

A GUIDE TO CAREERS IN DESIGN

> Becoming an

INTERIOR DESIGNER

SECOND EDITION

Christine M. Piotrowski, FASID, IIDA

Table of Contents

Title Page

Copyright

Dedication

Preface

Acknowledgments

Chapter 1: An Introduction to the Interior Design Profession

What Do Interior Designers Do?

Is Interior Design for You?

History

Sustainable Design

Professional Associations

Interior Design Registration and Licensing

Chapter 2: Educational Preparation

High School Preparation

Choosing an Educational Program

Four-Year Educational Preparation

The Importance of Internships
Two-Year Associate Degree
Postgraduate Education in Interior
Design
NCIDQ Examination
Continuing Education

Chapter 3: Where the Jobs Are
Career Decisions
Independent Design Firms
Architectural Offices
Furniture Retailers
Office Furnishings Dealers
Interior Design on a Global Stage
Facility Planning and Design
Sole Practitioner Work
Environments
Job-Seeking Tools

Chapter 4: Design Specialties
Residential Design
Aging in Place
Commercial
Sustainable Design
Corporate and Professional Offices

Hospitality
Entertainment and Recreation
Retail Facilities
Healthcare
Senior Living
Institutional
Restoration and Adaptive Use
Related Career Options

Chapter 5: The Design Process

Project Development
Programming
Schematic Design
Design Development
Contract Documents
Contract Administration
Project Management
Working Relationships

Chapter 6 Interior Design as a Business

Business Formations
Marketing Methods
Contracts
Interior Design Revenue

Legal Issues

Chapter 7: The Future

Interior Design Resources

***CIDA-Accredited Interior Design
Programs in the United States and
Canada***

Interior Design References

Interior Designers

Index

➤ Becoming an INTERIOR DESIGNER

A Guide to Careers in Design

Second Edition

CHRISTINE M. PIOTROWSKI, FASID, IIDA



WILEY

John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.∞

Copyright © 2009 by Christine M. Piotrowski. All rights reserved.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Published simultaneously in Canada.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 646-8600, or on the web at www.copyright.com. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at www.wiley.com/go/permissions.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and the author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales

representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

For general information about our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the United States at (800) 762-2974, outside the United States at (317) 572-3993 or fax (317) 572-4002.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books. For more information about Wiley products, visit our Web site at www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Piotrowski, Christine M., 1947-

Becoming an interior designer: a guide to careers in design / Christine Piotrowski.—2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index. ISBN 978-0-470-11423-0 (pbk.)

1. Interior decoration—Vocational guidance. I. Title.
NK2116.P56 2009

747.092—dc22

2008018564

DISCLAIMER

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher and the author are not engaged in rendering professional services. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

All photographs, documents, and forms are proprietary to the organization, design firm, designer, or author. None of the figures in this text may be reproduced without the expressed written permission of the appropriate copyright holder.

*To Martha and Casmier, looking down from above.
With love, Christine*

*A truly committed decision is the force that changes
your life.*

ANONYMOUS

Preface

The profession of interior design has received a lot of media attention over the years. Network television has portrayed interior designers as characters in major shows and featured them as experts on cable's various home decorating programs. Movies have even included interior designers or decorators as part of the cast. You have no doubt looked at one or more of the magazines related to interior design on the newsstands. The media attention, of course, doesn't necessarily help someone learn all that is involved in pursuing this profession.

This book is about the profession of interior design and the professional interior designer. If you are a student in high school or a postsecondary student who is considering interior design as a career, this book helps you understand what the profession entails. Maybe you have lost interest in your current career and are looking for a way to express your creative side. This book can assist you in understanding how interior design may help you achieve that goal. It will not, however, explain how to establish a practice or actually teach you how to do interior design.

The interior design profession has two broad segments of specialization. Residential interior design, primarily the design of private residences, is the area most familiar to the public. Commercial interior design is the other large segment of the

profession. This specialty involves the interior design of businesses such as offices, hotels, stores, restaurants—even airports, sports stadiums, and prisons. Within each of these broad areas, designers might focus on one or more subareas—condominiums and retail stores, for example.

