



On 20th Anniversary, California Council for Interior Design Certification (CCIDC) Shares Tips For Hiring an Interior Designer

(San Marcos, CA...April 27, 2011) In 1991, the California Council for Interior Design Certification (CCIDC) was established as the first private nonprofit certification board in the state. Though held accountable by the California legislature through the Sunset Review process, “private” nonprofit boards are supported by their respective professions and the certification fees they pay; hence they never become a burden on the taxpayer. Certified Interior Designers are qualified by the CCIDC upon evidence of a combination of education and/or experience and passing an examination on California building codes, ethics, business practices and design standards, the “IDEX California”.

When it comes to interior design services for your home or business, mistakes can be costly! Here are tips to avoiding some of the most common mistakes we hear about at the CCIDC:

TAKE A PROPER BUSINESS APPROACH:

- Take responsibility and do not become a victim!
- Do some research! Know whom you are doing business with.
- Anyone can call himself or herself an “interior designer” (or decorator) -- no matter what their qualifications are.
- Research several interior designers before hiring someone and check them out thoroughly!

BE CLEAR ABOUT YOUR EXPECTATIONS:

- Have a clear understanding of what you want to accomplish.
- Find similar examples of what you are looking for.
- Ask yourself: do you really need professional help?
- Can you afford the time and money it will take?

CHECK THEIR QUALIFICATIONS:

- Ask them if they are a “Certified Interior Designer”, the only title recognized under California state law. Check with the California Council for Interior Design Certification (CCIDC) at www.ccidc.org or call 760.761.4734.
- How long have they been practicing as an interior designer?
- Do they have any interior design education?
- What interior design-related examinations have they taken and passed?

CHECK THEIR WORK:

- Call their references.
- Request photos of their recent work, and make arrangements to visit a current project.
- Ask how long the different projects took to complete, and if their projects came in on budget and on time.

CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT OR CONTRACT:

- Ask them to prepare a letter of agreement or an interior design contract.
- If you have an attorney, run it by them. There is a lot of money at stake!
- Make sure the agreement spells out the scope of work to be performed, the fees to be paid to the interior designer, and when the fees are to be paid.
- Make sure the agreement has a dispute resolution clause in the case of a disagreement between you and the interior designer.
- Ask about their insurance coverage for anything you purchase from them.

ESTABLISH A BUDGET:

- Never start a project without establishing a budget first!
- Make sure your budget includes all the design fees, taxes, delivery charges, and other costs.
- Make sure your designer is getting multiple bids for all custom remodeling and construction work.
- Do not pay any money to an interior designer for construction work unless they have a valid state contractor's license.
- Pay all contractors and sub-contractors directly.

PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED:

- Items you want are not always available. They may take longer to obtain than anticipated and may cost more.
- When demolishing existing interiors, surprises can be found that will take longer and can cost more. Establish a contingency fund for the unexpected.
- Delays on a project can cost more because the contractors and interior designer are charging for their time.
- Be prepared to compromise, to keep the project moving along on time and on budget.
- Listen to the design professional, who will guide you through the process.

BE AWARE OF THE TRAUMA OF REMODELING:

- When planning a remodel with your designer, remember you live or work there!
- If you need to move out temporarily and can afford to do so, you should!
- If you can't move out, prepare to be inconvenienced if the work is extensive. Don't get in the way, and don't supervise.
- Use your professional designer to get you through this.

LISTEN TO THE PROFESSIONAL:

- Remember, you hired a professional interior designer, so listen to them.
- If you don't like what they are telling you or the designs they are showing you, maybe it's time to end the relationship.
- The designer should only have one customer -- you! Don't let other family members or business colleagues give instructions, especially without your knowledge.

For a free list of Certified Interior Designers in your area, contact the California Council for Interior Design Certification (CCIDC), 760.761.4734, visit www.ccidc.org/cidpages or email ccidc@earthlink.net.

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