

furniture readiness assessment

action plan

 kimikodesigns



a note from dianne

If you're here, you've already done something most project teams skip: you paused long enough to ask, "Are we actually ready for this?"

That alone puts you ahead.

Furniture has a funny way of looking simple, right until it isn't. It's chairs and desks, sure. But it's also budgets that quietly creep, schedules that get tight fast, and a surprising number of details that fall through the cracks when no one's watching closely.

That's where furniture planning comes in. Not because anyone woke up one morning excited to manage a spreadsheet full of task chairs (no judgment). But because someone needed to connect the dots between design intent and real-world execution, and make sure owners weren't left carrying the risk.

This guide is built to help you do that. A handful of considerations across people, product, process, and planet. Simple prompts, a few watch-outs, and some perspective to help you move forward with more clarity and confidence.

You don't need all the answers today. But asking the right questions early is where better projects begin.

One thing worth holding onto: furniture isn't just a line item. It's 30 to 40 percent of your project budget. It deserves a plan.

You're in the right place.





product



Q1: technical expertise

Getting the right team in place isn't optional. It's the first call you make.

Furniture projects involve more specialized knowledge than most teams expect. Product expertise, lead time management, vendor negotiation, installation coordination: these run the full length of the project and require someone who does this work consistently, not occasionally. The partner you choose at the start sets the ceiling on what your project can become.

(furniture) nerdy nugget

Not all furniture partners operate the same way. Some are manufacturer-aligned and push specific lines based on volume commitments. Others offer broader access but still have preferences baked in. Very few operate with genuine brand neutrality and full project management capability. Knowing which type you're working with tells you whose interests are being represented when decisions get made.

here's what you can do

Before locking in any partner, define what you need from them. Installation only? Full project management? Owner's representation? The role should drive who you evaluate, not the other way around. Matching partner capability to your actual scope is where a lot of organizations leave time and money on the table.

next step

Not sure whether your current roster covers what this project needs? We help clients identify what's missing and what the right team structure looks like before things get moving. Let's talk.

connect

	basic transactional	strategic collaborative	true partner invested
role how they show up	product-led	advisory	brand neutral, goal driven
brand access what's on the table	narrow portfolio	broader mix	open access
project capability how they get it done	order + install	partial project management	end-to-end management
pricing + transparency how it adds up	line-item pricing	competitive pricing	clear pricing logic
risk + recourse when things go sideways	manufacturer- dependent	vendor-managed escalation	defined recourse process

pro tip

Vet partners before you're too far in to pivot. Capability gaps get more expensive the later they surface.



Q2: spec quality

A spec that needs explanation isn't a spec. It's a risk.

Most organizations don't think about spec quality until something goes wrong because of a bad one. Vague or incomplete specs create a chain reaction: back-and-forth with vendors, delayed order placement, missed lead time windows, and change orders mid-project. If a spec can't stand on its own, every gap is a decision being made without you.

(furniture) nerdy nugget

A complete spec isn't just product name and finish. It includes dimensions, configuration, grade, lead time class, installation requirements, and substitution rules. Each field is a decision point. When any of them are missing or ambiguous, someone fills in the blank, often the vendor, often under time pressure, and rarely in a way that works in your favor.

