

Managing Brand Guidelines & Standards

In this comprehensive guide, learn how your firm can use DesignSpec to create reusable branded systems instead of rebuilding specs manually *every time*.



This guide is ideal for:

- ✓ Commercial interior design and hospitality firms managing multiple hotel or client brands
- ✓ Large multi-user teams needing standardized workflows, branding, specifications, reporting, and vendor management
- ✓ FF&E and OS&E teams managing approved products, model rooms, guest room programs, and rollout projects
- ✓ Brand operators and design leaders focused on maintaining consistency across multiple properties and offices
- ✓ Firms looking to create reusable templates, branded spec libraries, and more efficient production workflows
- ✓ Teams managing complex multi-area and room based specification structures
- ✓ Firms handling international hospitality projects with region-specific reporting and brand requirements

A Glance Inside



Brand Set Up,
Identity & Visual
Consistency



Reporting &
Client Facing
Documents

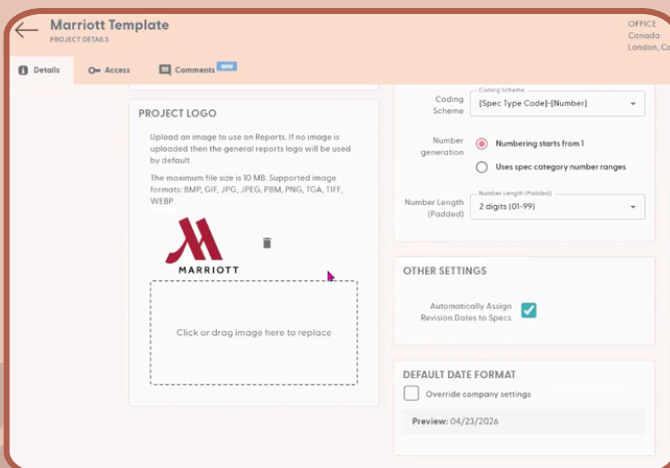


Reusable
Libraries &
Templates



Structure &
Advanced
Configuration

1. [Uploading Logos and Brand Assets](#)
2. [Labels: Your Brand Identification System](#)
3. [Custom Cover Pages](#)
4. [Custom Report Layouts](#)
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8. [Advanced Spec Coding and Spec Types](#)
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	CODE	DESCRIPTION	TYPE
<input type="checkbox"/>	ACC-01	Robe Hook	Accessory
<input type="checkbox"/>	ACC-02	GRAB BARS	Accessory
<input type="checkbox"/>	BD-01	Pillow (Omitted)	Bedding
<input type="checkbox"/>	BD-02	DOWN ALTERNATIVE ECO PILLOW	Bedding
<input type="checkbox"/>	CH-01	Chair	Chair

Why Brand Standards Matter

Running projects across multiple brands is one of the most demanding challenges interior design firms face. Each brand comes with its own vendor approvals, specification requirements, coding conventions, and reporting formats. Keeping those standards separate: keeping those standards separate while still working efficiently has traditionally meant duplicated effort, version confusion, and a constant risk of mixing up brand-specific details.

DesignSpec has built a suite of features specifically to solve this problem. The goal is simple: your company standards stay intact, while brand-specific details are layered in cleanly, reused across projects, and surfaced exactly when you need them.

This guide walks through every major feature in the Brand Standards toolkit, explains what it does, and shows how firms managing multiple brands can put it to work.

1. Uploading Logos & Brand Assets

Inside any project, go to Project Details and scroll down to the Project Logo section. You can drag and drop an image file directly into the upload box or click to browse. Supported file types and size limits are noted on screen.

Once uploaded, the project logo becomes available for use in cover pages and spec report headers and brings the hotel brand identity directly into your deliverables without manual workarounds.

The project logo field is flexible: firms also use it to upload concept imagery, floor plan renderings, or Revit drawings that anchor the spec book visually.



