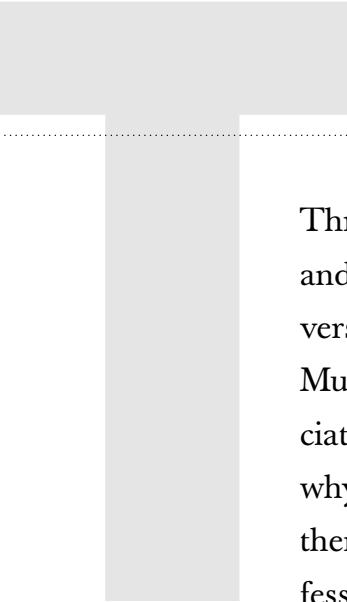


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The Professional Association

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Throughout the history of interior design, sole designers, design studios and firms have been pioneers in leading and nurturing the larger universe of designers toward new levels of achievement and recognition. Much of this activity has also taken place in professional nonprofit associations, which are dedicated to improving professional practice. But why join? Design professionals work hard at a wide range of tasks, all of them necessary for successful results and successful business and professional development. Elsewhere in this handbook, interior design professionals are urged to embrace life-long learning and to develop new skills to keep pace with market trends and technological developments. These development activities and the critical tasks that make up a day's work week after week make time a precious commodity for the serious designer. In a professional life with such demands, it may seem that joining an association is simply too much to ask.

In some cases, that may be so; for a particular designer, a particular professional association may not add enough value to make membership worthwhile in the face of competing demands for the designer's limited time. Yet associations are critical to the advancement of the interior design profession and its affiliates.

Throughout the history of design, leaders of these associations have evaluated, surveyed, and assessed (sometimes intuitively) the interior design profession outside their own studios (not just in terms of their own self-interest), and have established teams and organizations that work together to address issues of common concern. These societies, leagues, and associations have been formed, both informally and formally, to provide extra leverage for the priorities and causes of the design community. Design associations provide enhanced information sharing, legislative initiatives, continuing professional education, and fellowship of like-minded, although diverse, professionals around the world. Today, the interior design associations are continuing to build toward the future of the profession by reinventing themselves, proving