



The argument for interior designers From chaos to design

Some think of interior design as the romantic notion of picking out colours, working with beautiful fabrics and being creative while spending other people's money. By Debbie Anastassiou

Have you ever walked into a room or a public space where you felt suffocated and could not get out of there soon enough?

Or what about the experience of walking into a room or a public space which made

you feel inspired, positive, even happy?

Most of us have had such encounters. But what makes space exert such power over us? The answer would have to be (you guessed it) interior design.

Interior design can have a great effect on

our emotions, thoughts, well being and productivity; in fact, it touches our very psyche.

Is this an overstatement?

No, because according to human psychology, we are largely products of our respective environments.

It has been scientifically proved that our environment shapes our personality, even dictates our emotions and behaviour.

Researcher Roger Barker was the first to develop and prove the theory of social



settings influencing behaviour. He noted: "In a store, people assume their roles as customers. In school and church, proper behaviour somehow already resides, coded in the place."

Design professionals influenced by anthropology, environmental psychology, architecture, product design and by volume and surface treatment, manipulate space, improving the human environment.

In fact, interior design is the profession of combining all of the above with the seven elements of design, following a holistic approach to create or enhance a human environment.

Awareness of the ability of improved enclosed environments to create positive changes in people's lives has placed a focus on developing solutions to improve the living spaces of the ever-growing elderly population.

Additionally, establishments designed to take into account health and accessibility rely on the help of specialised designers to address these issues.

Interestingly retail stores and many other commercial venues take advantage of the power to manipulate the mood and behaviour of customers, spectators, gamblers and travellers by creating a certain ambience conducive to specific behaviours, with favourable results. Favourable to the venue, that is. Design is a great dynamic in our world.

A well designed interior is conducive to harmony, tranquility, coherence, productivity, success and much more.

Clients often comment on the positive effects a renovation or a makeover had on their everyday life.

The sixth sense

For some, the very thought of organising or designing a space causes dismay. It is understandable to worry about the process, for most people regard design and decoration as uncharted territory.

They lose their peace of mind thinking about all the negative scenarios they might face. This is why an ever increasing number of builders, developers, owner builders, renovators, business owners, to mention but a few, capitalise on the "sixth sense."

It has been said that interior designers have a "sixth sense"- the unique ability of visualising the end result.

By simply looking at a building blueprint, talented designers can virtually transfer

themselves inside that future environment and start to work within it as if it were real.

In addition to that "sixth sense", an interior designer performs some or all of the following activities as part of their profession:

- Analyse client's wants and needs, developing the design scheme based on knowledge of interior design principles and the science of human behaviour.
- Prepare presentations of the proposed concept using two and three-dimensional sketches and images, documents, drawings and diagrams in order to effectively communicate the concept to the client.
- Ensure the proposed concepts are safe, ergonomically sound, functional and aesthetically appropriate, as well as considering the aspects of public health, safety, welfare and accessibility. Environmental and sustainability issues must also be considered.
- Select the appropriate colours, textures, materials and finishes to meet the client's socio-psychological needs and aesthetic preferences. Considering and explaining the functional, maintenance, performance, environmental and safety benefits.
- Specify the furniture, fixtures and equipment to reflect the design concept, including layout drawings.
- Provide project management services, including preparation of project budgets

and schedules.

- Prepare relevant plans, elevations, details and specifications to communicate the various elements of the design, including, power and communications locations, ceiling plans, lighting designs.
- Act as the client's negotiator and purchasing agent.
- Communicating information on the progress and completion of the project and follow up by conducting post-occupancy evaluation and reports on behalf of the client.

More than interior decorating

Interior design is the profession of coordinating design projects with a holistic approach to spatial design. This includes designing the interior architecture as well as decorating the space.

All design styles comprise concept, colour, proportion, balance, ergonomics and function. They are all an integral part of the overall look and feel of a room.

Form, mass, shape, line, color, texture and pattern are the seven elements of design. Designers skilfully use them to transform or create effective interior spaces.

Essentially, unlike interior decorators, interior designers should really be consulted at the conception stage of a project rather than the delivery stage.

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