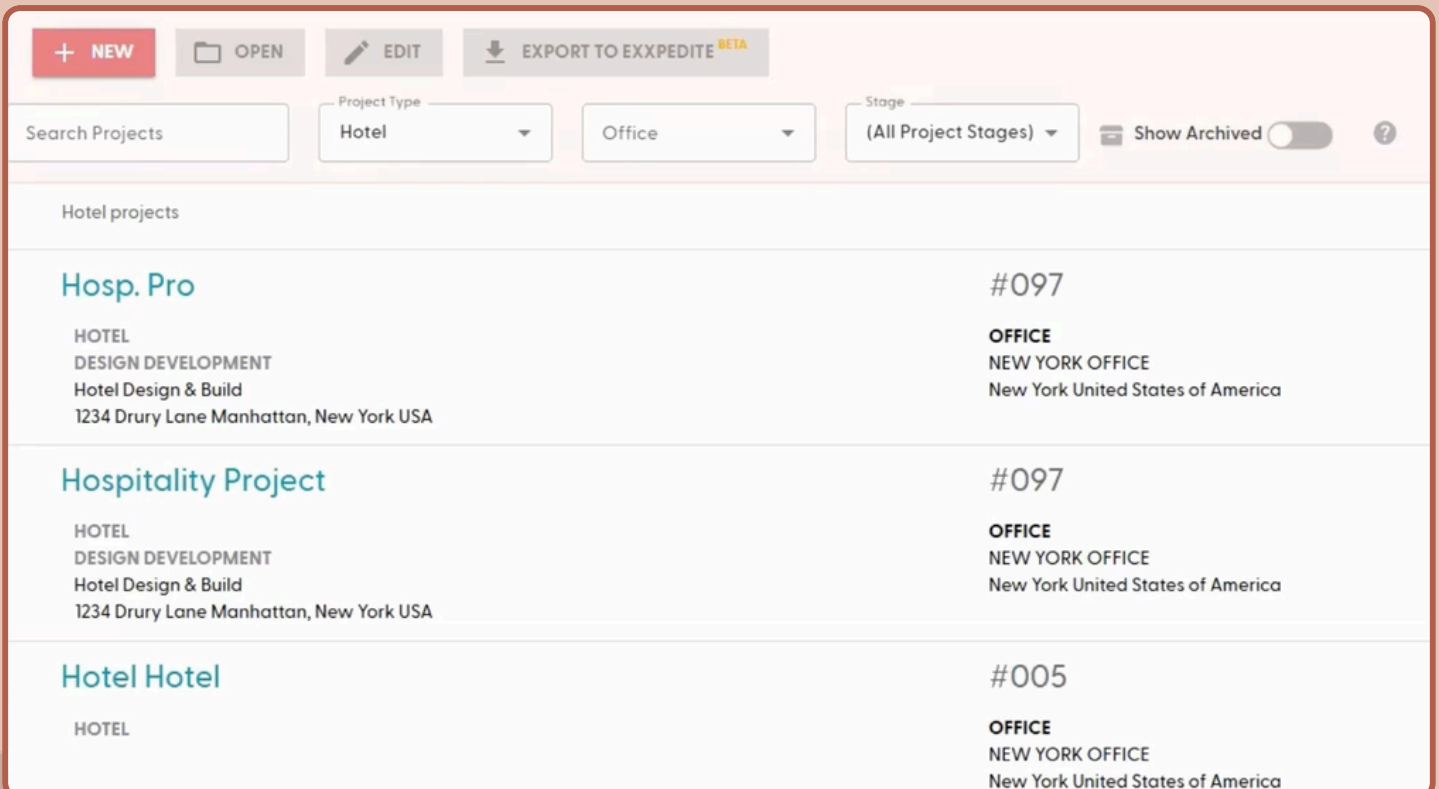
2. Brand Labels

Labels are the foundation of brand organization in DesignSpec. They let you tag your instructions, vendors, and spec library items with brand identifiers so finding Marriott-specific content, for example, is a matter of filtering, not searching.

Setting Up Labels

Labels are created centrally and can then be applied everywhere. Here is how to get started:

- Navigate to the Labels tab within Spec Instructions, Vendors, or Spec Library.
- Click New, enter a name (e.g., Marriott, Hilton, OS&E), and choose a color for quick visual identification.
- Save. Labels are immediately available across the platform.
- Labels can be archived at any time and archived labels are hidden from active lists but preserved in past projects.
- If a label is in use, it cannot be deleted, only archived. This protects the integrity of existing projects.



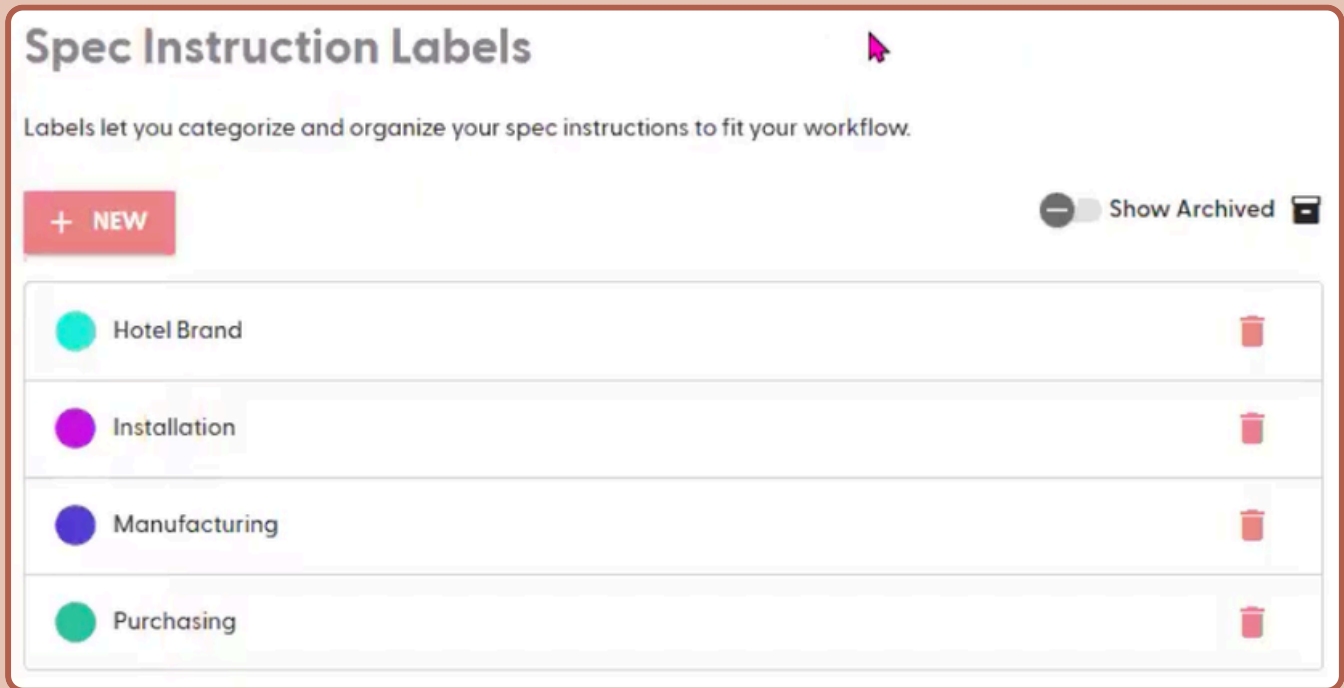
The screenshot shows the DesignSpec interface with a navigation bar at the top containing buttons for '+ NEW', 'OPEN', 'EDIT', and 'EXPORT TO EXXPEDITE BETA'. Below the navigation bar is a search and filter section with a 'Search Projects' input field, a 'Project Type' dropdown menu set to 'Hotel', an 'Office' dropdown menu, a 'Stage' dropdown menu set to '(All Project Stages)', and a 'Show Archived' toggle switch. The main content area displays a list of projects under the heading 'Hotel projects'. Three projects are visible:

