

Guide to Getting the Most from Working with an Interior Designer

Congratulations on Buying Your New House!

You are now faced with the daunting task of converting this house of brick and cement into a place you can call home. If your house is big and have a daily job to attend do as well as juggle with domestic chores, family and other commitments, it may be difficult for you to find the time to do up your house just the way you dreamed.

Thankfully, you can hire the services of an interior designer to carry out this task for you, with your involvement for suggestions and approval. Although you may be concerned about the designer's charges, with the enormous expense made on the house recently and so many things needed to be bought in order to complete it, rest assured that it is not an overhead.

Justifying the Cost of an Interior Designer

The help and guidance that an interior designer can offer will save you so much money in the long run. Doing things on your own without having the required level of knowledge or expertise are bound to end up as costly

mistakes. You will then need to call in the experts to fix the mess that you have made, at a very steep price.

They know the best places to pick up fabrics, fittings, floorings, furniture and finishings, since they deal with these items on a regular basis, on behalf of their clients. Moreover, they have built a good rapport with certain vendors and you would be able to get your stuff at a discount, thereby saving a considerable amount of money, even after taking into account the fees of the interior designer. There are some items that are generally not put up for sale, like traditional paintings and handicrafts, but with the influence of your interior designer, you would be able to procure such a unique piece for your house.

Interior designers have the right connections with carpenters, plumbers, electricians and other handymen. This will save you the time and trouble of checking various reviews and comparing quotes. With their recommendations, you can get the best manpower to do the job quickly and efficiently, at the lowest cost.

Thus, an interior designer can take a lot of work off your hands, leaving you with the peace of mind that your house is being taken care of by a professional, and with a lot of time that you can invest in your family. Setting up a house on your own can bring in a lot of stress, which often leads to tension and friction at home or at work. Do not feel overwhelmed at the prospect of doing up your house. Simply hire a good interior designer.

These individuals have the training and experience in home decorating that you don't. They know exactly how much material would be required for each task, avoiding multiple trips to the same store when time is of essence. They have perfected the process to be followed and the sequence of steps involved; a proven formula that has evolved from years of practice. Getting a house ready to live in is a project and the interior designer is the project manager at your service. With this talented individual around, there is direction and focus to your project. Progress is constantly tracked and you know the job will be done well.

What's the Big Deal About Interiors, Anyway?

The interiors of a house speak volumes about the owner. Your individuality and tastes are reflected in the colors, textures and layout of the rooms. There are so many things to consider, right from basics like flooring, furniture and upholstery to ornamentation with wall hangings, showpieces and more. Purchasing these items is not enough, as they need to be installed and positioned correctly to achieve the desired effect. It is your home; you need to personalize your space with love, so that it exudes warmth and welcomes all who enter.

Factors to Consider

A good designer will not recommend a style of any particular period for the basic furniture, as these are the permanent components of your home. Instead, their style should be timeless, remaining trendy in every season, for many years. Also, you will be encouraged to give priority to quality and durability over style.

You can follow a single theme throughout the house or set a different mood for each room. For example, the bedroom could be done up to have a relaxing effect, while the living room should seem inviting and the kitchen, cheery and bright. A creative interior designer might even make suggestions to improve the purpose of a room.

Light plays an important part in home decor, but is often neglected or taken for granted. The interior designer will pay attention to lighting effects, taking care that your rooms have the desired look in the daytime as well as under night bulbs, which can totally change the look. It is possible to use mirrors in many ways to beautify or light up a room, even making it appear bigger.

Furniture should be placed around the room such that it does not crowd or dominate the room. Proportion is critical. On the other hand, a relatively empty room will look incomplete and will cause unwanted echoes. The interior designer can help you strike the right balance.

Above all, a beautiful house is achieved by being detail-oriented. When you visit someone else's home, you tend to notice the little things, so keep in mind that your guests will notice them in your home as well. Your interior

designer has an eye for the finer things that you might have ignored, either because it was time-consuming or too much of a bother.

Job Description of an Interior Designer

An interior designer is different from an interior decorator, having more training and being equipped with a degree. This profession should not be confused with a design consultant, who only gives advice and possibly recommends labor for various tasks, but will not carry out the actual work.

The interior designer will be by your side from the start to the finish, through thick and thin, until your house is transformed into a cozy home.

They have been trained in the art of layouts, to make a room appear spacious and bright. While all of us have a creative streak within us, some people are truly blessed with a co-ordination for color and texture.

Colorful walls give a vibrant feel to a room, but going overboard or having a mismatched color scheme can create more damage.

Their usefulness is not limited to aesthetics. It involves proportion, scale and balance. There are other aspects to doing up a house, such as safety. You might like a ceiling fixture and have it suspended over your dining table, but you don't want it falling down sometime later to get ruined and possibly injure someone in the process. The interior designer will consider the load bearing capacity of beams and walls and other engineering specifics, such as the distance of furniture from electric plug points. Environmental friendliness is an upcoming trend and the designer's layout will have considered this factor as well.