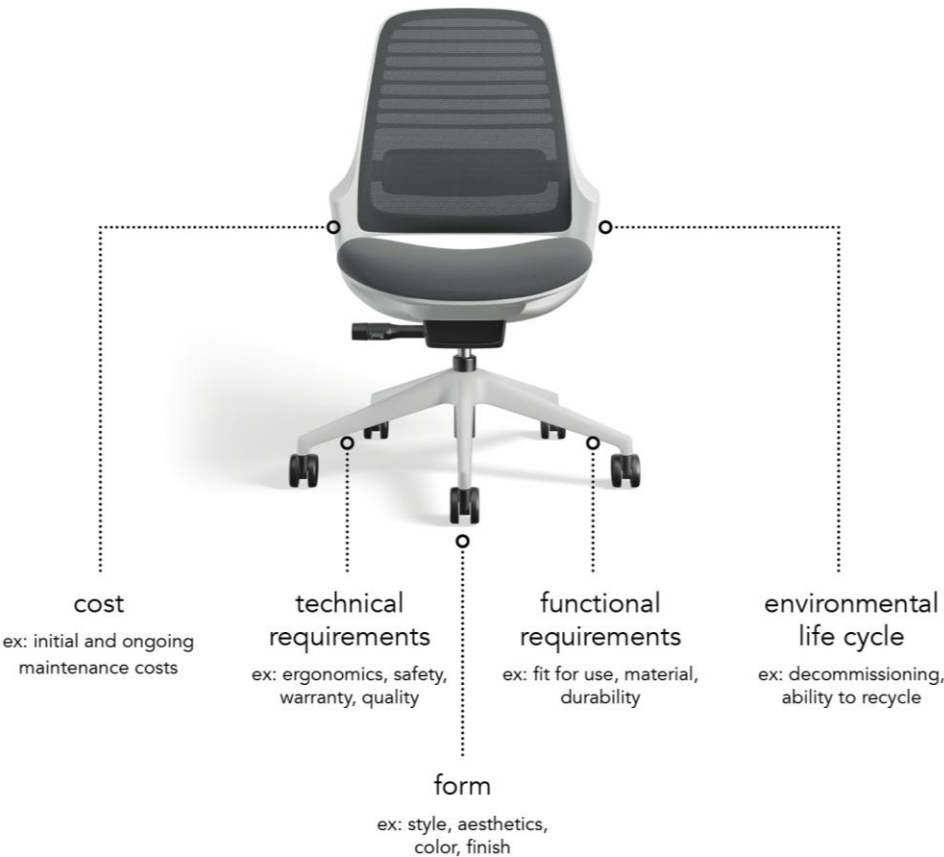
here's what you can do

Pull the most recent furniture spec you've worked with and ask one question: could someone place an order from this without calling you first? If the answer is no, identify the gaps. That exercise alone tells you where your spec process needs to tighten before the next project starts.

next step

If your specs consistently require rounds of back-and-forth to close, that's a workflow problem, not a vendor problem. We build spec discipline into our process from day one, and it's one of the places clients see the fastest return. Let's talk.

connect



pro tip

Set a standard: if a spec can't stand on its own without a follow-up call, it isn't finished.



Q3: budget confidence

Your budget doesn't have to be perfect. It has to exist.

Furniture budgets are often the last thing to get locked in and the first thing to create problems mid-project. Early budget visibility gives your team a working decision-making tool. Without it, every product conversation is a guess, and late-stage surprises are almost guaranteed.

(furniture) nerdy nugget

Most teams underestimate furniture costs by 20 to 40 percent when working from outdated benchmarks. A per-square-foot planning range is the fastest way to pressure-test a number before it becomes someone's problem. Use the table on this page as a directional guide. Every project has its own drivers, but these ranges will tell you if you're headed in the right direction. Don't forget the non-product fees: labor, freight, taxes, tariffs, vendor design fees, and contingency.

here's what you can do

Get a number on paper, even a rough range, and pressure-test it against current market benchmarks before decisions get made. The earlier your budget exists in some form, the more control you have over what comes next.

next step

Not sure if your number is realistic for what you're trying to accomplish? We work with these benchmarks every day and can help you pressure-test your budget before it becomes a problem. Let's talk.

connect

FF&E grade	pre-covid \$/sf	covid +25%	2026 +15%	rule of thumb
preowned	\$12.00	\$15.00	\$17.25	\$20.00
good	\$20.00	\$25.00	\$28.75	\$30.00
better	\$30.00	\$37.50	\$43.25	\$45.00
best	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$57.50	\$60.00

don't forget the non-product fees: labor, freight, taxes, tariffs, vendor design fees, contingency

pro tip

From the start, build in a contingency of

10-15%



process



Q4: market knowledge

What you don't know about the market is already affecting your project.