Project Name	Project ID
Hosp. Pro HOTEL DESIGN DEVELOPMENT Hotel Design & Build 1234 Drury Lane Manhattan, New York USA	#097
Hospitality Project HOTEL DESIGN DEVELOPMENT Hotel Design & Build 1234 Drury Lane Manhattan, New York USA	#097
Hotel Hotel HOTEL	#005

Where Labels Apply: 3 Key Functions

Spec Instructions

Apply labels to any instruction to indicate its brand or type (e.g., Marriott + Manufacturing). When building a specification, filter by label to instantly surface only the relevant instructions for that brand. This keeps your master instruction library intact while still giving you fast, targeted access.



Brand-Approved Vendors

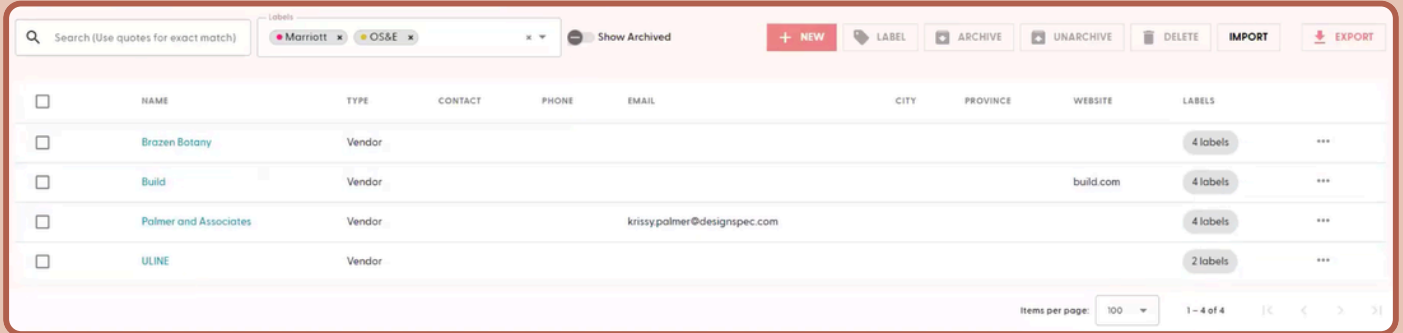
Tag vendors with brand labels and product category labels. A planned enhancement will also make vendor website URLs clickable directly from the filtered list, making sourcing a faster, more direct workflow. To apply labels to multiple vendors at once, select them in bulk and use the label button. There is no need to open each vendor individually.

✨ Pro tip for large firms

Set up a labeling convention at the start of a new brand relationship: brand name, product category, and project type. Consistent labels pay off every time you start a new project for that brand.

Spec Library Items

The Spec Library (a Pro tier feature) can be filtered by label to surface brand-specific OS&E items quickly. This is especially valuable when you maintain a global library across brands and need to send only the right items into a new project.



