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**THE INTERIOR DESIGN  
BUSINESS HANDBOOK**



# THE INTERIOR DESIGN BUSINESS HANDBOOK

**A Complete Guide To Profitability**

Third Edition

Mary V. Knackstedt, FASID, FIIDA



JOHN WILEY & SONS, INC.

This book is printed on acid-free paper. ∞

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*This book is dedicated to designers, especially to those who  
call me with questions or to share information.  
Together, we can continue to raise the standards for the field of  
interior design and to increase our ability to serve our clients.*



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# Preface

When we use the right procedures, the business portion of our organization can beautifully complement the creative process. As interior designers, we deal with business issues every day. We engage in business development when we seek new clients. We deal with finance every time we handle money. We sign contracts and letters of agreement, address personnel problems, and seek out new resources. We cope with masses of paperwork, including writing specifications and placing orders. Often we do these tasks without the background and advisors available to many other kinds of professionals.

To stay in business, we have to understand business. We don't have to earn business degrees or be personally capable of performing every business function, from accounting to devising retirement plans, but we do have to be able to talk with and understand the people who are specialists in these fields. To pull our weight as members of financial planning teams and to help our firms end the year with a profit, we cannot afford to wear blinders to financial matters.

Though business procedures are taught in design schools, they are not taught as extensively as they should be; the courses are usually scheduled for one semester or a year. Business procedures are the basis of communication that we will use throughout our professional years. We must relate to other industries, including the financial and legal entities that are part of the business world. If handled properly, these relationships can ease and complement our own work practices. Moreover, a good basic understanding of specific business functions is necessary for everyone, not just the person running the design company. Staff members or anyone participating in the company, no matter in what capacity, will benefit from a good understanding of business practices.

Other professions establish strong liaison and group activities through which they share their business practices and solutions to common problems. The interior design profession needs to do the same. We can learn from each other; and by learning from each other, we can strengthen our individual firms and create a stronger and better-understood profession.

Awareness is the key. Just as we continue to learn about design throughout our lifetime, we need to keep current with other issues that affect the interior design field. Everything that affects business in general affects the interior design business. When insurance rates go up, or certain types of insurance become unavailable, we may have to modify the way we do business. The state of the stock market, the price of oil, and the value of real estate affects our clients' attitudes to buying design services; therefore, they affect our interior design businesses.

It's a chain reaction: If we are not operating our firms profitably, we all lose—our clients, because we don't have the same quality of interest in a job that is losing money; our staff and resources, because we don't have the funds to promptly meet our obligations. Consequently, we may not be able to attract the caliber of projects we enjoy working on and find most financially profitable.

When designers are comfortable dealing with money and with all the financial issues of our business, it gives us a tremendous sense of freedom and provides a good environment for creativity.

The *Interior Design Business Handbook* is written primarily for practicing interior designers—whether working independently or within large firms. It covers the full range of business activities and procedures for the life of a practice—from choosing a location and running a business on a daily basis to selling it when it's time to retire. It is also useful to students and as a training manual for support-staff members. It defines business procedures that work for interior design firms all over the country. It's a book to refer to just before a meeting with business advisors. You may also want to give a copy to your bookkeeper or accountant so they better understand our field.

This third edition of the *Interior Design Business Handbook* addresses many new issues not included in previous editions. My first book, *Interior Design for Profit* was a very simple text. Since then, however, our work has become more complex, and each edition of the book was progressively more extensive. Still, I was surprised at the number of changes that needed to be made in this edition. Banking, other financial issues, and many general procedures have changed significantly. Technology has been part of that change. We are also dealing more on an international basis. Even as I finish this book, I realize that I would like to keep going, as there are so many more subjects that I would like to present. But if I included everything I would like, the book would be so large it would be difficult to carry. Thus, it became necessary to address only the most important issues.

This book provides the basics to help you formulate an excellent business foundation for your design firm. The information contained within has been researched and gathered in a very real, “hands-on” fashion. During the many workshops, programs, and classes in which I have held with designers, architects, and others in related industries. At these meetings, many new questions surfaced. If I did not have a solution to them, I asked my consultants for their assistance in finding one. Once we found a solution, we asked the designer to try the procedure. If appropriate, we tested the procedure in our firm. After the procedure had been tried in a number of firms, and polished, it was then presented in workshops that become the basis of articles or books. As a result, I can state with confidence that every procedure in this book works. They are used daily in my own firm and other successful design firms throughout the United States.

The goal of this book is to define business processes that complement the profession of interior design. I believe that we have a great contribution to make in our world. The creative process is very valuable in problem-solving situations. This book uses the design process to present and solve many of our business issues. You will find these procedures quite conducive to your creative style.

In working with many interior design firms, some near bankruptcy, others among the most profitable firm in the country, I have found that they have very specific problems. I've seen what goes wrong; even the most talented designers can lose money. But there are very easy ways of accomplishing our goals, and you will find many of those procedures here.

It is my hope that the *Interior Design Business Handbook* will enhance your creative energies by making the business end of interior design not only comprehensible but also rewarding—in every sense of the word.

Interior design and architecture at one time were considered “gentlemen’s professions,” something they did because they loved doing it, not because they had a need for or interest in earning money. Today, however, though most of us still love our work, we need to support ourselves and our families. To do that, we need the right business structure, one that permits us to be creative, to service our clients, *and* to earn appropriate income.



# Acknowledgments

**M**y goals in writing this book and in sharing business information have been to help create a professional standard for the interior design field and to try to ensure that there are rewards enough to keep all the bright and talented designers working in this field. Without the help and encouragement of many special people, I could never have completed a book of this scope and complexity.

Special thanks to the late Samuel Ledger for teaching me to understand accounting procedures.

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- To the consultants and business friends who helped develop ways to improve professional business practices for designers, and who are part of the Design Business Solution team.
- To my support staff who helped me live, run a business, and write a book at the same time:
- And to my friends, who thought I had deserted them.



# 1

# Finding Your Place in Interior Design

Interior design is a profession, a career, a vocation, and a lifestyle. It is not just a job. To practice it successfully, it is important to have a clear idea of what interior design involves, as well as an appreciation of its demands. It is just as important to know whether you have the combination of personal attributes and interests that a professional interior designer needs.

## WHAT IT TAKES TO BE AN INTERIOR DESIGNER

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Design expertise comes from exposure and experience, a combination of academic study and learning on the job. Every one of your experiences contributes to your design vocabulary. Design education stresses problem-solving. The four to six years you spend in the formal study of interior design gives you the informational tools to use in your work—problem-solving skills being perhaps the most valuable tool of all. But interior design demands a tremendous amount of ongoing research. To be a responsible designer, you must study new technologies, new product specifications, new laws and regulations, and changes in building and fire codes. With each new project, there is more to study and learn. Your education never ends. Learning is part of the lifestyle.