Lead times shift. Supply chains adjust without announcement. Teams managing furniture alongside everything else are often working from information that's months out of date, and they don't know it until something doesn't land when it was supposed to. Market knowledge isn't a credential. It's a risk management tool.

(furniture) nerdy nugget

Lead times for systems furniture can range from 6 to 20-plus weeks depending on line, configuration, and manufacturer capacity. That range has expanded since supply chain disruptions in recent years and hasn't fully normalized. Relying on outdated lead time assumptions is one of the most common ways project timelines get compressed without warning, not

because anyone made a bad call, but because the market moved and no one caught it.

here's what you can do

Before any product decision is finalized, run a current market check. Get lead time estimates from at least one vendor on the products you're considering. If the numbers surprise you, adjust the schedule before the project is already in motion. That single step catches more timeline problems than almost anything else.

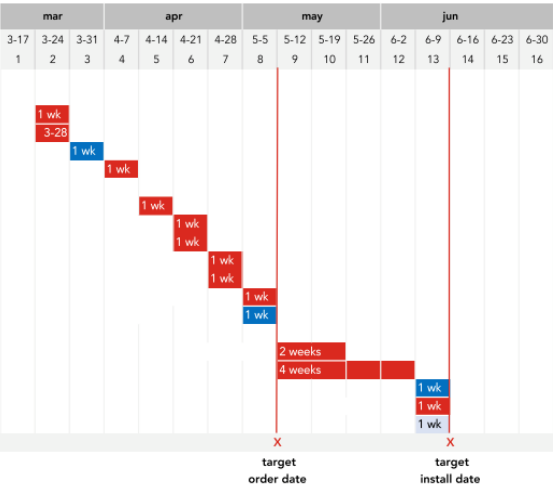
next step

Market intelligence is something we maintain actively because it affects every project we manage. If you're not sure your team's information is current enough to protect your schedule, that's a gap worth closing early. Let's talk.

connect

*** PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE ***

- 1.0 space planning
 - floorplan + product options
 - on-site visit to validate power/data locations
 - (1) virtual meeting for presentation + approval
 - high-level specifications + budget estimate
- 2.0 procurement assistance
 - evaluation of lead times + project schedule
 - vendor site visit to review product application + building finishes
 - client showroom visit to finalize product + finish selection
 - coordination + review of technical specs
 - dealer prepares purchase order/quote
 - QA/QC review of purchase order
 - (1) virtual meeting for review + approval
- 3.0 installation management
 - vendor coordination + installation drawing review
 - lead time for order
 - delivery + installation oversight
 - resolution of onsite issues + final punch
 - owner activities - IT/move contents



pro tip

Get lead times in writing before spec decisions are finalized. What you hear verbally and what appears on a purchase order can differ.



Q5: risk management

Furniture risk is real. It just doesn't announce itself in advance.

Lead time changes, specification errors, coordination gaps, damaged goods, installation conflicts. None of these are rare. They hit harder when no one has clear ownership of what happens next. The difference between a quick recovery and a fire drill usually comes down to whether there's one accountable point of contact with the authority and relationships to move things forward.

(furniture) nerdy nugget

Vendors respond differently depending on who's pushing. A furniture consultant who manages ongoing volume relationships has leverage that a facilities manager calling for the first time simply doesn't. Resolution timelines, replacement options, and how disputes get prioritized are all influenced by the relationship behind the call. Who owns vendor resolution isn't an administrative detail. It's a risk variable.

