

By and large, interior designers have measured quality by relying on intuition, or only the most basic of measurements to evaluate the success of their work.

Measuring Quality of Process—The Journey

The process is the experience of the client and others involved in the project as they move toward completion of the designed environment. If the current environment is Point A and the new environment is Point B, then process measures are the vector connecting the two points.

The process can be viewed in two categories: delivery and experience. *Delivery* measures are typical measures used as part of any project management process—variables such as fee compliance, schedule compliance, and resource allocation. *Experience* is more intangible and focuses on the client's relationship with the interior designer—the designer's communication, knowledge, empathy, timeliness, and so on.

EXPERIENCE

Customers expect good experiences, and they deserve them. The project team's responsibility is not only to solve problems but also to take the client through the journey of solving the problem, making it a collaborative exercise. An interior designer's future economic growth lies in the value of the experiences he or she provides to clients; goods and services are not enough. The journey is as important as the destination. A client's experience through the project process plays a pivotal role in the client's overall satisfaction with a project. Many experiences are characterized in "moments of truth"—such as when a consultant surprises the client with an immediate response or, conversely, fails to return a phone call. Experiences can play a negative role and decompose the client's perception of the interior designer in a very short time, regardless of how talented a project team is or how good the solution is.

DELIVERY

Given the complexity of the Project Circle—with its web of relationships, alliances, partners, contractors, and subcontractors—many extraneous factors contribute to and influence an interior designer's service delivery. Even with a designer's best intentions, sometimes projects cannot be completed on time or within budget. However, customers expect results, delivered on time, within or under budget. And the minimum expected from the interior designer is compliance with approved, well-communicated and formalized schedules, budgets, timelines, and deliverables. These delivery-focused aspects of the project process are understandably of concern to clients who want to achieve bottom-line results.