Interior design work, by nature, requires that those who practice it learn to temper their innate idealism with the practical demands of reality. You design for real people in the real world. In every design project you undertake, you must be willing to strike a balance between what you envision as “the ideal” and what you can achieve within the project’s practical constraints.

Interior design is creative work, and it attracts talented, creative people. In fact, without talent, you cannot go far in this field. Your challenge is to direct and focus your creativity. There is no problem in coming up with new ideas—only in choosing which ones should be executed first, which ones have priority. Setting and acting on priorities requires mental and behavioral discipline.

The days of sitting at a drafting table and drawing pretty pictures are over—if they ever existed. Designers have to make things happen. Social contacts are important in acquiring new projects. You need to like people and you need to get along with all kinds of people and to inspire their confidence.

An interior design career depends on organization. From beginning to end, every project involves myriad details; keeping on top of things is absolutely



### A Personal Inventory for Prospective Interior Designers

1. How important is interior design to me?
2. What kind of lifestyle do I want to have?
3. Do I have the innate creative abilities to become a successful designer?
4. Am I willing to spend the time and money required for the formal training?
5. How much time do I want to devote to my work?
6. In general, do I like the people in the field enough to work with them?
7. Do I have the personality to work with any kind of client?
8. Do I enjoy planning and organizing?
9. Am I self-disciplined?
10. Am I self-motivated?
11. Do I have more than average physical and emotional stamina?

critical. Even if your firm includes someone whose job is to expedite, you will always have to deal with mountains of details.

Interior design demands high energy and passion. It is almost never a nine-to-five business; on occasion, it is a twenty-four-hour-a-day profession. Interior designers need physical and emotional stamina to fuel their long hours and to cope with pressures of completing a job on schedule and to their client's satisfaction.

Most extremely successful designers—those with annual personal incomes of \$200,000 to millions per year—are addicted to interior design. They live it, eat it, and sleep it. It is a passion they cannot live without. Design addiction can be destructive. But the most successful designers are people who have managed to merge good business practices with their positive addiction.

This book is about how you can integrate your love for the creative parts of interior design—and the way of life that comes with your career—with good business practices. It is about success with profitability.

## FIVE TRADITIONAL DESIGNER-CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

The designer may fill many different roles in his or her relationship with the client; the business structure established will reflect the roles accordingly. Traditional roles that designers have held in the past include pure designer, agent, merchant, employee, and contractor.

### Pure Designer

In this capacity, the interior designer provides just professional design services: drawings, documents, and purchasing specifications for all interior elements and furnishings required. The scope of the work usually includes the preparation of the entire interior plan.

## Agent

The designer can act as an agent on the client's behalf, placing the client's orders with manufacturers and showrooms. The monies go through the designer's firm or under his or her name. The designer is responsible for managing the project. In some cases, the contracts are written so the designer does not assume responsibility for the merchandise, materials, and the work performed.

## Merchant

The designer becomes a merchant when selling merchandise. Many design firms will procure and sell merchandise. In some smaller communities, there is no choice but to act as a source of materials and to see that they are appropriately installed. The design firm may also charge a fee for the design of the space.

## Employee

Some designers are employed by retail stores, where they are usually paid salary plus commission. When the client purchases items from that store, the designer's services can be included or can be offered at an extra fee. More and more often, firms of this type are charging some fee in addition to the retail or list price of items, depending on the individual financial structure of the company and its location.

## Contractor

The designer may act as a contractor by employing the workers required to do construction, hang paper, finish surfaces, handle drapery and window treatments, and so on. In some states, the designer will have to carry a contractor's license in order to provide these services. In many instances, the craftspeople are directly employed by the design firm; in others, they work on a freelance or contracted basis.



## WORKING STYLES

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Many of the arts attract people who like to work alone; but interior design forces people to work together. This makes interior design almost as much a social science as an art.

Interior design touches many other disciplines. There is constant interaction with all types of construction trades, as well as with artisans from many different craft groups. A coordinated effort is of primary concern.

### Working Alone

If you work as an independent designer, you can do whatever you want at whatever speed you choose. If you want to work only one day a week, you can. If your forte is specialized work that no one else wants to become involved with, perhaps you need to work alone. If you are certain that you have mastered your art to the point at which you can perform every task within your specialty, and have a

personality that does not require a lot of stimulation, then an independent practice is for you.

## Teamwork

The trend now is to work in groups, or teams. Designers who practice in groups do so because they see this as a better way to accomplish their goals. It is a growing movement. The group may not be part of a corporate structure, where a group of designers all work for the same firm, but design teams and design partnerships are working successfully now, and there will be more of them in the future.

Interior designers are also realizing that by working together, as attorneys and physicians often do, they can share a business manager, an expeditor, an accountant, an insurance consultant, legal services, and other professional management personnel. This gives them a better-managed and more profitable firm, with opportunities for better retirement plans and many of the perks that are possible only in a team arrangement.

When designers work with other designers, there is a chance to test each other's designs, to determine what will work. When three other people look at a design and all say "I don't see any problems," obviously the chance of producing it successfully is much greater than if done in isolation. This kind of trial process, I have found, is important to quality design.

Increasingly, clients want one firm to control the whole project, even though their project may be complex enough to require several disciplines. Therefore, they like to hire firms who do it all. Obviously, a designer can team with other design professionals. Multidiscipline design teams of architects, landscape architects, interior designers, and engineers have an advantage in bidding for larger projects. Clients usually prefer teams that have experience in working together.

Government regulations require more recordkeeping than ever before. The nature of the work has changed, and clients are more likely to sue if the unforeseen occurs. We need to become more professionally efficient and to develop high administrative and production standards. We need access to more sophisticated tools, such as computerized equipment. A small office cannot as afford much of it. But by working together, designers can afford this kind of equipment and get the bonuses of other designers' professional knowledge and the stimulation of each other's company.

At one time, designers would work together in order to share technology. Today, computers are so inexpensive that it is easy for each professional to have his or her own computer, or even several.

Technology also permits designers to work where they want to work. It may be at home, in the mountains, at the beach, or any other locations where you feel most creative. Technology permits us to communicate, to share projects or administrative needs with others in any part of the country. I often work with specialists in other states, yet we work so closely that you would think we're in same office. Technology is a great research tool and a wonderful storage system, but more importantly, it enables us to work with people who otherwise would be too far away to work with. We can now design our companies to suit the type of work that we are doing. Technology permits us to grow, and the opportunities are increasing constantly.