here's what you can do

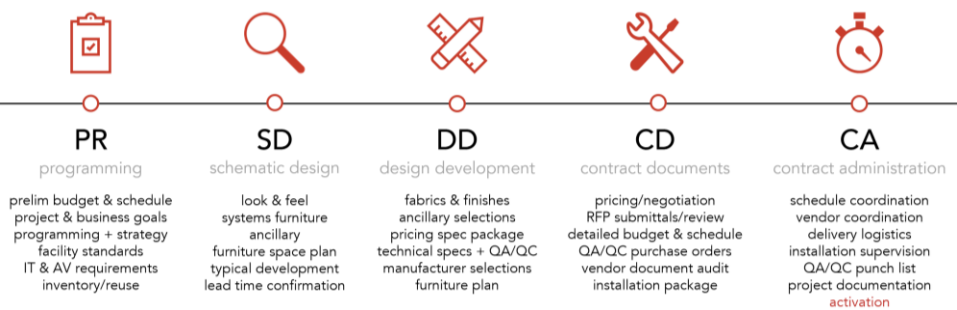
Build at least two proactive checkpoints into your furniture process: a schedule review at the halfway point and a QA pass before order release. And identify now who on your team would own a vendor dispute if one arose tomorrow. Don't wait for one.

next step

On every project we manage, we help navigate vendor disputes and r the options for resolutions. If you don't have that coverage right now, let's talk about what it looks like to have it.

connect

the furniture process



pro tip

Verify 3 things before order release:
lead times, QA/QC, and scope



Q6: change management

The furniture is the easy part.
Telling people about it is where
projects get complicated.

Furniture changes affect real people. Workstation assignments, shared space configurations, storage reductions, new ways of working. When those changes aren't communicated clearly and early, frustration fills the gap. The furniture itself becomes the problem, even when it isn't.

(furniture) nerdy nugget

Teams that bring the right stakeholders in early, communicate decisions before they become surprises, and set clear expectations about what's changing consistently experience smoother transitions and less pushback at move-in. The people most affected by furniture decisions are usually the last to hear about them. That's the gap worth closing.

here's what you can do

Identify who is affected by your furniture project and when they need to know. Map the communication touchpoints before the project gets moving, not after. Even a simple stakeholder communication plan reduces friction significantly.

next step

Not sure how to structure communication around your furniture project? We've seen what happens when it's missing, and we build stakeholder alignment into every engagement we manage. Let's talk.

connect

pro tip

Involve end users before selections are final, not after.

checklist for change

explore

- ☐ Determine which strategies and tactics are culturally appropriate for your organization.
- ☐ Examine the impact of the change with a thorough risk assessment.
- ☐ Identify the stakeholder groups most at risk or averse to adoption.

design

- ☐ Encourage your teams to think creatively about implementation tactics.
- ☐ Share a clear and compelling narrative to build trust and drive willing action.
- ☐ Identify who can best represent key stakeholder groups.

involve

- ☐ Personalize solutions and content for each stakeholder group.
- ☐ Identify additional change champions to communicate the benefits and spread awareness.
- ☐ Share progress updates and discuss challenges to promote transparency.

evolve

- ☐ Evaluate what's working (and what's not) and adjust your plan accordingly.
- ☐ Be prepared for people's tendency to revert to old habits; remind them of the "why".
- ☐ Continue to engage leaders and influential stakeholders to maintain adoption.





people



Q7: decision ownership

The right answer at the wrong time still costs you.

Furniture decisions involve more stakeholders than most people expect. Design, facilities, IT, HR, procurement, and sometimes executive leadership all have a seat at the table. When it's not clear who has final ownership, decisions slow down, loop back, or get made and then unmade. That friction has direct schedule and budget implications.

(furniture) nerdy nugget

On a well-run furniture project, decision ownership is established before the first product gets specified. That means knowing not just who makes decisions, but who needs to be consulted, who needs to be informed, and who can move things forward when the process stalls. Ambiguity about ownership doesn't just slow things down. It creates gaps that show up later as budget and schedule problems.

here's what you can do

Define the final decision-maker explicitly, even if input is distributed. Shared accountability sounds collaborative but often means no one is accountable. One person or team needs to hold the authority to call it. That needs to be clear before a vendor is waiting on an answer.

next step

Still sorting out who owns what? We help clients establish decision-making structures at the start of every engagement, because we've seen what happens without one. Let's talk.

connect

furniture decision RACI example

decision type	owner's rep (i.e kimiko)	owner leadership	A&D	furniture partner (vendor)
budget + furniture strategy	R	A	C	I
product + standards	R/C	A	R/C	I
pricing	C	A	I	R
procurement	C	R/A	I	I
installation	C	A	I	R

key:

- R: Responsible (does work + drives decisions)
- A: Accountable (final approval)
- C: Consulted (has input, not a vote)
- I: Informed (kept in the loop)

pro tip

Document your decision-making structure in writing.



