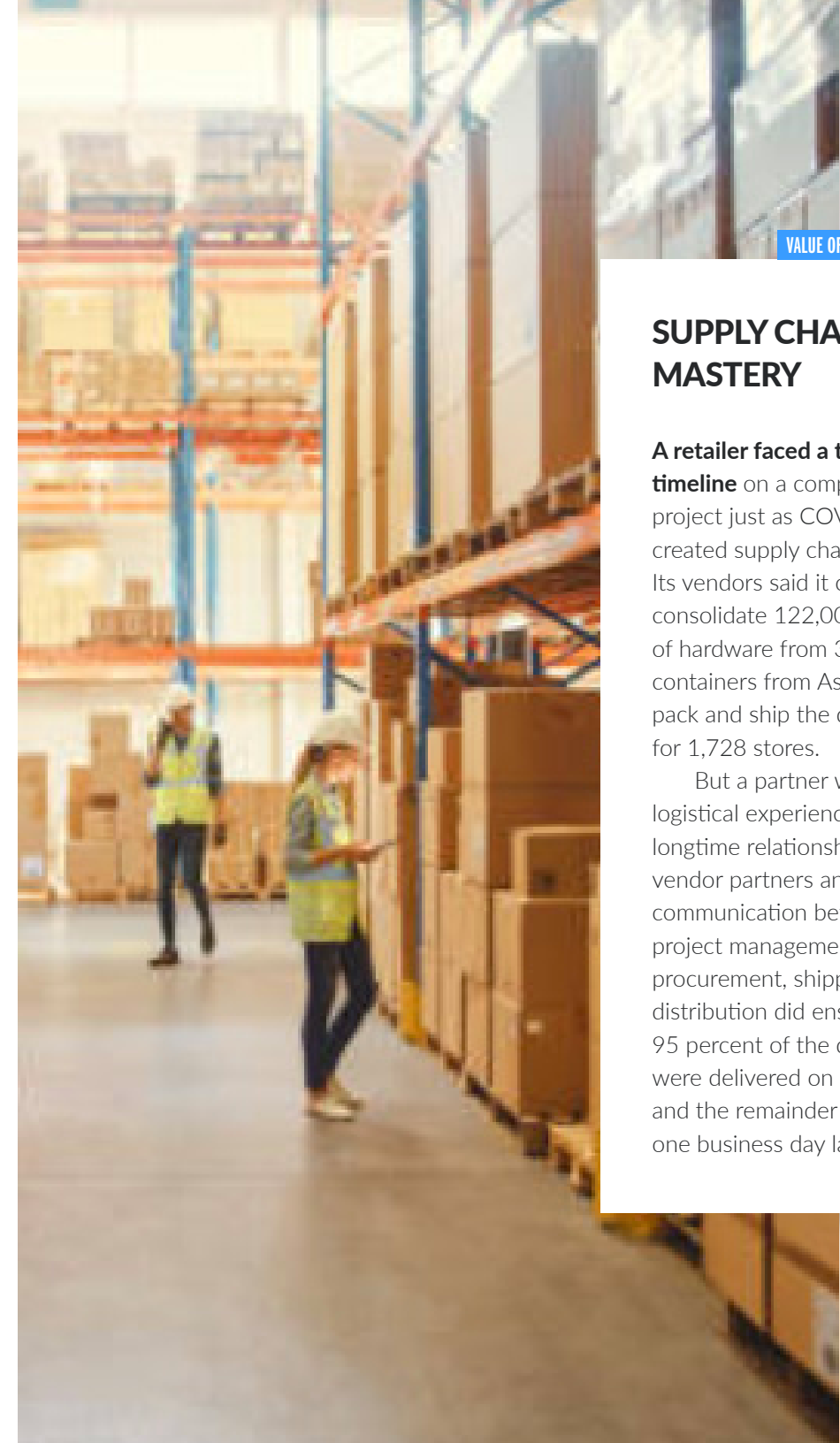
“Because they are plugged in from the very beginning, full-service partners aren’t overwhelmed by quick-turn requests, changing conditions and unforeseen obstacles.”

Many companies will claim they’re good with procurement, print production and manufacturing, but then they turn to un-tested vendors to take on those tasks. Navigating the supply chain requires expertise and long-term relationships with domestic and overseas companies that own proven track records manufacturing fixtures, furniture, décor, hardware and POP.

Also inquire about transportation management, warehouse management, customized kit packing, rollout coordination and inventory management.

As for implementation, true end-to-end partners offer installation as a core service offering, one that is fully integrated with logistics and program management.

In fact, more than a few rollouts fail during the final mile. The connection between project management and an experienced installation team is critical. It demands detailed plans, transparent quality control and guaranteed satisfaction.

