



ELEVATE

Interior Design through **Advocacy**

Issue 03 - Spring 2021

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Telling Your Story: Clarifying Our Roles in a Complex Industry

The architecture and design industry is complex. It includes diverse project types, hundreds of different job titles, and professionals with a range of educational backgrounds.

For commercial interior designers, it can be difficult to relay all this context when we get asked, "so, what do you do?"

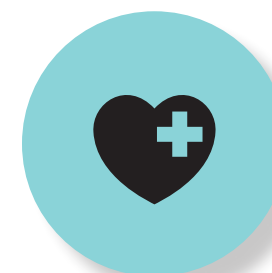
We're taking it back to basics to help you tell your story as a design professional.

1 Use specific terminology to avoid misconceptions.
Have you ever experienced these reactions when you introduce yourself using only the term "interior designer"?

You should help me with my house!
Fun! Do you pick out stuff for millionaires?
I've seen what you do on HGTV!

Next time try introducing yourself as a commercial interior designer and notice how that provides you the chance to explain more about what you do through follow up questions instead of being met with an onslaught of incorrect assumptions.

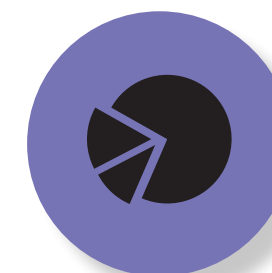
2 Be ready to give examples of what commercial interior design is.
Commercial interior design refers to the design of commercial environments including healthcare, education, corporate, retail, hospitality, restaurants, lab/research, and mixed-use developments. If you design spaces in one of these sectors, you work in the field of commercial interior design!



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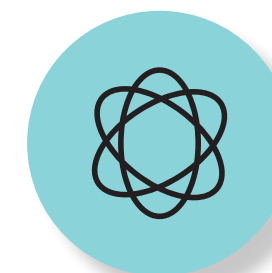
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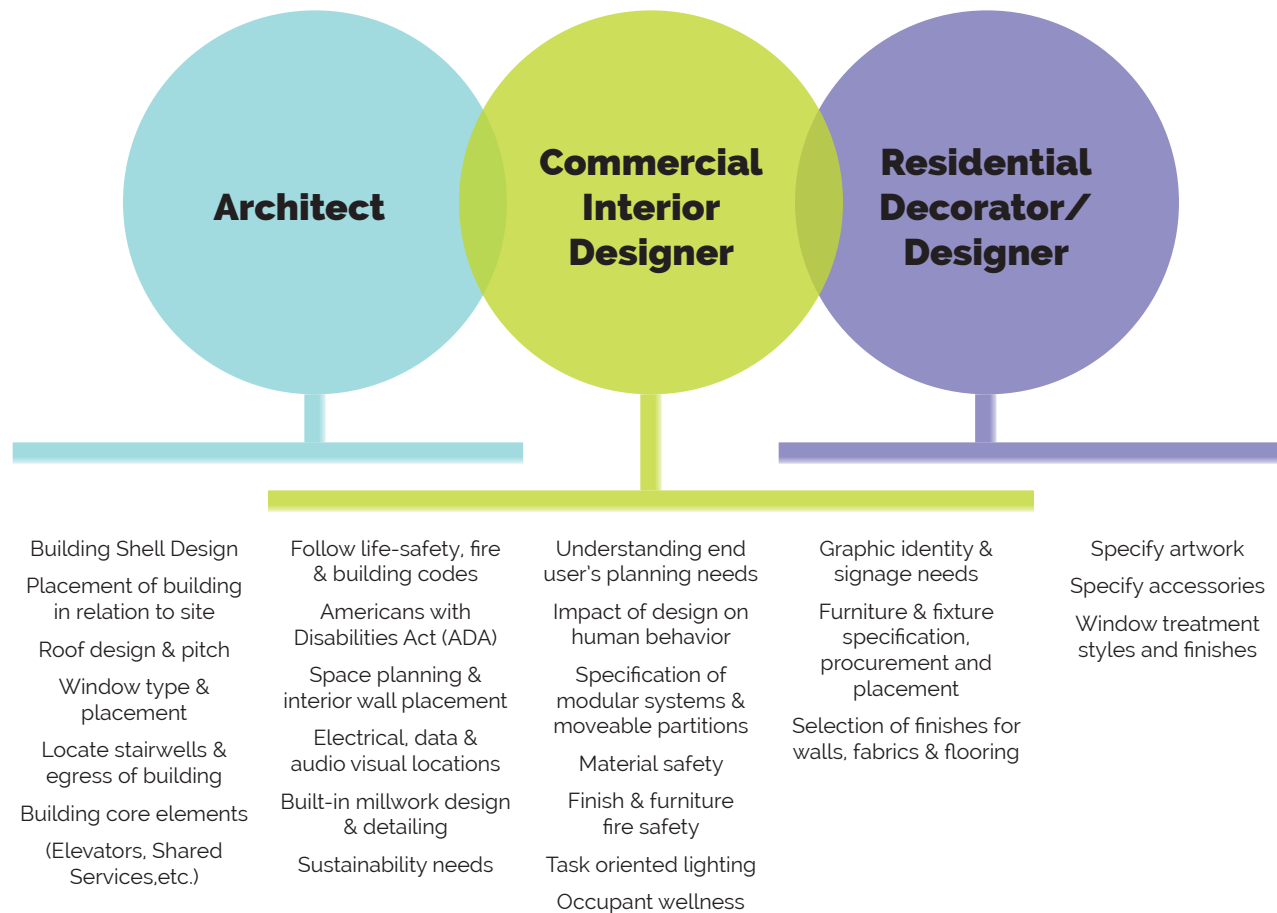
MIXED-USE
DEVELOPMENT