## Design Associate

At one time, people became design associates because they didn't have funding or were not ready to start their own company. Today, many interior designers who

have been practicing independently are associating with larger firms because the profitability is so much greater. Some interesting arrangements share profits between the management company and the associate designer. In this way the associate is responsible for writing the orders for handling all the design issues. In some instances, the designers provide their own marketing and bring in their own jobs; in other cases, the jobs are brought in by the firm.

Designers can work as hard as they want to. If the work or project is highly profitable, they profit accordingly. If they elect to do a project for little markup, perhaps as a marketing effort, this is also acceptable. Of course, certain overhead requirements must be met. If the designer decides to take time off—for example, to study—this is his or her decision since he or she is only paid for performance.

Experienced designers have found this arrangement one of the most profitable and most pleasurable ways to work. Let someone else handle the business problems. Designers want to design. Also, the clients know there is a higher power, so they are less likely to question pricing, billing, and other contract issues. In addition to high-quality management, the larger company atmosphere can also provide designers with the tools that they could not afford on their own—high-tech environment, library, consultants, support staff, communication with other designers, and so forth.

The arrangement permits the designer to work as an independent contractor. Designers cover all of their own expenses and are responsible for their own design work, but the managing company handles the actual processing of the project. The gross profits are usually split at different levels, depending on the varied responsibilities and levels of performance.

Today, we can arrange to work on the projects and parts of projects that use our best talents. There's no point in designers spending 75 to 90 percent of their day doing tasks that they are not good at. Even when you practice alone, you don't have to do it all. You can have the best bookkeeper, the best specification writer, and the best lighting designer. You can build a team of professionals you can call on, and use software programs they suggest. Whatever you need, it's there.



## SPECIALIZATION AND SPECIALTIES

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This is definitely a time for specialization. Designers with the greatest name recognition and financial success are those who have specialized. (This could lead you to wonder if being multifaceted in accomplishments and abilities does not hurt more than it helps.)

A review of design publications of the past ten years shows that less-qualified design firms can and did take the market share from “better” firms just because they were very clear in stating that they do offices, or that they do nothing but medical facilities, or that they do only restaurants.

Specialization most often leads to better profit. Specialists know their work; it is easier to do it because they did it last week. If you choose to specialize, you can vary certain facets of the work, but you do not have to relearn 80 percent of the technology to lower the risk of error and speed up design production.

Interior design has been a broad-based service profession—blanketing residential, contract, and industrial work. In the next decade, however, interior design will be more specialized than it has been, and some of the best and most interesting jobs will probably be in the specialties. The following pages offer brief looks at over one hundred areas of specialization.

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Client demand can cause you to change your area of expertise. A designer in Ohio specialized in education interiors. In time, she found that although she had become a specialist and did some of the most up-to-date and innovative designs for education, the demand was no longer there. She was forced to change her orientation, and began designing psychological/psychiatric spaces, working with many therapists to develop spaces to support their therapies. When interest in this dwindled, she found herself specializing in interiors that supported profit-making endeavors—professional services, manufacturing, general business, and spaces with a marketing and/or production component. In each instance, she was able to use some of what she had learned in the previous specialty. Still, she had to study, bring in many consultants, and do a lot of traveling to meet with other specialists in the course of mastering new specialties.

Changes are expensive, but often the best thing that can happen to creative people. Creative people become bored; boredom is one of their greatest problems, so having a specialty developed out of another specialty is really the most productive and profitable way of making a change.

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## Acoustic Design

Hearing is one of the five senses; sound is an integral part of every environment. As space becomes more expensive and people live and work closer together, quiet has become a luxury. Specialists in acoustic design consult on projects ranging from concert halls, conference rooms, open offices, and restaurants to residential design. Controlling sound has become a science. In open landscape offices, there are sound-breaking panels and sound maskers. Teleconferencing rooms need the sound to be contained. On the other hand, restaurants need a certain amount of noise in order to sell food. In any space, from residential to the most technologically demanding commercial environments, there are sounds we want to hear and sounds we don't want to hear.

## Administrative Headquarters

Every major company has an administration building with needs and demands that require design. The demands change as the products change, and interior designers are called in to streamline and to develop spaces to support work flow. At one time, we just designed offices, but today social environments are also important. Sometimes, more important decisions are made over a cup of coffee than in the boardroom.

## Adaptive Reuse

Reusing old buildings for new purposes is a growing trend as the composition of cities changes. Factory lofts are converted into shopping malls and residential use. It is not always practical to maintain an older commercial structure as commercial real estate. For example, turning the Chrysler Building into a residential con-

dominium building is being seriously considered. The building's construction will not accommodate the way computers are used today in business. Workstations can only be functional within so many feet of the main terminal. This makes many major landmark buildings obsolete as office space, while their location and the quality of construction argue that the building should be reused. This ties in to a concern for ecology and for not wasting available resources.

### **Airplane Design**

This is a unique specialty. Airplanes range from a standard passenger carrier to a flying conference room or living space. Designers must consider design elements in terms of weight, fire safety, and psychological and environmental effects.

### **Amusement Park Design**

Some designers work on theme parks, developing the visual components that enhance rides and exhibits. These can incorporate animated figures, and appeal to all the senses, even that of smell. These designers may develop unique signage for the park, design the fixtures, or be involved with the service areas: foodservice, restrooms, souvenir shops. Park design has this in common with museums and community buildings. Safety, effectiveness, and efficiency are important. Profitability is determined by the effectiveness of the fantasy, and everything has to work so that the fantasy is maintained. Designing traffic patterns to keep people moving is an art in itself.

### **Apartment/Condominium/Co-op Design**

With more multiple-housing developments in every part of the country, this specialty presents major opportunities. Some interior designers do only apartment layouts; others do only lobbies and corridors. Still others are responsible for the social rooms, which include function rooms, social areas, televideo conference centers, computer rooms, office and secretarial areas, and athletic areas.

### **Aquarium Design**

This specialty is not limited to aquatic parks. There are designers who do large aquarium design for homes, offices, and other businesses. There is a restaurant where one enters by walking over a sizable aquarium. Aquariums as a design element serve several purposes. Medical evidence suggests that gazing at an aquarium reduces blood pressure; and there is a social push toward using natural, earth-friendly materials in public spaces.

### **Art Consultant**

Searching out existing art and contracting for the creation of art suitable to a specific interior environment is the function of art consultants, who usually work for the client. They provide the background to support the art investment. The specialist must have an extensive knowledge of fine art disciplines as well as a practical and artistic understanding of interior design.

