the early 1980s brought profound change to the structure of business, it also changed the way corporate leaders thought about their companies' real estate holdings, offices, and equipment. The 1980s brought radical change to the profession of interior design as well.

In the 1980s, companies continued the workplace economies that they had introduced during the heyday of reengineering. Because workers spent a greater amount of time at the office, they became attached to their computers and their workspaces. For the first time, interior designers needed to understand the concept of social dislocation as it applied to the workplace. Ergonomic and health issues came up as well. Workers complained that computers produced eye strain. The repetitive keystroking used during word and information processing created something entirely new—carpal tunnel syndrome. Long hours sitting in one place produced back problems and made choosing a well-designed office chair not only a matter of aesthetics but a health and insurance issue as well. Interior designers began to take a holistic approach to their work and explore new areas of knowledge, such as management and the social sciences, that their education may not have included.

The furniture systems that had been designed in the 1960s and 1970s, though an ideal solution for their time, were not able to address the technologically and physiologically based problems of the new workplace. Now, interior designers were called upon to do no less than integrate furniture, technology, ergonomics, building systems, and the environment. Design professionals not only had to expand their skills and knowledge, they needed to change their work style. Specifically, they had to learn to work quickly and collaboratively with their clients and to see office design from the perspective of every position on the organizational chart.

For a time, the speculative office building and its emphasis on first-time costs had relegated interior designers and furniture manufacturers to the periphery of the business decision-making loop. The new client–designer collaboration brought designers and manufacturers together for the first time in decades. Designers had gained a deep, fundamental understanding of workplace issues. Manufacturers realized that they could intensify the partnership if they listened to what designers had to say and learned from it. In addition, they could also add the critical component of research to their knowledge

base. Manufacturers began behavioral and observational research to study different solutions to workplace problems; that research continues to the present.

The economy was moving rapidly, too, with the high-risk economic climate creating great fortunes almost overnight. Talented residential designers including Peter Marino, Sister Parish, and Mark Hampton saw their once-small firms burgeon during the 1980s. Their clients became more significant as well. In addition to increasingly high-end residential work in New York and cities around the world, many received commissions to restore landmark residences and public buildings in the United States and abroad; others created and licensed their own lines of furniture or home accessories. At the same time, shelter magazines hit their stride. Computerized printing techniques made color reproduction beautiful but relatively inexpensive, and magazines such as *Architectural Digest* had influence to match their circulation. On the residential side of the street, interior design was becoming big business and remains so as the twenty-first century begins.

Global competition, coupled with a recession in the late 1980s through the early 1990s, lured many American interior design firms—corporate and residential alike—into the global market. These firms, particularly those specializing in corporate interiors, were lauded for their understanding of the building process. Some corporate design professionals, however, were criticized for bringing large but efficient buildings to countries where they were culturally problematic. Many European workers, for example, consider direct sunlight and fresh air to be standard office equipment and found it hard to adjust to permanently closed windows, closed-off interior cubicles, and air conditioning.

Nevertheless, a new breed of interior design professional had emerged. The weak economy of the early 1990s required many design firms that had been successful in the previous two decades to redefine their own businesses. In addition, the design profession became capital-intensive rather than labor-intensive. To rationalize the expense of capital expenditures for new technology, design firms began expanding the scope of services they provided. Many followed corporate America's lead and downsized, reengineered, or even closed their doors. Those left standing were stronger and better qualified to work in partnership with their clients.