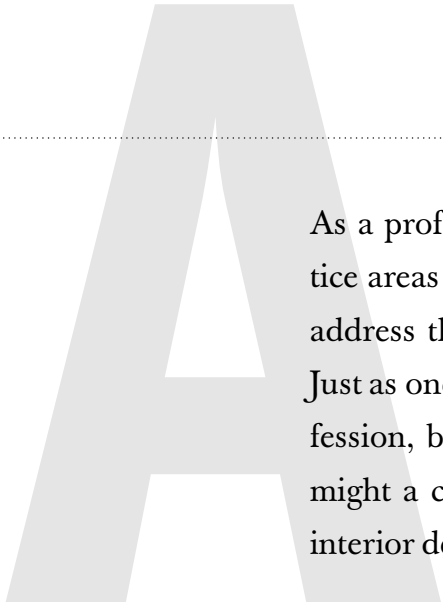


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Specialty Practices

CHERYL DUVALL, FIIDA



As a profession matures and evolves, it is inevitable that certain practice areas begin to emerge as specialties, requiring specific expertise to address their individual complexities. Interior design is no exception. Just as one may seek the services of a “family doctor” in the medical profession, but later need to visit a dermatologist for a specific need, so might a corporate client encounter similar circumstances in requiring interior design services.

Generally, the core services provided by interior designers follow the six basic phases of design: programming, schematic design, design development, contract documents, bidding and negotiation, and contract administration. Yet these core services may not meet all of a corporate client’s needs. As a result, design professionals have developed specialty practices to add supplemental services to their professional repertoires. These ancillary services are related directly to the core services but address the client’s needs with more depth and breadth than a general practitioner would. This attention to detail generally requires more time from the designer and thus generates more fees. Even though the cost to the client rises, if the designer executes these ancillary services well, the client enjoys a valuable return on his investment.

Some design professionals may seek a career path focused on one or more specialty services because these services make the best use of a particular set of skills they have already identified. Some may feel most comfortable working in the six basic phases of design, as generalists. Some may simply fall into a specialty as a matter of chance. And for many designers, an initial choice or chance may seem to have set a course that would be difficult to alter. Yet whatever their initial professional choices, all designers should be aware of the directions in which specialty practices take the profession of design. Without this awareness, a designer can fall behind in a competitive market for the best projects, lose a chance to strengthen a client relationship, make a misjudgment about building a design team, or miss an opportunity to develop professionally in the most productive and personally satisfying way possible.