HeartWork organizing

How to Work With A Designer

Finding a hair stylist is like dating, and I hate to do both. I haven't had to do the dating scene for a very long time, but it seems like I'm always on the hunt for that special stylist who is approachable, compassionate, hip but not too hip, financially compatible and almost always available. I keep searching. I make the salon appointment and bare my soul and scalp every few weeks, just hoping that *she gets me*. Luckily I'm only making a small investment in each salon appointment, and if I'm not thrilled, I can try again after my hair grows. But what about changes that are a little more permanent?

Like hair stylists, professional organizers and designers come in all stripes. Each one could be an amazing, talented professional who is capable of outstanding work. But how do you know that you'll be able to work with the one that you meet or select?

If you seek a little TLC for your home or yourself, you'll be asking yourself these questions. Whether you decide to work with us, with another professional, or even with just your spouse, here's how to pave a path to success.

And finally, if you'd like even more decorating inspiration, come join me this Wednesday night for a Decorating on a Dime seminar that focuses on one-day room transformations using things you already own! (See date and time on the right sidebar.)

Read My Mind

I recently met with a couple who told me they wanted a bid to remodel their living room. What color? No idea. What style? Updated. What budget? No clue. What did they like? Not this. Wow, not much to go on. I shared as much as I could with them, described the design process, and amicably parted. I'm still waiting for their call. Here's how to bring your dream design home with great results:

1. Go with your gut. Do you like the designer? Don't worry about being judged. A good designer just gets excited about helping you envision and reach your dream.
2. Do your homework. Catalogs. Window shop. Keep an inspiration file. Pictures help describe your tastes, even when you can't in words.
3. Be inspired. Pick one item you love to find a jumping off point. It could be new or something cherished, quirky or traditional. Build around what makes you happy.
4. Pick your battles. With a year and a million dollars, I can change anything. Let your designer know what must go and what must stay.
5. Budget. Be up front with a range so your designer offers you solutions in your budget. Whatever your budget is (from $50 to $50,000) is ok. But asking for a $15,000 makeover on a $1,500 budget is not.
6. Trust your designer. They are expert at shopping, trending and combining things in ways that you probably aren't. They are fully visualizing combinations that you can't even imagine. Give them the chance to finish the job before you nix major parts of it.
7 And verify. Ask to see samples of work. Designers love to share their projects with you, as it is another way to read how best to complete your project!
8. Know your strengths. If you are great at color selection but not room arrangements, offer that information to your designer. That way she can focus most where you need her help.
9. Make your mark. Designers like to help you find the best YOU possible. There should be at least one thing that says "you" in a space. And that one thing should make you feel proud that you worked with that designer. (If a designer tells you that they are putting their signature on your project, be sure you like their signature, or shop for another professional.)
10. Stay focused. A design project is like any other, with a beginning, middle and end. Let your designer keep you focused on the project you've hired her for, and you'll end up with a well thought out and pleasing space. Let her know if you have other projects you'd like help on, but let her take them one at a time.

Next Month: Outsmart Email Overload

Got clutter?

Clear Path Strategies, a weekly support group starting NOW (February 22 for 4 weeks), will offer you personal support and a (loving) kick in the butt. Click here for enrollment form.

Wow, all this for only $80. Don't miss it.

Who Loves Your Sweaters As Much as You Do?

Did you know there are two different types of moths that might be bothering you? Pantry moths eat grains and clothes moths eat sweaters, but you don't have to live with either one of them. Rather than resort to nasty, smelly chemicals, check out Mike McGrath's post on the buggers that are bugging you. http://www.gardensalive.com/article.asp?ai=933

Decorate on a Dime hosted by Mothers & More on Wed., February 3rd at the Upper Main Line YMCA, 1416 Berwyn-Paoli Road, Berwyn at 7:30 p.m. Help your house beat the winter blahs and receive a complimentary hand massage courtesy of Freedom Massage. Free registration to chapter156@hotmail.com

Clutter Control: Reclaiming the Important "Stuff" at the Upper Merion public library (King of Prussia) on Tuesday, February 9 at 7 PM. Free registration is requested by calling 610-265-4085 or emailing UpperMerionLibrary@mclinc.org

Save the Date:
March 13, NAPO-GPC will hold it's Get Organized Event at IKEA Conshohocken. Come shred documents, receive goodies, and learn how to get organized, all for free! Please stop at the front to see me if you come.

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