

Getting the most out of your  
Interior Design Appointment.



*By*

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INTERIORS



# Why hire a designer?

You've finally decided that your home can no longer stay the way it is. Somethings got to change. You take a look at your budget and realize that if you DIDN'T hire a designer you could increase your renovation budget. *Yay!*

But wait... there are some good reasons why you should spend the money on a qualified designer .

## Reasons to hire a designer,

A good designer will be able to help you determine **what** your style is and **how** to implement it.

Designers **design** and **shop** for a living. What may take you hours or days and multiple trips to a store can be done in a fraction of the time by a designer.

On a related note - designers know **where** to shop. Who has great customer service and who doesn't. We don't give our volume of business to stores that don't deliver a great experience. A bonus here is that retailers tend to pay a little extra attention to clients who are working with a designer. These clients don't take up a lot of the sales staff time and the store is anxious to keep designers happy due to the volume of clients they bring in.



Designers have many contacts in the renovation and home decor world. We are able get jobs done professionally - on time and within budget.

Most designers offer Trade Discounts. The money you save on product purchases can be used to help offset your designer's fees!

Finally - ***Peace of Mind!*** Knowing that you are not in it alone and that you have a professional working with you to turn your vision into reality makes the whole process way more fun!





# What to expect,

The first thing most people say to me during that initial phone call is, "I've never worked with a designer, I don't really know what to expect." And this is the reason many people just don't contact a designer. They don't know what to expect and they are afraid to ask a "stupid" question. But you know the old saying, "The only stupid question is the one not asked."

Every designer has a slightly different way of working. There is no "standard" system of operations in place. Personally, I believe in being transparent and arming my clients with a solid understanding of my procedures. I offer all my clients an online **Welcome Package** that includes a Step by Step list of procedures. The following is a brief list of what you can expect when working with Paula-Lyn Interiors.



Most jobs will start with ***The Initial Design Consultation***. This appointment is 1- 2 hours. We will review and prioritize your wish list and basically "interview" each other to discover whether we are a good match moving forward. Does your scope of project suit PLI and do you feel comfortable with our process?

## How much does working with a designer cost?

People always want to know how much it's going to cost. At PLI we always provide you with a design fee estimate prior to signing on with us. You can also pre-purchase blocks of time if your scope of work feels a little less structured. If the scope of your project changes or more hours are needed to complete your project you will have the opportunity to purchase additional design hours. We charge \$175 an hour plus HST. On larger jobs like kitchens and bathrooms, design fees normally amount to about 8% of the overall project cost.

Many designers only take on large full service projects, at PLI we also offer DIY Packages. These packages are designed to help get you started. To point you in the right direction with a detailed "to do list".



# Preparing for your appointment,

If making the initial call is a bit unsettling for people, the initial appointment can also be a source of stress. It's always that element of the unexpected that leaves people feeling a little unsettled. Let me just say this, "Don't Stress!" I aim to make appointments fun and relaxed. This is how I spend my days, if I'm not enjoying myself I can't expect my clients to be at ease.

My first bit of advice is this, ***have an idea of what you want***. "I want a new kitchen that has more seating, more storage and is brighter." Many times clients explain their needs to me and in the same breathe go through the numerous options they have come up with for solutions to their design dilemmas. Remember, it's the designer's job to offer solutions. You provide the ***Wish List***, we provide ways to get as many items on that Wish List incorporated into your design.





**Have a realistic budget** in mind. Now perhaps you don't really know the cost of things, after all, a kitchen renovation is not something that you do every day. But you should have some kind of budget in mind. Many times clients tell me that they do not have a budget, but when I show them a \$5000 light fixture they realize that they do in fact have a budget.

Feel free to **make yourself a list of questions** or points you would like to discuss. Personally I love it when people have a list ready. It shows me that they have really given a lot of thought to their project. Just remember to keep your questions relevant to the Scope of Work. Occasionally I have people contact me for a kitchen design but the list of questions involves the whole house, items that we can't possibly get to within the scope of one job.



Speaking of lists - you won't need to worry about writing down everything I say. Every consultation is followed up with a comprehensive **Design Summary**, which summarizes all the items we discussed.

An invoice will be mailed to you following your initial appointment. E-transfers are the preferred method of payment.



Finally, be prepared to really get to know each other! Designers end up being a little bit like therapists. We end up finding out all the little quirks of your family. And don't worry... we all have em'. But it's important that we know how your family lives day to day.

If you want a home that functions for you and supports the needs of your family while looking beautiful, we need to know how you live.



# How to find the right designer for YOU,

It's always great if your designer has been recommended to you by a trusted friend or family member. If this isn't possible don't be afraid to **ask your potential designer for references.**

**You need to like your designer.** You will be communicating with them **a lot**. This person is being hired to transform your HOME, that's pretty personal! You have to like this person and trust that they "get" you. Not everyone is going to be a good match and that's OK, just acknowledge that and move on to another prospective designer.

*Little story relating to this... I once had a client ask me if I was "willing to work with blue". Of course I'm willing to work with blue, I love blue! Why would I not work with blue? They proceeded to tell me that they had had not ONE but TWO decorators tell them that blue was "out" and they would not "work with it". Make sure that your vision is not just something your designer can work with it, but something they are excited about!*



Make sure that you are comfortable with their methods, fees, and payment schedule.

Does your designer have a team of trusted professionals to bring to the project? Does the designer expect you, or allow you, to hire your own contractor?



The take away here is this, ***make sure that you know who you are hiring.*** What type of projects they specialize in, their company methods, when the job can be done etc. Read their Letter of Agreement carefully and make sure you feel good about working with this person.

# Your role,

Your role is pretty straight forward. Once you have done your homework and you have hired the right designer for you, there are a few things that will make you a great client.

***Respect the process.***

***Pay invoices promptly.***

***Respond to e mails in a timely fashion. It is hard to keep the momentum going in a project if there is no back and forth. If clients take too long answering questions, that project will get put on the bottom of the pile. Occasionally I have had clients take weeks to respond to an inquiry. This does NOT work in the design world.***

***Have a budget, or at least have a ballpark.***

***Finally remember that this is your space. It needs to feel authentic to you. If there is something you are not liking in the design or styling speak up. I would much rather my client voice concerns about a proposed layout or styling item than live with it and not love their new space.***

*Paula-Lynn*

