

**DOES YOUR DUCTWORK SUPPLIER MAKE THE CUT?**

# The Ultimate Guide to Selecting

# THE BEST



Selecting vendors — whether it be for something as simple as who provides your office supplies or as complex as who you turn to for legal advice — is essential to running any business. The vendors you work with need to be responsive, reliable, and able to fill the gaps in your business' needs.

When it comes to ductwork, you might not have extensive knowledge about construction or design. Still, you know that it's a crucial piece of any construction or machine installation project. Your ductwork vendor should be able to fill all of your ductwork needs with the best products, and they should also be willing to make your business their business.

When it comes to picking a ductwork vendor, look for one that is willing to make ductwork easy.





# They want a partnership, not just sales

Your business deserves your vendor's attention. Ducting is probably not a huge part of the overall project, but it can cause big headaches. You'll want to work with a supplier who understands your application, is available when you need them, and is going to stick with you throughout your partnership.



# Will you work with an order taker or a trained professional?

When deciding on your ductwork supplier, look for a company that will provide you with easy access to knowledgeable personnel.

- **Are you able to communicate with a seasoned representative, or are you dealing with someone operating off a prescribed script?**

There is a difference between the conversation you'd have with an order taker and one you'd have with a knowledgeable representative. If they ask questions about your application and seem to know the basics, you're probably speaking with a prospective partner.

- **Can they offer a dedicated representative who will learn about you and your business preferences?**

It's always nice to have a familiar voice on the other end of the line, but having a dedicated representative can also help keep you out of trouble. Someone familiar with your project, your business, and your commonly seen applications can recommend solutions that work for you.

- **Are they enthusiastic?**

The more excited they are to get your business, the harder they'll work to keep it.



# Will they keep you waiting when you need an answer?

Nothing is more frustrating than waiting: on hold, on a phone call to be returned, on an email or proposal. The automated technology and additional layers of personnel commonly used among corporations help them cut costs and manage personnel, but it often results in a frustrating customer service experience. Streamlining operations should not come at the expense of serving customers. No one wants to navigate complex phone systems or voicemail options only to then wait for a delay in communication.

- **How many times do you end up in voicemail?**

That's fine if you're not in a hurry. But if you've got an issue on-site, voice mail is not going to be much help. Even small suppliers should have your call forwarded to their mobile phones.

- **How long does it take to get an email response?**

They may quickly reply when you have questions or last-minute change, but a company slow to return calls or emails is rarely fast on deliveries.



## Will they help you sell more ductwork?

As the adage goes — of price, quality, and speed, you can pick two! Some vendors want to establish themselves as the cheapest, highest quality, or fastest. But in reality, it is better to find a vendor that is competitive on price and is willing to take service and product quality to a level based on YOUR business needs. **Their goal should be to help you sell more successfully — not boost their sales numbers and pad their wallets.**

You can spot a manufacturer that is willing to go beyond a transactional relationship with these service indicators.

