

The Key to Working with an INTERIOR DESIGNER...

communication

by Vicki Flores

We rely on trained mechanics to repair our cars and appliances. We use professionals to dry clean our clothes and we depend on our hair stylists to keep us looking chic. Why, then, are we so reluctant to enlist the aid of an interior designer to assist us with our renovation and decorating projects?

Many people shy away from consulting a designer because of cost concerns and a fear that they will get a look that reflects the designer's sense of style, not their own.

When you hire an interior designer, you get more than someone who has a knack for putting colors together (although it is a skill that comes in handy). Interior design requires not only artistic talent but education, training, and an understanding of the elements and implementation of good design. Designers who fulfill the education and experience requirements might even be invited to join professional organizations such as the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID).

When considering engaging a professional to assist you in designing or decorating your space, a little pre-planning will go a long way toward making you more comfortable with your decision. Typically budget is foremost on everyone's mind. Set a realistic amount that you are prepared to spend on the project and share that with your candidate early in the process. Designers understand budgetary constraints and can



help you spend your money wisely. Often, having a designer at your side can actually save you money since their experience in the business can help prevent you from making an expensive mistake.

Communication is very important. If you find it difficult to convey your ideas and thoughts to your designer, look through home decorating or "shelter" magazines for photos of styles and colors that appeal to you. The terms "Old World" or "Traditional" can be interpreted many ways. Pictures and color swatches make it easier for your designer to see what you have in mind for your space. If more than one person is going to be in on the decision-making, then both should be involved in the pre-design homework. Be specific about what you have in mind. Do you want new accessories and window treatments or an entirely new kitchen?

Ask your designer about fees. Each charges differently according to the scope of the project. Also ask about their backgrounds, specialties, experience and references. The

end result is to have confidence in the designer so you can develop a comfortable working relationship.

As you begin your project, your designer will show you swatches and samples to establish a feel for your space. Don't be afraid to question a design or color selection, but remember: there's a reason you hired a professional. Your designer will look at things differently than you do and will think of ideas and changes that you may not have considered. They have access to products and resources that are not readily available to you and can enlist the services of talented craftspeople to assist with your project. With the right mix, your rooms can reflect your personal style and be even better than you had imagined. ■

Victoria Flores, allied member of ASID is a designer for The Studio at Accent Interiors.



WITH SKILL & IMAGINATION
WE PRACTICE THE ART OF INTERIOR DESIGN

THE STUDIO AT

Accent Interiors

Woodlawn @ Kellogg • 316.681.3469 • Mon.-Fri. 9-6, Sat. 10-5