The profession has changed significantly over the last 45 years or so. Here are just some of the ways in which it is different: building and safety codes are emphasized; sustainable design in both residential and commercial interior design has gained importance; the growing complexity of projects and the design process means interior designers must be better educated and trained; licensing and legal responsibilities focus added attention on project management and contract administration; and the aging population has brought an increased awareness of the design of spaces for seniors.

These challenges and others have brought about critical changes in the profession through greater educational preparation, increased technical skills, broader knowledge requirements, and the measurement of professional competency via testing. Thus, today's professional interior designer works in a profession raised to a higher level than that of the stereotypical decorator. Interior design in the 21st century is much more than selecting colors and arranging furniture.

Helping you understand this exciting creative profession and career is the purpose of this second edition. This award-winning book has been revised

and updated to include new information on sustainable design, aging in place, and interior design on the global stage, as well as other topics and comments from dozens of additional practitioners at many levels in their career. Numerous new designer profiles with examples of their project work have been added throughout the book.

Additional highlights to the second edition begin in Chapter 1, which provides an overview of the profession of interior design with a brief look at its history and such considerations as licensing, and other general topics. A new section discusses the role of interior designers and poses the question “What do interior designers do?” to dozens of practitioners. Chapter 2 describes the educational requirements of interior designers. A section has been added concerning high school preparation to help younger potential practitioners understand what can be done at that level. Chapter 3 looks at the various environments in which interior designers work. For example, some designers work by themselves from home offices, while others work as team members in large design firms—and everything in between. Note that all the information on job seeking such as résumés and portfolios has been moved to this chapter. Chapter 4 offers insights into the opportunities for various specializations in the field through interviews with practitioners currently working in them. This chapter also includes additional information and comments from designers about the importance of sustainable design and design for

seniors. Chapter 5 describes the activities that occur between the inception of a project and its completion. It also discusses working relationships with allied professionals and the project management process. Chapter 6 presents an overview of the business side of the profession. This chapter briefly discusses how interior designers find clients through marketing activities, the importance of contracts in defining proposed services, and how interior designers earn revenue. Chapter 7 is a compilation of comments from practitioners on what they feel is the future of the interior design profession.

Indeed, I think you will find what practitioners have to say interesting and exciting. Included are quotes and commentaries by nearly 100 professionals who are practicing interior design or have been involved in this exciting profession in other ways. Interior designers in many specialties and career stages have provided insights to help you discover what this profession is like. Their responses to questions and points of view comprise a special feature found within and at the end of each chapter. This feature is unique among career books and will help you understand what interior design is like from people doing professional work every day.

The initials that follow the names of many interior designers represent the appellations of professional organizations and are included because attaining professional association membership is an important milestone for professional interior designers, as it is

with any design professional. The following list provides a key to identifying these organizations:

AIA—American Institute of Architects

ARIDO—Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario

ASID—American Society of Interior Designers

CAPS—Certified Aging in Place Specialist

CID—Certified Interior Designer

CMG—Color Marketing Group

IDC—Interior Designers of Canada

IDEC—Interior Design Educators Council

IES—Illuminating Engineers Society

IFDA—International Furnishings and Design Association

IFMA—International Facility Management Association

IIDA—International Interior Design Association

ISP—Institute of Store Planners

LEED-AP—Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design—Accredited Professional

NCARB—National Council of Architectural Registration Boards

NKBA—National Kitchen and Bath Association

RIBA—Royal Institute of British Architects

RID—Registered Interior Designer USGBC—United States Green Building Council

If an appellation begins with *F*, as in FASID, the member has earned a fellowship, which is the highest

national honor of his or her association. Also note that some designers are required to place their state code before the CID or RID designations. An example is KYCID for Kentucky Certified Interior Designer.

Updated selected references in “Interior Design References” at the end of the book provide further reading on the topics covered in this book. “Interior Designers” in these back pages provides contact information for the various professional organizations and designers mentioned in the text.

