

Chapter 1

Introduction to

Design Engagement

Reflect for a moment on when you first decided to learn more about design. Did this interest begin at an early age or did it surface after taking an introductory design class? Or did the calling come well into adulthood when at a crossroad you considered a new career path? After that interest began taking root, did you start observing the world around you in different ways? Did this coincide with looking more critically at interiors and considering alternative ways of designing spaces? Did your curiosity lead to questions? “I wonder what that is made of?” “How was that built?” Did a specific interior designer or design instructor inspire you to come into the field? While everyone’s story is unique, someone or something ignited your interest in the field. And this new focus, in turn, motivated new learning—and you began developing further than you thought possible.

A Starting Point

The starting point for learning anything begins with a question. Curiosity leads to questions. A search for information and a way to gain skills begins. Such a starting point falls anywhere along a continuum of knowledge, from a beginner’s understanding to advanced expertise. Even though an initial interest might be personal, as knowledge grows, so does the potential for creative thinking and design contributions. A comprehensive understanding of design allows development to progress on solid footing.

This book begins with *an interest in interior design*. It is our starting point. You, the reader, and we, the authors, must share an orientation to what *design means* and reach a common understanding. The central premise of this book is that in today’s world memorable design goes beyond form and function. Having a clear understanding of design

and its purpose in human existence sets the stage for later discussion on the six markers of memorable design, engaged experience, and a role for stories.

We aspire to design in ways that are supremely satisfying and innovative. While creating designs with similar materials, similar elements, and similar needs, the manner in which individuals know and combine these components differs, creating unique interior spaces. The process and its results, in turn, offer discovery, enjoyment, and a sense of heightened belonging in everyday life. Such knowing, doing, and experiencing of design have a variety of meanings that eventually impact the quality of human life.

Design has long been described as *product*—as noun or an object. From this view, we speak about form and space, or style. We notice design materials and the uniqueness of substance and arrangement. Design is also a *process*—a verb, an ordering principle guiding spatial arrangement. From this standpoint, we notice how to organize and think about how designers create within the interior. Within this process, we also recognize not only the designer but also the clients, and those who occupy the interiors. Process encompasses design thinking and creative problem solving that guide decision making and action. Design occurs in many *professions*, such as industrial and product design, engineering design, urban and regional planning, landscape architecture, architecture, interior design, environmental graphic design, design communications, set design, and textile design. Yet designers, educators, clients, and users also view design as an *experience*. According to Yi-Fu Tuan,¹ the definition of experience engages many modes—visual, symbolic, behavioral, social, and cultural—from which to come to know reality. Design experience is multimodal and reflects the force of the whole, the gestalt, the nondiscursive spirit of design. The physical, intellectual and spiritual mingle as parts of design experience.

To define design as experience shifts the focus from a purely physical entity to *human meanings of interiors or places*. Design in this sense is *relational*. It is about connections among elements, settings, roles, and people. Design experience presents a deeper and more expansive understanding of design as a whole. In other words, we ask, “What is being experienced? How is it experienced?” “What does the experience mean to designers, to clients, to users?” “How does design experience transform human living?”

To become truly knowledgeable about design experience requires an understanding of both people and place. In turn a person filters

design knowledge, theory, and skills to arrive at a more comprehensive knowing of interiors. Having knowledge about environmental psychology differs from knowing and applying environmental psychology within interior design. Having knowledge of color theory differs from knowing and applying color to transform interior spaces. It is this latter integration of knowing and doing that we seek to expand.

Bill Stumpf, a well-known industrial designer of the late twentieth century, wrote one of the most powerful passages about design:

I'm going to talk about design, that . . . immensely human construct. I should say that by design I mean the process both physical and mental by which people give order to objects, community, environments, and behavior. Like many hard-to-define but profoundly important activities, design is both art and science. It aims to make our existence more meaningful, connect us to natural realities, show us advantages to graceful restraint, infuse serious work with playful humor, extend human capacity—physical, emotional and spiritual. Designers make ideas into things.²

This observation by Stumpf captures the humaneness of design work, the physical materiality and the thinking involved. He cites objects, places, or paths to which humans bring order. He speaks to interconnected design thinking, making, and experience—as both artistic and scientific. He beautifully captures intents of design as connections to human realities of work, fun, extending human capacities, and making living meaningful. Design links humans in their environments and to larger meanings of living life.

Specifically, the framework for this book rests on the following assumptions, which also should be considered when designing interiors:

- While design crosses different fields, we define the interior as the architectural interior and its elements.
- Knowledge about interior design is interdisciplinary in nature and rooted in art, humanities, social sciences, and business.
- Design of interiors involves intellectual information and analysis combined with creative thinking, making, and innovation. It is holistic in its way of being in the world.
- Design of interiors adds meaning to human life by impacting built and natural environments and the quality of the human experience.

- Designers and their clients benefit from investing in design processes, design products, places, and paths that result in meaningful engagement.
- Interior design, as a profession, attracts individuals who want to see their knowledge, skill, and talents at work in a real-life situation.

These designers:

- Make new visual and experiential forms
- Design for and serve clients and users
- Have the ability to observe, interpret, and apply cultural, historical, social, and technological perspectives in their work³

Such assumptions reinforce design as a whole, the gestalt—the more than a sum of parts. People, as individuals, groups, societies, or cultures show behaviors and values that connect to spaces and the objects within them. When we study these connections with care, a fuller appreciation of designing interiors emerges. Society benefits as well. Yet to study such a complex topic, it is helpful to know the key features that form fundamental connections and act across time, people, and settings.

Design Engagement Framework

In recognition of the issues just discussed, we developed the Design Engagement Framework to acknowledge a holistic approach to the discipline. The horizontal direction of the framework (Figure 1-1) underscores three key features: *designer or design team*, *interior environment and its elements*, and *client and users*. Each is a stakeholder: individuals and an environment at stake. Designers take roles of observer, interpreter, planner, translator, communicator, and creator of a place. Clients and users are perceivers and residents to which the place must belong and for which the design has a various meanings.

