

# ***Free Report #1***

## **What criteria should I use to select a design firm?**

1. Experience with the type and level of remodel that you are interested in doing for home.
2. Chemistry! You absolutely must feel comfortable with the designer you select. Trust and honesty are important components of the decision.
3. Someone who listens to you and truly wants to create the best possible experience with you.
4. The design firm must have the time to devote to your project, so be sure to ask about the current work load and their level of interest in your job.
5. You like the designer's work. Most professional designers can do more than one style, so the first five criteria must be met before making the decision based on the designer's work. Most designers have a website now, and the best ones win awards and are published.
6. Is the designer involved in professional organizations? Why is this important? It shows their commitment to excellence and professionalism that ensure the best possible results for you.
7. Does the designer have their NCIDQ designation? Only 1,700

designers in Colorado had completed the exam by 2002. It takes years of experience and education to pass the exam.

8. Does the design firm have the appropriate insurance? This includes a Business Owner's Policy, Worker's Compensation for their employees and Professional Liability Insurance. These protect you from lawsuits due to injuries on your property and professional malfeasance.
9. Does the designer participate in continuing education? Keeping up with the latest design trends, what the consumers are interested in, technology and codes ensures that you are getting the best in your personal design.
10. How will the designer provide information to you throughout the project? How often? Do they provide thorough specifications and documentation so there is no misunderstanding about what you are purchasing?
11. If you want custom furnishings, be sure you understand what that entails. I encourage you to read my December 2007 blog post about a custom sofa. That is certainly a worse-case scenario, but it does happen from time to time. Be sure your designer is willing to do what it takes to make you happy.
12. If you are indecisive or prone to change your mind, working with a designer may be challenging and expensive. If billing is by the hour, you must be prepared that you may be causing your own bill to go up.

Carefully consider whether you should hire a designer in this case.

Preparation for the process and understanding of the decisions that will be required is vital. A typical house of about 2,000 square feet can involve as many as 3,000 decisions. Multiply by your actual square footage and you will have some idea of how much work it is.

This isn't a comprehensive list, but these are certainly the key factors in my opinion.