I hope you will find this second edition of *Becoming an Interior Designer* a valuable source for learning about the exciting career of professional interior designer. This creative, multidisciplinary profession is a satisfying way to express your talent while providing functional and aesthetic solutions to a client's projects. Because the field offers so many avenues of work, you can find a niche that is stimulating and satisfying to you as it has been for the thousands who have come before you. These are exciting times for the interior design profession. I welcome you to it!

—Christine M. Piotrowski, FASID, IIDA

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the many interior designers, educators, and other design professionals who have contributed material to this book. Many of them I have known for many years. They graciously shared their insights, experiences, and passions about the profession as well as their project photos and drawings for this book. All these professionals are listed at the back of the book under “Interior Designers.”

I also want to thank several people at John Wiley & Sons for their assistance and guidance. Of course, special thanks go to my editor, John Czarnecki, for patiently seeing this book to completion. I want to acknowledge Raheli Millman and Sadie Abuhoff for their assistance on the second edition and Lauren Olesky for her assistance on the first. Lastly, I want to thank my long-time friend Amanda Miller for encouraging me to do this book in the first place.

Chapter 1

An Introduction to the Interior Design Profession

We spend over 90 percent of our day in interior spaces. Despite this, most people take interiors for granted, barely noticing the furniture, colors, textures, and other elements—let alone the form of the space—of which they are made. Sometimes, of course, the design of the interior does catch our attention. Maybe it's the pulsing excitement of a casino, the rich paneling of an expensive restaurant, or the soothing background of a religious facility.

As you are reading this book, you obviously have an interest in interiors and interior design. It might be because you have always enjoyed rearranging the furniture in your home. Maybe you like to draw imaginative floor plans for houses. It could be that a relative or friend is a contractor and you have been involved in the actual construction of a building in some way. Perhaps you saw a program on television and it inspired you to learn more about the profession.

The interior design profession is a lot more than what you see portrayed on various television programs. The profession of interior design has been defined by educators and professionals. This widely

accepted definition is provided to help you understand what the profession is all about:

Interior design is a multi-faceted profession in which creative and technical solutions are applied within a structure to achieve a built interior environment. These solutions are functional, enhance the quality of life and culture of the occupants, and are aesthetically attractive. Designs are created in response to and coordinated with the building shell, and acknowledge the physical location and social context of the project. Designs must adhere to code and regulatory requirements and encourage the principles of environmental sustainability. The interior design process follows a systematic and coordinated methodology, including research, analysis and integration of knowledge into the creative process, whereby the needs and resources of the client are satisfied to produce an interior space that fulfills the project goals.¹

Professional interior designers are not interior decorators and interior decorators are not professional interior designers, although the public generally does not see any difference. "Interior design is *not* the same as decoration. Decoration is the furnishing or adorning a space with fashionable or beautiful things. Decoration, although a valuable and important element of an interior, is not solely concerned with human interaction or human behavior. Interior design is *all* about human behavior and human interaction."²

Although a professional interior designer might provide interior decoration services, an interior decorator does not have the education and experience to perform the many other services of a professional interior designer. A decorator is primarily concerned with the aesthetic embellishment of the interior and rarely has the expertise, for example, to produce the necessary drawings for the construction of nonload-bearing walls and certain mechanical systems that are routinely produced by a professional interior designer.

What Do Interior Designers Do?

Interior design professionals provide the owners of homes and many kinds of businesses with functionally successful and aesthetically attractive interior spaces. An interior designer might specialize in working with private residences or with commercial interiors such as hotels, hospitals, retail stores, offices, and dozens of other private and public facilities. In many ways, the interior design profession benefits society by focusing on how space—and interior environment—should look and function.

The professional interior designer uses his or her educational preparation and training to consider how the design affects the health, safety, and welfare of occupants. Many projects today include careful consideration of sustainable design in the selection of furniture and materials used in the interior. Planning the arrangement of partition walls, selection of

furniture, and specifying aesthetic embellishments for the space are all tasks the designer uses to bring the interior to life. A set of functional and aesthetic requirements expressed by the client becomes reality.