The core environmental setting—the interior design—maintains a powerful role. It calls forth and gives energy through a common purpose when two or more of these individuals come together. The interior and its design become their link, their uniting force. Designer, client, and users, with their distinctive roles, help advance ideas and contribute to a best resolution for their common interests in the interior setting and its purpose. Finally, the built design stands on its own for others to experience, to assess or recreate. The built design communicates in a different voice, a nondiscursive voice. Yet, it realizes

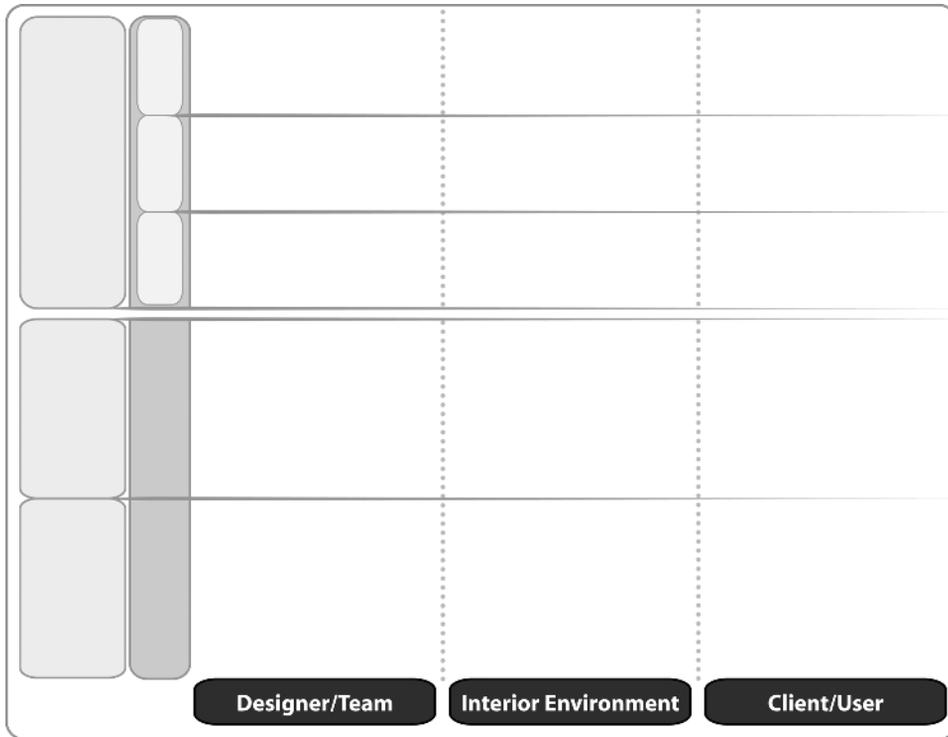


Figure 1-1 Design Engagement Framework: Stakeholders Feature.
Source: Brooke Godfrey.

tangible and intangible judgments and tastes that are now concrete reality. Often, the space reflects the designer's and client's priorities, meanings, as well as their ability to draw connections and a best fit between people and their spaces.

Moving vertically, the framework considers time features (Figure 1-2). Time cycles throughout projects given different filters, as ideas become physical realities. Time comes into play when thinking, researching, and planning. Design requires construction-installation time. Likewise, time emerges as a feature when presentation and design performance engage stakeholders. Time at this stage may be private and/or public where local and global represent platforms of performance. A private time for designer, firm, setting, or client reflects occasions when one might document and assess work in one's own way. Local and global times reflect level, type, or scope of design works. If one considers only the designer and team column, local and global help assess where recognition of design skill, knowledge, or leadership is realized as an example. If one considers the interior settings column, finished designs

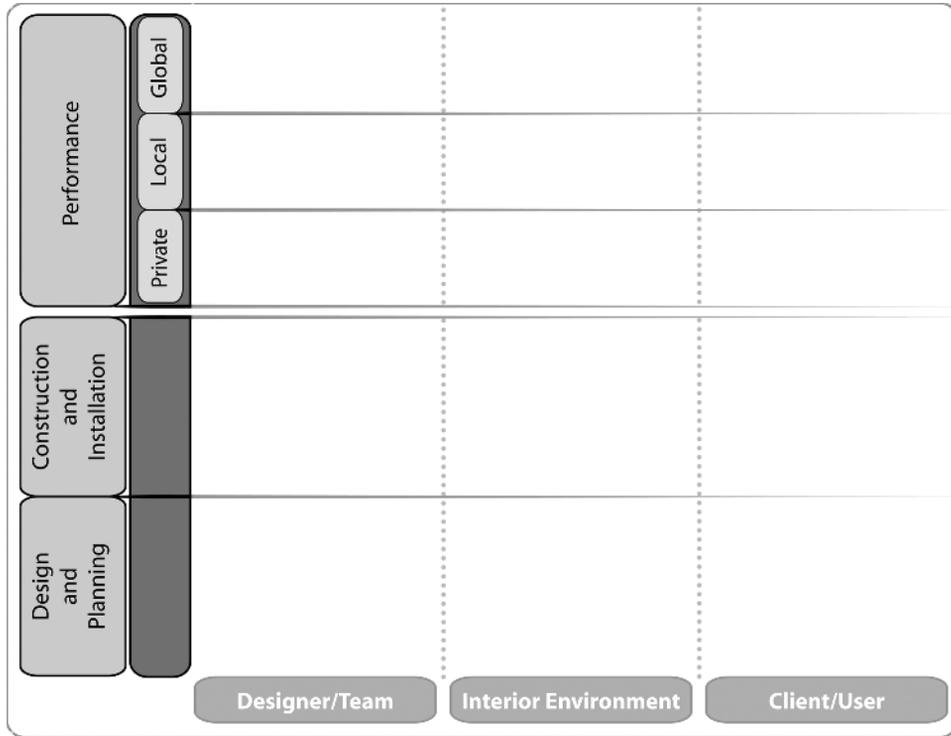


Figure 1-2 Design Engagement Framework: Time Features.
Source: Brooke Godfrey.

stand on their own with the characteristics of the interior, personality of interior, and a site-specific location. They become a socio-cultural artifact at a level that provides a standard. They can equally reflect a historical design that has local presence and meaning but later brings new exploration to the world stage. If one explores the client or user column, one might ask how a client contributes to or markets the interior as an asset of local or global profile.

Articulating the role of time in design responds to the changing nature of design. Interior design is never static. The Design Engagement Framework (Figure 1-3) allows practiced designers as well as beginning students to see design as relational and encourages the exploration of connections from the framework. They may also see a design feature singularly; for instance in Example 1, the focus is on the interior setting during construction where a new skill or material is studied. Another example is client/user participation at a time of planning. With greater complexity, relational issues and questions might emerge when considering vertical time frames

and their interactivity. For instance (Example 2), what is the fluidity and constancy of a design team's membership from design planning through design construction to design completion? And what membership is constant? What members come and go? What are the costs? How efficient and effective is the make up of the team? Or the same progression of movement could be explored from what the interior itself reveals as a design historian or anthropologist might develop.

