



THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE WHEN HIRING AN INTERIOR DESIGNER

1) NOT TAKING A PROPER BUSINESS APPROACH (CAVEAT EMPTOR):

- Take responsibility and do not become a victim!
- Know with whom you are doing business!
- Anyone can call themselves an "interior designer" (or decorator) no matter what their qualifications are.
- Research several interior designers before hiring someone.
- Get a list of "Certified Interior Designers" in your area from the California Council for Interior Design Certification (CCIDC).
- What is a "Certified Interior Designer"?
- Check them out thoroughly!

2) NOT BEING 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?

3) NOT CHECKING 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) if you don't get an answer.
- 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?

4) NOT CHECKING THEIR WORK:

- Call their references.
- Look at recent work done by them, and try to visit their projects.
- Ask how long the different projects took to complete.
- Ask if their projects came in on budget or not.

5) NOT GETTING A PROPER 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 by the interior designer.
- Make sure the agreement spells out the fees to be paid to the interior designer.
- Make sure the agreement spells out how 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.

6) NOT ESTABLISHING A BUDGET:

- Do not start a project without establishing a budget first!
- Make sure your budget for the work includes all the design fees, taxes, delivery charges, and other costs, so you don't end up over-spending.
- 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. Ask to see it, and check it out with the Contractors State Licensing Board (CSLB).
- Pay all contractors and sub-contractors directly, do not give the money to the designer.

7) UNPREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED:

- Things 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 are charging for their time. So is the designer!
- 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 entire process.

8) UNAWARE 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 do so, you should!
- If you can't move out temporarily, prepare for being overwhelmed if the work is extensive. Dust, noise, lots of people in the way!
- Don't get in the way, and don't supervise.
- Use your professional designer to get you through this.

9) NOT LISTENING 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 work colleagues give instructions, especially without your knowledge, otherwise you will be undoing the designer's work, or getting things you don't want. Either way it will end up taking more time and costing more.