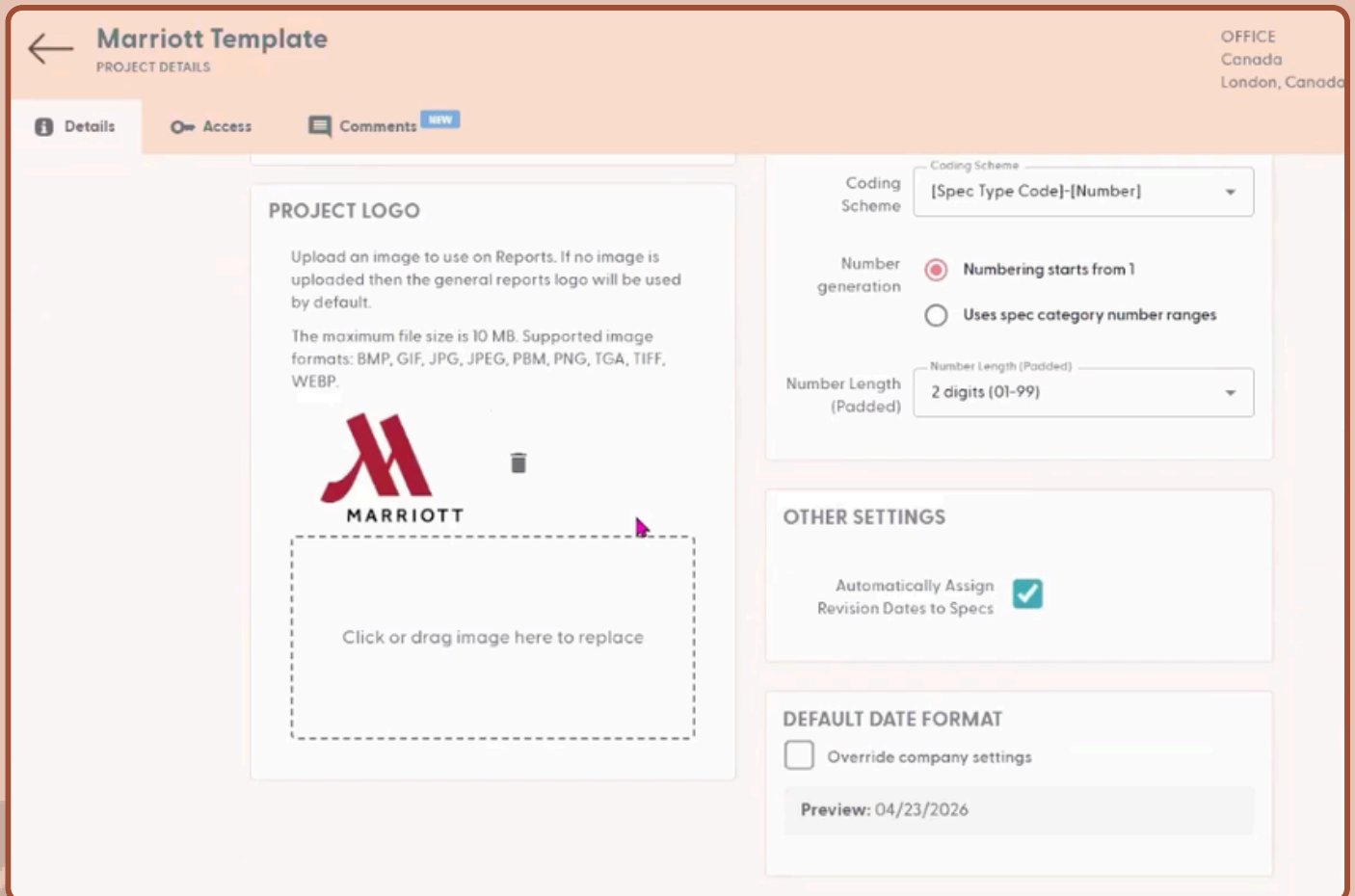
The screenshot shows a web interface for a Spec Library. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Search (Use quotes for exact match)". To the right of the search bar, there are filters for "Labels" with "Marriott" and "OS&E" selected. Further right are buttons for "Show Archived", "+ NEW", "LABEL", "ARCHIVE", "UNARCHIVE", "DELETE", "IMPORT", and "EXPORT". Below this is a table with columns: NAME, TYPE, CONTACT, PHONE, EMAIL, CITY, PROVINCE, WEBSITE, and LABELS. The table contains five rows of data:

	NAME	TYPE	CONTACT	PHONE	EMAIL	CITY	PROVINCE	WEBSITE	LABELS
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brazen Botany	Vendor							4 labels
<input type="checkbox"/>	Build	Vendor						build.com	4 labels
<input type="checkbox"/>	Palmer and Associates	Vendor			krissy.palmer@designspec.com				4 labels
<input type="checkbox"/>	ULINE	Vendor							2 labels

At the bottom right of the table, there is a pagination control showing "Items per page: 100" and "1 - 4 of 4".

3. Custom Cover Pages

DesignSpec's cover page builder gives you full control over layout, content, and branding.



The screenshot shows the "Marriott Template" cover page builder interface. The top left has a back arrow and "PROJECT DETAILS". The top right shows "OFFICE Canada London, Canada". Below the header are tabs for "Details", "Access", and "Comments". The main content area is divided into two sections:

- PROJECT LOGO:** A section for uploading a logo. It includes instructions: "Upload an image to use on Reports. If no image is uploaded then the general reports logo will be used by default. The maximum file size is 10 MB. Supported image formats: BMP, GIF, JPG, JPEG, PBM, PNG, TGA, TIFF, WEBP." Below this is a preview of the Marriott logo and a dashed box with the text "Click or drag image here to replace".
- Settings:** A panel on the right with various configuration options:
 - Coding Scheme:** A dropdown menu showing "[Spec Type Code]-[Number]".
 - Number generation:** Radio buttons for "Numbering starts from 1" (selected) and "Uses spec category number ranges".
 - Number Length (Padded):** A dropdown menu showing "2 digits (01-99)".
 - OTHER SETTINGS:** A checkbox for "Automatically Assign Revision Dates to Specs" which is checked.
 - DEFAULT DATE FORMAT:** A checkbox for "Override company settings" which is unchecked. Below it is a "Preview: 04/23/2026".

Building a Cover Page from Scratch

In the Reports area, click Report Setup, then New, and select Cover Page as the report type. The builder starts with a blank canvas and a left-hand menu of content blocks:

- Project name, address, and other project details (pulled automatically from project data)
- Issue and revision dates with custom descriptions
- Company logo
- Project logo (this is where the hotel brand logo appears)
- Free-text fields for any additional content
- Decorative lines and spacing blocks for layout control



Each element can be repositioned, resized, and styled. Fonts, sizes, and alignment are all adjustable. The result is a cover page that reflects the brand without requiring any design software.

Issue and Revision Dates on the Cover

DesignSpec supports multiple issue and revision dates with custom description fields. Instead of just showing a date, you can label it with a description such as Initial Issue, DD Set, or Permit Submission, giving clients a clear record of the submission history.

These dates can be stacked on the cover page with spacing controls to keep the layout clean. They also appear on individual spec pages, giving the full document a consistent version record.



✨ For firms managing multiple submission rounds

Turn on auto-assign for revision dates. DesignSpec will automatically apply new dates to specs that have been revised since the last date was added, and mark new specs as issued. You can also assign dates manually for full control.

