Sensitivity to the role of design in society is as relevant at the beginning of the twenty-first century as it was at the dawn of the twentieth. Some, in fact, have referred to the year 2000 as the beginning of "the design century." Today, design is relevant as never before, particularly to the world of work. Following World War II, business theories and practices began to evolve and proceeded at a manageable pace; with the widespread use of computers in the 1980s, that evolution picked up speed and continues to do so today, when the only organizational constant is change. After World War II, the residential and corporate branches of the interior design profession began to move on separate tracks. Both have traveled rapidly, but in different directions. The interior designer's role as a professional consultant to business and organizations is the focus of this chapter. It is important to emphasize, however, that design is a global language that transcends home and workplace, geography and culture. To be a designer is to understand what all men and women have in common–their humanity.

INTERIOR DESIGN EMERGES AS A PROFESSION: 1900 TO 1930

The formal study

The formal study of interior design began in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century. Programs and curricula typically developed in art schools; at the great land-grant colleges of the Midwest, which were open to women and also boasted strong programs in home economics; and within academic programs in architecture, primarily at East Coast universities.

When interior design actually became recognized as a profession is a subject for debate. Some scholars believe that interior design was not acknowledged as an independent profession in America until 1897, when Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman, Jr., published *The Decoration of Houses*. The authors are considered the first to define the profession as it is viewed today, by clarifying the difference between interior decoration, which deals with surface treatments, and interior design, which encompasses the design of interior spaces.

Elsie de Wolfe, a contemporary of Mrs. Wharton's and a disciple of her approach, is considered to be one of America's first professional interior designers. Her expertise, however, was on the side of interior decoration,

which she used with great skill in the creation of interiors for the industrialist Henry Clay Frick and other wealthy New York families. She also accepted commissions from the prominent Beaux Arts architect Stanford White. Early twentieth-century women who are also considered among the first design professionals are Nancy McClelland, who brought design services to the general public through the decorating department she established at Wanamaker's department store in Manhattan; and Eleanor McMillen, whose McMillen, Inc. is considered to be America's first interior decorating firm.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the Industrial Revolution had reached full maturity. Daily life in the developed world had become increasingly mechanized, and Thomas Edison's electric light bulb was adding time to the work day and changing the nature of work. At the same time, the seeds of the Information Age–a century in the future–were being planted with Bell's telephone in 1876 and Edison's subsequent inventions of the telephone transmitter, the stock ticker, the phonograph, and the movie camera. During the early part of the twentieth century, there was little if any distinction between residential and nonresidential interior design; it was not until after World War II that North Americans became open to the idea of hiring design professionals for both their houses and offices. As the century began, the archetype of the workplace was the assembly line that Henry Ford created to produce the Model T.

An early business theorist, Frederick W. Taylor, extended the assembly line from the product to the worker. Considered to be industry's first efficiency expert, Taylor conducted time-study experiments that he developed into the concept he called *scientific management*. In Taylor's view, human workers could–and should–function as mechanically as machines. If workers were discouraged from thinking creatively and independently and completely removed from decision making, and if work was broken down into its simplest units, with all members of a single group of workers dedicated to identical tasks, efficiency would result. Taylor's methods, developed for the factory, eventually found their way into offices, along with typewriters, calculators, and switchboards and the women and recently arrived European immigrants who were hired to operate them.

Ford's assembly line, and Taylor's translation of it to human activity, next found its way to business and the chart of organization. The hierarchical organization, with its mechanical, organizational, and psychological elements