## Art Dealing

Interior designers with an interest in fine art understand what people enjoy and will buy; they understand the space, and they also know how to place art properly. This is a major asset for an art dealer, because art sells best when it can be envisioned or placed in an interior.

## Audiovisual Center Design

Television, computer, videocassette recorder, and stereo equipment provide entertainment and worldwide communication for residential and commercial use. They are often clustered in the same area or room. The technical requirements of these devices demand a knowledge of electronics, acoustics, and lighting disciplines.

## Auditorium Design

This is a fascinating field, and very different from stage design. Acoustics and sight lines in theater design are vital and complex. Productions can be made or destroyed by very small design elements of the house.

## Barrier-Free Design

New laws require that new commercial and public buildings, and renovations to existing buildings, make the space accessible to those in wheelchairs. Barrier-free design is increasingly desirable for all spaces. Probably more money has been invested in designing for the physically limited or orthopedically disabled than for any other group. Some interior designers specialize in reviewing products and buildings for this group to ensure that standards are met. This specialty is included in almost every project.

## Bathroom Design

At one time, a neglected and utilitarian room, today the bathroom joins the kitchen as a selling point for houses. Modern bathrooms may include spa-like environments with whirlpool baths, saunas, and hot tubs. Public restrooms and bathrooms for commercial spaces demand state-of-the-art detailing. A new consciousness of human factors has greatly improved asepsis, safety, and the adaptations needed to make the bathroom barrier-free. International bathing customs have had an influence, bringing us the European fixtures, the Oriental soaking tub, saunas, and steam rooms. Environmental concerns have brought new products and codes.

## Beauty and Barber Shop Design

Beauty and barber shops are often mixed-media salons. The designer may be asked to provide appropriate space for services such as waxing, facials, manicures, and cosmetology, in addition to hair care. State regulations and requirements differ. Interior designers in the beauty field often work with or for suppliers, who may offer complete financing and turnkey projects.

## **CAD Specialist**

A designer who is also expert at computer-assisted drafting and drawing is increasingly important today. Computers are instrumental in communicating with other design professionals. Designs created on CAD may be used by the client as a basis for in-house space management. CAD's accuracy and ability to make quick changes is invaluable. This former specialty is a basic tool of most design specialties.

## **Carpet and Rug Design**

Who should know better how to design carpets and rugs than interior designers, who are responsible for a large volume of floorcovering sales? Interior designers working with textile specialists can develop the most suitable rugs for a given situation. Designing handwoven rugs is very different from designing for the technical demands of Axminster, Wilton, tufted, or woven machines. A designer must either study at a textile-intensive school, such as the Philadelphia Textile School, or work extensively in the carpet field.

## **Ceramic Tile Design**

This field encompasses foreign and domestic sources as well as artist-made and mass-produced tiles. Ceramic tiles are used for high-traffic, functional areas as well as decorative effect, including murals and sculptures.

## **Closet Design**

Space is at a premium today, and closet space especially so. Around the country, businesses that do only closets are designing storage components and new ways to store almost every item.

## **Code Safety Design Law Specialist**

This person keeps up-to-date information on building, fire, and safety codes in all states. The specialist designer may consult with other designers, contractors, manufacturers, and owners.

## **Color Consultation**

Color and its effects on people is a recognized science with well-documented results. Color is the most noticed of all the design elements. This specialty is used by all the design disciplines, as well as marketing firms, corporations, governments, and medical practices—anywhere encouraging specific reactions is desired.

## **Commercial Design**

This specialty designs everything except residences. It includes retail, businesses, offices, laboratories, factories, medical facilities, and other commercial space. Most commercial designers specialize further. Within the specialty of design for medicine, there are several subspecialties.



## Computer Office Design

Designing to accommodate computer use is much in demand. Office requirements of computers have changed dramatically since computers first emerged in the workplace. In some ways, the requirements are less rigorous. Specialists in designing offices to accommodate computers usually work for the computer companies, and may travel across the country to explain the requirements and conveniences of combining computer and staff functions.

## Construction Supervision

Designers supervise, manage, and review the components of a project and advise on decision making. Interior designers are often hired to act as liaison between the contractor and client. Sometimes, they are responsible for hiring other consultants and contractors.

## Corporate Campus Design

The designer creates a total environment. The corporate campus promotes efficiency and expresses the mission of the company through design that is tailored to meet the specific needs of that company. Campuses can include administration buildings, training centers, manufacturing or production facilities, and fitness centers. Some demand space that can be leased to support companies.

## Corporate In-House Design

The staff interior designer for a corporation is responsible for maintaining the company's design identity. The designer may initiate and complete the design or hire design consultants on major design projects, as well as act as liaison between outside consultants and the firm.

## Country Club Design

These spaces combine aspects of residential and commercial design. The buildings must conform to area regulations and codes for fire, safety, labor, and industry. They must encourage proprietary feelings among the membership but must also give the staff the tools to run programs with time and financial efficiency. Facilities may include indoor swimming pools, ball courts, gyms, locker rooms, restaurants, and areas for business meetings and socializing.

## Dental Office Design

This is a highly engineered segment of the medical field; the design specialist must have an understanding of the mechanics as well as the antiseptic and medical aspects of the discipline. The dental profession has exerted the effort to develop business management techniques and to improve use of time to make dentistry more efficient and professional. Space design for dental offices is an integral part of the new dentistry.

## **Design for Children**

Environment affects a child's behavior; there is a body of research indicating that what stimulates a child is not what stimulates an adult. Spaces for children must be adaptable, because children change and grow so rapidly. These spaces include every place a child might use: doctors' offices, libraries, schools, and retail spaces, not just bedrooms.

## **Design for In-Home Medical Care**

At one time, patients with chronic, debilitating illnesses were confined to hospital wards, but the trend is toward in-home care. Not only do these patients enjoy the comforts of home, but there is also less risk of acquiring new infections while their immunities are low. This specialty means more than just installing a hospital bed. The residential space must be adapted to meet geriatric, orthopedic, or other medical requirements of both patient and caregivers.

## **Design for Vision and/or Hearing Impairments**

Not every person sees or hears as well as the next. The number of people affected with vision or hearing grows each year in proportion to the aging of the population. More than 60 percent of people in the workforce today have some hearing loss, and probably a much larger percentage have some vision impairment. People are becoming more aware of the problems. There is an increased knowledge of the issues and more technology available to resolve the problems. There are successful applications for every situation—from residences to theaters.

## **Display/Exhibit Design**

Retailers, wholesalers, specialty shops, museums, and all types of public spaces can use display and exhibit design to sell products as well as ideas. These displays may be permanent or built for travel. These exhibits must make an impact but also be easy to set up and take down.

