

How to Know You're With the Right Integrator

At Cross Company, we understand how important it is to have a good relationship with your automation integrator. Partnering with a trusted team that cares about your business is vital to the success of your operation. We've been offering solutions to industrial and commercial operations since the 1950's, with successful projects that consistently turn into long-term business partnerships. When you work with us, we're in it for the long haul. We know that our success depends on yours.



Eight Signs to Look for in a World-Class Integrator

1. **The Approach:** They Discuss Your Process Before the Solution

- A respectable integrator isn't looking to push a product sale or position a specific brand just because they sell it. Their first priority should be process analysis and optimization. They should ask deep, challenging questions about why you do things the way you do and how automation fits into the larger workflow. Automation projects don't always require robotic motion; sometimes a pneumatic system, an electromechanical solution, or an advanced vision system is the more appropriate choice. If the conversation starts with, "Which robot do you want?" you might be talking to a reseller, not a solution provider.

2. **The Discovery:** They Insist on Detailed On-Site (or Virtual) Visits

- A dedicated integrator will want to see your operation firsthand. They need to understand more than just the machine's task; they need to know the surrounding environment, potential safety risks, physical constraints, material flow, and staffing. Visiting your site allows them to identify hidden challenges like uneven floors, limited overhead space, or ambient temperatures that a simple phone call would never reveal. Thorough site discovery is non-negotiable.

3. **The Integrity:** They Tell You "No" or Pivot to a Better Solution

- If you present a concept, and your integrator simply agrees with everything, proceed with caution. An experienced, ethical integrator has no qualms when telling you no (or, more accurately, suggesting a more efficient, cost-effective, or safer alternative). You can trust they are looking out for your best interest if they challenge an unrealistic timeline, a technically unfeasible approach, or a budget that won't deliver the necessary outcome.



How to Know You're With the Right Integrator

4. **The Stability:** They Have Proven Technical Expertise, Longevity and References

- Automation is a long-term investment. You need a partner who will be around for the next decade, not just the next quarter. Look for an integrator with a long history of successful deployments and solid partnerships. The ultimate proof is in their customer relationships. A truly stable and reputable integrator will have a proven track record of continued partnerships. They'll willingly share case studies, and most importantly, be ready to provide direct, verifiable customer references. They want to connect you with previous customers so that you can get a first-hand account of their experience. This is the clearest sign that they stand behind their solutions.

5. **The Project Management:** They Provide Transparent Timelines and Accountability

- There should never be surprises when it comes to the project timeline or budget. A professional integrator delivers clear, milestone-based schedules, provides regular updates, and immediately flags any potential changes or delays before they become problems. This commitment to transparent communication and realistic expectations is the foundation of a good relationship.

6. **The Proof:** They Perform Rigorous Factory Acceptance Testing (FAT)

- Before your automated system leaves the integrator's facility, they must prove that it works exactly as specified under simulated production conditions. This is the Factory Acceptance Test (FAT). They should invite your team to witness this event, testing the machine against the defined specifications. If they skip the FAT or push to test only after delivery, it's a major red flag.

7. **The Partnership:** They Provide Comprehensive Training and Post-Deployment Support

- The work isn't over when the system is installed. A true partner will have a clear answer to "what happens next?" They should provide specific, hands-on training for your staff, create detailed operating manuals and schematics, and offer defined lines of communication for after the project concludes. When, not if, you run into a problem, you need to know a skilled engineer is ready to support you quickly.

8. **The Relationship:** They Are Responsive and Enjoyable to Work With

- Automation is stressful enough; the process shouldn't be a struggle. Look for a partner who prioritizes a positive working relationship. This means they are easy to work with, they answer the phone or reply to emails promptly, and they consistently treat you like a valued partner. When your project wraps up, you should be left with a feeling that the team was not only technically smart and capable but also kind and collaborative.