Early on it was suggested that Palram could simply repurpose structural details from the Athens 2004 Olympic Stadium, which Palram also worked on. “We strongly advised against repurposing. It would leak,” Furman said. A 1:100 scale model of the Shenzhen roof structure was built to test Palram’s conclusion. A hose watered the model and “everything leaked,” according to Furman.

LESSON #2: THROW AWAY THE BOOK
Building material suppliers often “sell by the book”: If material specifications fall outside prescribed parameters, the job may be declined or punitively-priced. “We throw away the book. We go by what the customer needs,” observes Tamir Horesh, head of Palram projects. “If that requires a lot of custom tailoring for panel size, color, light transmission, haze, solar transmission, shading coefficient, or special heat-blocking, so be it. Architects can count on us for flexibility.”

It’s not uncommon for Palram engineers to work from the design intent to furnish all materials detailing and documentation on behalf of the architect.

LESSON #3: GO THE EXTRA MILE
A big design challenge for the Shenzhen stadium project team was water drainage. What was the best way to direct rain water away from spectators? “We created a special aluminum element that served as a drainage channel for any excess water, helping keep spectators dry,” reports Palram engineer Furman.

LESSON #4: ASSUME NOTHING
Jobsite questions and issues are inevitable, no matter how deeply-planned the process. “Our people also participate during the installation phase. We come to the project site. We offer training to the installers, just to make sure everything is going down the right path. We don’t just ship the materials and say, Here, now it’s your problem;” says Palram product manager, Shlomi Yehodai.

LESSON #5: UNDER PROMISE/ OVER DELIVER
Set honest, realistic expectations. “The general contractor was very impressed by how quick the installation went,” reports Furman. Shenzhen stadium roof installation (about 500,000 square feet) took just 100 days. Meeting or exceeding deadlines supports all downstream project activities.

As you plan your next project, expect more from your building product manufacturer. Palram suggests architects look for these services:

PLANNING
• Quick match of product specifications
• Adapt plans to fit the architect’s vision
• Create specific planning details
• Consult during planning meetings
• Provide advice on materials and engineering
• Render conceptual designs

IMPLEMENTATION
• Create specific action plans
• Offer on-site support and engineering supervision
• Conduct seminars on request

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