They will hire the required professional services to get each task completed, be it a painter for the walls and ceiling, a carpenter to build and install furniture and a plumber / electrician if you are making modifications to the pipes and wiring. It is ideal to have these jobs completed in the least amount of time, so that you can have the house to yourself and start living in it. Simply trust the judgment and experience of your interior designer and the jobs will be taken care of.

There are various specializations in interior designs. For example, a universal designer's forte is space utilization, especially for people confined

to a wheelchair, elderly and disabled people or families having a baby.

Sustainable designers put their entire focus on eco-friendliness, mainly how to save on energy and be water efficient. They can save you money on each month's bill, which is a big sum in the long run. Decide what kind of help you need and hire the interior designer accordingly.

Online Interior Design Services

Recently, a new form of interior design is gaining in popularity. Also known as e-decorating or virtual room design, an online interior design service is a cost-effective way to get professional help in doing up your house.

In this approach, the designer does not actually come to your premises, but will provide all the help and support over the Internet. You will have more involvement, in terms of taking measurements and photographs of rooms, so that the designer can get a good idea of the layout of your house. There will be detailed guidelines and tips to help you do this correctly. You will also need to provide an inventory of the existing furnishings in order for your designer to incorporate them into their plan. Your color preferences,

any theme-based design and special requirements will be captured through a detailed online questionnaire, and then the interior designer will create an online portfolio of your house, showing you virtual plans of the finished look for approval.

You will still get the advantage of discounts with product suppliers through online recommendations and links to their websites, while the purchasing of items is your job. Rest assured, you will be guided every step of the way. You have the liberty of contacting your designer over the phone or through e-mail when you need assistance or advice.

A virtual home décor portfolio is tracked in the same way as an onsite interior designer would. Just because there is no physical presence of the design expert does not mean that the end result will be any less beautiful. There are many benefits in hiring an online interior designer. It is a cheaper option for you, since the designer does not have to make multiple trips to your house and to the product vendors for purchases; you make a direct saving on all travel expenses. The online interior designer usually charges a flat fee per room, rather than the costlier hourly rate.

People who are limited by a budget or those who live in remote areas will benefit from hiring an online interior designer. If you have a lot of time on your hands to do up your house, and enjoy Do-It-Yourself projects that keep you busy, but need some professional advice and support along the way, you should opt for this service. However, major changes to the flooring, walls, plumbing or electrical wiring needs the physical presence of an expert to thoroughly inspect the area; an onsite designer is the only solution in this case.

Process for Working with an Interior Designer

An interior designer might be employed at an engineering or architectural firm, or even with a designing or retail store, but many of them are self-employed. They may have other clients, so ask if you can see some other finished work as a sample. The designer can help you in any phase of your home décor process; the start, middle or towards completion. But the ideal time is at the very beginning, so that you can reap the most benefit and avoid re-work.

Before you begin working together, initially they would spend some time getting to know you, the owner of the house, and what you expect from it. Will you be having guests over occasionally, or are you a regular party person? What is the age group of the family members? This dictates the color scheme and overall theme for the house. Are there children in the house? If so, delicate furniture and accessories have to be kept to a minimum and have to be strategically placed. What is your personality and your favorite color? All this data will be collected and incorporated into the house, so that it characterizes you.

The next step would be to sketch a rough layout of the house and put in some design plans. You will need to provide a list of furnishings and décor items you already possess and intend using. Using computer-based tools, they will create the finished plan with a professional look. After discussing a schedule and costs involved, they will show you material samples and other items, which you must approve at the earliest, so that orders can go out and work can get underway as soon as possible. Rest assured, once you have set your budget, the designer will strive to work within it.

Tips for a Better Working Relationship with the Interior Designer

Your involvement with the interior designer does not end here. To get your house turned into your dream home, you need to work in tandem with the designer, every step of the way. Plans are bound to get modified, based on unavailability of material, impracticality of design and other hurdles. Build a rapport with the designer and this will become a fun project. There is so much to learn from their passion, innovative ideas and expertise.

If, at any time, you feel that their ideas do not match yours, they are too futuristic or too old-fashioned or the colors are too bold and going against your nature, do speak up. After all, it is your money, your house and you will be living in it for a long time to come. Just broach the topic gently and do not be rude. The designer will respect you for being honest and both of you will enjoy a better working relationship.

Summary

With the guidance of an interior designer, your home will be a source of pride to you and the envy of all visitors. Use this guide to get the most from your designer, so that your home is truly your fashion statement and will give you a sense of belonging. You will want to spend most of your time here and it is a great place for the family to spend quality time together.

To learn more about the interior design services provided by Cheeky Living, please visit www.CheekyLiving.com.