



10 Things I Know About... *Commercial Design*

by Gia Milazzo Smith

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10. Know Your Goals

Form and function are so important when designing a commercial space. Want to increase productivity? Drive sales? Soothe and comfort? It all begins with the design of the space.

9. Know Your Customer

Likewise, being able to view the space through the eyes of your customers will ensure that you meet expectations. This is your opportunity to form a lasting bond and encourage future business by designing with their needs in mind.

8. Plan the Work

Will your place of business be open during renovation? How's your workload? When's your slow time? Pay attention to the peaks and valleys to have time on your side and plan accordingly.

7. Design for Longevity

There's a lot of pressure to follow trends, but design and materials should stand the test of time.

6. Color to Win

A number of studies have focused on the psychology of color and how it impacts spending habits,

productivity and more. Some colors may not match your personal palette, but could result in higher profits.

5. Timing is Everything

When a project hits a roadblock, the compounding delays can translate into big expenses. Proper planning and an eye for potential issues can save thousands in the long run.

4. Materials Matter

Anything used in commercial spaces must adhere to strict building codes and specifications. Choosing from commercial-grade products does not guarantee that you've met those requirements.

3. Get the Right People

The licensing, insurance requirements and level of skill needed to successfully complete a commercial project often vary from those needed for residential work. Building the right team before you break ground will ensure the project goes smoothly.

2. Put Safety First

There are numerous safety options and requirements that should to

be taken into account during the design phase. These may include fire prevention, disaster preparation and security systems.

1. Hire the Right Designer

The design process, project management skills and experience level needed in the commercial realm are different from those used to create a home. Ask for references, project histories and pictures. ■

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Designs by Gia

Gia Milazzo Smith is the owner of Designs By Gia, an interior design firm based in Central Massachusetts.

- Commercial Design
- Residential Design
- Project Management
- Decor

www.DesignsbyGia.com
508-847-6221