



1-800-558-5096

International Number: 001-920-725-2667

www.arcways.com

A staircase can enhance or take away from the design of your home or office. You want to be sure you are purchasing the right staircase from the right company. Arcways believes we are your best choice. But don't take our word for it, ask these questions of the companies you are talking to. Then compare their answers to Arcways. We think you will find Arcways is the better choice.

If talking to several companies, print out as many of these worksheets as you need.

Historical Questions

Question	Competitor	Arcways, Inc.
How long has your company been in business?		Since 1966
What percentage of your business is dedicated to the design & manufacture of curved stairways?		90% Curved / 10% Spiral
Do you belong to the Stairway Manufacturers Association (SMA) and/or Architectural Woodwork Institute (AWI)?		SMA - since 1989 AWI - since 1975
What are the skill levels and/or educational backgrounds of your employees?		Woodlinks High School Curriculum / AS - Wood Techniques – Fox Valley Technical College BS – Business & Accounting, U.W. Wisconsin / BS – Engineering Mechanics, Purdue University

Technical Questions

Question	Competitor	Arcways, Inc.
Is your product a fully engineered entity, with documentation to justify? (can they prove with calculations the stair meets live load code requirements of 100 pounds per square foot)		Yes – Arcways can even engineer for seismic requirements (state of California)
Is your stairway manufactured as a “custom” piece of millwork or as a commodity item where the stair parts are outsourced to a commodity stair parts company?		Custom made – all carriage and rail parts manufactured at Arcways
Are detailed 24” by 36” professional AutoCad generated shop drawings provided?		Yes – Inventor & AutoCad – AutoDesk University 2007, Las Vegas
Does your product meet current International Residential Codes (IRC)? (ask that they provide a visual interpretation of the code so you can easily verify yourself)		Yes – Arcways assists the SMA with code language for IRC adoption



1-800-558-5096

International Number: 001-920-725-2667

www.arcways.com

Is your construction methodology “state of the art”?		Yes, we utilize CNC & robotic machining centers.
Do you bend your stair railings with multiple vertical layers of bent material?		No – because it springs back / creates tension in the balustrade / de-laminates over time
Do you shape short 3'-0" to 4'-0" rail sections and bolt together?		No – creates many butt joints / color variation / greater joint failure opportunities
Do you shape (not bent whatsoever) long (12'-0" +) continuous rail spans?		Yes – because it's structurally stable / beautiful in color / more rigid & stiff / smooth to the touch
Do you rabid & dado your treads and risers together like fine furniture?		Yes – every single time since 1966
Do you use solid (no veneer or MDF board) tread and riser stock?		Yes – every single time since 1966
Do you mechanically fasten your skirt boards (side boards of stairway) to ensure a structural connection and seamless fit?		Yes – designed to 100 psf with a safety factor of 2.5
Do you mortise your skirt boards and wedge with shims from underneath? (ask if they are even providing skirt boards – many job built stairs have no skirts)		Yes – for exterior use / No – for most interior work due to gap issues
Are your volute rail fittings at bottom of stairway flat with only a sharp up-easing or a true helical descending volute climbing specifically to your stairway geometry?		Helical descending volute made specific for your stair geometry (dramatic affect / 6" lower than flat volutes)
Do you mechanically hidden fasten your wood balusters and newel posts with hardware that is metal on metal, metal to wood, or is it surface nailed and glued?		Hidden metal to metal connections with no unsightly wood plug holes, wood putty, or glue stains
Do you create a rough wall beam between rough wall and skirt board in order for the finish drywall company to screed from?		Yes – we call it a travel beam that ensures a perfect marriage between wall and stair carriage
Is any type of a full scale stairway template system offered at the framing stages of the home construction by the stairway company?		Yes – our template system was awarded a patent (# 7,552,564). The framers refer us because it locates exactly where they are to frame the curved wall(s), header, and curved balcony overlooks.
What grade of hardwoods do you use – common, select & better, or superior?		Superior grade – Northern Glacier Path / superior color, old growth stability, & uniformity. / AWI Section 800 Standards
Is turn-key installation available by your in-house company employees or by others?		Yes – by talented long term employees (20 + yrs.) with sawdust in their veins.



1-800-558-5096

International Number: 001-920-725-2667

www.arcways.com

Aesthetics Questions

Question	Competitor	Arcways, Inc.
Does your company offer design help via layout sketches and/or 3D realistic rendering capabilities?		Yes – talented design staff with formal educations offering sketches to 3D renderings
Does your company offer engineering help via dead and live load calculations?		Yes – it's extremely important – especially when you have a party and 60 + friends gather onto the stairway for a photo op.
Does your company have a proven architectural background as to how principals and practices are achieved – how does the stairway relate design-wise to the surrounding space or environment?		Yes – 43 years of curved stairway spatial analysis – depth perception, width & height relationships, continuance flow affects, centerline & balance in elevation, etc.
What is the most complex stairway your company has ever undertaken from both a design and engineering standpoint?		A three story mega motor yacht curved stairway project where we also fabricated 90 degree kiss joint quadrants of mackore paneling wrapping continuously around the fixed aluminum cylinder three story well opening. Everything was hidden fastened (not one nail hole permitted even on the crown molding) and fit precisely as engineered.



1-800-558-5096

International Number: 001-920-725-2667

www.arcways.com

Value Questions

Question	Competitor	Arcways, Inc.
What intrinsic / essential values does your company offer the product you provide?		Customer is purchasing an element of history from an established leader in the industry. Timeless quality and craftsmanship proven by our 34 year history with adhering to the Architectural Woodwork Institute quality standards. Knowledge of Arcways owners and staff – client is purchasing a functional piece of art produced by the combined efforts of highly educated and skilled wood artisans.
How do you guarantee a superior quality outcome as a one-off custom piece of fine woodwork or forged iron work?		Initial critical design elements are professionally addressed from infancy to protect clients' aesthetic concerns / requests. We are superior listeners with the ability to interpret and produce visions. Confirmation of vision to reality is drawn and illustrated for complete understanding. Fabrication is state of the art advanced technology utilized in conjunction with "old world – old school" craftsmanship.
How do you guarantee a lifetime of beauty and functionality?		The longevity of our business is a testament in itself - We also have expressed and implied company warranties
How do you explain pricing as it relates to quality and service?		You get what you pay for – if you want a well conceived product, do your homework – or you'll likely pay more for less quality and service!

Trustworthiness Questions

Question	Competitor	Arcways, Inc.
Do you have a backlog of orders to substantiate a healthy future?		Yes – we have maintained a 4 to 6 month backlog of orders for the past 43 years
What state does your company manufacture in?		Wisconsin – land of strong trustworthy values, work ethics, long history of woodworking and millwork company locations, and of course cheese
Is your brand identifiable locally or nationally by building associations or		Yes – call the Stairway Manufacturers Association or



1-800-558-5096

International Number: 001-920-725-2667

www.arcways.com

other professional building organizations?		Architectural Woodwork Institute to verify.
Do you possess name referrals of local and national customers?		Yes – call us and we'll locate a previous Arcways job in your vicinity.
Is your proposed pricing include all applicable local and state taxes so that I don't have any issues with the IRS after I complete my home?		Yes – in fact most out-of-state manufacturers have what is called "NEXUS" – make sure you have that covered.