Q8: stakeholder alignment

Everyone said yes. That doesn't mean they meant the same thing.

The most expensive misalignment on a furniture project isn't a disagreement. It's an assumption nobody checked. Finance thought the budget included installation. HR assumed private offices were staying. Facilities signed off without looping in IT. Nobody was wrong, exactly. Nobody was talking to each other either. By the time the gaps surface, selections are locked and the window to course-correct is gone.

(furniture) nerdy nugget

Stakeholder misalignment surfaces at three predictable points: product selection review, when someone sees the spec for the first time and has opinions; order release, when finance questions a number they weren't briefed on; and installation week, when someone is surprised by what arrived. Most of that friction is preventable with earlier, more intentional communication.

here's what you can do

Before the project gets moving, document the assumptions each internal group is operating from. Budget, scope, space configuration, timing. Where those assumptions conflict or haven't been shared, that's where the mid-project surprises are already waiting. Surfacing them early costs a conversation. Surfacing them later costs a change order.

next step

Stakeholder alignment is something we help clients build into the project structure from the start. If you're not sure who needs to be in the room or when, that's a good early conversation to have. Let's talk.

connect

predictable points to watch out for



Product selection review, when someone sees the spec for the first time and has opinions; order release.



When finance questions a number they weren't briefed on.



Installation week, when someone is surprised by what arrived.

pro tip

Get stakeholder buy-in on scope before product decisions are in motion, not during them.



Q9: bandwidth + burden

You can't run a furniture project on the side.

Furniture scope is almost always assigned to someone who already has a full job. These are capable people. The problem isn't competence. It's bandwidth. A furniture project of any meaningful scale requires consistent attention across months of activity, and when the person managing it is stretched, gaps form at the worst possible time.

(furniture) nerdy nugget

Bench strength on a furniture project isn't just about headcount. It's about having the right expertise available at the right stage. Programming and planning require a different skill set than specification and procurement, which are different again from installation management and closeout.

Bringing in outside expertise at the right moment, rather than stretching internal resources across all of it, consistently

produces better outcomes and gets your internal team's time back. Adding an external furniture resource doesn't mean giving up control. It means adding a specialist who catches the details your team doesn't have the bandwidth or background to catch.

here's what you can do

Scope out what managing this project internally would realistically require in hours per week, then compare that to what your team actually has available. The gap between those two numbers tells you exactly where outside support would make the biggest difference.

next step

If your team is stretched or expertise gaps are creating risk, we can help. We function as an extension of our clients' internal teams, taking full ownership of the furniture scope so they can focus on everything else. Let's talk.

connect



pro tip

Watch the peak phases. Specification + installation are where stretched teams drop the ball most often.



planet



Q10: inventory visibility

You might already own more than you think.

Most organizations have furniture assets scattered across floors, storage rooms, and facilities they’ve long since stopped thinking about. That inventory has financial and practical value, but only if you know what you have. Without a current picture, the default is to buy new, whether you need to or not.