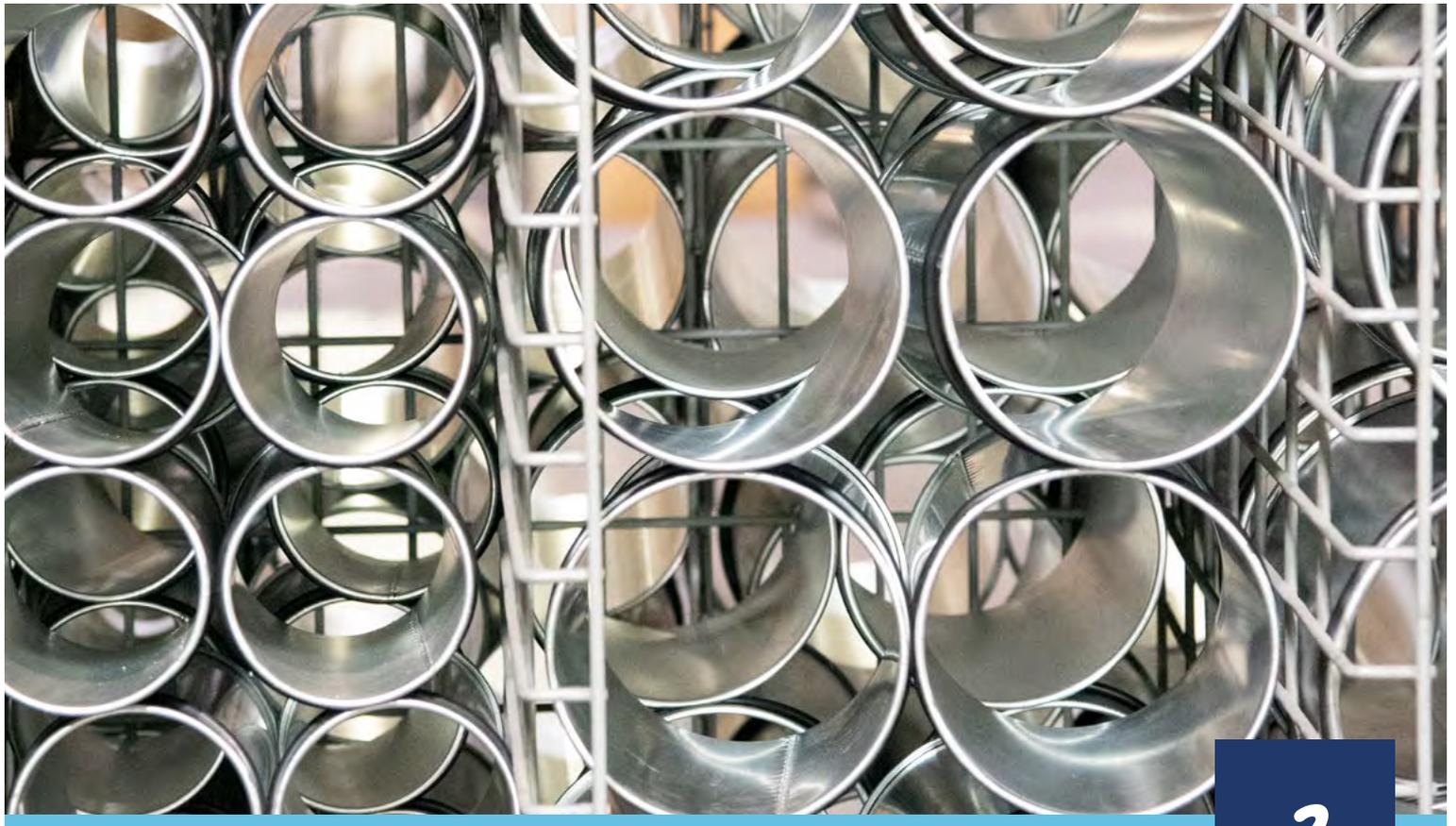
- Ability to quote projects with a fast turnaround
- Willingness to provide or customize marketing materials
- Dedication to educating and supporting your product knowledge with webinar training and materials
- Commitment to provide free product samples
- Quality checks in their process to ensure orders are correct BEFORE it ships
- Offer a helpful and informative website

## Will they be bidding against you?

The industrial air filtration industry is a complex network of original equipment manufacturers, manufacturer's representatives, and overlapping (as well as competing) product lines. Dust collector brands share lines cards with fans, machinery, fire suppression equipment, related electronics, and ducting. When considering your ductwork supplier, **be sure that they are not a part of a competing brand.** If you find yourself buying ducting from a company and then bidding against one of their other divisions for the collector or fan business, you might want to find a different ductwork supplier.

### DOES YOUR DUCTWORK SUPPLIER MAKE THE CUT?

The best vendors will establish a relationship that provides much more than a transaction or “good enough” customer service.



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# They know what quality really means for ductwork

Small problems on a job can quickly add up to substantial impacts on your customers' productivity and cost. While the ductwork that carries materials and debris away from machinery isn't usually the highest priority, you know that the last thing manufacturers want to worry about is a failing ductwork system.

## So, what goes into creating a ductwork system that's reliable and gets the job done?

It depends. Whether a ductwork system or component is for a manufacturer's rep or someone that needs a one-off solution for their machinery, the fit, materials, and construction of your ductwork always depend on the application.