Conversely, the framework allows discernment of a single time phase, such as "local time presence and market" across multiple stakeholders of design firm, interior place, and client-users (Example 3). If marketing is being developed, what might be shared about firm, place, and client in the context of the community? What does each bring? What is their impact on one other? How does the project benefit the local community? Again, we think the framework helps advance seeing knowledge and skill through a relational mindset.

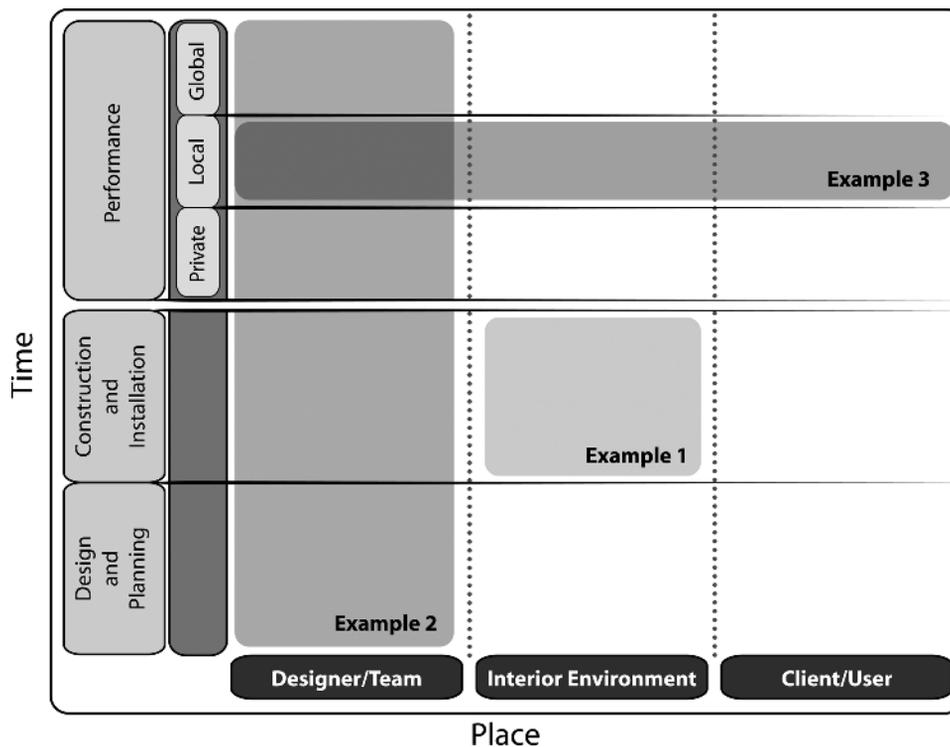


Figure 1-3 Design Engagement Framework: The whole with highlighted example.
Source: Brooke Godfrey.

Design Engagement as Relational Explained Further

The Design Engagement Framework draws from the early work of V. T. Boyd.⁴ A design historian, Boyd and her colleague Timothy Allen examined ways objects are valued. Their model (Figure 1-4) presents the intersecting continuums of the object's perceived inherent (inner) value and instrumental (external) value.

For example, a card from a friend may have a high inherent value but a low instrumental one. Each of the model's quadrants identifies one of the following: (1) objects valued for high aesthetic quality and lower functionality (a beautiful sculpture), (2) objects valued for high inherent and functional value (a sexy and comfortable chair), (3) objects valued for high functional use with lower aesthetics (a tool), and (4) objects viewed as having little functionality or aesthetic value (a grocery bag too thin to hold purchases). The model recognizes the relationship among the designer, object, and perceiver, as well as the values we place on objects. This model goes beyond understanding reactions to designs in terms of either "likes" or "dislikes," yet the study also documents that such responses offer early leads to final value positions.

Boyd's model inspired an early version of the Design Engagement Framework, which considered social issues, valuing, and other influences when teaching, learning and doing design projects in education.⁵

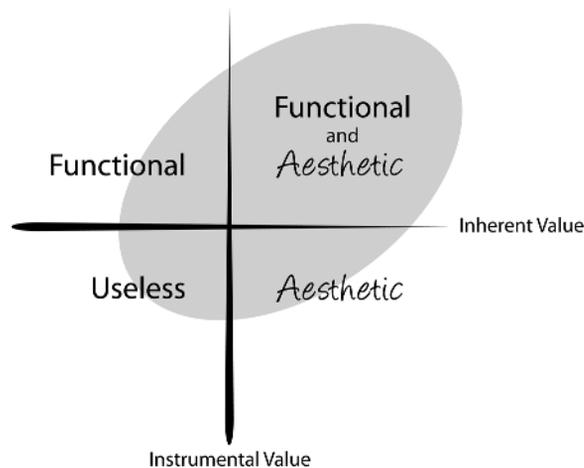


Figure 1-4 V.T. Boyd Model: Instrumental and Inherent Value of Objects.
Source: Brooke Godfrey.

It focuses the study of student development of design thinking and skills during phases of preparation, production, and presentation as well as performance. The work also acknowledged a creative and evaluative position for thinking and design skills.

Having such frameworks, we argue, encourages the study of design thinking, production, implementation, and evaluation across contexts. The underlying premise of a holistic view further references a common question of designers, “How should I approach this project to achieve the *best* results for the client and those who use the space?” “What’s definitive for the context?” Again, these pose more thoughtful questions than “Is *my* design idea or solution right or wrong?” This latter question focuses on “me,” not how the design works in the context of the larger society. Given current realities of technologies and global complexity, design practice depends more on team efforts rather than a solo designer. Design work mixes human self-reliance and human collaboration to find answers.⁶

Such settings require substance in knowledge and clear communication. As the field holds, best designs progress from a sound design premise and clear communication, rather than just style consumption. True communicators and translators, designers do not just act as interpreters alone. They problem solve like artists who imagine and create three-dimensional forms; they share similarities with psychologists who study human thought and affective processes; they are sociologists who study group behavior, as well as anthropologists who study cultures. When planning spaces, designers need to know who is involved, when, where, and for what reason.

If places express values and beliefs, then designers need to integrate value systems with behaviors, and occupant needs, as well as technological and cost parameters. Thinking this way reinforces the way Bill Stumpf cast design as multifaceted.