4. Custom Report Layouts

Beyond the cover page, every deliverable can be tailored to brand requirements. DesignSpec's report cloning feature makes this efficient: start from an existing report, clone it, rename it, and adjust the layout for the brand.

Cloning a Report

- In Report Setup, find the report you want to use as a starting point.
- Click the options menu (three dots) and select Clone.
- Give the new report a clear name (e.g., Marriott Full Spec Report).
- The clone carries over any assigned cover pages, headers, and footers.

From there, you can make layout changes: add or remove sections, adjust what appears on the spec page, control sort order, add page breaks, and set visibility rules (for example, hide the link specs section if no link specs are assigned to an item).

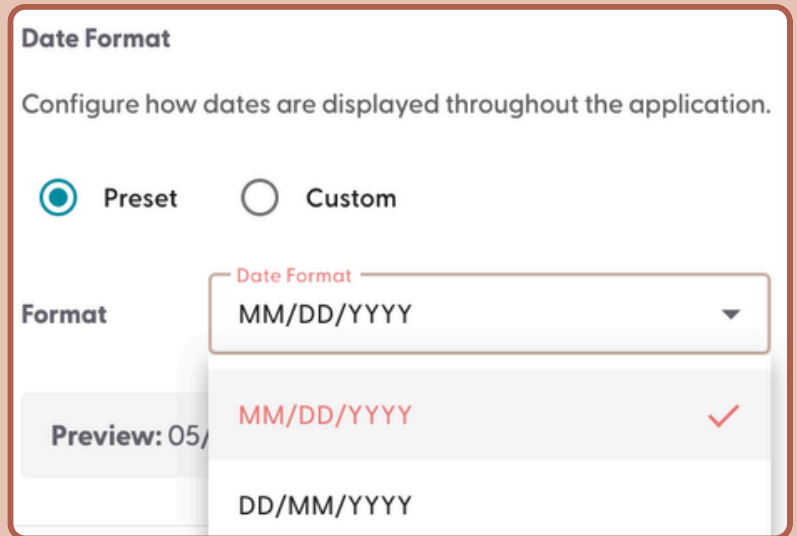
Brand-Specific Reporting Considerations

Some brands require specific groupings, sort orders, or content blocks in their deliverables. The cloning workflow means you set this up once per brand and reuse it across all projects for that brand. Since reports are global, every new Marriott project automatically has access to the Marriott report layout.

[Download an example spec book here!](#)

International Date Formatting

For projects at overseas properties, DesignSpec supports international date formatting. This ensures that date fields on cover pages and spec reports display in the format appropriate for the region and this is an important detail for global brands managing properties across multiple countries.



Date Format
Configure how dates are displayed throughout the application.

Preset Custom


Format Date Format
MM/DD/YYYY













Preview: 05/23/2026

MM/DD/YYYY ✓
DD/MM/YYYY

5. The Spec Library

The Spec Library is a centralized, account-wide repository of specifications. For firms managing multiple brands, it is the most powerful efficiency tool in DesignSpec and serves as a single place to maintain approved items that can be sent into any project with a few clicks.



	CODE ▲	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	MANUFACTURER	VENDOR	STAGE	CLASSI...	ISSUED/REVIS...	FURN ...	QUAN...	AREA CODE
...	 ACC-01	Robe Hook	Accessory		ULINE	 Prelimina...	FFE	04/23/2026	OFCI		
...	 ACC-02	GRAB BARS	Accessory		ULINE	 Prelimina...	FFE	04/23/2026	OFCI		
...	 BD-01	Pillow (Omitted)	Bedding			 Hidden	FFE	04/23/2026			
...	 BD-02	DOWN ALTERNATIVE ECO PILLOW	Bedding			 Prelimina...	FFE	04/23/2026			
...	 CH-01	Chair	Chair			 Prelimina...	FFE	04/23/2026	OFOI		
...	 MI-01	BATHROOM MIRRORS	Mirrors		Build	 Prelimina...	Arch, FFE	04/23/2026			



What the Spec Library Does

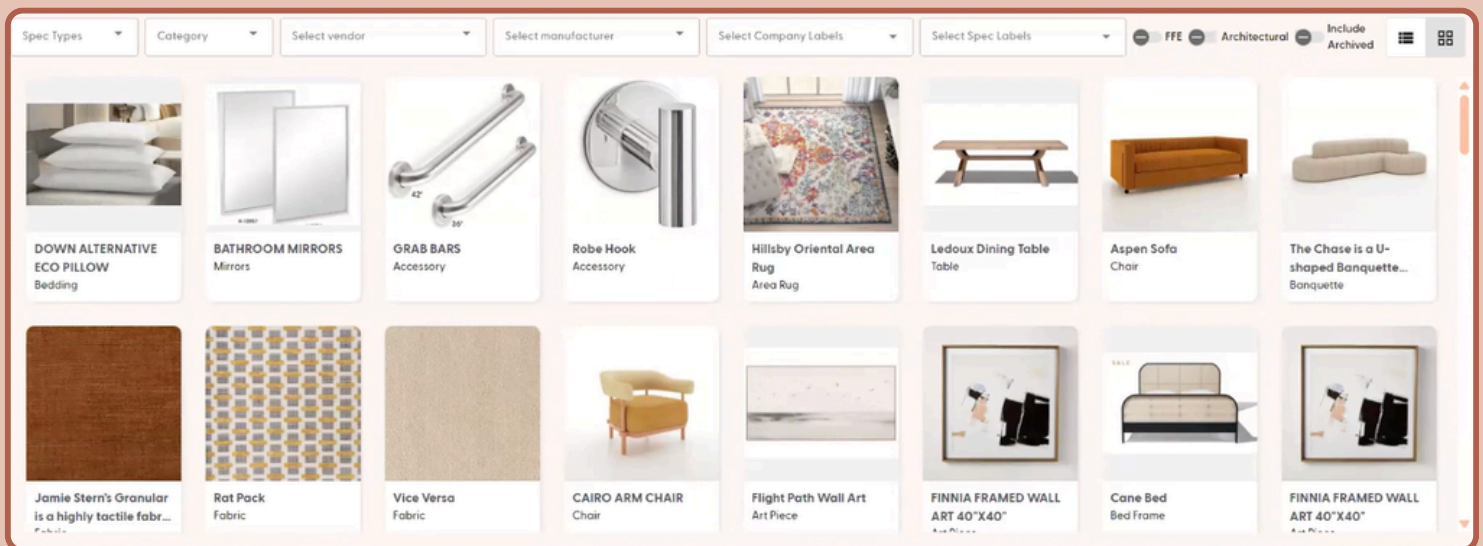
- Houses specifications from across all projects in a single, searchable library.
- Allows specs to be created directly in the library, without starting from a project.
- Supports global updates: change a price or SKU once, sync to all projects.
- Tracks which projects each spec belongs to, so syncing can be controlled at the project or spec stage level.