Make sure your ductwork supplier is familiar with:

## **FIT**

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### **When to use rolled-lip ducting**

If you need dry dust collection or particle extraction, rolled-lip ducting (or clamp together ducting), is most likely the highest-quality ductwork you can select. Because clamp together duct is a modular system, its benefits are threefold: it's often the fastest, most versatile, and most reliable ductwork you can use for dust collection applications. The pipe, gasket, adjustable sleeve, and clamp eliminate the need for exact measurements, cut, and weld ducting together. Its modular nature reduces installation by up to 70%, allows for adjustments even after installation, and creates a tight seal designed for long-term service. Although sometimes more expensive upfront, clamp together ductwork's versatility and durability will ultimately save time and money.

### **When to use airtight US Tubing**

Some applications require a product line of ductwork that's beyond airtight — it needs to be mist-tight. Ductwork used to move oil mist, fine grain, harmful chemicals, or other minute particles as well as positive pressure systems requires a leak-free connection. In applications where leaking is not an option, an airtight ducting system is the best solution. Similar to its rolled-lip ducting counterpart, US Tubing systems are modular, adjustable, and durable. However, the v-shaped gaskets used in US Tubing systems surround the pipe, and when compressed by a torque-tightened clamp, create the ultimate, airtight seal.



Make sure your ductwork supplier is familiar with:

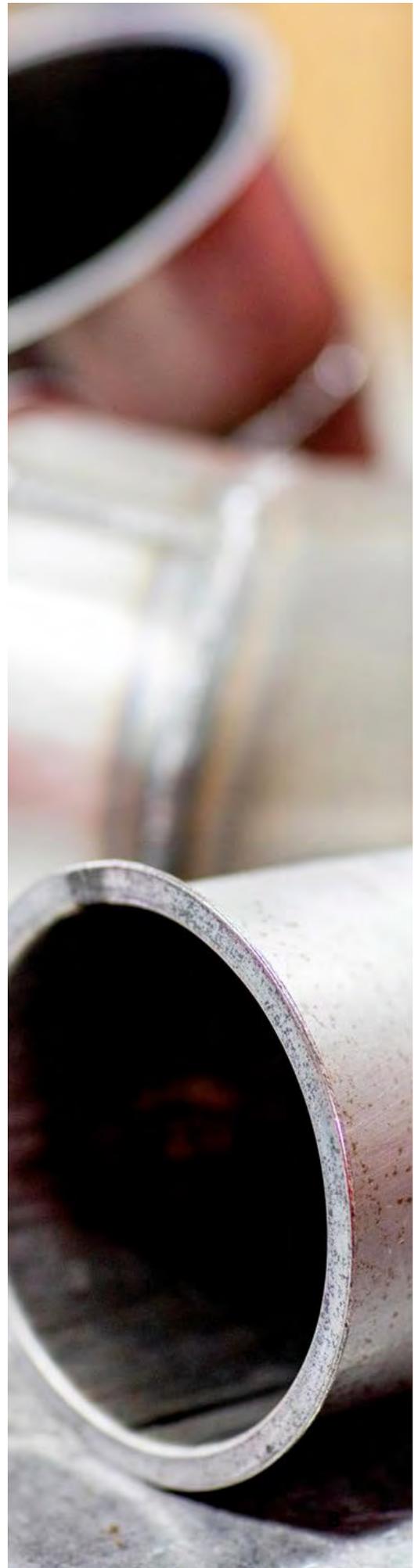
## **MATERIALS**

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### **When to use galvanized ductwork**

Because galvanized metal ductwork protects against corrosion, it has become an industry standard used for a wide array of applications — from pneumatic conveying to dust extraction, and everything in between. The galvanization process protects the sheet metal used for duct straights and fittings from rusting, making ductwork reliable for decades. Galvanized steel ductwork is available in a variety of gauges and diameters and is a suitable material for ductwork that:

- Removes dust-contaminated air, wood chips, fumes, or lightweight chaff from a work environment
- Is needed for a corrosive environment or outside where it'll be exposed to rain
- Collects mist or “wet” air



## When to use stainless steel ductwork

If you need to convey a corrosive or a reactive product, or if your ductwork requires frequent washdowns, galvanized steel won't be enough. Because the raw steel is blended — not just coated — with an alloy that protects against rust and corrosion, stainless steel is even more resistant than galvanized metal. Stainless steel ductwork should be used when there's long-term exposure to corrosive materials, or in applications with high chloride exposure, like when conveying off-gassing or chemical byproducts. Although more expensive, stainless steel ductwork is considered an "upgrade" in appearance and may be specified for that added feature alone.