From Framework to Markers of Impact

While the framework describes people and place variables, it further offers *five design concepts underlying relational strength*. These concepts help clarify what interior designers might expect about typical connections appearing in the design process. The discussion of these concepts also helps explain the markers of impact covered in Chapters 3 to 8 (Figure 1-5).

Allowing discovery of “what’s definitive” in design thinking and in experiences of being in an interior, real-life design narratives offer insights into threshold moments. These narratives clarify engaged

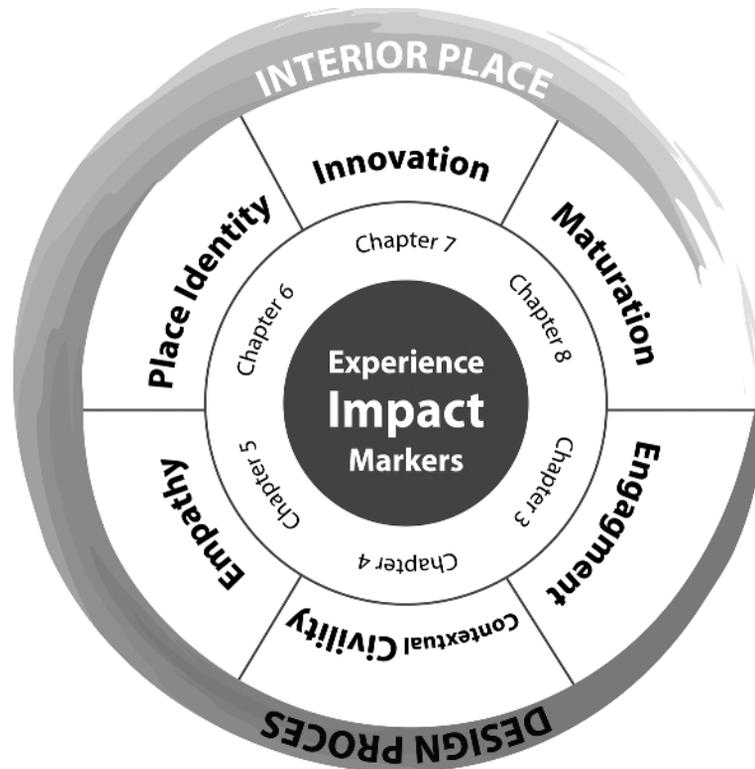


Figure 1-5 Design and Interior as Experience: Impact Markers per Chapters.
Source: Brooke Godfrey.

experiences in human-environment transactions. Figure 1-5 identifies the markers as: engagement, contextual civility, empathy, place identity, innovation, and maturation. As illustrated by the narratives, the impact markers build on and advance existing knowledge in interior design.

In returning to the five concepts of relational strength, how does the Design Engagement Framework help clarify what is meant by *engagement*—the first marker? In the sense we are using it here, engaged experience means commitment, having a passion and deep-seated care for what is known, what is done, how it is done, and who is involved. It's about being stewards as well as designer, consumers, and users of the built and natural environment. Even using the term “stakeholder” and “environment” suggests a deeper quality of commitment to the project and one another, bringing best thinking and skills to work. The stories found in this book show different levels of commitment in designers and user teams. For example, when designers do not keep clients adequately involved throughout a project, disengagement may

occur. Yet when designers actively engage their clients in the process (and this may involve differences of opinion and creative tension), the outcome can be rewarding, as seen in the following story.

MATTHEW'S RESTAURANT

A tug of war between designer and client on a signature piece of sculpture for the design of a 4-star restaurant was begging to be resolved. This conflict seemed in direct odds with the congenial relationship established between the interior designer, Larry Wilson, and his client, who wanted a very special design for his first restaurant, seating 65 people. In the beginning of the process, only physical parameters challenged Larry, not client opposition. This was to come later.

The acquired restaurant space was located in a dated branch bank space and had more than its share of limitations, including a low ceiling height and small windows. After much thinking, Larry was excited to share his vision for the intimate space with his client, Matthew. "As we developed a plan with Matthew, we spent a good bit of time talking about what he wanted to create." Larry reflected. The client was a noted chef, and today Matthew's Restaurant stands as one of two 4-star restaurants in the North Florida region. "We needed to set the stage for an exceptional gourmet dining experience. We knew immediately that the space had to have certain elegance and a high level of detail." Larry immediately knew the stakes for Matthew's were high. He saw the challenges as: getting all the functions into the space, meeting client needs, [and] creating a space with elements that the general public perceives as being very upscale.

So the artwork became critically important in the space.

And the interior called for a sculpture since the wall space was very limited. It became critical to find that iconic experience for clients to take notice [of], talk about and create a buzz to help Matthew's succeed. (See Figure 1-6.)

So we took that search for the art piece very seriously.

Larry recalled the framing of his quest, "So a couple things happened. First, when you walk into that restaurant it is very short distance before you hit the maître d' stand. This was a bit challenging in such a compressed space. So what we did was to create a maître stand with a pedestal. It did a couple of things—one, it brought the eye up and created that verticality in the space which was missing. And [it] also gave us an opportunity to place an iconic piece of art on top of this pedestal. The pedestal solution worked at many levels: it protected the artwork from circulation paths and allowed ample clearance making sure that people wouldn't bump into it, or damage it."

This was the plan and that's what ended up getting built.

So we were on the search to find a sculptural piece to go on top of this pedestal, which is the focal point of the restaurant. Every seat in this restaurant can see the sculpture on this [pedestal].

My design team was looking for artwork in San Francisco and then Santa Fe, and we found an artist, Peter Woytuk. He is an amazing sculptor and we spied a cast steel crow at this little gallery. Immediately, we recognized that this sculpture was right in so many ways: its inherent quality, its uniqueness, and the scale and positioning of the crow—it would fit incredibly well on the pedestal. We had found the perfect signature piece for Matthew's. From its perch atop a very thin vertical pedestal, this alluring sculpture would demand attention from all in the restaurant.

As designers, this whole imagery was very enticing to us.

