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Future fantastic

Saeed Zaki explains how the user's experience can be enhanced through well-conceived interior design

Interior design trends move rapidly. Myriad factors need consideration in the interior design of any building or space. In-depth collaboration with the client is key in order to generate an exhaustive list of requirements, taking into account purpose, taste, function, form, flow, feeling, colour, texture, materials et al, before embarking on the design.



Architecture and interior design are key elements in creating a unique experience for private or public building and space users. While private residences are designed to cater to individual needs and tastes, interior design of public buildings requires careful consideration, as they cater to users who are largely anonymous. A well-conceived interior design for public buildings ultimately results in the enhancement of the building's value, user comfort and desire to repeat visits.

In the hospitality sector in general, a strong emphasis is placed on interior design, as with other public buildings, such as retail malls, commercial buildings and increasingly even hospitals. The focus on interior design is critical, to ensuring the spaces are well planned, easy and safe to use, aesthetically pleasing and impactful. Since urban public buildings are one of the most polluting building typologies, with excessive energy, water and chemical usage and waste generation, sustainability issues demand that designs are environmentally sound, without compromising on the user experience.

The key to successful interior design is a strong and clear design concept based on building typology, location, context and size. The concept must be followed through in every area, to give a sense of unity and continuity. A good example of this is a recently completed hospital project developed by dwp | design worldwide partnership, the Seven Hills Hospital in Mumbai, India. An effective concept based on cultural context, architectural design and user profiling runs through the entire building, coupled with acute attention to detail. Increasingly, healthcare facilities are being designed as lifestyle concepts, since research has shown that a well-designed facility leads to quicker patient recovery. Furthermore, a swell in medical tourism, particularly in Asia, means hospitals are becoming more reminiscent of 5-star hotels in response.

Hotels interior design needs to incorporate branding, star-rating, property USPs, location, socio-cultural context, size, the environment, technology and, of course, guest profile. The design also considers various space types, namely, but not exclusively, the public areas, F&B outlets, function rooms, recreational and wellness areas, circulation spaces and, all importantly, the guest rooms. Most upscale hotels rely on brand and revenue amelioration, through unique F&B outlets

Sirocco, a rooftop restaurant at the Lebua Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand, designed by dwp and featured in the blockbuster movie Hangover II, has earned global recognition due to its breathtaking design and exquisite guest experience.

Commercial building interior design requires concerted emphasis on its lobby and public areas, which is critical for creating a lasting impression. These are generally the first and last points of contact. The design here should take into account functionality as well as aesthetics. The award-winning design for the Johnson & Johnson offices, in Bangkok, Thailand, boasts a lobby and reception

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that do exactly that. The outer entrance area, lobby and reception are integrated, maximizing use of space and creating a unique concept.

Research has proven that a well-designed commercial space improves staff morale and, consequently, productivity. In a world where time is money, this is vital. Conceptualisation of corridors and circulation spaces of public buildings, plus toilets, lift lobbies and lift interiors, especially in retail malls, should include enhancing the user experience, including safety, ease of access and navigation. With the continual advent of newer technologies, enabling ever more creative and sustainable materials, and with the talent pool of interior designers vast and varied, the future of interior design is vivid and vibrant.

On track

The regional managing director of dwp (design world partnership), Saeed Zaki has over two decades of extensive experience in property and real estate development. An architect, urban designer and planner by trade, he has a proven track record of successful project planning design, development and implementation, throughout Asia.

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