

Specifier and manufacturer: A beautiful friendship

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by Mike Del Rosso



When specifier Susan Walter moved from a Midwestern architectural firm to work at [HDR](#) in Washington, D.C., she took her relationships with her.

Her collaboration with [Kim Shaw](#), project manager for GCP's Design Advantage, was an important one.

"Kim's the one I trust," Walter said, in reference to Shaw's extensive construction product knowledge and specification expertise, among other design and technical services she and her team provide.

GCP's Design Advantage team works closely with project architects, specifiers, structural engineers, building owners and general contractors to guide the design process, [review design specifications](#), [ensure product compatibility](#), [provide installation best practices](#) and provide [manufacturer technical support](#).

A 28-year design professional, Walter has worked on hospitals, sports facilities, convention centers and arenas. Now she specializes in healthcare, labs, and educational facilities.

She's a trusted resource within her firm.

"People come to me and say 'What waterproofing should I use on this project?' and I ask 'Where's the water table? Is your site contaminated?' And they haven't thought about that," she said. "I do think about those things, because site conditions can influence product performance. And I know the factors that drive product decisions."

Yet, even with extensive construction product knowledge and understanding on how best to assemble a project spec, Walter appreciates the streamlining that comes with Kim and the GCP Design Advantage team.

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The building design process is best when highly collaborative, but often experts are siloed into their respective fields. Design Advantage facilitates communication along the [design-build](#) and [design-bid-build](#) processes. They get the project team talking earlier.