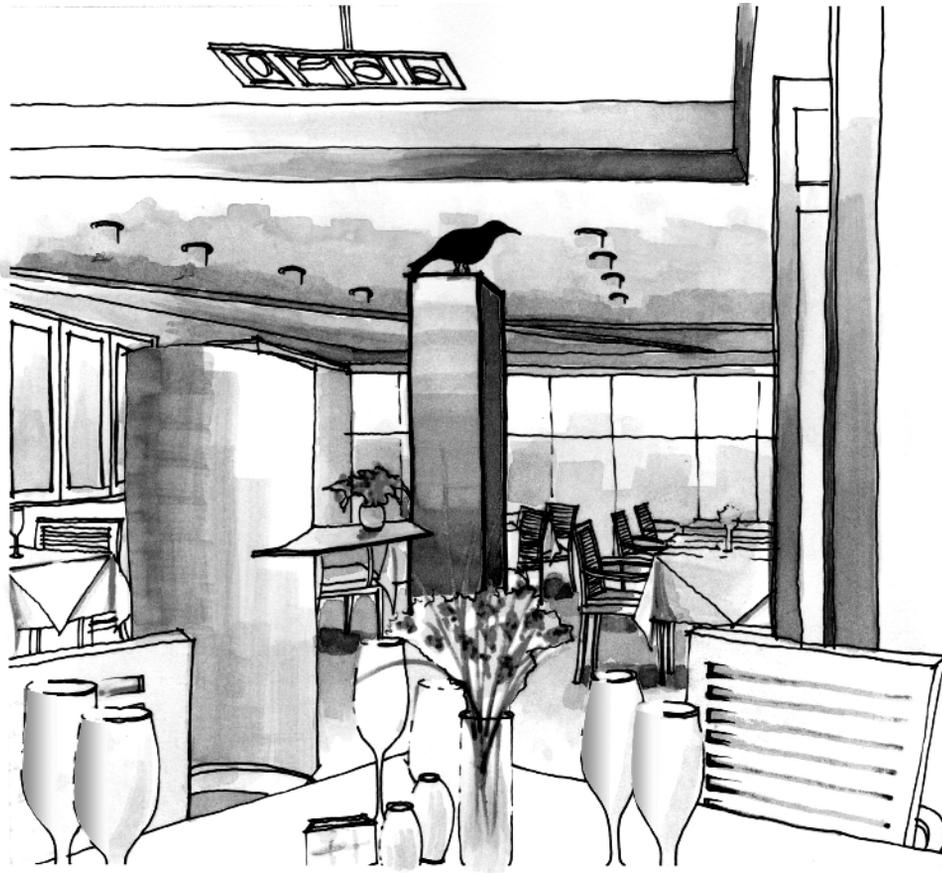


Figure 1-6 Matthew's Restaurant in view.
Source: Siriporn Kohnithikulwong.

So we couldn't have been more enthused about presenting our discovery to the client. Our excitement grew as we described the sculpture in detail. We explain[ed] the piece and the artist's exciting work to Matthew. Without a doubt this piece would offer a special cachet to the space. We talked about the materials and the craft behind the piece and also presented the price to him. After patiently hearing us out, Matthew paused and told us in no certain terms, "It's not going to happen. We can't afford to buy that right now."

Yet, I was unable to let go of this proposal.

I continued repeatedly to make the case for the sculpture. I joked. I cajoled. I presented our rationale logically presenting reasons to acquire this piece.

After much discussion and back and forth negotiation, Matthew finally began to relent. At least he began to recognize the primacy of the pedestal. Acknowledging the pedestal as a clear focal point within the restaurant, Matthew challenged us by asking: "What happens if you put a vase of flowers on top of the pedestal?" "What happens in this scenario?" "What if you try this . . . ?"

I explained that the sculpture represented the main feature of his restaurant. It would provide the "wow" factor. Without the sculpture, I strongly believed that the space would just not make sense.

So we had lots of wringing of hands, brow sweating, and discussions about the cost of the sculpture and how to pull this thing off. But

Matthew finally agreed to buy the piece. So what we ended up doing was selling him the sculpture at our cost just to get the piece up on the pedestal—because it needed to be there.

It was the right piece.

So come opening day, we got the sculpture on top of the pedestal. The crow in all its glory, perfect for the space, perched above Matthew's with a tight spot of light illuminating the surface texture. The crow overlooks all diners and was unique as well as very appropriate.

It was the right place.

After the opening of Matthew's Restaurant, everyone was in such a good mood, chatting about the amazing food, the space, and the complete success of the opening. Joining in the animated conversation, Matthew shared a story from his

childhood: "When I was young, my three brothers and I . . ." Matthew's voice cracked as he said directly to his brothers, "All of you are here and made possible my dream of opening my own restaurant. Do you remember what grandmother always called us?" After pausing a moment for dramatic effect, he delivered the punch line:

"Her little birds."

"Grandma called us her little birds."

To that, Larry quickly replied: "There it is, Matthew!" "There's the tie-in!" "That's a nod to your grandmother and how she called you and your brothers her little birds!"

"So once that was done, I think he became very comfortable with the decision. And to this day that bird is still there, which is good . . . that was a happy ending."

Lessons from "Matthew's Restaurant"

The designer of Matthew's restaurant reflects on the larger lessons that can be learned from his experience on working effectively with clients:

What can happen is even when the design plan calls for artwork when it comes right down to the end of the project, clients often become cost-sensitive because budgets generally have grown a little bit, and, at this point, the budget may be pretty much maxed out. During the design process you always have to be very diplomatic and there's always lots of compromising but when it comes to certain things I dig my heels in. I know what's appropriate and what's going to work.

Once in a while you have to do a little strong arming with the client but you do it in kind of a playful way but you're also very forceful in driving it home, driving it home, driving it home. And you will do anything you can to help him meet that realization. In this case, we gave Matthew a great, great deal on the piece. We also told him that after the fact he could sell it back to us because my wife loved it anyway to become part of our collection. I really had to push it, push it, push it, and he could see by my passion for it that it was important and very necessary. He finally realized that it was crucial to the design and so he gave in and purchased it. It really had to do with a level of passion and a level of conviction that I had as a designer that it was the right thing to do.

In other cases during the process, I would suggest something and he wouldn't be thrilled about it or the cost was too high and we would modify it do something different and it would be successful. But in this case when you are buying original art, you can't buy a copy or buy something cheaper—it just doesn't work. The quality has to be there; the image has to be there. I think he realized that and finally agreed.

Larry Wilson and his client have continued to work together on other projects. The framework helps clarify such designer-client professional relationships, underscoring **engagement** (*first concept of relational strength*). Engagement starts with an attraction to objects, places, or design challenges. At first perceptual, engagement often grows deeper as one gets to know and consider more deeply the situation at hand. In psychology, this might be called forming therapist-client alliance; in law, engagement could involve drawing up a contract. Engagement involves a willingness to agree or disagree, to have an exchange. Stories in the following chapters often recognize professional connections among persons in place. These connections often involve tensions and conflict resolution. Disagreement and discord can break out between individuals in the design process, between individuals in designed spaces, between people and places, or even within components of a design itself. Lessons learned through stories of engaged experiences, offer meanings that reach beneath the surface of designed spaces.

