

# INTERIOR DESIGN

By Richard Gacek, Gacek Design Group

## The Importance of Lifestyle Preferences

**A**s commercial interior designers, we are constantly looking

for ways to reach new audiences and deliver the WOW factor in our interior hospitality and amenity spaces. We

carefully follow research on industry trends and buyer behavior. We pay attention to lifestyle preferences, and we visit competitive projects



**Richard Gacek**

to physically experience the spaces. This intelligence helps to guide our design as well as support our recommendations for future projects. This has always been the practice of Gacek Design Group, and no doubt is what differentiates us from other designers.

Recently, we've recognized some substantial changes. Our client partners are laser focused on this marketing intelligence as a common practice. Exciting news for the marketers and visionaries in the room! In today's marketplace, it's not enough

to provide a cost effective amenity design that offers a gym and a lounge. It's about being strategic from a marketing perspective; getting into the minds and lives of the consumer to understand how they want to live and what is memorable. It's about creating an experience that will resonate. It's about delivering cutting-edge design to a targeted audience. And who do we define as the target audience for multifamily developments? We call them Renters by Choice. They are young adults and empty nest-

ers. They are savvy, demanding, diverse, and have many living options to choose from. They are active, interested in convenience and maintenance free living, who crave walkable amenities steps away. They own a bike. And let's not forget that they do have pets.

Predicting future trends and consumer needs is critically important. Let's drill down to a few of the lifestyle preferences to watch.

The Live-Work-Play lifestyle is redefining the functionality of our environments. With the introduction of We-

Work and similar sharing facilities, spaces are beginning to look like "home". Many of today's office buildings are offering amenities that are more commonly found in a residential setting. Lounges are transformed to Living Rooms; Break rooms to higher-end home kitchens. We see active gaming rooms with ping pong tables and video gaming. In addition, nap rooms are becoming more popular as a place to re-charge during a busy workday.

Smart-home technology is here to stay. Of course, dependable and free WiFi connectivity as well as furnishings with built in USB charging ports is typical. Keyless electronic front entry is going to be the new norm in multifamily. Alex Samoylovich, CEO, Cedar Street Company in Chicago, IL, said he's working toward keyless entry via tenants' cellphones across his company's properties. "Seventy-five percent of our tenants have given us permission for keyless entry into their units to deliver packages," he said. Keyless technology can even be a revenue stream, he said. "We did \$85,000 last year in lockouts."

Swimming pools and fitness centers are expected in all situations. In the future, they are larger and more elaborate. The Urban Land Institute recently released their report, Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2019, which touts how multifamily developers are going well beyond the fitness center and recreational areas to include what they call, "amenities gone wild". These amenities include child care, pet spa, bike rental, and even a curated garden that grows fresh fruit and vegetables for residents. Not only are apartment units getting larger, (to accommodate the needs of the empty nester consumer), outdoor amenities are in vogue. Rooftop decks and terraces include sound systems, kitchens with pizza ovens, and private cabanas. Outdoor seating venues welcome concerts, food trucks, basketball, as well as a wine and cheese courtyard.

So many choices, how do you determine the right amenities to offer? Know your target audience's lifestyle preferences.

**Richard Gacek is the principal designer of Gacek Design Group. ■**

## The Result.

### Experiential Design



215.862.9038

[gacekdesign.com](http://gacekdesign.com)

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