3 Respectfully elaborate on the valid differences between the work you do and that of residential interior designers/decorators and architects as there are real distinctions in how we all practice.

Both residential and commercial interior designers create functional and beautiful spaces. But unlike designers who solely practice residential design, commercial interior designers follow life-safety, fire, and building codes, and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) specifications, as well as best practices for wellness, sustainability and green building practices, and ergonomics.



There is also some overlap in skills and responsibilities between architects and commercial interior designers because commercial interior design emerged from the practice of architecture in the last half of the 20th century due to the increased complexity of interior spaces and a new demand for thoughtfully designed interiors.



4 Don't forget to emphasize the WHY. Save time to share the bigger passions behind why you do your work in addition to what your work is and how you do it.



IIDA California's advocates used Simon Sinek's Golden Circle method to define our collective WHY.

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Spokesperson Centerfold

Advocates from IIDA's Northern and Southern California share their thoughts about the impact of our profession and IIDA's efforts to continually elevate it.



"The importance of advocating for the vocation of interior design became clear to me very early on in my career when I found myself explaining what I actually do for a living. In order for our profession to be widely understood and respected alongside so many others, we need to be vocal about the importance of our role; we not only create holistic spaces that succeed in functionality and aesthetic harmony, we do so while protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the end user, often in the code-impacted commercial environment. The more voices we have, the louder we are and the more impactful our message becomes."

Katie Toth, President
Southern California Chapter

"Many of us in the commercial interior design world aren't aware of how much of an investment IIDA makes on our behalf. IIDA invests significant hours and energy to the advocacy cause. I am proud to be part of an organization what supports legislation which will benefit our industry."

Melanie Harbert, Advocacy Co-Chair
Silicon Valley City Center

"Advocacy today is more important than ever. Companies and individuals are stepping up to support all kinds of causes like never before. Our professional association channels our collective voice for bigger impact to support the causes that are important to our profession."

Verda Alexander, President-Elect
Northern California Chapter



"The spaces we inhabit are the foundations of our health and wellness. We advocate for our profession so these spaces will continue to elevate lives."

Adam Newton, Asst VP of Advocacy
Northern California Chapter



"It is all of our responsibility to keep our industry strong and thriving. Each day we work to impact the health and safety of the public through the design work we do. And in order to keep in our industry strong we need to advocate for the work we do. So again, Advocacy is all of our responsibility."

Christine Peter, co-VP of Advocacy
Southern California Chapter



Did you know that California's laws regulating interior design affect how you practice?
Did you know they are actively reviewed every 5 years? Most designers are not aware of or engaged in this process – but IIDA is!

Christina Marcellus
Capitol Advisors

Lobbyist for IIDA's
California chapters

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From the Frontlines: Sunset Review

In early 2022, the California Business & Professions committee will review the regulation of the interior design occupation as established in 1990 through SB 153, in a process called a “sunset review”.

IIDA's California advocates work with our lobbyist to engage with the B&P committee during this process to support the continuation of existing regulation while also providing testimony about modifications and expansions to the current law that will more accurately reflect how commercial interior designers practice.