Second, it is important to recognize that design incorporates **mature, contemplative creativeness** (*second concept of relational strength*) that has value to society. For example, how has the designer tried to test ideas considering quality? Are these ideas substantial? How well will the design pass the test of time? It's known that a finished project can reveal strength of idea and concept. As discussed in Chapter 6, focusing on identity of place, the public often can see whether a space appears contrived or authentic. During programming and conceptual design development, has the designer adequately studied the needs of the future occupants? Has the designer considered related research or design precedent? Has the designer fully explored what a space might say through its materiality or physical configuration? Does it reflect the identity of the client? This way of thinking exercises mature creativeness and innovation. The Impact Marker of Innovation discusses mature creativeness further in Chapter 7, as does Maturation, explored in Chapter 8.

Third, we consider **time and place** (*third concept of relational strength*) as key features to design transformation. By understanding time, it is easier to see how interiors or even a design style from one point

in time can be well received in one time period and not in another. This rediscovery process engages us. Equally, time to designer and time to client or user often have different meanings. Or designs that are successful in one location might not reach a global market. This acknowledgment of *time and place* dimensions in design can be studied and applied to projects underscoring transformative qualities. The value of design changes across time. Understanding this allows one to question the life cycles of interiors, or consider ways to increase client participation in the process, reinforced by the field's interest in the end user.

The framework also emphasizes an **interdisciplinary mindset** (*fourth concept of relational strength*) to fully address design projects. Either a single person needs to be adaptable in his or her thinking throughout a project or a team must include diverse members who provide complementary backgrounds from different disciplines. These perspectives include aesthetic considerations, economic conditions, practical and technological functions, psychological, social, cultural and historical understandings, and even the politics of design. All can surface in a design project and develop in a spiral, iterative process.⁷ While project requirements often remain fairly constant, the designer as well as the client and users tend to relate to unique dimensions of the project that eventually are integrated into a whole, a final solution. Acknowledging these viewpoints, and resolving relational tensions when necessary, results in a clarity and direction that generally produces stronger and more satisfying finished work.

Independence and interdependence (*fifth concept of relational strength*) recognizes design as experiential and interdisciplinary. Being a designer is not about being a signature artist. Rather a designer balances independent professional identity and discipline with interdependence of giving and receiving from others. Crediting designers and design precedent, as well as influential works from other fields, on one's thinking and work is at issue here. This practice, we see, is becoming a stronger expectation and norm in the field. A story in Chapter 8 on the Marker of Maturation succinctly demonstrates one way of finding this balance. The story speaks to crediting clients and team members as told through a designer honoree at an international awards ceremony. By acknowledging the contributions of the client, team members, and site itself, a full appreciation of the interior designer and her work unfolds. Even those outside of the design profession in the audience marveled and saw interior design in new light. This might seem counter to those who seek solo credit—whether an individual, firm, or disciplinary field.

Schools of Thought

The reality of interior design knowledge and skill is that it draws from arts, sciences, and business. This fact is addressed in the field's *body of knowledge*⁸ and in the Council of Interior Design Accreditation standards. This interdisciplinary knowledge base has directly led to the evolution of the field. And this encourages many ways of knowing. Whether approaching the field through a historical or architectural or social science or fine arts perspective influences what type of work a designer ends up doing and how that work is shared with others. For example, the study of learning environments might be approached from a historical, social science, or architectural vantage point; the selected orientation affects the questions being asked and the design solution.

Typically, interior design students learn the fundamentals of basic design, art, architecture and design history, product design, and graphics. Additional courses on environment and behavior theory offer a psycho-social-based understanding of humans and environments. Codes and safety reflect an application of the human sciences, while also being technical and practical in character. Materials and material specifications introduce a physical science, technology, and ethical understanding into the process. Designers engage in information gathering, programming, and developing ideas and visualizing, drawing and modeling, and presenting and communicating. This work often entails real sites and clients or case studies, some design research, or even an internship experience. Professional practice expects graduates who are able to synthesize these skills, while developing a business sense of firms and market culture. Business of design engages an understanding of ethics, business law and practices, organizational behavior, real estate, marketing, promotion, branding, and employee relations. Ultimately as synthesized knowledge and skill, the questions we ask of it, develops the knowledge base.

Fundamentally, the discipline centers on the multiple relationships of people in place. Historically, different schools of thought have sought to make sense of the body of knowledge in the field. Schools of thought make known the types of thinking, seeing, and making that shapes the field today. These schools of thought might be seen similarly to work groups of like-minded partners when doing a studio project. Individuals seek those who approach design similarly and share a similar mindset. Pragmatically, this may be specialized design clusters such as contract business designers, residential designers, or practice groups focusing on hospitality, education, or

healthcare building types. Other subgroups within the design culture might include large firms, top 100 firms, small firms, evidence-based designers, or design historians. While distinctive as groups, all are in interior design.

Equally, a school of thought shows an affinity for a defined way of thinking, study, and approach to practice. The knowledge and skills that members offer and embrace represent a specialized focus, literature, norms for studying and assessing designs, and at times research methodologies. All have contributed to interior design. We identify four major schools of thought: *composition and style*, *environment and human behavior*, *planning and design*, and *business and marketing*. Each has influenced the standing of the field today and remains relevant in the Design Engagement Framework.

Early interior design work, whether as the field as a whole or course work of an interior design program, covers *composition and style*. As a school of thought, it has roots in art and design, including decorative arts and the material culture and history of architecture, art, and design. It underscores a basic human interest in aesthetics, where seeing and knowing one's surrounding world comprises the beautiful or ugly, intellectual engagement or boredom, and heightened sensibilities or the deadening of senses. Teaching and learning about design composition and style often involve "seeing" in new ways, exploring everyday spaces and objects, understanding the elements of design, and applying the principles of composition. This school focuses on the categorization and contextualization of design elements observed in interiors, furniture, textiles, art, landscapes, and architecture as well as everyday living patterns. It examines period styles, leading designers, and scholars who are recognized within a period of time and give precedence.

Practitioners share initially it is the compositional and stylistic expertise that the public often identify with the interior design profession. The public seeks and expects such service. For example, a designer of a small residential firm agrees that clients come to the firm based on its strong decorative and compositional reputation. Only after listening to and engaging the client, does this designer bring other areas of expertise to the client's attention. A designer of a large firm also sees style and composition as producing client satisfaction.