## When to coat your ductwork

Ductwork and fittings can also be powder-coated or painted to customize the look of your ductwork, but the appearance isn't the only benefit of coating your ductwork. Applying a special coating to the interior or exterior of ductwork can enhance its quality and performance. Coatings are a cost-effective option for ductwork conveying:

- Abrasive materials: A coating of liquid Teflon® inside the ductwork prevents damage from abrasive or corrosive materials.
- Sticky substances: Teflon® can also provide a nonstick surface that will be more efficient in conveying materials like ink, plastic, or adhesives.
- Corrosive chemicals: Depending on the chemicals, powder coating, painting, or a variety of coatings can be applied to prevent reactive interactions with chemicals and the ducting.
- High-temperature debris: Speciality interior coatings add durability to the inside of your ductwork.



Make sure your ductwork supplier is familiar with:

## CONSTRUCTION

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Laser welding technology “reinvented the wheel” for ductwork manufacturers and the quality of ductwork they could provide. Laser-welded seams on ductwork straights create a more accurate and consistent seam that improves the ductwork’s dimensional accuracy. On modular ductwork systems, this tighter-fitting ductwork is essential for ensuring tight fits and easy adjustments. Laser-welding the longitudinal seams on ductwork is estimated to be 90% faster than manual welding, and thus offers both quality and turnaround time benefits.

### Quality ductwork combined with expertise and service

Most ductwork and fabricated ductwork parts worth your time will be made with the highest quality and materials; however, if the ductwork you buy isn’t right for the job, its quality won’t add much. Using ductwork that fits your application means your system will be efficient and effective — making you a ductwork hero.



### DOES YOUR DUCTWORK SUPPLIER MAKE THE CUT?



When it comes to ductwork, fit, materials, and construction make a difference. Your ductwork vendor should be able to advise you on the right system and components needed for your application.



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# They have a broad product line

## They will have a broader knowledge of applications

In ductwork design, the application is everything. The material you need to convey and the environment in which your ductwork is installed will determine what the ductwork is made of and the ductwork's fit. A good vendor will give you access to knowledgeable reps — not just order-takers who assume you know what you need or sales reps that only want to close the deal. The person you are working with should ask about the application and make recommendations on the right type of ductwork.

### To be able to supply the right ductwork, your vendor should ask questions like:

- What will the ductwork convey?
- What's the environment like in the facility?
- Are there mandatory specifications, or ranges?
- What challenges are unique to this quote or installation?

Application knowledge is indispensable when you bid on projects or encounter a new industry. A ductwork vendor that manufactures multiple types of ductwork will have the experience and expertise to make the right recommendations for your application.



## They provide a breadth of products from a single source

A good vendor works in multiple industries, knows the right type of ductwork to use, and can provide you with the ductwork and components you need for a complete system. It may seem like an obvious thought, but if your vendor only sells one type of ductwork, how do you know you're getting the best and not just what's available?

They will supply the right standard straights and fittings in different applications, and also be able to design and manufacture special ducting components that may be unique to your customers — like custom hoods or transitions. Ductwork manufacturers need to have:

- Experienced employees who can manufacture to the specs of an existing drawing
- Application knowledge to be able to design a custom component
- Creativity to be able to modify a standard part to fit a unique application (which could even save you money in the right situation)

It's also worth considering how much time and effort it takes to establish a working relationship with a new partner. It's frustrating to have to educate new vendors on your industry and customers, or submit credit applications and wait on approval. Not only that, but the customer service you provide could suffer if you have to coordinate among multiple vendors. You risk missing a bid deadline or not receiving the components you need for installation on time if you are working with multiple vendors or juggling numerous shipments.



## Products aren't the only factor in selecting your ductwork supplier

We know there are many suppliers and vendors of industrial ductwork in the market — and a lot of them offer quality products. However, the right supplier will also have an expert team that understands ductwork applications and design.

### DOES YOUR DUCTWORK SUPPLIER MAKE THE CUT?



A vendor that manufactures all of the components you need for a complete ductwork system will save you time and money, and ultimately, make ductwork easy.



