



Includes CD-ROM

Professional Practice for Interior Designers

Fourth Edition



Christine M. Piotrowski, FASID, IIDA

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FOR
Interior Designers

Fourth Edition

Christine M. Piotrowski, FASID, IIDA



John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

*For my parents, Martha and Casmer:
I am sorry you are not here to share this with me.*

This book is printed on acid-free paper. (∞)

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PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FOR

Interior Designers

The profession of interior design is challenging and competitive. Being a professional interior designer, however, is more than creating exciting interior spaces. Those within the profession must willingly accept the legal, ethical, social, and business responsibilities that go with being a professional interior designer in the twenty-first century. Clients expect excellence not only in creative work but in conduct as well. Ethics complaints and legal challenges have increased, indicating that clients demand more from interior designers in today's profession.

Part of the education of an interior designer rests in learning about the business practices of the profession and how these practices impact the creative side of interior design. Regardless of the size of firm or design specialty, professional interior designers must understand and conduct themselves as businesspeople. Today, clients are more inclined to question a designer's decisions and hold interior designers responsible, resulting in an ever-increasing need for comprehensive knowledge of business. This knowledge contributes to the welfare of the client by saving money and creating value in design decisions.

Since its first publication in 1990, this book has become the leading choice of educators for use in teaching an interior design business practices course. This book is also embraced by professionals who tell me they continually refer to the topics within this book as they work for others or start their own practices. This new edition adds a wealth of answers to practical questions about the practice itself for the already engaged professional.

As the practice of interior design continues to be transformed through the challenges of legislation, sustainable design, aging in place, advancing electronic technologies, and generational changes in the workplace, so has the professional practice of interior design. Information and ideas on revisions for the fourth edition were obtained from working professionals, educators, and industry associations. A large body of business topics literature was reviewed to ascertain current information on business in general and interior design business in particular.

In addition, this book has been thoroughly reviewed to bring additional clarity to the content. Some sections have been relocated to improve the logical arrangement of topics. New material has been added to every chapter, whether through updated information, new examples, revised methods of practice, or topics that have evolved since the previous edition.

The text remains easy to read, with many new examples added to help explain some of the more difficult topics. In this edition, each chapter now begins with a list of key terms and concepts, as well as a list of critical issues. Also added to each chapter are brief case studies or scenarios called "What Would You Do?" describing situations that present, for the most part, ethical questions. These scenarios will no doubt encourage discussion and debate whether by students or professionals.

Practitioners will continue to find this book to be a thorough discussion of every aspect of planning and maintaining the business tasks of interior design. Several new discussions have been added that focus on topics more attuned to the professional. Many topics have been expanded and new items included so that this book continues to be a comprehensive text on interior design business practices.

Let me share with you highlights of the changes and additions to the fourth edition of this book.

Part I and Part II provide a comprehensive overview of the profession. The chapters in Part I offer a foundation for professional practice. Topics include defining a profession, why the study of business practices is important, the NCIDQ examination, professional association requirements, the importance of licensing, pursuing continuing education, and giving back to the profession. Because it was strongly suggested that one should not be discussed without the other, Chapters 3 and 4 in Part I bring together critical ethics and legal responsibilities issues. The chapters in Part II focus on goals and career options. This combination was suggested by educators to show students that there is more to the profession than working in either “residential” or “commercial” design.

A major restructuring of Part III brings more clarity and order to the topics about establishing an interior design practice. The reader is led through the process of examining motivations and risks, as well as decisions concerning the structure and legal formation. Part III then culminates with the preparation of a business plan. Students and practitioners will learn that starting a business is certainly a goal worth achieving, but not one to be taken on lightly.

Part IV has been reorganized as well, with a focus on topics needed to help grow a practice. An expanded discussion on strategic planning should be of particular importance to any practitioner with the goals of expanding and enriching his or her practice. The chapters on business organization, personnel management, and business finances have been updated as well.

Educators and professionals suggested that the discussion of marketing and business development be next in the sequence. Part V on marketing and business development has been revised to include information on branding and buyer behavior. The promotional tools chapters have also been reorganized, bringing current practices such as creating and utilizing Web sites into proper focus. In addition, business etiquette is now more succinctly discussed in this part of the book.

Parts VI and VII are thought by many to be the heart of the discussion of professional practice. Part VI focuses on compensation and fees, contracts for interior design services, product pricing explanations, the Uniform Commercial Code, and warranties and products liability. The updated material in Part VII discusses project management trade sources, contract documents, and all facets of contract administration.

Finally, Part VIII places the spotlight on getting a job and settling into a first or next job in interior design. Chapter 33 discusses the job search, portfolios, and resumé. A consolidated section on electronic job-hunting topics has been created for this chapter. The last chapter highlights the interview and the transition from student to professional. A discussion of career change issues for professionals concludes the text.

New to this edition is the listing of Internet Web sites that are included in the References at the back of the book that the reader may wish to search for additional information. These Web sites include listings for professional associations and affiliated associations or organizations that are important to the study of professional practice and the interior design profession. Also included in the References are magazines, journals, and other print media. The glossary has

been expanded to include all the new terms that have been introduced in this edition of the text. The long version definition of interior design from the NCIDQ is provided in the Appendix.

For the first time, a companion CD-ROM disc is included with this book. The compact disc contains many additional short articles that supplement the main theme of the chapter as well as copies of business forms included in the text. Some business forms proprietary to a design firm might not be included due to a design firm's request; however, a similar form has been added to the compact disc. A special section on the CD-ROM includes numerous references from older resources that were previously listed in the text. For educators, a revised *Instructor's Manual*, located on the Instructor Companion Web site, can be accessed by contacting the publisher.

This edition also includes a 210-day trial of the Standard edition of Design Manager, a software program for project management and accounting used by many interior design practitioners. This trial version allows students and other readers to experience creating documents and performing accounting procedures by entering information themselves possibly as part of class projects. The author and publisher do not recommend this program over other software programs that are on the market. However, since Design Manager has been widely accepted this trial version offers real world practice with an advanced system. Many designers find general software programs such as Quickbooks to also be of use in their practices. The reader should try out several systems and become proficient in those that are likely to be used in practice.

Thoughtful criticism and suggestions from students, educators, and professionals alike have helped to improve the fourth edition, and I am grateful for their suggestions. It is an honor that this book has been embraced by so many educators who teach the business side of interior design and has been chosen by professionals to assist them with their practices. Thank you to all and I wish you continued success in your professional practices.

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Christine Piotrowski



Susan Coleman, FIIDA, FIDEC, CID retired after 31 years as a design educator at Orange Coast College. She continues to work as a consultant for Education 4 Work writing grants, developing career development materials, conducting workshops for faculty, and writes a bi-weekly newsletter. In addition, Susan consults with design firms and architects on learning resource projects. Coleman has served in leadership positions with Interior Design Educators Council, International Interior Design Association and California Council for Interior Design Certification. Traveling continues to be a passion with Susan as she takes groups around the globe to study Architecture, Design, Textiles, and Crafts.

In order to prepare students to compete in the global workplace, we must focus on teaching students how to learn. The most valuable skill that we can teach our students is how to access, analyze, and apply information to the “real world” of design practice. Teachers must become the facilitators of learning. As we move from the industrial age to the age of technology, we must equip students with the skills to become lifelong learners.



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