



*This is Part One, of a Two Part Series- Taking a look inside the process of collaboration between Architects and Interior Designers*

Increasingly, interior designers, architects, builders, and best of all, clients, are realizing the value and importance of having the whole team on board at the beginning of the design process. If not, there is a great opportunity to educate clients of the very real value this approach brings to their project and budget. Having all of the design team at the table at the beginning of a project ensures that; the client's wants, needs, and vision can be met; that each discipline can offer valuable information focused on design, constructability, and budget; ideas build upon one another creating a well-integrated project that exceeds a client's expectations (and sometimes even exceeding the design team's vision).

### **Part 1 Collaboration: Viewpoint from the Architect**

There is always a gray area between where architecture stops and interior design begins, and that gray area is constantly changing even during the course of a single project. Close collaboration can turn that gray area into the best part of the project. It can be frustrating to see a missed opportunity or changes in the field because we weren't all on the same page. It is so much easier to accommodate design before the first hammer swings. Too often, it seems like there is a tendency to 'protect ones turf', or work at cross purposes rather than respect what each party brings to the table.

When architects have the chance to bounce ideas around, talk about unique finishes and the special touches that make a space more than the sum of its parts, we end up with a great project, a satisfied client, and a referral. Well integrated projects save time and money. Our favorite interior designers are organized, vocal about the design objectives and needs, open to enhancing the overall design concept, and understand budget and the effort required to ensure that interior design elements are constructible and well-coordinated.

It is a real joy to sit through a meeting or attend a site visit when there is that energy or buzz in the air when good design and collaboration happens. Projects are not easy, require hundreds of hours in effort and resources, with fees that are tight, and a team working together from the start is much more assured of a great project.

"I can always spot the projects that resulted from design and construction collaboration, they are a seamless blend of form and function," Erik Peterson, Principal PHX Architecture says. "I really respect what a great interior designer brings to a project. In many ways what a client touches, feels, and sees defines the architecture. Clients can talk for a week about a special fabric or fixture, and in good humor, I sometimes think we provide the backdrop for the flash and sizzle," added Nikal Conti, Principal PHX Architecture.

Scott Carson, Principal PHX Architecture also recognizes benefits in designer/architect collaboration. Carson observed that "every successful project shares the key ingredient of an integrated design team. I always prefer to work together as a team from the start, that's when the magic happens as design ideas are presented and refined

by all of us.”