Using Labels in the Spec Library

Apply brand labels to library items so that a Marriott OS&E package, for example, is always findable with a single filter. When starting a new project for that brand, filter the library by label, select the relevant items, and send them directly into the project. No re-specing from scratch.

Populating the Library with OS&E

DesignSpec supports populating the Spec Library with OS&E (Operating Supplies & Equipment) items. Default designations such as OFCI and OFOI are built in, making it straightforward to categorize and track these items alongside FF&E specifications.



6. Template Projects

For brands you work with regularly, setting up a template project is one of the highest-value investments you can make in your workflow. A template project is a project configured with all the brand standards in place, covering areas, specs, coding schemes, instructions, and labels, ready to be copied into new projects as they come in.

What Goes into a Template Project

- Areas set up to reflect the brand's typical property layout (guest rooms, public areas, floors, etc.)
- Specs pulled from the Spec Library, filtered by brand label
- Instructions linked to spec types, filtered and applied by brand label
- Brand-specific spec coding scheme (including area codes if the brand requires them)
- Project logo uploaded for the brand
- Any relevant brand guidelines or documentation saved in project details
- Brand contacts set up under project contacts

Copying to New Projects

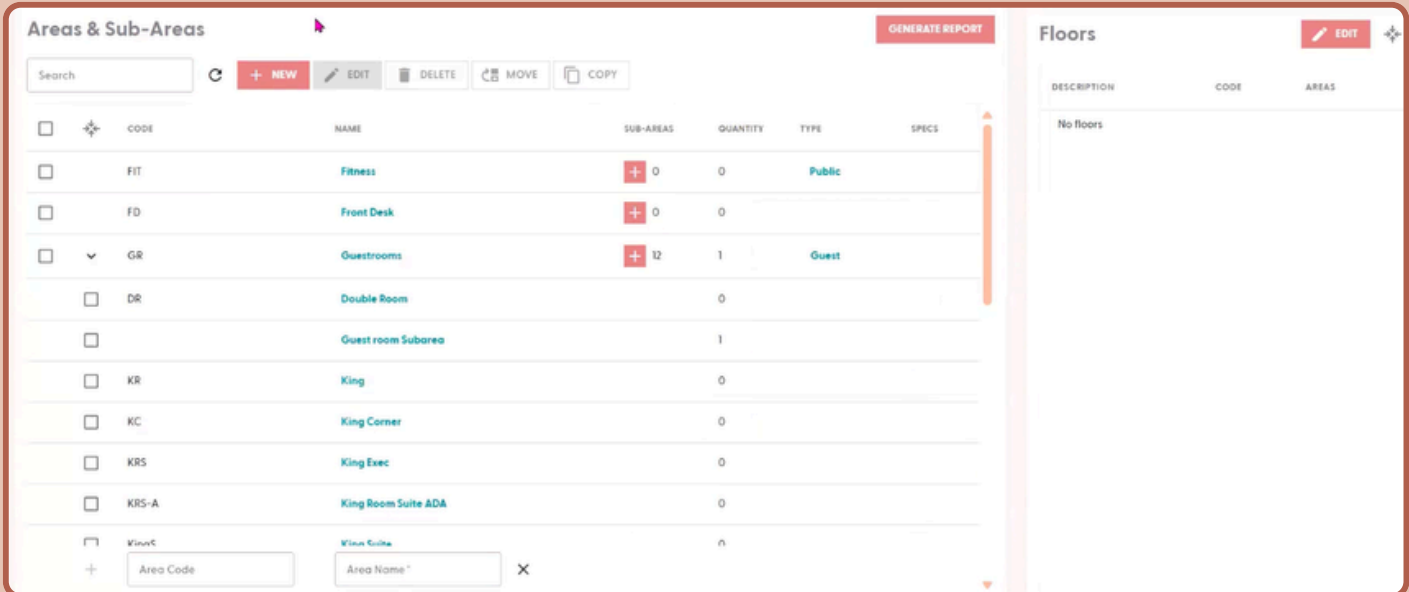
When a new project begins for that brand, copy the template areas and specs into the new project. You control exactly what carries over: all areas, selected areas, or specs assigned or not. The new project starts with the brand framework already in place. Only the property-specific details need to be filled in.

