

Reception Desks

1 ADA Accessibility Is Not Optional

Every reception desk in a commercial facility must include an ADA-compliant transaction section at 36" or lower. Specify this upfront — retrofitting an ADA section later is expensive and often looks awkward.

2 Order the Reception Desk First

The reception desk is almost always the longest lead-time item in an office build-out, especially if custom or semi-custom. Order it first — before chairs, workstations, or anything else. Construction delay insurance for a whole office is expensive because the reception desk wasn't ordered in time.

3 Transaction Counter Height Is 42"

Specify a 42" transaction counter for the visitor-facing surface and 29-30" for the receptionist work area. These are industry standards. Deviating from them without reason creates ergonomic problems.

4 Plan Cable Management at Purchase

Specify in-counter power, cable routing channels, and grommet locations at order time. Retrofitting power and cable management to a reception desk that's already installed is difficult and expensive. Get it right at purchase.

5 Front Panel Branding Multiplies Visual Impact

A vinyl logo or dimensional letters on the front panel of a reception desk elevates the entire lobby. Budget for front panel branding — it's often the highest-ROI design investment in an office refresh.

6 Match the Desk Depth to the Entry Space

A deep reception desk in a small entry overwhelms the space. A narrow desk in a large lobby looks underwhelming. The desk depth and width should be proportional to the entry space dimensions. Sketch or plan the entry before finalizing dimensions.

7 Include Storage in the Configuration

Receptionists need accessible storage for supplies, visitor logs, badges, and personal items. Specify at least one or two storage pedestals or under-counter cabinets in the configuration. A reception desk with no storage becomes disorganized within weeks.

8 Confirm Delivery Access for Large Desks

Reception desks are often large and difficult to navigate through elevator lobbies and doorways. Confirm all delivery access dimensions — elevator width and depth, hallway widths, door widths — before finalizing the desk size. Modular systems that assemble on-site are sometimes the right choice for difficult access situations.

9 Matching Visitor Chairs Completes the Look

A beautifully specified reception desk next to mismatched guest chairs looks incomplete. Include matching or coordinating visitor/guest seating in the same specification. Reception + seating as a complete package is the way to go.

10 Powder Coat Metal Accents Add Durability

Reception desks with powder-coat metal base frames or accent panels are more durable in high-traffic areas than all-laminate construction. The metal resists bumping and rolling cart damage. Specify metal accents for any high-traffic reception environment.