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## **They can customize parts and provide special solutions**

### **“I’ve got a problem.”**

Sometimes, no matter how many links you click, pages you scroll, or catalogs you flip through, you just can’t find that solution that checks all of your boxes. Or maybe you’ve got a very niche problem that you’ve never seen or encountered before, and none of the standard parts you’ve previously used seem to fit the bill. When things like size, fit, and dimensions are critical, there is no room for fudging your numbers or hoping a piece is “close enough” — precision is key.

This is where custom ductwork solutions come into play: Those “one-size-fits-yours” answers that go beyond the standard parts found anywhere and fit into your system exactly how you need them to. Rather than spending time running endless searches and asking the internet where to find what you need, you can talk to a specialist about what you need and how to get it.

# Types of custom ductwork solutions

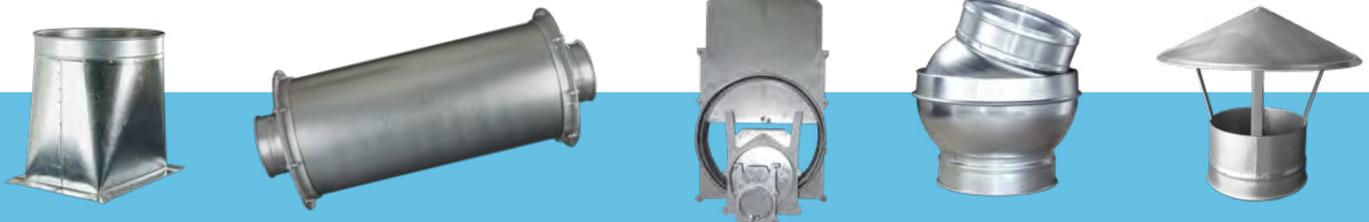
There are two classifications of custom ductwork solutions: custom fabrication components and special solution products.

## CUSTOM FABRICATION COMPONENTS

Custom fabrication components are those odd or one-of-a-kind products that require truly customized design and construction. Rather than following a standard design, they are essentially made from scratch and built to your specifications. Examples include:

- Special hoods
- Uniquely sized transitions
- Peculiarly dimensioned elbows or gates

These types of solutions are particularly useful in solving issues unique to a specific installation. Physical obstacles and barriers like narrow openings, posts that you have to navigate around, or space limitations at the point of exhaust can affect the installation and require parts to be customized to fit the particular space. Fabricating custom parts can address these unique needs in ways that standard parts can't. With products like custom hoods or customs transitions, you will likely receive a new, custom sketch or drawing (based on drawings you provide of the existing application) to go along with a quote for the product.



# SPECIAL SOLUTION PRODUCTS

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Special solution products are designed for just that — providing special solutions. They are products that have been manufactured to handle a very specific need based on application or specification. These products do come in standard sizes and designs, but they aren't needed on every ductwork system. Rather, they are designed to address very particular issues in certain applications and are seen more as additional components or accessories to standard pieces.

Examples include:

- Spark traps collect and extinguish sparks from metal welding and cutting applications.
- Oil mist accumulators collect coolant mist from the air stream and prevent it from overloading the collector.
- Oil mist curbs reclaim leaking oil at the pick-up point and recycle it into the machine.
- Exhaust stacks reduce exhaust backpressure and prevent rainwater intrusion.
- Swivel joints and ball joints allow the flex hose/ducting connection to rotate, increasing mobility.
- Diverter valves dependably redirect air-flow and/or product between exhaust points.



Things like managing oil mist leakage at the hose or duct connection point and having to mitigate sparks from cutting or welding downstream are unique requirements that come up specifically with certain applications. Such specific or niche needs can be addressed by implementing certain special solution products.



# Choosing your customized ductwork solution

As always, it's essential to start by considering the application with the problem:

- Is it collecting nuisance particulate?
- Is it collecting something wet, like oil or vapors?
- Is it high-temperature?
- Are there abrasive products in the airstream?
- What's the air velocity?
- Is it indoor or outdoor?
- Is this a new system, or are we connecting to an existing system?

While you may already have a solution for your problem in mind, seasoned consultants can guide you to think a little deeper, asking both high-level and detail-oriented questions that help determine which solution is actually best for your application and budget. Asking such questions and getting to these granular details upfront is the first step to ensuring that you get what you need for your application — which might not necessarily be what you first expected. Consultants are trained to get to the bottom of what exactly you are looking for and finding the appropriate solutions.