Model rooms

A common best practice: build and finalize a model guest room in a dedicated project. Once approved, copy those specs into the live project. Archive the model room project afterward. This keeps the live project clean and gives you a documented baseline for the brand's approved room configuration.

7. Organizing Spaces by Areas & Rooms

DesignSpec gives you precise control over how a property's spaces are structured and how specifications connect to those spaces.



The screenshot displays the DesignSpec interface. The left panel, titled 'Areas & Sub-Areas', features a search bar, a '+ NEW' button, and action buttons for 'EDIT', 'DELETE', 'MOVE', and 'COPY'. Below these is a table with columns for 'CODE', 'NAME', 'SUB-AREAS', 'QUANTITY', 'TYPE', and 'SPECS'. The table lists several areas, including 'FIT' (Fitness), 'FD' (Front Desk), 'GR' (Guestrooms), 'DR' (Double Room), 'KR' (King), 'KC' (King Corner), 'KRS' (King Exec), and 'KRS-A' (King Room Suite ADA). The 'GR' row is expanded to show sub-areas like 'Double Room' and 'Guest room Subarea'. At the bottom, there are input fields for 'Area Code' and 'Area Name'.

The right panel, titled 'Floors', has an 'EDIT' button and a table with columns for 'DESCRIPTION', 'CODE', and 'AREAS'. The table currently shows 'No floors'.

Assigning Specifications to Spaces

Specifications can be assigned to Public Areas, Guest Rooms, or specific floors. This means every item in your spec book is tied to a physical location in the property, making it easier to generate area-specific reports and track quantities by space.

Room Numbers and Quantities

- Assign room numbers to all room types for properties with numbered inventory.
- Specify the quantity of every item by area, giving you accurate counts for procurement.
- Create detailed guest room matrices showing every spec assigned to each area within the guest room.



Copying Area Configurations

Area setups including sub-areas and floor groupings, can be copied from one project to another. When copying, you can choose to bring the specs along or just the area structure. If specs are included, they are added to those specs' area assignments; existing specs are not duplicated. A differentiator (such as a bracketed number) is appended to area names to keep them distinct.

Copy Specs

COPY TO PROJECT

Hotel Hotel #005

CODING SCHEME
[Spec Type Code]-[Number]

AREA ASSIGNMENTS

Re-assign Remove All

DQR Double Queen Room

Set Spec Quantity for Area

1

SPEC CODES

Generate new codes with next available numbers

Keep the same code

Keep the same number sequence (but update the area code portion)

DESCRIPTION	SPEC TYPE	NOTES	PROJECT LINK
BATHROOM MIRRORS	Mirrors	Freshen up and look your best. Use in cor...	athroom... 2
DOWN ALTERNATIVE ECO PILLOW	Bedding		/product... 1
GRAB BARS	Accessory	Meets or exceeds ADA and building code...	rab-Bars 1
Robe Hook	Accessory	Recommended for hotels, resorts and apart...	https://www.uline.ca/Product/Detail/H-127... 1
Hillsby Oriental Area Rug	Area Rug		https://www.wayfair.ca/rugs/pdp/mistana... 14
Ledoux Dining Table	Table		https://industrywest.ca/collections/dining-t... 3

8. Advanced Spec Coding & Spec Types

For brands with specific coding requirements, DesignSpec offers two levels of customization.

Advanced Spec Coding

The advanced spec coding feature (a Pro tier capability) allows for project-specific coding schemes, including area codes within the spec code structure. Specs copied from one project to another using this feature can retain their coding scheme; only the assigned number updates in the destination project.

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SPEC CODES

- Generate new codes with next available numbers
- Keep the same code
- Keep the same number sequence (but update the area code portion)




Brand-specific spec codes and tags can also be created to flag items that are particular to a brand's requirements and serve as a useful reference when reviewing specs or generating brand-specific reports.

Bulk Edit Specs

SAVE

SELECT ATTRIBUTES + ALL

- Architectural
- Arm & Leg Material
- Arm Height

	ACC-02	ULINE	GRAB BARS
	BD-01	None	Pillow (Omitted)
	BD-02	None	DOWN ALTERNATIVE ECO PILLOW
	CH-01	None	Chair
	MI-01	Build	BATHROOM MIRRORS

Custom Spec Types for Brands

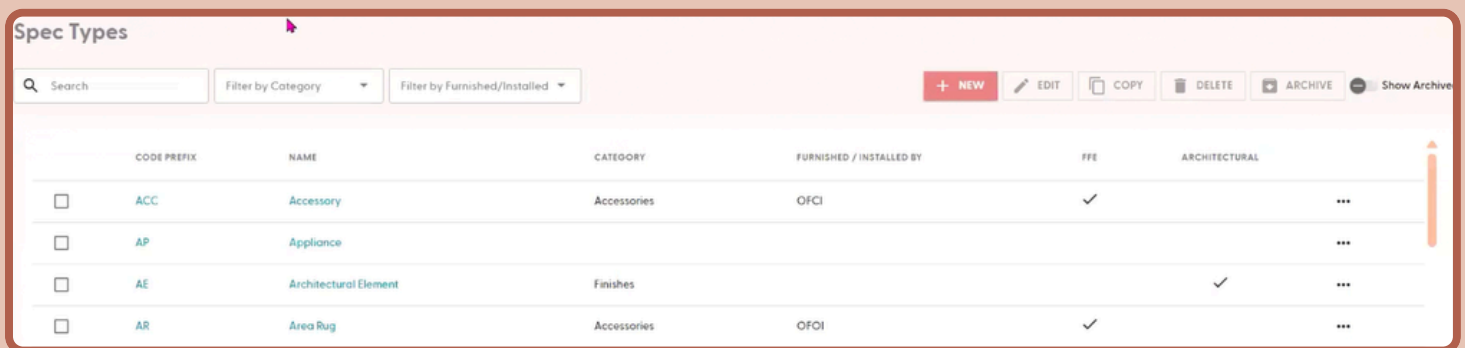
When a brand's requirements differ meaningfully from your firm's standard spec types: different default attributes, a different code prefix, or different linked instructions. You can duplicate an existing spec type and configure it specifically for that brand.