While in the past some might have maligned a decorative rendition of this school, there is a new and critical understanding. Today, building from predecessors, scholars advance the study and understanding of object form and interior environments in the context of social,

political, technological, and cultural norms and values. There is a rich, global forum in interior studies that draws upon critical inquiry in the arts and humanities. The focus challenges new thinking from those with interest in history, design, art, architecture, anthropology, and the meaning of interiors. It further accentuates the ongoing foundation of design history and contributions to historic preservation and adaptive use of historically significant buildings. Seeking to understand both objective elements and subjective valuing and meaning captures the human fascination with creating places and the various spheres of living.

Environment and human behavior represents another school of thought, which grew during the second half of the twentieth century and continues today. It is based in the social sciences and relates more to the scientific reality of interior design than the art. Commonly known as Environment and Behavior Studies (E&B or EBS), its strength lies in expanding the field's understanding of people who occupy built and natural environments. EBS identifies these individuals as "end users." They form the center of this approach: their reactions to architecture, interior elements, and landscapes; their patterns of movement through space; and their social and psychological needs. The Design Engagement Framework reflects the influence of EBS with its focus on clients and users, as well as in its recognition of objective design evaluation. Theories of this school aim to explain how human beings perceive and understand the environments in which they live. Questions and topics such as privacy, environmental mystery, complexity, preference, and comprehension, selection of simplified shape, figure/ground reversal, depth perception, cognitive mapping, and wayfinding are but a few subjects that affect the knowledge base in the field and how we design interiors today.

A careful examination of building codes for health, safety, and welfare reveals a compatibility with EBS, as well as the applied knowledge drawn from the physical sciences and technology. Academics and consultants in this school of thought contribute to a body of literature, for example, sometimes reflecting a psycho-social or an ergonomic perspective. This more positivistic approach often favors empirical research. Books, texts, scholarly articles, and electronic databases provide access to pertinent research to apply to projects. For example, EBS forms the core of the research database *InformeDesign*. When seeking to inform their clients, designers can use design research to provide evidence for their designs.

Concurrent with growth in Environment and Human Behavior during the late twentieth century, the *Planning and Design* school of

thought also gained visibility in the design community. Interior designers drew inspiration from the processes of architects and planners of the early twentieth century. In some cases, design academics and practitioners collaborated with colleagues in engineering, business and organizational behavior, education, and psychology as they sought new understanding of planning and design. Increased understanding came from many fields and disciplines.

Examples of the topics of interest in Planning and Design include: understanding stages and phases of the design process, identifying principles of design work, and articulating performance criteria for projects. Of interest is that leaders in planning and design focus on the features of thinking and planning and of construction phases. This complements interest in designers' creative process and development. They equally ask about and examine the planning and team approaches in regard to how design teams involve client and user needs, or user needs that reflect EBS. They concern themselves with tapping into the mind of the designer and complex processes of design through methodologies and information-gathering techniques such as gaming (today this is electronic), participant observations, surveys, protocol analysis, trace analysis, and focused interviewing. They explore design thinking and team and client engagement during projects. They ask questions about leadership in interior design. For example, do the organization and roles within an office or firm relate to the physical office environment? If so, how does this work? Others in this campus explore teaching and learning of interior design by focusing on the development of thinking and production. This work typically illustrates a broader perspective of interior design than other schools of thought and its literature aligns with management and organizational principals or career development. Work integrates the realities of composition and style and of human behavior in planning and design for practice, learning, and communication.

Business and market conventions offer another focus and represent a reality of professional practice. However, this school of thought often appears to be less acknowledged as a root than design styles, EBS, or planning and design approaches. We claim it here because it is basic to human interests in goodness (ethics of practice), plenty (economics of client and practice), and power (politics of design and work environments).⁹ This school of thought also relates to both the art and science of design. Business topics such as organizational behavior or marketing have direct bearing on interior design. Questions, for example, can be raised on how market identity influences the

types of design services and profit centers. How has the language and terminology from business infiltrated the field of interior design? The term “branding” popularized and perhaps overused without fully knowing what it entails, comes directly from commercial ventures. In the past, interior designers might have used residential and contract design distinctions. Today, the language of design shows a specificity of place design: retail design, education, hospitality, worship, healthcare design, and office design. Practitioners recognize the nuances demarcating distinctive forms of office designs from insurance environments to legal offices to graphic and marketing offices. Further, the language of design has evolved to reference special population groups, such as design for aging, or universal design, which gained favor following research and the development of policy for people with disabilities. Another increasingly important distinction for clients and designers is LEED certification. The language of the marketplace communicates a type of service and profit center that, in turn, influence thought, study, and place design.

Interestingly, typical position descriptions and occupational titles in interior design reflect an underlying business model. For example, what expectations does a principal of a firm have? How does this compare with the responsibilities held by a president, vice president, or senior designer? How does senior designer differ from design director or from a junior designer? What defines these professional roles within the field; what business conventions do they reflect?

In addition, a primary goal of design firms, as in business, is commerce and profitability. Thus, time on a project converts to billable hours. Increasingly, we see practice supporting community service that is either pro bono or involves nonprofit work. In the latter case, billable hours have a different payback. For-profit and nonprofit projects alike typically reflect a business and consumer language. In the case of the nonprofit, the organization being served might be nonprofit, yet the goal is to strengthen the organization and its reach through its design, using business practices.

Looking Back . . . Looking Forward

We argue that roots of the discipline of interior design grew through schools of thought in composition and style, environment and behavior, planning and design, and business. The framework acknowledges these roots in its structure, while stressing the reality of a progressive interior design practice as a whole and in the

memorable design experience. Further, design practitioners, educators, and students alike in the twenty-first century seek connective knowledge that builds across topics and fields, as well as deepens the discipline. Changing boundaries demand alternative ways of practicing, position the field to acknowledge relationships, and encourage engaged stakeholders to pose meaningful questions. For example, a growing focus on design requires vision, as does constructively dealing with economic downturns. The integrated framework should help support creative problem solving and innovation in addressing timely issues such as sustainability.

By emphasizing engagement, the framework recognizes both the independence and interdependence involved in designing interiors. Engagement forms connections, giving insight and structure to different perspectives and knowledge in the field. This holistic and integrative approach will help advance the field beyond its current place and will better address pressing social concerns. This chapter offers a context from which narratives of memorable design may now be shared and be studied in greater detail.