In planning a residence or any type of commercial interior, the professional interior designer engages in many tasks using a wide variety of skills and knowledge gained through education and practice. The professional interior designer must consider building and life safety codes, address environmental issues, and understand the basic construction and mechanical systems of buildings.

He or she must effectively communicate design concepts through precisely scaled drawings and other documents used in the industry. Another critical responsibility concerns how to manage all the tasks that must be accomplished to complete a project as large as a 1,000-room casino hotel or as small as someone's home. The interior designer must also have the business skills to complete projects within budget for the client while making a profit for the design firm. And, of course, the interior designer selects colors, materials, and products so that what is supposed to actually occur in the spaces can.

This book helps you see clearly what the profession is about and what the real work of interior designers is like in the 21st century. It includes comments from professional interior designers in many specialties, sizes of companies, and areas of the country. These responses are presented to help you get an idea of

what working professionals think about the profession. I posed the question “What do interior designers do?” to many of the designers whose work or other comments are in this book. “Problem solving” is a common response, but many other tasks and responsibilities are also mentioned.

What Do Interior Designers Do?

› Residential interior designers support their clients in realizing their dreams and creating a home for their family and friends. We research, design, document, and specify the interior architectural finishes, millwork, plumbing, lighting, cabinetry, and interior design details and work closely with the project team (client, architect, and contractor) to implement them. Second, we bring together the complete vision for the project through the design, research, and implementation of the interior furnishings—from all the furniture to the artwork and accessories.

Annette Stelmack, Allied Member ASID

› Create environments that support the human condition in whatever activities it chooses, including living, sleeping, working, playing, eating, shopping, healing, or praying. These environments must be safe, accessible, sustainable, and, in many cases, beautiful. But, most importantly they must be functional for the person(s) inhabiting them.

Lisa Whited, IIDA, ASID, Maine Certified Designer

› Interior designers create interior environments that are functional, aesthetically pleasing, and enhance the quality of life and culture of the users of the space. In doing so, they have an obligation to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

Jan Bast, FASID, IIDA, IDEC

› We influence life patterns by creating healthy and safe environments.

Patricia McLaughlin, ASID, RID

› Interior designers solve problems. Our clients come to us with questions, wants, and needs and through design development we answer those questions and provide solutions for those wants and needs—all while protecting the health, welfare, and safety of the public through our knowledge of local and national building codes.

Kristin King, ASID

› Interior designers plan and design interior spaces. Interior designers understand how people move through, live and work in, and experience interior space. We consider the specific experiences and functions the space or project must support from the point of view of the user. Our unique understanding of psychological and human factors as well as formal design principles, materials, codes and regulations, and the means and methods of construction inform our diagnosis of user needs and the development of design concepts.

Beth Harmon-Vaughn, FIIDA, Associate, AIA, LEED-AP

› They use their creative skills and expertise to create spaces that improve people's environments and make life better. More pragmatically, interior designers gather and analyze information, produce drawings, manage consultant teams, and oversee construction projects.

David Hanson, IDC, RID, IIDA

Private residence: kitchen remodel. Sally Howard D'Angelo, ASID, S. H. Designs, Windham, New Hampshire.

PHOTOGRAPH: BILL FISH



› Good question. Interior design is sometimes described as problem solving, but our work is really focused on helping our clients prepare for a future they can imagine but not fully predict. We develop an image that transforms their vision to reality. The vision is from the client's thoughts and business goals.

We take our client's ideas, expressed in business terms, and give them form, make them reality. That reality is something they could have never imagined themselves and when it is right and becomes their vision, we have succeeded with the magic of design. To do so, designers have to understand their aspirations, not merely their needs.

Rita Carson Guest, FASID

› Interior designers are problem solvers who must be able to develop a design that fits the client's criteria and budgets. They must be able to take that design concept and make it reality by preparing the necessary drawings, renderings, details, construction documents, specifications, budgets along with the most important part, which is creativity and visualization. They also must be very strong in communication and, most important, in being listeners.