WHAT IS A SUNSET REVIEW?

A sunset review is a formal legislative evaluation of a state-authorized regulatory body. The process provides an opportunity for legislators, members of the profession, and members of the public to assess the effectiveness and performance of the body that is under review. The sunset review allows for relevant changes and updates to be made to the law that governs California's regulated professions, and typically yields a recommendation to:

- retain the agency, board, or program as is,
- modify the agency, board, or program, or
- allow the agency, board, or program to terminate.

Many states add the sunset clause when a law is first passed or a regulatory body is first created, with a review frequency that can range from every two years to ten years after the law passes. California Interior Design regulation is typically reviewed every 5 years, though the Covid-19 pandemic postponed the 2021 Sunset Review by one year.

WHAT IS IIDA'S POSITION DURING CALIFORNIA'S 2022 SUNSET REVIEW?

IIDA supports the continuation of a voluntary certification or registration for interior designers, including commercial interior designers who practice in the code-impacted environment. Due to the health, safety, and welfare impacts of commercial spaces, the public's best interest is served when commercial interior design is recognized and regulated.

IIDA advocates for commercial interior designers to be regulated by a state board. The current regulation is overseen by a private board. California is the only state in the country utilizing a private board to oversee interior design regulation.

IIDA submits that the qualifying exam for certified or registered commercial interior designers be the NCIDQ exam. The NCIDQ exam is the industry's national standard and is required by many states for certification or registration. California currently does not accept the NCIDQ exam.

IIDA argues for commercial interior designers' ability to stamp & seal drawings within a defined scope and for the acceptance of that stamp to be codified in state law to ensure consistent acceptance at building departments throughout California. Currently, Certified Interior Designers do not have codified stamp & seal privileges and experience inconsistencies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction when submitting drawings for review.

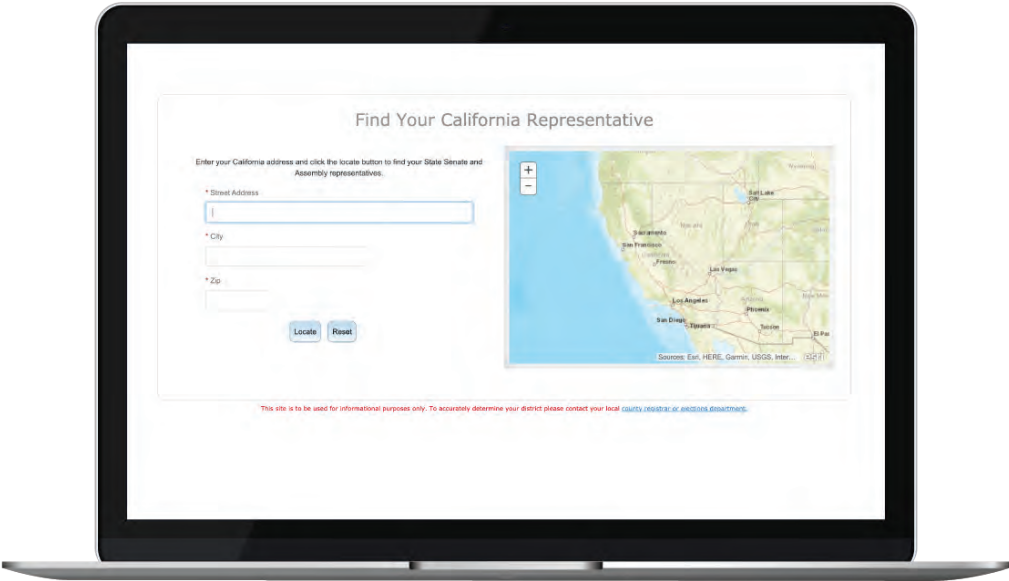
IIDA recommends that “commercial interior designers” be included in California's definition of “design professional” which also includes architects, engineers, landscape architects, and land surveyors. Without this recognition, the thousands of commercial interior designers practicing in California are legally excluded despite their critical role working in code-impacted environments.



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Find Your California Representative

Find out who represents you in California's State Senate and State Assembly by visiting findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov and search both your home and work addresses.



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**Thank you to our 2020-2021
Advocacy Sponsors**



Interested in joining our advocacy efforts in California? Reach out to your local IIDA advocates!

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