"All depends on the quality of the conversations."

In the 1990s, the design profession became capital- rather than labor-intensive. A design project required plenty of tasks, to be sure, but many of them could be relegated to machines rather than delegated to people. To rationalize the expense of bringing new technology into their organizations, design firms expanded the scope of their services. Because technology abhors stasis, new business opportunities continued to appear. However, as services expanded, capital expenditures expanded as well. The pressure on design firms intensified.

Design firms that are successful and that will remain so have an inherent understanding of the way people actually live and work. These firms are committed to intellectual as well as socioeconomic diversity and inclusion. They collaborate with, or sometimes employ, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, management experts, and financial analysts in order to better serve their client's aims. This change is profound and represents a new view of the profession, one that is multidisciplinary and user-centered. Above all, this view acknowledges that design, and designers, have a social responsibility. This improved value system for the design industry insists that design projects create a problem-specific solution and at the same time balance all of the client's goals—financial, organizational, functional, cultural, and environmental.

Successful firms are also taking a nonlinear approach to the process of design. Effective design is measured by the final product, to be sure, but also by the degree to which the process of design encourages everyone it affects to collaborate and to share and integrate ideas. In an organization, this brings together people at all levels, with all types of responsibilities. In a family, it means all generations, with all types of needs. This new inclusiveness understands the rigors of the design process and the complications of daily life. It anticipates new demands and continual change inside and outside the organization, the family or the group.

"You do not merely want to be considered just the best of the best. You want to be considered the only ones who do what you do."

Evolution is swift. Designers must not simply change but maneuver to a position ahead of the field. To stay there, to keep moving toward the ever-shifting finish line, they need support, information, and new knowledge. The *Interior*

Design Handbook of Professional Practice describes the changes currently occurring in the design profession and industry. It suggests new, unique ways of thinking and working. Ideally, this book will become a catalyst for all designers who seek excellence in interior design practice. It will be an essential tool for those who have made a commitment to sustained excellence and continually move the profession forward.

Interior Design magazine is proud to bring together the best writers and thinkers in the field today whose mission, under editor-in-chief Cindy Coleman, was to define design for the new millennium in terms that will help professionals, academics, and students of interior design realize their commitment to professional excellence. The *Handbook* is designed, itself, to be used flexibly and repeatedly by professionals in search of new definitions, new strategies, and new benchmarks by which to measure success.