Lisa Slayman, ASID, IIDA

› Depending upon the project, interior designers investigate existing conditions; research work habits and management philosophies; incorporate work and life culture of space users or clients; explore potential solutions that meet functional and aesthetic goals; conform to code and legal constraints; prepare graphic and written materials that communicate the solutions to a wide variety of people—clients, lenders, committees, other design professionals, code officials, and the building industry; and continue building their knowledge.

Katherine Ankerson, IDEC, NCARB Certified

› An interior designer serves many roles. A designer is a mentor to clients and others in the profession. We serve as project managers coordinating many trades and making sure that not only we are doing our job correctly, but that others are as well. We inspire interiors as well as lives with our work. Sometimes we do the dirty work that no one else wants to do, but in the end the smile on a client's face and the satisfaction that comes from a completed project makes all the project's challenges worth the time and effort.

Shannon Ferguson, IIDA

› We are professionals that offer our clients creative solutions in order for the spaces in which they live, work, play, and heal to function better and be more aesthetically pleasing.

Robert Wright, FASID

› We do everything for a space: we think through how the space functions based on who is occupying that particular space, how they are going to live there, work there, and function, and design around those parameters. We coordinate colors, furnishings, fabrics, and everything that goes into the environment.

Laurie Smith, ASID

› Interior designers design and create interior spaces, whether residential, commercial, or hospitality. The role of the interior designer is to understand the client's vision and goals for the project and interpret them in the design.

Trisha Wilson, ASID

› Good designers provide problem resolution through good design.

Patricia Rowen, ASID, CAPS

› Every decision an interior designer makes, in one way or another, involves life safety and quality of life. Some of those decisions include specifying furniture, fabric, and carpeting that comply with fire codes, complying with other applicable building codes, designing ergonomic work spaces, planning spaces that provide proper means of egress, and providing solutions for the handicapped and other persons with special needs. *Universal design* and *green design* are buzz words right now but they have always been and will continue to always be a part of every project. In addition to all of this, we manage projects, with budget, time, and safety in mind.

Donna Vining, FASID, IIDA, RID, CAPS

› If they are good at what they do, they create environments that unfold really *meaningful* experiences for their guests.

Bruce Brigham, FASID, ISP, IES

› Interior designers take a client's programmatic needs for a space and combine them with creativity and technical expertise to arrive at a customized space unique to their client.

Maryanne Hewitt, IIDA

› Interior design is a service industry. A designer must enjoy working with and helping people. Some of the aspects of commercial interior design include research, psychology, art, color, graphics, design, ergonomics, efficiency, and workflow.

Mary Knopf, ASID, IIDA, LEED-AP

› They are problem solvers. They need to be able to translate someone else's idea into a new reality. They need to be able to pick up all the puzzle pieces and reconstruct them into another solution—different from what the box said.

Linda Isley, IIDA, CID

› In three words: plan, coordinate, and execute. An interior designer is responsible for distilling the client's thoughts, desires, and budget to create a design plan for the project. The designer then coordinates all the elements within the plan and finally is the moving force for the plan's execution.

Greta Guelich, ASID

› Interior designers shape the human experience by creating the spaces in which we interact and live.

Darcie Miller, NKBA, CMG, ASID Industry Partner

› The easy answer is we create environments that are not only lovely to look at, but are also functional. But actually we are also therapists, accountants, researchers, organizers, shoppers, and sometimes even movers to realize our concept. The interior designer often becomes a family's most trusted friend as major moves, new additions to the family, new hobbies, or any other family change that affects the interior are discussed with the designer—and often we are the first to know.

Susan Norman, IIDA

› Interior designers in the corporate world understand corporate culture, how people work, and what corporations need to attract and retain personnel. Interior designers study the workplace and create environmental solutions that are productive and fitting for the users.

Colleen McCafferty, IFMA, USGBC, LEED-CI