## **Energy Conservation Design**

An energy specialist advises on energy-efficient products and space planning for better use of energy. This may include solar design, adapting existing structures or developing new ones; or it may be simply involve finding new uses for traditional products and appropriate uses for new ones.

## **Ergonomic Design**

Ergonomic design is the science that relates people to the way they use things. It is an engineering science based on the physical needs of the human body. Factors considered are the measurements of the human body, human sensory capacities, comfort, body functions, safety, and emotional satisfaction.

## Facility Management

The person or department responsible for the physical management of the facility coordinates purchasing, repairs, and maintenance. Facility managers plan and act as liaisons between the firm's executives and the consulting designers, architects, and engineers.

## Factory/Production Consulting

This specialty includes traffic control and designing to improve safety and increase productivity. See *Ergonomic Design*.

## Faux Finishes and Stenciling

Faux finishes and stenciling have become a vital and growing decorative element since the '80s. A fine arts or interior design degree is not essential for this type of work, but either help in translating the client's desires into reality. Tools to create faux finishing effects are available at every hardware store and in most hardware departments. Though the books on these subjects are in great quantity, which makes the art understandable and desirable to the general public, most clients would rather hire a specialist than attempt it themselves.

## Feng Shui

The ancient Chinese art of placement is considered the mother of natural sciences. Harmony and balance are the goals. A feng shui practitioner serves in the multiple roles of healer, psychologist, therapist, cleric, business consultant, financial advisor, and matchmaker. The concepts are drawn from Tibetan, Chinese Buddhist, and folk wisdom.

## Forensic Consulting

This specialty was created by the litigious times we live in. When a product is made or used incorrectly, and results in injury or death, a forensic designer may be consulted by attorneys. In addition to expertise in ergonomics and product construction, the designer must also be familiar with court terminology and the correct way to testify. This field requires not only training but a special personality that holds up well under pressure.

## Funeral Home Design

The funeral home must comfort and support people at an emotionally vulnerable time. There are presentation and financial aspects to consider, as well as the appropriate physical supports for heavy objects, and space for behind-the-scenes management.

## Furniture Design

Interior design and industrial design must be blended for good product design. The interior designer knows where the furniture goes and how it is used; the industrial/furniture designer knows construction techniques.

## **Geriatric Design**

As our society grays, design for the mature market gains in recognition as a specialty. Retirement centers, nursing homes, even condominiums are designed to meet the physical, psychological, and cultural needs of older people. It's not a case of just dealing with illness and infirmity; it is acknowledging the pleasures of life and the opportunities still available. Older people are no longer simply old; they act, hence like to be treated, as if they were young.

## **Graphic Design**

These specialists can develop a corporate image or design graphics that define the space or movement of people through public-use facilities. A graphic designer develops the logos and icons that are used on everything from business cards and stationery to Web sites and Web pages.

## **Greenhouse Design**

At one time, greenhouses were simply for plants. Now they are incorporated into residential and commercial spaces that also accommodate people. Depending on the climate, greenhouse design can involve controlling temperature, light, and humidity. Insulating elements and the design atmosphere are other factors. Manufacturers consult interior designers on the design of greenhouse components; some designers have made this their specialty.

## **Hard-Surface Flooring Design**

Designing this flooring product demands a knowledge of color trends, as well as a working knowledge of the properties of wood, ceramics, marble, vinyl, and other appropriate materials. There are so many hard-surfaced floors and flooring products that each of them requires specialists.

## **Hardware Design**

The work of interior and industrial designers enhances the functional and decorative effect of knobs, hinges, and handles—hardware for use in buildings and on furniture. The demand is increasing for beautifully sculptured, handsomely crafted hardware.

## **Health and Fitness Club Design**

Personal fitness became important in the eighties, and health clubs are not just places to exercise, but meeting spots for people with similar goals and interests. Athletic, aerobic, and recreational facilities of all sorts are proliferating. Keeping the facilities safe, convenient, and appropriate to their specific sports is involved enough that some designers have made it their specialty. It has some aspects in common with country club design.

## **Historic Preservation and Adaptive Reuse**

Historic preservation demands technical and scientific knowledge, and an ability and willingness to research small details. What were the colors, materials, and

wallcovering in use when the building was created? What hardware is appropriate? How historically accurate does the client want it to be? Some people want the interiors to be absolutely authentic, and will hide the electricity or do without it. They want everything exactly as it used to be, with no substitutions or modifications. Technology has given us the means to determine what the original colors were (and they are often garish when compared to the more subtle ones we are accustomed to seeing today). We can assign precise dates to furniture. The body of knowledge continues to grow.

## Home Office Design

The home office is a space tailored to the way an individual works. Working with people who have been in the corporate scene for many years and who now want home offices can be exciting. The office may be small, and be incorporated into part of an apartment or bedroom, or it may be larger than any executive office in a corporate building. Quite often, the office contains all the bells and whistles of a commercial space, along with all the comforts of home, plus a few indulgences as well.

## Hospital Design

Today, some areas in a hospital have such complex technical requirements that hospital designers with a particular specialty have international practices. Specialties proliferate. Some designers do only emergency rooms and intensive care units, others design patient and visitor areas, and some designers combine both. Hospitals are changing dramatically and quickly to support new systems of medicine, causing hospital designers to put aside most of their traditional systems and work with System Technology, a new and very demanding set of guidelines. Fortunately, as a result, hospitals are much more user-friendly. Insurance and legal requirements, along with cost-effectiveness, place demands and constraints on the design. It is highly unlikely that a specialist in hospital design would also work on a nursing home project; the demands are very different.

## Hospitality Design

This practice can range from the bed-and-breakfast to a large conference center, and some of the latter are practically cities in themselves. This field encompasses luxury spaces for community and celebration, as well as functional accommodations. Designers may specialize in restaurant dining halls, training centers and convention spaces, guest rooms, lobbies, and corridors.

## Interior Landscaping

Plants add a natural quality to even the most static environment. This field requires knowledge of landscaping and botany in order to place plants where they are suitable. It may include contracting to provide maintenance, and design changes for seasonal updates and plant health. While greenhouses are primarily to keep plants healthy and growing, interior plantscaping is an increasingly important component of a building's atmosphere. Design factors include temperature, light, and humidity control.

## **Journalism**

Through writing, designers can expand the design field, making our work more understandable to people inside and outside the field. Designers can educate through columns and articles on design for newspapers and magazines, and more recently, on television as well. Writing is a special skill, as is the ability to relate on camera. Some people with design education have chosen design journalism, but only after intensive efforts to learn these additional skills. If these skills do not come easily, designers who need to produce books and articles would do well to collaborate with a writer. It may be a more effective use of their time.

