



## How Do I Hire an Interior Designer?

So it's time to hire a Professional Interior Designer to transform your space. Your research has yielded two to three solid names, but how will you know which designer is the right match for your needs? What criteria will help you in the selection process? What questions should you ask? What specific facts about your prospective designer are the most important? What should you look for in a designer's portfolio? Ultimately, selecting the appropriate 'space doctor' depends on finding satisfying answers to these questions.

### ***What criteria should a designer meet to be employed by you?***

Before meeting prospective designers, first define your project scope. Are you sprucing up a room(s) in your existing house? Is it new construction from scratch that may require interior architectural detailing and construction methodology? A kitchen or bathroom remodel may be best served by a designer with architectural certification. Is your project residential, commercial, hospitality or institutional in nature?

Match your project needs to the designer's knowledge base. This can include his education, his experience and

expertise in handling similar projects to yours. Design skills are honed over time. The more experienced your designer, the better you will avoid design pitfalls. Ask about the design process as this may vary from one professional to the other. It is important to know upfront if a work style or work ethic will closely mesh with your own. Now is the time to discuss money. Find out how your chosen professional is compensated for his work IN SPECIFIC DETAILS. There are several accepted methods of compensation in the industry. Discuss what methods would best suit you and exactly what services you will require of your designer. Click the links to access helpful interview questions that will help you get to know your prospective designer and a few questions you should be able to answer.

### ***Important facts to learn about your Interior Designer.***

By using the questions outlined in the linked articles you will undoubtedly know more for making an informed selection of the appropriate professional for you and your project. Absolutely know if your designer is qualified to do your project either through education, research or experience. Know if the designer is available and will be able to work within your time table and budget. Determine if the designer's methodology, offered services and billing methods meet with your needs and personality.

### ***What should you look for in a designer's portfolio?***

The simple answer is evidence of good design and recent projects. It's not necessary to like every room you see in a designer's portfolio. However, search for details or moments of individuality that catch your eye. Design projects are greatly influenced by the needs, taste and budget of the client. So, your primary aim is to identify elements of design that resonate with you. If you are looking for a space that is uniquely you, then you should look for a design wizard whose portfolio demonstrates a



*Moni A., Rehoboth Beach - Foyer*



highly individualistic approach to their design solutions. On the other hand, if a designer's portfolio is variations of one design style, say Moroccan, and that is what you love and want, it will likely benefit you to use this designer, knowing you will receive a final product just as your envisioned it.

#### ***Final Tips:***

Design is a very personal and intimate profession, so the importance of establishing and building a healthy and mutually, cohesive Designer/Client relationship cannot be over emphasized. You must like your designer and your designer should like you. Your being at ease with them and feeling comfortable to share, trust and confide in them are paramount elements to the success of your project. Usually, I provide a free, hour long, initial in-person meeting to get to know my clients. During this introduction period if the client or myself deem that we are not a mutual match, we agree it's acceptable to terminate the meeting at any given moment with no hard feelings.

It is unethical to fish for design ideas and unreasonable to expect free solutions during your initial design interview. Do not ask questions such as, "What would you do with this room?" or "What do you think about the color red on that wall?" If you choose to work together, those details would be covered in phase 2 of your professional partnership during what is called a "consultation." It is here where designers are paid for their ideas, their knowledge to diagnose space issues and suggest design solutions.

Now that you are better equipped, go interview your prospective designer with confidence. Make an educated selection, check references, hire your designer and begin the journey to creating the interior that mirrors you.

*Peter G.*