

Team Collaboration is the Key to Success Part II

Written by Amanda Rumore



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

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).

PHX Architecture asked Barbara Kaplan, Lawrence Lake, and Donna Vallone their thoughts on the collaboration process.

Part 2 Collaboration: Viewpoint from the Interior Designers:

Barbara Kaplan IFDA, Allied ASID, WATT: Architects and interior designers often begin projects in the same way. Designers go a little deeper and work with our client's psyche to help them express their design choices. I'd like to say I work with the interior of people first and then the interior of the room- and sometimes, I call this exterior design. As an interior designer, I am asked to help the client express their deepest desires and help them discover their taste and style so they can make design and decoration choices with confidence. Then everyone's job is made easier and the client will be happy with the end result.

Some of these choices are color, texture, finishes, woods and metals and are dictated by our DNA. We are born with these preferences and then become influenced by outside factors which mold our design personality.

Lifestyle choices also need to be completely discussed. Brining all this together in a definite combination identifies personal preferences which can result in a unique look.

This information enables designers to encourage clients to become comfortable with the important selections they must make. Also, it helps the trade professionals better express the choices and decisions of the homeowners. The more clients are enabled the easier and more successful the project.

"The final lasting joy and satisfaction at the completion of a project can only be accomplished when the feelings, energy, creativity and knowledge of all the professionals involved in the project, along with the wishes of the client, are understood, accepted and executed." Kaplan explained.



Lawrence Lake, ASID: Working as a team to complete a shared vision has many benefits to the interior designer. By creating a team, all players are on equal footing from the beginning. The collaborative process allows all the disciplines to start the project with a shared program of the client's goals. By creating the plan together, synergy can be created to expand the design ideas, and then help refine them.

Often interior designers come into the project after the project has been started. This requires designers to get up to speed before we can begin our programming and design concept. We often run into challenges based on decisions that were made before we designers were engaged. Not being present or a part of this process can leave up open to misdirection by missing key client concerns. A well-functioning team can prevent these problems.

One of the greatest benefits for the designer happens during execution. The building process is much more rewarding and productive when all members of the team are working toward the same goal. Working with the team to accomplish the client's goal is fun.

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Finally, the value of working on a team brings knowledge to the designer. The ability to reach beyond yourself in search of ideas and a solution is very valuable. Finding your way through the design process to deliver great solutions requires a team.

Donna Vallone, ASID: We have seen a very positive change in the architect/designer relationship over the past decade. Each discipline has a greater respect for the skills and artistry that each brings to the table.

"I have found that when we work as a team from the start of a project, there is more creative energy greater development of ideas and better clarification of each individual role. Bottom line: more enthusiasm and excitement equating to frequent communication and an 'urgency' to share a creative thought or change that cannot wait to be analyzed or incorporated into the design," explained Vallone.

PHX Architecture is a diverse team of talented professionals joined by a common passion for detail and inventive design. The PHX Architecture team, knowledgeable and experienced in all aspects of architecture and design, specializes in a wide range of building styles and types. And by working collaboratively with designers, they deliver exceptional architectural service- on schedule and on budget. They welcome to opportunity to collaborate with designers.

Barbara Kaplan ASID is an author, speaker, designer, columnist and television design show guest. Kaplan has been in the interior design spotlight all of her career. Her design studio, Design Dimensions in Scottsdale, has served residential and commercial clients for 25 years. She is a creative and free thinker who enjoys new challenges and fresh ideas.

Lawrence Lake, ASID has performed award-winning design services for clients in 10 states in the past 20 years. He is an ASID Medalist recipient and his work has been cited by many juried competitions. He is a former president of the local chapter of ASID and has served ASID in many capacities throughout his career. Lawrence Lake Interiors is based in Scottsdale.

Donna Vallone, ASID has been a sought after professional interior designer for 30 years. She currently applies her unique style to residential and commercial projects throughout the Southwest and to hospitality projects in the United States and abroad.