

Refurbished-First Quote Sheet

Five lines to send to both a new-furniture supplier and a refurbished supplier before either quote is accepted, so the two can sit side by side and be compared honestly.

Every fit-out has a window where the budget is open and no supplier has been appointed. Most organisations close it by briefing the same new-furniture dealer as last time, and the refurbished option is never priced. These five lines on the quote request keep the window open. They ask questions, not prices, because prices date and questions do not.

THE FIVE LINES ON EVERY QUOTE REQUEST

1 Name the standard, not the brand

BS EN 1335 for standard office task seating, BS 5459-2 where the use is 24 hours a day or the user weighs up to 150 kg, and the relevant BS 7176 hazard level for upholstered seating in a non-domestic building. A refurbished chair that meets the standard is a chair. A new chair with no stated standard is not automatically better. Once the standard is on the line, both suppliers answer the same question.

2 Price ex VAT, with the VAT basis stated

A quote that does not state its VAT basis is not a comparable quote. Refurbished stock sold under the HMRC margin scheme carries VAT in the margin with no separate line to reclaim; stock sold under standard VAT accounting compares directly with a new quote once both are read ex VAT. Ask both suppliers to state the basis on the quote and check the treatment with your own adviser.

3 Lead time in writing, from order to installed

Verbal reassurance from either side is not a quote. Ask for a written lead time tied to the items quoted and to your programme milestones, and hold the refurbished and the new supplier to the same test before you score them. No credible UK market figure exists for either, so the written answer is the only comparison you will get.

4 Warranty terms, on the quote itself

What the warranty covers, for how long, and what it excludes. A refurbished supplier should say which parts were replaced and what the warranty is on. A new-furniture supplier should say what the manufacturer warranty covers in practice. Two written answers can be compared. Two verbal ones cannot.

5 The evidence pack that arrives with the furniture

An item-level delivery list, a carbon and cost saving certificate on any refurbished lines (stated as an estimated net saving against new), the take-back or end-of-life route, and a waste transfer note and recycling certificate for anything removed. That item-level list is the asset baseline: it is what gives the next lease event a negotiating position and the Scope 3 record a denominator.

The difference between a visible buyer and an invisible one is what is written on the quote request before any supplier is called. If your estate runs to 200 or more items and you want a picture of what you already hold before the next brief goes out, contact Coggin SOS to arrange a free scoping visit.