## **Kennel Design**

In the competitive world of breeding pedigreed pets, space design for each species is a serious business. You must understand animals and their needs. In kennels, there are areas for grooming and training, food preparation and nutrition, as well as testing. Maintenance and health care are a prime concern.

## **Kitchen Design**

The kitchen is often one of the most expensive parts of the house. Some equipment is unabashedly new. There are also historic designs infused with new technology. Scientific and artistic detail go into the design and planning of components for residential and personal-use kitchens. The designer must have a complete knowledge of currently available products as well as the dietary requirements of the users.

## **Law Office Design**

Law offices have many features in common with residences. A designer who is skilled in residential work will be excellent at doing this. Image, cost, and work efficiency have become important here. An environment that supports legal professionals and visiting clients and consultants provides visual and acoustical privacy. Law offices now incorporate highly technical equipment, as well as areas for specialized personal interaction.

## **Library Design**

Libraries are individual and specialized, catering to local needs. A library in a county seat will be different from one on Wall Street. Libraries need space planning and marketing, with special attention to lighting and acoustics. Many libraries have exhibit areas or function rooms. They are true multimedia environments, lending books, videocassettes, art, and music. Electrical demands have increased greatly with the advent of computers, which are used for card catalogs, periodical indexes, and subject-dedicated databases. Spaces for extensive personal libraries are enjoying a comeback. Personal libraries are no longer just for English country homes.

## **Licensing**

Many designers license their names to a product line. The designer can style or develop the product or merely endorse it. This is a growing field, encompassing

wallcoverings, upholstery textiles, bed linens, tabletop china, and just about everything that can be used in interior spaces. Today, very fine designers design for inexpensive merchandise. Licensing fees are based on volume, and work on easily available consumer goods becomes very lucrative. Although some licensors are used principally for their names, most designers contribute to the design of products for widely divergent markets.

## **Lighting Design**

Lighting is a strong and important element, used for design, drama, ecology, and, of course, for function. Scale, structure, engineering, and a knowledge of the end use are critical components of good fixture design, as are the technical requirements and codes for specific projects.

## **Lighting Fixture Design**

In any space, the human eye goes to the windows and to the lighting fixtures. Scale, structure, engineering, and a knowledge of the end use are critical components of good fixture design.

## **Liturgical Design**

Churches and synagogues are not just monuments, but living centers that actively serve the community. Some offer recreation areas for children. These buildings are used for social events, theater productions, educational lectures, and community activities. Of course, each religion has its own design requirements; the designer must know and understand the liturgy.

## **Manufacturer In-House Design**

Manufacturers have staff designers who work not on design but on merchandising. In order to promote sales, many contract office furniture manufacturers offer interior design services at little or no cost to the end user. Designers, especially interior designers, work directly for manufacturers to help align products to the needs of today's design public.

## **Manufacturer Representation**

This sales position is the link between manufacturer and interior designer. Some of the best manufacturers' representatives are former interior designers or dealers. They understand the product, they know how to sell it, and they appreciate what interior designers want. Within assigned territories, manufacturers' reps call on designers, providing catalogs, assisting in specification preparation, and writing purchase orders.

## **Marine Design**

This specialty requires extensive knowledge of fire codes, marine standards and regulations, weights, and materials. Many products must be made specifically for

marine use. Marine design encompasses all sizes of ships and boats, from working boats to cruise liners the size and complexity of small villages. The design demands range from stripped-down, where every inch must have more than one use, to extravagant, with swimming pools, shops, ballrooms, and health spas. The designer deals with physical, psychological, and ergonomic issues as well. There are fewer restrictions—sometimes none at all—on smaller craft for personal use.

### **Marketing Specialist**

This person develops and positions design firms with appropriate clients. Some designers are better at design work than selling, so the need for and value of this specialist is well recognized and compensated.

### **Medical Center Design**

Hospitals, clinics, rehabilitative care centers, and nursing homes have requirements so specific and technologically complex that only a specialist could keep up with the constant changes in standards, codes, and equipment. The specialty includes emergency rooms, intensive care units, lobbies, and administrative support. Today, examples of special needs campuses are: a medical complex dedicated to heart care, another to birthing and women's care, another to orthopedics. Hospitals in many cities are being redesigned. Some doctors are designing centers to fit their own specialties. The medical field is changing so rapidly that some facilities are not even completed before major changes must be made. Outpatient care has expanded so dramatically that it has changed the profile of every medical institution. Medicine is advancing dramatically, so we can look forward to much more work in this area.

### **Medical Office Design**

Every medical specialty requires special equipment, as well as appropriate space planning, traffic patterns, and storage management. Today's specialties use such an intensive array of high-tech equipment that offices require total replanning every few years. A complete understanding of the medical procedures and equipment, legal aspects, codes, and aseptic demands is needed.

### **Modular Prefabricated Design**

This area of the building industry is rapidly growing. It is cost-effective to build standard components in a factory-controlled situation. A high level of quality with skilled engineering, can be accomplished by prefabricated design. Understanding requirements of building and delivery is critical. It's not just price, but quality that's relevant here. You can construct a much better product under controlled conditions. Factory-built housing or modular complexes for other purposes also come with guarantees, something not available in on-site construction. Modular prefab construction is usually most practical when you are building a hundred or more similar units. The designer creates a standard, builds a sample, checks all the details, confirms with the client, and analyzes the finished product. When all has been approved, several hundred units are built. These units ship well over water, which can be a construction advantage when placing large complexes on deserted islands where you have very few construction trades.



## Model Home Furnishing

Model home furnishing may be handled by an independent designer, who may also specify the architectural details of the interior to be purchased and installed by another contractor, or by companies dedicated to furnishing model homes. There are also companies who will grant all of the furniture, accessories, and appointments to the builder for his or her use for several months or a year. At the end of that time, they retrieve the furniture to reuse in another project.

Model home design can be a promotion tool for design firms. In some areas, interior designers pay contractors or developers for the privilege of working on their models. The work may encompass all the interior architectural details, lighting, fixture specifications, and hard and soft furnishings. The furnishings are often sold with the home. In other instances, contractors consider this same work part of the presentation of the home, and will hire designers, and/or lease furnishings.

## Mural Painting

A number of mural artists are interior designers with fine arts backgrounds. They first paint a miniature for the client, then execute the full-size product on canvas or directly on the wall. This art form has become very prominent. Demand is increasing for this, and spills over to create a new specialty, that of hand-painted walls.

