

BON *B* BRISE
DESIGN
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Looking

FOR INTERIOR DESIGN HELP? 10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Hiring an interior designer can help make your house a home, but it may feel like a daunting task to find the right firm. We've pulled together our top 10 tips to help you navigate the process of choosing an interior designer, no matter your budget or project size.



KNOW WHAT A DESIGNER CAN DO FOR YOU

Do you really need an interior designer? Doing some research will show you what a designer can do for you, and in most cases the answer will be...Yes! If an interior designer is within your budget, having the expertise of a professional on hand can be invaluable in avoiding costly mistakes. An interior designer can help you with projects large and small.

Not only will a designer pull together the aesthetics of a space, but he or she also can ensure that the room has the elements it need to function as it should for your lifestyle. A designer can assist with jobs as small as choosing the window coverings and rug for a living room, or as large as planning and coordinating a full-scale remodeling or construction project. A designer can use his or her expertise to develop solutions you may not have thought of, and help you envision your dream.

DISCUSS PRICING UP FRONT

The fact is, some designers will be more affordable than others or have varying fee structures. Some charge an hourly rate, a flat fee, or a percentage of total project costs. You may also be asked to pay a retainer before the project begins. One structure is not necessarily better than the other, but it's something to consider when creating your budget.

Even when on a tight budget, don't assume that hiring a designer is out of your reach! A consultation can also be a great resource for simply selecting furnishings, paint colors and accents.

MAKE SURE THE DESIGNER'S STYLE WORKS FOR YOU

Many designers cultivate a signature look while others will create a space to reflect their clients' interests and aesthetics. There is no right or wrong here, but be sure you know which type of designer you're hiring. Look through a designer's portfolio, which can usually be found on their website, to see if the photos reflect a wide array of styles, or if there is a certain look and feel to all the photos.

ASK ABOUT THEIR SOURCES

Designers have access to many sources for furnishings and accents that a consumer does not, so you'll want to ask about their go-to sources for your particular style or concerns. If you prefer US manufacturing, sustainable/green design or have other specific interests, does the designer work with vendors that fit your criteria? Is the designer flexible and willing to scale down on expensive furnishings to offset other costs, such as construction?

Many clients choose to select high-end pieces that need to stand the test of time, while opting for less expensive accents. This is another way to stay within a modest budget, so ensure that this is an option with your designer.

CALL A FEW REFERENCES

Does your designer have references for you to call? Most designers have a few testimonials on their website or online reviews, but it's best to ask for a few references from previous clients. Ask questions such as if the designer was easy to work with, took a conversational approach, and took their unique needs into consideration.

KNOW YOUR BUDGET

You may not know exactly what a project will cost; a designer can help you determine an approximate budget. To help the process you must know what your maximum budget is and whether you will need to complete your project in phases or can afford to do it all at once. This will be one of the first discussions you have with your designer.

Whether it's a \$2,500 budget or a \$250,000 budget, you need to know from the beginning and be firm with your maximum cost. Also know that construction may add a significant amount to a project. Even removing or moving a wall isn't always as simple as it sounds - it can involve moving electrical, plumbing and ensuring structural integrity. And be prepared for surprises if plumbing or electrical work is involved, since prior work may have been done in an unusual way or is no longer up to code. Finally, once your budget is established, leave room for a 10%-15% contingency fee to cover the unknown potential costs.

COME TO THE TABLE WITH YOUR IDEAS

A Pinterest board, an old-fashioned mood-board, magazine clippings - anything! Collecting samples of images that reflect the look you are going for and your design aesthetic can help you choose a designer, as well as give your designer a look into whether or not they will be a fit and if your budget is realistic. Don't expect a designer to completely recreate your inspiration, but rather to tailor your aesthetic to fit your lifestyle, budget and architectural space.

COMPLETE A PROJECT IN PHASES IF NECESSARY

Many designers will accommodate completing large, or even medium-sized, projects in phases. Think about your priorities so you know what you want to complete first. For avid entertainers, a kitchen remodel may be at the top of your priorities, making it okay to leave the remodeling of the master bath for another six months or a year. Your designer can analyze your needs and the costs of each phase, giving you the information you need to determine how and when you should complete each phase.

KNOW WHAT NEEDS TO STAY IN ADVANCE

Along with your inspiration board, this is another simple task that will kick start your relationship with an interior designer, and get going in the right direction. Your designer may be planning to give your great grandmother's rocking chair the boot, so by creating a complete list of must-stay items, they will be better prepared to present you with inspired ideas for your space, incorporating the family heirlooms or must-stays with new furnishings to achieve a cohesive design.

KEEP AN OPEN MIND

This is a must! When looking for interior design help, keep an open mind. Be prepared to hear new ideas, and take time to consider them. One of the many benefits of working with a professional designer is their ability to create a unique look you will love. Give them the chance to work their magic!

Let your space
INSPIRE YOU!