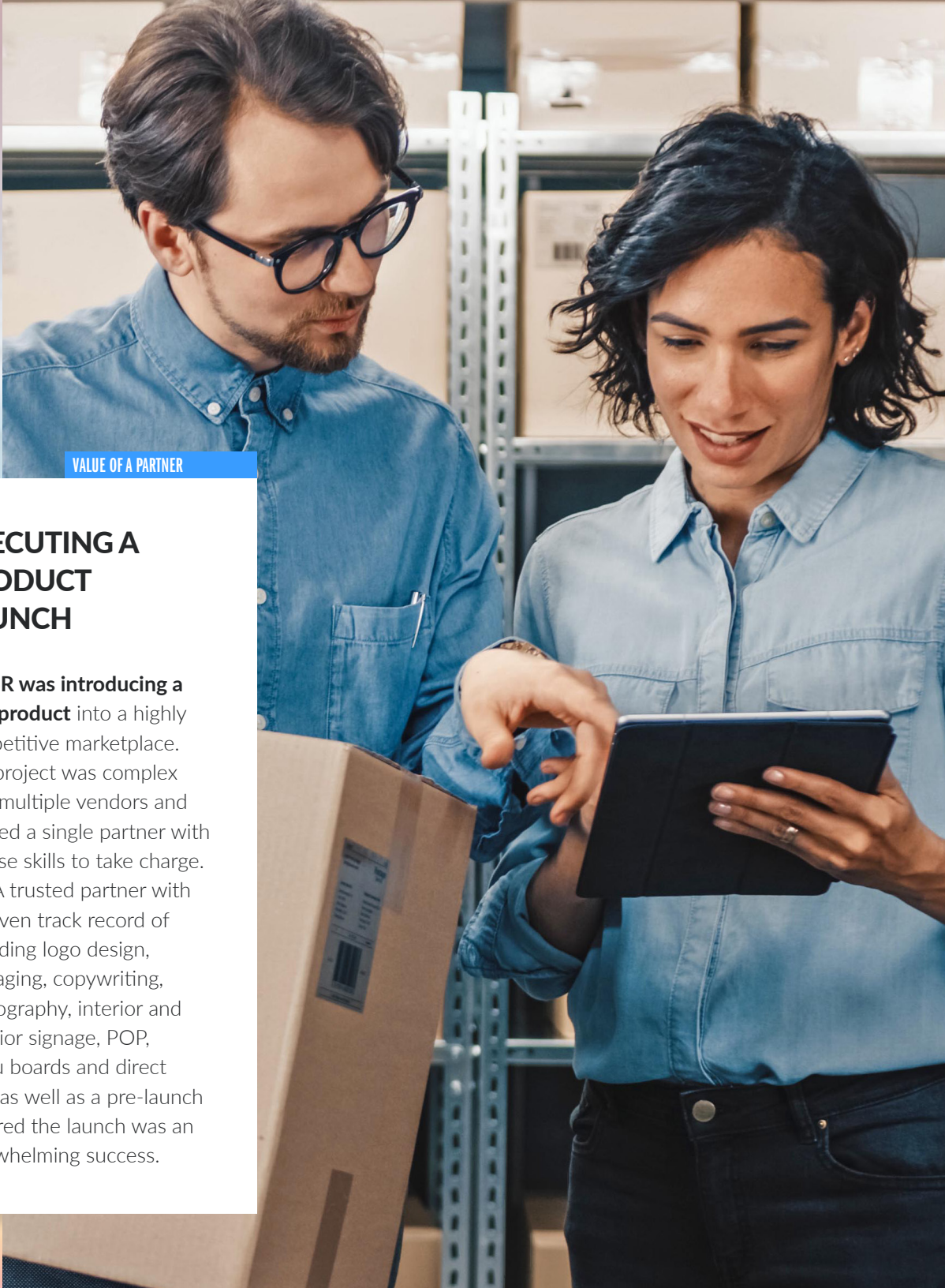


VALUE OF A PARTNER

SUPPLY CHAIN MASTERY

A retailer faced a tight timeline on a complicated project just as COVID-19 created supply chain chaos. Its vendors said it couldn’t consolidate 122,000 pieces of hardware from 35 containers from Asia. Or kit pack and ship the displays for 1,728 stores.

But a partner with logistical experience, longtime relationships with vendor partners and great communication between project management, procurement, shipping and distribution did ensure that 95 percent of the displays were delivered on schedule, and the remainder arrived one business day later.



VALUE OF A PARTNER

EXECUTING A PRODUCT LAUNCH

A QSR was introducing a new product into a highly competitive marketplace. The project was complex with multiple vendors and needed a single partner with diverse skills to take charge.

A trusted partner with a proven track record of providing logo design, packaging, copywriting, photography, interior and exterior signage, POP, menu boards and direct mail, as well as a pre-launch ensured the launch was an overwhelming success.

“More than a few rollouts fail during the final mile.”

Finally, make sure your partner uses the latest technology to manage logistics. Today’s leaders have software capabilities that span the entire process as well as a centralized ordering platform and database. These advanced systems have transparent access to all store specifications and floor plans across multi-unit operations, keep track of ordering and data in real time on your phone or laptop and are intuitive without extensive training.

Many businesses start with a strong design and a seemingly workable plan, but they don’t execute rollout properly without comprehensive expertise to guide it all. Then delays, inefficiencies and cost overruns break the budget.

The best way to avoid that? A partner who offers true end-to-end solutions.



When clients work with Miller Zell, there are no handoffs. Instead, there is a comprehensive partnership, offering proactive expertise that adds value at every juncture.

Under one roof, our diverse talent and technology connect research, strategy & design to procurement and production, all the way through to installation and follow-up. This single point of contact guarantees accountability and becomes an extension of your team, exceeding expectations, providing proactive solutions and championing efficiency and cost savings.

Ready to meet your team? Contact us today.

MILLER ZELL

Believes Passionately in Innovation

Miller Zell is a retail experience solutions company. It partners with retailers to create the ideal customer experience in their stores, offering design, implementation, strategy and support that fosters sales growth amid a complex and changing marketplace. It deploys these solutions at scale, thereby minimizing client risk, cost and operational complexity.

MILLER ZELL

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