



What to expect when hiring a decorating and design professional

What is a decorating and design professional? What services do they provide? How can they help me with my space? Are their services too expensive for me? These are the most common questions most people ask when they are planning a decorating, design or renovation project.

A decorating and design professional is: a person qualified by education, experience, and examination to enhance the function and quality of interior spaces. A professional analyzes clients' needs; formulates design concepts that are aesthetic, appropriate and functional; presents final design through appropriate presentation media; prepares drawings for interior detailing, lighting, materials, finishes, space planning, furnishings, fixtures and accessories; collaborates with professional services of other licensed practitioners in technical areas; and reviews and evaluates design solutions within the client's budget.

A decorating and design professional will save you money, time and confusion. Services can be as limited as a consultation only offering advice on what to be aware of, for instance, choosing a colour scheme, hiring a contractor or buying a product. Or, if the client desires, full design services are offered for any complete home decoration, office designs, space and furniture plans, renovations, hiring of trades and purchases through the decorating professional for interior related products for the space.

Recognizing that all design styles and approaches are acceptable when used appropriately, decorating and design professionals take into consideration their clients' personal design style and lifestyles or work environment, to help create their look, on their level from their perspective. Some professionals specialize in a particular design area, eg, commercial design (offices, restaurants, retail outlets, etc), residential design, (new home finishes selection; kitchen

design, bathroom renovations, finished basement design, colour specialists, window treatment specialists, etc). For those of you thinking of purchasing a yet-to-be constructed house or condo, a professional can look at a floor plan and spot potential problems involving traffic flow or furniture placement. Also, these professionals are a virtual resource library of the most current trends in the design world and have a large network of reliable trade and supplier contacts.

Professionals also understand that consumers today expect products to be well made and expect value for their money. Although the thought of "hiring a decorating and design professional" may be perceived as a luxury few could afford, it should be seen as a minimal "investment". In effect, you are purchasing the services of an expert in the field of interior decorating and design. This service will pay off in the long run by enhancing the value of your residence.

Most decorating professionals work together with busy working people who don't own mansions or large corporations and don't have the time for planning a design project and following through from start to finish. Even with the time, most people do not know where to start. When faced with too much variety, people tend to become overwhelmed and that's where costly mistakes are made. A decorating and design professional who is educated and skilled will see inspiration and an opportunity to design a solution within the client's budget with an objective eye.

To find a decorating and design professional, it is extremely important to:

- Take recommendations from others that were satisfied with the work of their decorating/design professional;
- Go through magazines in which decorating/design professionals are featured; design and resource associations and

directories, chambers of commerce, yellow pages, and the web, are other sources.

- Ask if they belong to a professional association and contact that association to ensure they are members in good standing;
- Ask questions to help you arrive at a decision, such as how the design professional charges for the service you require, years of experience within their specialty, have they worked on similar projects with the same budget as yours;
- Ask for references, or examples of their work through photos or website;
- Be wary of "department-store" type chains or franchises that hire salespeople rather than educated and experienced decorators and designers. Hiring unqualified persons shortchanges the consumer;
- Insist on an educated, experienced decorating and design professional;
- It is also important to communicate to them what you hope to achieve from your project within your budget, what level of service you expect, and your schedule;

A recently completed study by CDECA Canadian Decorators Association in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada on the interior decorating profession concluded that consumers expect to work with educated, skilled and experienced decorating and design professionals in putting together their homes to reflect their lifestyle.

Finally working together with a decorating and design professional with whom you share ideas will be a creative and stimulating experience achieving exciting results for your space.



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