- Go to the Spec Types tab and copy an existing type.
- Give it a unique internal name (e.g., "Bedding – Marriott Template") and the same display name if preferred.
- Set brand-specific defaults: designation (OFOI, BB, etc.), custom attributes, code prefix.
- Link brand-specific instructions by filtering on the relevant label.

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- Set brand-specific defaults: designation (OFOI, BB, etc.), custom attributes, code prefix.
- Link brand-specific instructions by filtering on the relevant label.

The unique name is internal only. Clients see only the display name. This keeps the client-facing document clean while giving your team a clear internal reference.



	CODE PREFIX	NAME	CATEGORY	FURNISHED / INSTALLED BY	FFE	ARCHITECTURAL	
<input type="checkbox"/>	ACC	Accessory	Accessories	OFOI	✓		...
<input type="checkbox"/>	AP	Appliance					...
<input type="checkbox"/>	AE	Architectural Element	Finishes			✓	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	AR	Area Rug	Accessories	OFOI	✓		...

9. Saving Brand Documents to Projects

Keeping brand guidelines close to the project they govern is a simple habit that saves time during production. In DesignSpec, you can attach brand documentation such as guidelines, standards manuals, and approval requirements, directly to a project.

These documents are accessible from within the project at any time and can be shared or downloaded with a link. For teams working across multiple brands, this means the relevant standards are always one click away, not buried in an email thread or shared drive folder.



10. Quick Reference: Feature Overview

Feature	What It Does for Your Firm
Brand Labels	Tag instructions, vendors, and library items by brand. Filter instantly to find only what you need for a given project.
International Dates	Display dates in region-appropriate formats for overseas hotel properties.
Project Logo Upload	Upload a hotel brand logo (or concept image) at the project level. Appears on cover pages and spec reports.
Custom Cover Pages	Build branded cover pages with logo, dates, descriptions, and office address. Set up once per brand.
Report Cloning	Duplicate any report, rename it, and customize it to meet brand-specific reporting requirements.
Brand Documents	Attach brand guidelines and standards directly to a project for easy reference.
Advanced Spec Coding	Project-specific and area-based coding schemes. Copy specs across projects while updating codes automatically.
Area Assignments	Assign specs to Public Areas, Guest Rooms, or floors. Copy area structures from project to project.
Room Numbers & Quantities	Number all room types and specify item quantities by area for accurate procurement counts.
Guest Room Matrices	Create detailed matrices linking specs to areas within each guest room type.
Model Rooms	Build and approve a model room, then copy its specs into live projects as a clean starting point.
Brand Spec Codes/Tags	Create brand-specific spec codes and tags for easy filtering and reporting.
Copy Areas to Projects	Copy configured area structures with or without assigned specs, from template to live project.
Spec Library (OS&E)	Populate a curated library with OS&E items. Label by brand, filter, and send into new projects.
OFCI / OFOI Defaults	Built-in support for standard FF&E and OS&E ownership designations.

11. Example Workflow

Here is how a firm managing multiple hotel brands might structure their workflow using these features:

Initial Setup (Done Once Per Brand)

- Create brand labels in Instructions, Vendors, and Spec Library.
- Tag all relevant instructions, approved vendors, and library items.
- Set up custom spec types for any category that differs from your company standard.
- Build a branded cover page and clone a report layout configured for the brand.
- Create a template project with typical areas, brand specs, coding scheme, and project logo.

Starting Each New Project

- Copy the template project's areas and specs into the new project.
- Upload the property-specific logo or imagery if different from the brand default.
- Filter the spec library by brand label to pull in OS&E or additional items.
- Assign room numbers and quantities for this property.
- The branded report layout is already available. No setup needed.

During Production

- Use label filters to find the right instructions when specifying items.
- Source vendors by filtering on brand-approved labels.
- Use issue and revision dates with descriptions to track submission history.
- Preview any spec directly without generating a full report.
- Sync library updates across all active projects when pricing or specs change.

The result: each new project for a brand starts faster, stays consistent with brand standards, and requires far less manual setup. Your firm's core company standards remain untouched.

“DesignSpec has made it really easy for clients to go through all the specifications, approve, approve, reject, resubmit. This efficiency that DesignSpec gives us just allows us to create more, do more, and really not be afraid to design to the extent that our creativity allows us to design.” **Ruby Ramirez, Founder ROW01**



What your team can do with **DesignSpec brand standardization features:**

- ✓ Create branded template projects for multiple projects at once
- ✓ Organize approved vendors, specs, instructions, and OS&E with labels
- ✓ Build custom cover pages and branded report layouts
- ✓ Create advanced spec coding schemes and brand-specific spec types
- ✓ Manage guest rooms, room numbers, quantities, and areas by space
- ✓ Build approved model rooms and reuse them across projects
- ✓ Sync spec library updates globally across multiple active projects
- ✓ Store brand standards and guidelines directly inside projects

For questions about any feature covered in this guide, [book a demo here](#), or start your free trial by heading to [designspec.com](https://www.designspec.com).

Want to learn at your own pace? Watch [DesignSpec's Brand Standard Webinar](#).