## Museum Design

At one time, only people with backgrounds in history or art history worked in museums. However, museums today have many opportunities for interior designers, to design exhibits, promotions, and community projects. Since preservation of artifacts is as important as the display, understanding the effects of humidity and lighting on artifacts is important. Interior designers may work directly for the museums or be employed by consulting firms that specialize in museum work.

## Nursing Home Design

As the levels of health care change, so do the codes, systems, regulations, and requirements. Nursing homes now cater not just to senior citizens but to young people who have short-term needs—people who live alone or have no one to care for them, but who require care for a limited time. Things to consider in any design of nursing or convalescent homes include the probable length of the stay and the special equipment that patient will need. Changes in medicine make many facilities obsolete before they are five years old, so it is important to plan for change.

## Office Design

While commercial and home offices have elements in common, the home office is usually for one or two people. Commercial office design requires knowledge of high-tech equipment, as well as an understanding of management and office production. The term “commercial office” today may still suggest open-plan offices; however, companies vary, hence need different types of design. In general, these spaces are designed for large groups of people working together in a cooperative

and productive fashion. The space must accommodate many different disciplines with varying needs.

## **Park Design**

Amusement parks, municipal, and other parks need safety, effective traffic patterns, management systems, and efficiency. Designers may be called on to develop unique signage, to design fixtures or the service areas: food service, restrooms, souvenir shops. Some designers work only on theme parks. The emphasis is to get people to come back often, especially if the park is for-profit. Parks are also hubs for many other environments, such as residential complexes, or campuses for education, medicine or business.

## **Passenger Train and Bus Design**

The interiors of passenger trains and buses must be designed for the comfort and safety of the traveler. They also need to be made attractive.

## **Party and Ball Design**

Designers organize and orchestrate parties and balls for corporations, charities, and other organizations. Entertainment and celebration requires an appropriate atmosphere. It is not enough just to put people into a ballroom for so many hours; they want fantasies brought to life. The competition among charities is intense. The donors have been in every hotel many times. If you cannot show them something different, they are not interested.

## **Photographic Set Design**

This specialty works with manufacturers and advertising agencies to create settings designed to sell products. They maintain an inventory of props and backgrounds, spend weeks creating and building a set, then tear it down immediately after photographing it. Successful photographic set design requires an understanding of what photographs well and what does not, as well as what can be faked.

## **Photography Stylist**

Designers work with photographers to make interior spaces work better in photographs. This involves moving furniture to show the room to advantage, and accessorizing the space. Very few interior designers and architects understand how to stage their own work for good photography.

## **Plumbing Fixture Design**

To design sinks, lavatories, bathtubs, and spas, the designer must have training and a special interest in sculpture. Sometimes the specialist will be asked to re-color or redesign an existing line, but more often, the project means creating new forms. Fixtures manufacturers may revive the shapes of antique items or items

from the Orient, reworking them to meet today's plumbing standards. The day of strictly utilitarian bathroom fixtures is gone.

### **Prison Design**

State and local governments are turning to private companies to help in constructing prisons, which are then leased back to the government. Some organizations, such as Volunteers of America, actually operate the prisons. Prison design is a specialty in the midst of change. Social scientists suggest that new prisons should not just house prisoners but also help to rehabilitate them.

### **Product Design**

Opportunities in the field of product design are as numerous as the products themselves. Designers can make vital contributions in helping manufacturers find and develop products that are wanted, function well, and suit the environments they will be used in. Designers have a hand in almost every product available today.

### **Product Display**

Interior designers have traditionally designed store windows and product displays. Never has it been brought to so refined an art form as recently. This strong effort in merchandising often permits unlimited budgets, which encourage a free range of ideas.

### **Product Evaluation**

Hiring designers to evaluate products for design quality, practicality, and marketability is a sound investment for manufacturers.

### **Product Marketing**

Interior designers are well qualified to assist in product design development, as a complement to the manufacturer's design staff. Consulting interior designers can help maintain a firm's position in the marketplace. Interior designers assist with marketing products by developing ways to use the product.

### **Professional or Promotional Organizations**

Trade and professional organizations and product promotion organizations often hire interior designers as spokespersons or interpreters to build links between the product group and the designer or client. The designers' skill in organization and promotion can strengthen the organization. Designers understand the needs of the end user as well as the multitude of design disciplines involved in the manufacturing process.

### **Project Management**

This can be as simple as handling interior design development for one's own firm or as complex as running a project under a turnkey proposition. It requires complete understanding of various crafts.

## **Psychiatric Care Facility Design**

While many codes are the same as for other medical facilities, the form of therapy determines the design response. Use, practicality, and ease of maintenance are prime concerns.

## **Public Relations**

Interior designers with strong communications skills may choose to draw media attention to the work of other designers rather than to run a design practice of their own. Some act as liaison between manufacturer, designer, and end user.

## **Purchasing**

The designer may act as a purchasing agent for large companies, reviewing and testing products, then negotiating and ordering the furnishings. Purchasing agents or procurement companies can get better prices for the individual design firms that use them than those firms could get on their own.

## **Real Estate Development**

A knowledge of space, its uses, and its potential for change has given many interior designers an edge in real estate sales and development. Some designers assist developers by restructuring and designing buildings for turnkey or development projects. In some states, interior designers will need Realtor's licenses in order to be recognized and compensated for their contributions. In others, interior designers are part real estate development firm.

## **Real Estate Upgrading**

Build a better home, please the client, and sell: These are the objectives in design upgrading for luxury development homes. Many experienced designers have moved into this specialty: There is opportunity for creative design, and it pays very well.

## **Rendering**

CAD can do a lot, but there is nothing like a beautiful hand rendering. Rendering is a special art, requiring knowledge of graphics, fine art, and design. A good presentation is vital: Many design firms, even small ones, hire good renderers, either staff or freelance. Fees can run into the thousands of dollars.

## **Residential Design**

At one time, the most prevalent design specialty, residential design also can be the most lucrative. It requires a knowledge of human behavior within living spaces, an understanding of and ability to communicate with people, and respect for the client. Generally, people hire residential designers whose tastes and communications skills are similar to their own.

## Restaurant Design

There is room for design in every restaurant, from the fast food stands in malls to local eateries to establishments for gracious dining. Knowledge of all design disciplines as well as food management is essential.

## Restaurant Kitchen Design

This requires a knowledge of kitchen equipment and the know-how to adapt it to the preferences of individual restaurateurs. Kitchen specialists work as independents or for equipment suppliers. Kitchens for country clubs, educational facilities, and large commercial restaurants are typical projects.

