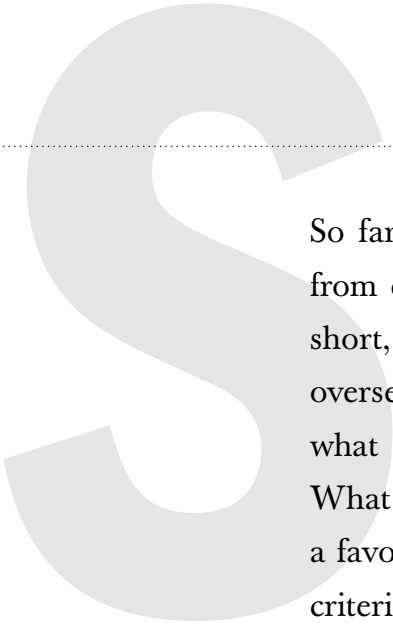


# 40

# Gauging a Successful Design

THE EDITORS AT INTERIOR DESIGN

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So far, we have covered all aspects of the interior design profession, from ethical considerations to global strategies to team dynamics—in short, the skills, philosophy, methodology, and resources necessary to oversee an interior design project from conception to completion. But what happens when the project comes to its inevitable conclusion? What are the standards for assessing the outcome’s merits? The key to a favorable result is knowing what “success” entails and the necessary criteria for achieving it.

Success is, of course, in the eye of the beholder. Although the opinions of the client and the designer are paramount, other points of view must be taken into account, including—but not limited to—that of the contractor, the occupants of the space, project managers, real estate consultants, the press, even society at large. Opinions and priorities obviously vary even within these categories, from project to project, and from day to day. As editors who review and critique interiors on a daily basis, we have finely honed—and highly individual—palettes of likes and dislikes. To assess a project’s merits, however, we suppress personal stylistic preferences, instead evaluating the quality of the underlying ideas and the ingenuity of their execution. Our task begins where the designer’s leaves off, after all the tears have been shed and wiped dry. We judge the finished work, without considering the obstacles and setbacks the designer and client encountered along the way. Design professionals, however, must take these production factors into account when evaluating outcomes.

A successful project addresses pragmatic exigencies and program requirements as well as more abstract notions of nuance, character, and ambiance—the qualities that elevate a design from a one-liner to a fully realized work of art. We experience and react to spatial environments on many levels: physically, visually, and intuitively. Space is a container for our emotions as well as our actions. Despite the ease with which many clients can rattle off a list of needs and preferences when it comes to matters of function and appearance, from ample storage to compositional elements such as color and materials, it is exceedingly difficult to describe how a space should feel. Tapping into this subconscious terrain is the root of good design.