(furniture) nerdy nugget

A furniture inventory isn’t just a list. When done properly, it documents condition, quantity, type, size, and location, and forms the foundation for every reuse and cost-optimization decision that follows. Organizations that invest in a thorough asset analysis before a project typically find that a meaningful percentage of what they need is already owned, reducing procurement costs and shortening lead times.

here’s what you can do

Before you spec or buy anything, get eyes on what exists. Schedule an asset walk and document what you find. Even a rough inventory is more useful than none, and the cost of doing it is almost always recovered through reuse savings or avoided procurement.

next step

Not sure what you own or what it’s worth? We conduct asset analysis as part of every engagement, and it consistently surfaces value clients didn’t know they had. Let’s start there.

connect

furniture inventory clarity starts here

Designed to strengthen inventory clarity and consistency, supporting more efficient and informed decision-making.

category structure

streamline and standardize categories to improve reporting clarity

data quality

align with vendor to focus on consistent, reliable data inputs to ensure accuracy and improve visibility

quantity visibility

consolidate duplicated line items to provide clear, accurate visibility into total quantities

standards alignment

align inventory tracking with current furniture standards to better support reuse

asset lifecycle tracking

Incorporate asset age tracking to support more informed decisions around reuse, donation, or deployment

intake process

establish clear entry criteria to ensure only relevant items are added to inventory

pro tip

Document condition alongside quantity. Knowing that 140 are good, 40 need repair, and 20 are at end of life is actionable. A count alone isn’t.



Q11: decommissioning cost

What goes out has a price tag.
Most projects don't budget for it.

Furniture removal is one of the most consistently under-budgeted pieces of any project. Teams plan carefully for what's coming in: specs, finishes, lead times. The cost of removing what's already there tends to surface as a surprise at the end, when timelines are tight and options are limited. Decommissioning isn't what happens after the project. It's part of it.

(furniture) nerdy nugget

Decommissioning costs depend on volume, condition, floor access, building restrictions, and what can be donated, resold, or disposed. For a mid-size office refresh, removal costs can range from a few thousand to well over \$50,000. That range is wide enough that "we'll figure it out at the end" is a budget risk, and the options you have at the end are always fewer than the ones you had at the start.

here's what you can do

Identify the furniture that will need to be removed and get at least one decommissioning vendor quote before the scope is fully defined, not after. Even a rough volume estimate by floor or space type gives you something to plan around.

next step

Decommissioning is part of every project we manage. The cost range is wide enough that knowing your number early matters. If you haven't started, we can help you scope it. A good starting place is downloading our playbook on sustainable decommissioning.

download

reuse

save your planet and your wallet

definition
[ri:'ju:z] verb
Using existing non-systems product (e.g., ancillary) in new areas or new ways.

sustainable decommissioning | kimiko green



pro tip

The earlier you plan decommissioning, the more options you have: resale, donation, reuse elsewhere. Wait long enough and disposal becomes the only option.



Q12: environmental impact tracking

Someone is going to ask for this data. The question is whether you'll have it.

Environmental impact data, including landfill diversion rates, material lifecycle records, and carbon footprint documentation, is increasingly part of what leadership needs to report. Most project teams don't collect it during execution, which means it either doesn't get reported or gets reconstructed from incomplete vendor records after the fact. Collection during the project costs almost nothing by comparison.

(furniture) nerdy nugget

Vendors can provide product certifications and material content documentation, but that's not the same as tracked project outcomes. Landfill diversion rates require documentation from disposal and donation vendors, not just the furniture supplier. If no one is collecting that data during the project,

it's gone when the project closes. The ask from leadership usually comes after the fact..

here's what you can do

Identify what environmental data your organization is expected to report, then compare that against what you're currently capturing from furniture projects. The gap between those two is your exposure. You don't need a complex system. You need someone to own it before the project kicks off, not after it closes.

next step

We help clients track what they need to report, built into the project process from the start. If you're not sure what data you should be collecting or how to get it, that's a quick conversation. Or download our playbook on sustainable furniture planning and procurement.

[download](#)

data tracking thought starters

- ☐ total pounds diverted from landfill
- ☐ overall landfill diversion rate (%)
- ☐ total project cost savings generated
- ☐ estimated embodied carbon avoided
- ☐ number of furniture assets retained in circulation
- ☐ percentage of furniture managed through circular economy strategies
- ☐ community impact value (donations, jobs supported, organizations served)

pro tip

The easiest time to collect environmental impact data is during the project. Every week after closeout, it gets harder to find.





connect with us.

info@kimikodesigns.com