

INTERIOR DESIGNER

It is always useful to define a thing, an idea, or a person before we go into any serious discussion about it/him. Since the profession of interior design is relatively new in India, though quite developed in the United States, let us describe the definition given by the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), assuming that they have a keener insight into the profession and practice of interior design, because of their seniority.

"The professional interior designer is a person qualified by education, experience and examination, who

- 1 Identifies, researches, and creatively solves problems pertaining to the function and quality of the interior environment;
- 2 Performs services relative to interior spaces, including programming, design analysis, space planning and aesthetics, using specialised knowledge of interior construction, building codes, equipment, materials and furnishings; and
- 3 Prepares drawings and documents relative to the design of interior spaces in order to enhance and protect the health, safety and welfare of the public.

All this requires elucidation.

Role of an Interior Designer

Today's interior designer is not a mere decorator, he is a professional in the true sense. Interior design is not only an art, it is a science and technology also, and an interior designer encompasses the fields traversed by an architect, engineer, psychologist, graphic designer, furniture designer, decorator, and a host of other

professions.

The profession of interior design is considered by the novice as glamorous as the profession of advertising and film acting. But this glamour is only a part of the whole. The profession includes a problem definition and analysis, space planning, selection and specifications of all interior furnishings and finishes, and coordination of all installations. All this requires technical knowledge of construction, codes, zoning laws, fire regulations, product technology, fabrication techniques, product sources and an understanding of social, cultural, religious practices.

An interior designer has to possess a wide range of abilities; and artistic talent though important, is only one of them. There are other characteristics an interior designer should possess to do justice to his profession and client.

1 Appreciation of Beauty

The ability to appreciate beauty in everything, which will help the designer to use unthought of, supposedly inexpensive materials and inane ideas in his work.

2 Psychological Insight

To understand the needs of a client, and the understanding to elicit the best work according to their capacity from the people employed on a project, and to go beyond the requirement sheet makes the designer successful. It is like seeing the soul rather than the body of a person/project.

3 Analysis of the Problem

The ability to think over a problem, considering the requirements, personality of client, his socio-cultural background and his budget, materials and lobby available, the shifting of important/unimportant elements and likewise discarding of useless concepts is what makes a good designer.

4 Flexibility

Stubbornness is human. But to adjust one's views, and design approach according to a client's requirements, financial constraints, unwanted pressures and other conditions, turns a difficult situation into a workable one, and turns a mediocre designer into a successful one.

5 Visual Communication

Interior design is a visual field. So whatever a designer wants to communicate to his client, should be in visual terms. A picture is supposed to be equal to 5,000 words. So instead of describing an interior, it is better to present its perspective to the client.

6 Meeting the Deadlines

Everything has a time for it, and after that, it becomes useless. A rattle is useful to an infant or not to a teenager. So meeting a deadline is as important as doing good work. If you are able to keep your deadline, you will be known as a good, trustworthy and dependable designer. Clients will flock to you and your fame and prestige will soar in your profession.

7 Working with Diverse Personalities

In your profession, you will come across all types of people—clients, his family members and friends, suppliers, contractors, labours, unconnected people. Some will not like you, some will want what you do not approve of, some will not like your face. As we have seen above under 4, here also the flexibility to accommodate all types of people, to bow where needed, to be aggressive when you know it is necessary, will smoothen out your way towards a successful career.

8 Business Acumen

Everything nowadays has become business because everything is geared to generate money. It involves meeting and convincing clients: gathering right people to carry out a project; having good contacts with suppliers to avail of good quality, **reasonable prices** and on-time delivery of materials; elicit good work from office staff and keeping proper accounts according to the rules of the land. If you do not possess these qualities, your practice will suffer.

9 Love of Detail and Accuracy

There is just a fraction of difference between a good and an excellent job. A good job becomes excellent when it is done accurately and details are not lost sight of. Take fixing of a hinge, for example. It should be at **rightangles** the door jamb (accuracy), and should be made of aluminium/brass/chrome plated/stainless steel considering the climate of the place (details).

10 Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm means the quest to know and understand the mechanism of a thing and practically involve oneself in it with all the energy, interest and concentration. These traits are indispensable to succeed in any field and more so in the field of interior design, which is the newest profession and ever-changing.

Idea of Responsibility

Everybody has responsibility towards something or someone. When we say everybody, we mean human beings, because other living things like plants and animals do not have responsibility. They do not have responsibility because they do not have conscience as human beings have, which allows us to distinguish between good and evil; and they do not have freedom to shape their destiny or environment the way human beings have. Because of this freedom which human beings can use to construct or destroy, they have been burdened with responsibility. And to carry this responsibility justly, they have been graced with the faculty of consciousness to distinguish between good and evil.

A child, because of his feebleness and lack of the faculty of consciousness, is debarred from any kind of responsibility. For that matter, mad, unconscious, very sick and very old people are also made not responsible for anything or towards anyone because they lack one of these properties or both of them.

But a person living in a society, has a web of relations around him, and for that reason, he is responsible towards not one but many things and people.

Responsibility of an Interior Designer

An individual as an interior designer has responsibility towards his

- 1 Profession
- 2 Client
- 3 Contractor
- 4 Suppliers
- 5 Society in general

But this basic responsibility is, and always must be, towards his profession, and overrules all other kinds of responsibilities.

If a designer sacrifices professional interest for the sake of a client, he is indulging in business, because in business, **the** customer is always right, and the quality of products or service takes a back seat. If he has more loyalty towards the contractor than to his profession, he is trading, because traders do not worry about the customer's interests but keep only the dealer's interest uppermost in their mind. If he cares for suppliers more than others, he is doing commerce because in commerce the product is the be all and other things do not matter. As far as his responsibility towards society is concerned, it would suffice to say here that it is a most complex issue, and we will deal with it in one whole chapter later.

From the above discussion, you would have understood the most important reason why your basic responsibility must be towards the profession only.

Now the question arises why is interior design a profession and not business, trade or commerce. An interior designer offers his consultancy and advisory service in return of a fee or salary as the case may be. He does not sell his services. This activity is termed a profession. And in his dealing he is not influenced by the consideration of personality, lustre, favour, fear or any other kind of pressure.

If a designer keeps his profession above other temptations, like a priest keeps his faith above other things, he moves towards truth, because he has used his freedom properly and used his conscience judiciously. This is what religion is all about. And this is the essence of true worship. Here work becomes worship

And it is not a coincidence that the word profession also means *religious belief*, and *entrance into a religious order*.