

How to choose interior designer

Whether you are designing a new interior from the floor up or redesigning an existing space, the earlier you engage a designer, the more likely you are to have successful results. Your designer will be invaluable in helping you transform general ideas into functional realities. Where should your preliminary search begin?

- **Referral service** - The American Society of Interior Designers network of designers offers you a rich resource in Michigan. Check the yellow pages for an ASID chapter in your area or call the ASID referral service at (800) 553-ASID.

- **ASID chapters** frequently participate in civic fund-raising projects that showcase the residential and commercial design talents of local members. Call your local ASID chapter to determine if such a project is forthcoming or check your community newspaper.

- **Personal referrals** - Check with associates or friends who have recently redesigned their businesses or homes with projects of similar nature and scope to the one you have in mind. If they are pleased with the outcome, contact the designer responsible for the project.

- **Design trade and shelter magazines** - Many different magazines feature exemplary design work. You should read design trade magazines that feature the type of projects you

have in mind; for example, restaurant, hotel, store, office or residential design. National and local magazines will feature the work of a variety of residential designers.

Next you will want to interview the designer. This is your opportunity to present your project, listen to the designer's observations and insights and examine the designer's work. It is equally important that you assess the degree of compatibility you have with the designer.

- **References and education** - It is also important that you check the designer's references and education. Ask about the designer's other educational background, experience and affiliations with professional organizations.

Ask for the names of clients you may contact for references. It is important that you feel a strong sense that you and your designer can work well together as a team. Compatibility is key to a good experience and you should ask yourself if you expect a good outcome and also a rewarding personal experience.

It is also vital that you identify the budget that you intend to commit to the design project. By doing so, you enable the designer to seek solutions to the problems that you've identified, that are within your financial means.

During the interview, it will be appropriate to discuss the method by which

the interior designer will be compensated. Examples of compensation methods are noted below. It is critical to both parties that methods of compensation are documented. You should expect a contract from your designer during the early stages of the design process. Some methods of compensation are: a fixed or flat fee, an hourly fee, cost plus a mark up on purchases, a percentage fee, retail basis, cost by square foot and/or a combination of one or two of the aforementioned. A quick check list for someone about to retain an interior designer would be:

1. Determining your needs
2. Searching for an interior designer
3. The interview
4. Determining fees and compensation
5. Contracts

6. The design process

There are many rewards to good design. You have come to understand the interior design impact on every aspect of your life. Each environment you enter - home, office, restaurant, hotel - has its own distinctive interior.

You know that good design is more than a question of good taste and appearance. Interior design is the only profession that focuses on making the interior environment meet your needs for beauty, for efficiency and for comfort and safety. Through your experience as a consumer or as a business professional, you have earned an education in the value of good design and the high cost for design.

The letters ASID following the name of an interior designer identify him or her as having met the highest professional standards in the field. In order to become a professional member, a designer must meet rigorous criteria that include a credited education, years of proven experience and passing a two-day examination. The allied designation, Allied Practitioner ASID, identifies a designer as having met some of the above criteria regarding education and experience, but not the examination process.

ASID is the hallmark of professionalism. It assures you of the ultimate degree of valuable assistance and consumer protection.

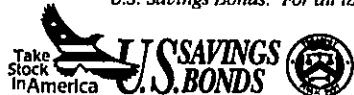
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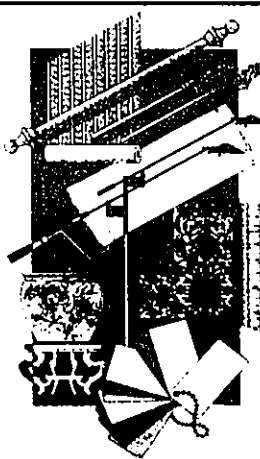
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