QUESTIONS TO ASK A POTENTIAL PRODUCT DESIGN SERVICES FIRM

1. Will the firm agree to non-disclosure and/or non-compete agreements?

2. Are there any conflicts of interest (competitors, suppliers, etc.)?

3. How are the fees charged? Fixed cost or time and materials? What are the payment terms? Is a deposit required?

4. What is the timeline to complete the project? What reparations are available in the event this timeline is not held?

5. When will the firm review their progress with me? How will this progress be communicated?

6. What guarantees or warranties does the firm offer for their designs?

7. How can I terminate the project? Does the firm retain the right to terminate the project? If one party terminates, what portion of the fees must be paid and what documentation for progress to that point will be provided?

8. Do they have experience designing products for your target market?

9. Do they have experience in using the materials that you expect your product to require?

10. Do they have experience designing a product based on functional or performance goals?

11. Do they have experience designing to a desired cost?

12. What software will be used to design my product?

13. What are the deliverables I can expect to receive at the conclusion of my project?

   - 3D files? 2D files? Will they be dimensioned?

   - Bill of materials (with or without) estimated costs?

   - Schematics?

- Source code?

- Firmware files?

- Test plans?

- Assembly documentation?

14.   How will my design be validated?

15.   Does the firm conduct due diligence on the design? Design Failure Mode Effects Analysis (DFMEA) or mechanical or electrical subsystems? Finite Element Analysis (FEA)?

16.   Does the firm have prototyping capability? How many prototypes do they recommend be produced? How will they be used?

17.   Will the design be reviewed against 3rd party regulatory, safety or marketing standards? Who is responsible for obtaining and reviewing those standards?

18.   Does the firm have experience in obtaining 3rd party regulatory, safety or marketing certifications? Whose responsibility is it to ensure that the design will pass the testing?

19.   Who owns the Intellectual Property associated with the design?

20.   What support does the firm offer to assist with the transition to manufacturing?

21.   How many and what types of products that they have designed have successfully transitioned to volume production? How have those products performed in the field? Does the firm offer any continuous improvement service to revise the design based off of field or market performance data?

22.   Will the firm provide guidance on production testing and quality checks that should be conducted?

23.   Aside from designers, what other resources are offered? Project Management? Sourcing?