While the framework establishes given features and key relationships, it does not offer content; the substance will be provided by real-life cases shared in story form. For example, “Matthew’s Restaurant” offered a true narrative of design engagement. Throughout the rest of the book, narratives will deepen our understanding of designers, clients, and stakeholders. The following chapters will share design stories of people and places that are instructive on creating memorable, engaged experiences. It is our position that the field will benefit from such holistic study.

This approach will enable beginning students, as well as more experienced designers, to see larger connections in their work. We also offer the framework as a way to understand the field more comprehensively: to question the meaning of design, to think more explicitly about design values, to create a deeper dialog with allied colleagues, as well as with others showing interest in the discipline, and to explore local and global design environments and markets.

Summary

The starting point for anything begins with a question. This book begins with an interest in interior design. Having a clear understanding of design and its purpose sets the stage for later discussion on the impact markers of memorable design, engaged experience, and the role for stories.

Knowing, doing, and experiencing design has a variety of meanings that eventually impact the quality of human life. Design is a product, a process, and an experience. Design experience reflects the force of the whole, encompassing the physical, intellectual, and spiritual. Defining design as experience has the effect of shifting interiors from simply physical spaces to meaningful places. In this sense, design is about the relationships connecting people with compositional elements, contextual settings, and imbued meaning. And to gain knowledge about design experience deepens an understanding of both people and place.

Bill Stumpf explains that design is both a physical and mental process by which people give order to things. It develops the human relationship with the things we create, provides purpose, depth, and growth beyond the self, and helps define our existence. Designers make ideas real.

The framework for this book rests on the following assumptions that should also be considered when thinking about and designing interiors:

While design crosses different fields, interior design and its dimensions form the context for study.

Knowledge about interior design is interdisciplinary and relates to art, humanities, social sciences, and business.

Interior design involves intellectual information and analysis as well as creative thinking, making, and innovation. It is holistic.

Design of interiors adds meaning to human life by impacting built and natural environments and the quality of the human experience.

Designers and their clients benefit from investing in processes, products, places, and paths, resulting in meaningful engagement.

Interior design, as a profession, attracts individuals who want to see their knowledge, creativity, skill, and talents at work in a real life situation.

Studying memorable design carefully leads to a fuller appreciation of interior environments. People, as individuals, as groups, as societies, or across cultures, exhibit behaviors and values that connect to spaces and the objects within them. When we study these connections with care, a fuller appreciation of designing interiors emerges and society benefits.

The Design Engagement Framework acknowledges a holistic approach to interior design. The horizontal direction of the framework underscores the designer or team, the interior setting and its elements, and the client and users. Moving vertically, the framework considers the time features of thinking, research and planning time; construction time; and the local and global times of a completed design's presence and market.

This framework draws from the early work by V. T. Boyd and her colleague Timothy Allen on ways objects are valued. Their model presents intersecting continuums of the object's perceived inherent (inner) value and instrumental (external) value. Having such frameworks encourages the study of design thinking, production, implementation, and evaluation in different contexts.

True communicators and translators, designers do not just act as interpreters alone. If environments express values held, then designers need to integrate values, behaviors, and occupant needs with technological requirements and cost parameters

The framework offers six concepts underlying relational strength that help clarify what interior designers might expect about typical connections appearing in the design process. Narratives deliver insight into human-environment transactions. The framework identifies the six concepts as: engagement, contextual civility, empathy, place identity, innovation, and maturation. The framework helps clarify designer-client professional relationships underscoring engagement. It is important to recognize that design incorporates mature, contemplative creativeness that has value to society.

When designers actively engage their clients in the process (and this may involve differences of opinion and creative tension), the outcome can be rewarding, as seen in the narrative "Matthew's Restaurant." The tug of war between a designer and client over a central piece, in this case a sculpture, not only benefitted the client through understanding the designer's eye, but it ensured the designer's conviction about the piece. Bringing the client in on this major decision meant that when all was said and done the stamp of approval came from both sides, despite their original differences of opinion. The passion and certainty of the designer persuaded the client.

The framework helps clarify designer-client professional relationships, underscoring engagement (the first concept of relational strength). Engagement starts with an attraction to objects, places, or design challenges. It is first perceptual, then contemplative and creative. It is this development that produces lasting designs, rather than trendy, temporary spaces. Third, time and space influence relational

strength, from the rediscovery of style to determining the proper setting on the global stage. Bali will have different needs than Britain. The framework further underscores an interdisciplinary mindset (the fourth concept of relational strength) to fully address design projects. The realization that projects involve multiple professions, designers with different strengths, and opportunities to utilize these differences results in a clarity and direction that generally produces stronger and more satisfying finished work.

Either a single person needs to be adaptable in his or her thinking throughout a project or a team must include diverse members who provide complementary backgrounds from different disciplines. A designer is independent and yet dependent. Designers are not signature artists, rather they apply their personal identity and discipline to serve client needs and typically collaborate with others, giving and being receptive to ideas from others.

The reality is that interior design knowledge and skill draws from arts, sciences, and business to form its body of knowledge. Many individual scholars and groups of design thinkers have also contributed to this knowledge base. From these, we identify four major schools of thought: composition and style, environment and behavior, planning and design, and business and marketing. Practitioners often share compositional and stylistic expertise first, since that is what the public seeks and expects. It is only later that other areas of knowledge are shared. This view of design is traditional, but it is continually being expanded by a rich, global forum of interior studies that draws upon critical inquiry in the arts and humanities. Another, typically more empirical, school of thought is Environment and Behavior studies (EBS). EBS identifies individuals as “end users” and focuses on their interaction with the space. The Design Engagement Framework acknowledges these ideals with its focus on clients and users, as well as its recognition of objective design evaluation. Research in this area often produces evidence that can be provided to clients. The planning and design school of thought draws inspiration from the processes and architects and planners of the early twentieth century. This school of thought often illustrates a broader perspective of interior design. Business and market conventions are realities to professional practice; however, this school is less acknowledged than any other. We claim it here because it is basic to human interests in goodness, plenty, and power and because it relates both the art and science of design. Profit and procedure also play into the business school of thought in varying levels from

nonprofit work through high-level clients and from the principal of the contract through the CEO of the company.

The integrated perspective offered by the framework establishes impact markers and key relationships but does not give us content. The content will be provided by real-life cases shared in story form. This approach will enable beginning students as well as experienced designers to see the larger connections in their work.

