

COMMERCIAL DESIGN

By Richard Gacek, Gacek Design Group

Design Preview 2021

The circumstances we faced last year have had a significant impact on design. COVID continues to leave a mark on our lifestyles and this new norm has influenced many new products and processes as a result. Being mindful of this is a necessity in commercial design, along with another important objective: to create a genuine experience that captures attention and reaches the audience on an emotional level. So, how do you stand out and provide a differentiated experience? Here are some factors to keep in mind when designing a commercial interior in 2021.



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Health & Safety. With social distancing in place, it is more acceptable to design open spaces that are defined and come complete with pods, or small vignette lounges that offer some privacy. This Alone Together concept is what we call an environment where people can be together in an open space, while feeling like they are set apart. Wall dividers, screening, and sliding door options are designed to delineate the room and blend with the aesthetic. A new layer of products has also emerged for protection. Those include flooring, tile, and countertops that are antimicrobial; Ultralow VOC emissions to better control indoor air pollution; and the use of sustainable fabrics — organic cotton and recycled textiles like polyester are most popular. Lighting is another important element we have come to rely on for health and well-being. This category is gaining momentum with technology that mimics natural light, adjusts to an environment, and can even enhance mood, productivity, and sleep.

Create Visual Interest with Color Accents. 2021 is a year to celebrate and commercial spaces are embracing the use of vibrant color and pattern. The Pantone Color Institute, an influencer in product development, is laser focused on new color influences around the globe and selected a color duo for 2021. Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color

Institute says it best, “The union of an enduring Ultimate Gray with the vibrant yellow

we are drawn to simplicity and are comforted by styles and accents that evoke emotion

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Illuminating expresses a message of positivity supported by fortitude. Practical and rock solid but at the same time warming and optimistic. This is a color combination that gives us resilience and hope.”

Nostalgia: Need for Comfort. In times of uncertainty,

and are sentimental. There’s no doubt that this trend has changed the way we design interior spaces reflecting color, textures, and geometry that are reminiscent of past times. This occurs in the form of vintage furniture, artifacts, or recycled accents as well as

the curvilinear shape of sofas and chairs to provide a cocoon effect and envelope us.

Biophilic Design. We have an innate need to connect with nature and living things, and when we are separated from it, our health and wellbeing is affected in a negative way. Biophilic design is a sustainable, architectural interiors solution that reconnects people with their natural environment. Research shows when natural elements are integrated into interior spaces, (and inspirational, mindful places are designed), the result gives us live and work

environments that are productive, welcoming, healthy, and less stressful. Some of the most effective elements that can contribute to the wellbeing of those within it include natural materials, (reclaimed or sustainably sourced woods and flooring to look like a forest floor or a riverbed); natural light (skylights with views to nature); natural ventilation, plant life (potted plants, green walls); and views of the natural world (murals and landscape art).

Richard Gacek is the principal designer of Gacek Design Group.



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