You should also come prepared with any former drawings that you may have of the existing application to produce new sketches (when applicable) and assuring that what's being prescribed is accurate.



# Quality assurance in producing custom parts

The questions don't stop there — the next step to getting the right product in your hands should occur throughout the production process, where checks and balances are key. Once the qualifications and requirements for a custom part are nailed down, manufacturers need to perform multiple quality checks — from design to fabrication to pre-shipment inspections — to make sure the product you get is the product you need for your specific application. Schedulers, fabricators, and welders alike should be trained to raise flags and ask questions when something doesn't align with the original order. Both shipping personnel and your salesperson should also, once again, have their eyes on the final product before it gets shipped out to you.



## DOES YOUR DUCTWORK SUPPLIER MAKE THE CUT?

Your perfect ductwork solution might not exist yet, but that doesn't mean it can't. The most knowledgeable ductwork vendors will work to find out if a solution already exists for your unique problem, or if it's time to start designing one — just for you.





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## They value their employees and community

A common mantra heard in business is, “Our most valuable product is our employees.” This is especially true in manufacturing, where employee turnover can be a consistent issue. Companies that develop and invest in their personnel will succeed where others struggle. Finding a vendor that invests in their employees is essential for your success, as well. Why?

**Happy employees stay longer.** This means you can build a long-term relationship with your contacts. That relationship allows for increased collaboration and understanding. How many times have you taken time to explain, again, to a new vendor about your business, your priorities, your pricing needs? An established relationship eliminates the need for continuous education and explanation. You know how each other works and what you need to speed to success.

**Well-trained employees will do a better and more consistent job for you.** There will be fewer errors and misfires. When employers value their employees, it frees them up to think about the customer rather than having to be cautious or concerned with their status with the company. They can and will more likely focus on serving your needs.

Look for a manufacturer that invests in its employees. Some indicators include:

- A training program for onboarding and strengthening employee skills
- The willingness to identify and develop leaders
- A management team that encourages creative solutions

## American owned and operated

When we hear the phrase “made in America,” it likely conjures up sentiments of patriotic allegiance. However, feelings aside, there are several very pragmatic reasons to have a vendor or supplier with American ownership and/or location.



## ECONOMIC IMPACT

The value of American ownership means that the benefit of doing business with a US company contributes directly to the United States economy's strength. This not only directly impacts you by improving the local economy, but means that 100% of the revenue is kept in the USA to provide jobs, purchase materials, and grow businesses.

## SHIPPING

A manufacturing supplier located in the United States is going to typically offer **faster delivery and lower cost** shipping options than a non-American supplier. Based on the limits of geography alone, a local vendor will be able to customize your order and deliver it in a reasonable amount of time. In the industrial ducting industry, freight is bulky and costly to transport, so minimizing the distance and turn-around between order and delivery is critical.

### DOES YOUR DUCTWORK SUPPLIER MAKE THE CUT?



You'll want a ductwork vendor with a culture that values their employees. When people know their work is meaningful, they'll work harder and smarter to deliver the best possible service.



# A decision that shouldn't be taken lightly

Working with the right ductwork vendor allows you to form a long-term relationship with someone that will learn your business. Your supplier should provide you with access to seasoned experts to answer questions, help you select the right systems and components for your projects, and make sure your deliveries are complete and on time — every time.

Ultimately, you'll want to find someone who can consult on what you need and why you need it. Select a vendor that will **make you a ductwork hero** on every project or installation.

# US Duct is an American owned and operated, industry-leading manufacturer and supplier of industrial ductwork systems and custom solutions.

The combination of a dedicated sales team and skilled fabricators gives contractors, ductwork installers, and OEM representatives everything needed to select and sell ductwork to end-users. US Duct has extensive knowledge of ductwork applications, design, and manufacturing that allows us to offer comprehensive lines of clamp together ductwork, air-tight tubing, flanged ductwork, and special solution products.

From take-off design services to on-time delivery to installation, we will provide the support you need for any project. We know that when you succeed, we succeed. That's why we're committed to developing long-term partnerships that save you time, money, and the stress of selling ductwork. And you may even have a little bit of fun along the way.



**CONTACT A DUCT GUY TO SEE HOW US DUCT CAN MAKE DUCTWORK EASY FOR YOU.**

**CONTACT US**

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