## Retail and Specialty Selling

Selling is part of every design practice. Some designers have found it more lucrative to own, manage, or work for retail and specialty stores. Designers are good salespeople, especially in design-related areas, because they understand how to use a product. The best salespeople are consultants who show clients how to use a given product. Interior designers may help develop a product mix for a specific store; this often means creating a design package to be sold by other people. It also can mean working with a group of artists to market their work.

## Retail Store Design

This popular specialty requires skill in image development, marketing, traffic patterns, and security and concern for financial return on space. Custom fixturing is often part of the design. The designer may be customizing local spaces for national chains or working with individual store owners.

## Security Systems Design

Everyone cares about security, either for personal safety or as theft prevention. Safety and security have also become increasingly vital to all spaces, from commercial to residential. Schools and courthouses are being retrofitted with cameras, metal detectors, and other devices. A security consultant is now part of the basic design team for any public building.

## Set Design

Many interior designers started in set design; others expanded their practices to include set design. Although it is a unionized profession, there are still some opportunities. Set design for movies, theater, dance, and opera is a different world. You build for show, not to last. You design everything to be seen from a certain perspective. The size and design of the theater—whether it is a proscenium or a theater-in-the-round—affects the placement of furniture and props. The director's vision of the production is critical to the choice of furnishings.

## Shop-at-Home Services

If you can show the client a product sample in his or her space, very often you can sell it. There are extremely successful firms that specialize in shop-at-home ser-

vice. Some stock a van or truck with a coordinated line of pictures, accessories, pillows, and draperies. They distribute their products to representatives or franchise owners.

## **Shopping Mall Design**

This is large-scale marketing. Each store in a mall must contribute to the total mall concept, which ranges from discount to luxury. Each mall promotes a different lifestyle or environment. Designers may work directly for the mall owners to coordinate all mall activities and designs. They also work with individual retailers and in the common areas. The mall of today must allow space for entertainment and other activities. It must be an experience in itself, not just a place to shop.

## **Showroom Design**

In Manhattan, Rome, Paris, London, and every small city in the country, showroom designs and presentations account for an amazingly high dollar figure. The primary job of the showroom is to sell a product. Whether the showroom is beautiful is a question of taste, but whether it works and produces can be measured.

## **Spaceship and Rocket Design**

This is the ultimate challenge in ergonomic design—every inch must count. Many consumer products have been developed as a result of studies done for spaceship design.

## **Solar Design**

Design for solar buildings is not just solar collection but a matter of coordinating solar and environmental concerns with human needs. Energy efficiency, sun control, sunlight-resistant materials, and insulation are key.

## **Stadium and Arena Design**

While architects and engineers are most often involved with shaping the space, interior designers are consulted on public areas, service areas, and even choice of seating. This specialty has aspects in common with theater and store design. Safety and security are also prime concerns.

## **Storage Design**

Planned storage is an essential design element. Storage specialists catalog the clients' storables, then plan for growth. Custom storage can range from making tiny drawers to accommodate contact lenses to developing automated filing areas for offices. Good storage means placing things in convenient locations near where they will be used, and putting lesser-used items in less accessible places.

## **Tabletop Display Design**

Restaurants and department and specialty stores use tabletop display to sell food and tabletop products. Clients today expect both drama and practicality.

## Teleconference Center Design

Teleconference centers exist not only in large corporations but also in community centers and occasionally in apartment complexes. This discipline may specify the shape of the room, lighting, choice and placement of furnishings, and even the teleconference equipment. Sight lines, light and sound control, and audibility are prime concerns.

## Tenant Development Services

Interior designers work with landlords and developers to coordinate interior spaces for homes, apartments, and commercial offices. They may devise color schemes and layouts or may only ensure that the work of other designers coordinates with what exists in the building.

## Textile Design

Interior designers with special knowledge of textiles design rugs, fabrics, and wall-coverings. This combined discipline creates products that are appropriate, distinctive, and easy to use.

## Training Center Design

Education takes place in more places than schools. Corporate training centers are found in office buildings; smaller firms use hotel meeting rooms or convention centers. Special demands include adaptable lighting, to accommodate audiovisual equipment, and attention to acoustics and sight lines.

## Transit Center Design

Airports and train and bus terminals have become almost total living environments for some people. Interior designers are called on to entertain people, enhance people-movement, and accommodate their needs with airport shops, small conference areas, VIP clubs, and cocktail lounges. There is not much one cannot do in transit centers these days, from banking to seeing a podiatrist to hiring a secretary. Transit centers have become like cities in the range of services they offer the daily commuter, as well as the person who may have a layover of many hours. Chicago's O'Hare airport has a laser show. Some centers offer college courses; others have educational displays. There is usually a church or chapel.

## Turnkey Services

A turnkey design service does everything from securing the property and designing and building the facility to installing furnishings and finishing to the finest detail. All the client needs to do is turn the key and open the door.

## Underground Habitation

Because the temperature underground is a constant 55 degrees Fahrenheit, underground space has become a practical and appropriate area for living and work-

ing. Computer centers, for example, are located underground. This field is relatively underdeveloped.

### **Vacation Home Design**

Second homes are big business, but they often must be designed as turnkey projects because the clients are involved elsewhere. This market is growing. For some clients, the vacation home is a place to indulge in an opulence they would not feel comfortable expressing in other parts of their lives.

### **Wallcovering Design**

Many interior designers design wallcoverings, drawing on their expertise with color, pattern direction, and scale. The field demands production and design expertise as well as an understanding of current trends.

### **Wall Finishes**

Marbling, fresco, and textured finishes—some of which have not been seen for centuries—are again in demand. This specialty is no longer limited to historic restoration work; commercial and residential clients also request novel wall finishes.

### **Wayfinding**

Wayfinding involves signage, but it also involves many other parts of the interior design discipline. It means designing a space, building, or complex that is easy for people to move around in. Finding one's way becomes natural, not complicated or confusing. This specialty first became popular in hospitals, but is now relevant to almost every large complex. People want to be able to find the things they're interested in easily, whether on a campus, in a conference center or hotel, or in any other complex.

### **Window Treatment Design**

Draperies, shades, louver drapes, valances, cornices, and a broad spectrum of other treatments make up this specialty. Insulation, ventilation, light control, and energy conservation are all part of today's window treatment design.



## **FINDING YOUR PLACE**

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With a plan, effort, and research, everyone has a reasonable chance to find his or her career niche—whether that means general practice, specialized work, or working independently or in a firm.

Using this book, you will learn virtually everything you need to know to design your successful independent career. That said, I admit that I have a bias about starting to work independently too soon: It can be very risky, and for that reason I strongly discourage it. If you want to give yourself the best chance for success in your career, find someone whose work you admire. Find a mentor and learn