

resources and progressed nowhere. Others battled to protect the designer's turf, only to find that management consultants and other business professionals had co-opted design principles for themselves, combined them with twenty-first-century management strategies, and are using them to win the war. In the second part of this book, best-practice examples show designers how to be more strategic in their methods, using information technology, financial management, marketing and human resources skills, and team dynamics to power the practice of interior design.

WHERE IS THE HEART OF IT?

The heart of this book is interior design itself. In Part Three, the authors show strategy in action, presenting works that have become benchmarks of interior design for the ways in which they address design strategy and research, sustainability, and global and specialty practices. This part also describes the legal environment and legislation that affect interior designers in the United States. Following the dictum that power isn't something that's conferred, it's something that's taken, American designers who choose to become involved in legislative affairs will grant themselves the power to affect the profession of interior design for decades to come.

Part Four focuses on the designer's scope of services. Narratives from a varied group of designers describe their individual methods of approaching the process of design. These descriptions address prelease services, positioning and programming, schematic design, design development, and contract documentation and administration. Part Five focuses on the management process and delineates the criteria for a successful design project, showing designers effective ways to manage relationships with the in-house design team, consultants, and clients.

WHAT IS AT RISK?

During the French Revolution executions were popular public affairs, and all of Paris was agog over the mind-numbing, heart-stopping efficiency of a new and improved model of the guillotine, a beheading device that consisted of two 14-foot posts from which an 88-pound diagonal metal blade, when its support mechanism was released by the executioner, dropped at the rate of 21 feet per second.

From the aristocrats' point of view, one of the heroes of the Revolution was the Scarlet Pimpernel, who formed a secret society dedicated to rescuing their class from the guillotine.

One of the Pimpernel's henchmen, a doctor, was led to the guillotine nevertheless. He valiantly placed his head in the notch above the basket and waited for the blade to fall. The executioner lifted the lever of the support mechanism but the blade stayed in place. "It is a sign!" the public shouted. "The doctor has done no harm. He is meant to be free!" The doctor raised his head, was whisked onto a waiting horse by the Pimpernel and sped to safety.

Another Pimpernel henchman, a lawyer, was next in line for the blade. He lowered his head. The executioner raised the mechanism. Again the same thing happened. Nothing. "There is nothing to negotiate," cried the populace. "The malfunctioning blade has cast doubt on his guilt!" The lawyer, too, was whisked to safety.

Next in line was Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, wife of King Louis XVI and a well-known designer in the land. One of her famous works was a farmhouse in the gardens of Versailles, where she liked to dress up as a milkmaid and pretend that she was a simple peasant. Marie ascended to the guillotine and put her head in position for its destiny. Again the executioner raised the lever and again nothing happened. Marie, willing to atone for an offhand remark about cake and, because she was a designer, in possession of a naturally contributive temperament, turned her head upward toward the blade and said to the executioner, "Perhaps if you'd toggle the mechanism ever-so-slightly to the left . . ." At which point the blade achieved its mission even more efficiently than its usual 70th of a second, and Marie's head fell into the waiting basket and the designer was no more.

THE MORAL OF THE STORY?

It's in the designer's nature to solve problems. But now, it's time for interior designers to solve problems and design solutions for their own profession. Our profession must become a group of people who speak with one voice on matters of regulation, legislation, ethics, and excellence. We must coalesce as an assembly of well-educated minds that, focused on a research question or a matter of social policy, can create, hold, and perpetuate new knowledge that will contribute to the universal intellectual enterprise. Because it's time for us to use every tool we can get our hands on, it's time for this book.

What do designers need? Knowledge. If that's a simple answer, it's as simple as a good design. There's more to it than we, or anyone, can anticipate. But, it is not more than we can—and should—handle.