

- *Major goals and project values*
- *Diagrams*
- *Plans*
- *Elevations*
- *3-D models*
- *Finish selections and mock-ups*

THE RESULTS ARE SPECTACULAR!

When the design team works within a single vision it becomes extremely effective at turning that vision into a design reality. A good example of this was when four designers from Skidmore Owings & Merrill's San Francisco office were completing the design development phase of a headquarters project. The team had designed the general office space, executive suites, and conference center, but there remained a small place of worship within the headquarters building that had not yet been designed. Because the team was scheduled to leave on a flight overseas that afternoon for the client presentation, we needed to have the design completely worked out before we left. As a first step, our team worked quickly together to establish the vision for the space. Once the vision was established, the team collaborated in order to design and detail the entire chapel—including a complicated system of different screening elements that were introduced to filter the daylight as the sun moved around the building. It was a very rewarding feeling to board the plane knowing that we had completed the entire design development package and, while time was short, our solution was in no way compromised—in fact, we thought it benefited.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MARGINAL AND MAGNIFICENT DESIGN

The anecdote in the previous subsection may give the impression that design development is magical or impressionistic. Far from it—it is a process that depends on a comprehensible relationship between many distinct parts and steps—a design hierarchy. Design hierarchy takes an idea to the next level. It is a sense of layering of ideas, materials, and detailing which can be understood and tracked. Although it may not be obvious to the visitor, who may see the design as one whole, a design is a conceptual arrangement of joints, lines, and overlaps to create a structure for which the design exists. In a sense, design hierarchy is a methodology for “making”—for creating the project itself and an understandable view of its design.

When a team has a clear direction of design intent or hierarchy, that team will move forward. If team members have a framework within which to develop the design, chances are much better that they can more easily tie all elements together. To create the team dynamic and keep communication open, which it must be to develop design hierarchy, it is important to touch base often, one on one with team members and as a group. In a team approach, each member often has a distinct role requiring collaboration with other team members. It is important that the team leader maintain a balance between everyone’s contribution.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT IS ABOUT PROBLEM SOLVING

During the design development phase designers should pretend that they are in a construction drawing phase, except for dimensioning, additional detailing, and final selection of colors. In essence, your drawings in the design development phase will be used for pricing. Accurate pricing is directly related to accurate and complete drawings. This ideal is, of course, easier said than done because in this phase the design team continues to solve problems.