

October 14, 1995



# Realty & Building®

Volume 214 Number 16

The Economist - FOUNDED 1898

ISSN 0891-9200

CHICAGO AND REAL ESTATE AND CONSTRUCTION NEWSWEEKLY

**THE RENOVATION ISSUE**

**OCTOBER 14, 1995**

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# Designing Office Space

**D**esigning an office can be an overwhelming experience. Many decisions have to be made such as space planning, lighting, material and finish selection. Each phase of design has to be properly thought through because of its impact on the client. Mistakes made mean having to live with them or paying the price of redoing work already completed.

Having an interior designer on your team of building experts, which may include an architect and general contractor, can save you from making costly mistakes, enhance the aesthetics of your office and make the design process run a lot smoother. You would not think of asking an electrician to fix a plumbing problem; you would consult with a plumbing expert. If you are designing an office, you should consult

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an interior designer. A trained professional, licensed in his or her state, will know the best usages of space, proper lighting application, material and finish selection for your project.

Hiring an interior designer from the beginning of your project is a good idea. The designer should be working with the architect and contractor from the outset to help coordinate all phases of the job and to prevent any miscommunication. A trained design professional will conduct a needs analysis survey for your project. Through meetings with you and your staff, important information can be ascertained that will be used in developing your plans and selecting your materials.

For example, if you or a member of your staff has a chronic back or knee problem, the designer may refrain from selecting ceramic tile for a floor application. Ceramic tile can be a very difficult material to stand on for any length of time. Hardwood or vinyl flooring might be a better choice in this situation. An interior designer can also address health and safety issues in a design plan.

Very few office situations are the same. Clients have different budgets, needs and space usages. An interior designer has the resources to find the proper furniture, materials and tradespersons to create an aesthetically pleasing and functional environment that reflects their individuality. Remember, one should be a well educated consumer in selecting the best possible design team for an office environment. □