

DESIGN FOR SUCCESS

The Dilemma – Your Home Office

Creating a home office can be more involved than knowing that you need a desk and then setting out to the nearest furniture stores to find something you like. Look at how your space will function, Think about the style and size of furnishings. Create a plan. It will make the process much smoother, as well as allow you to have the home office of your dreams.

INTERIOR DESIGN APPROACH TO A HOME OFFICE:

1. Function – Determine the “How”

The first step to any room design is to ask, “What is the function?” This is especially true for your home office as there are often many functions to think about when creating workspace. Think through all of the activities performed and how you work. Do you write letters, draw, watch T.V., read, etc.? What kind of computer equipment and other office machines do you have and how often do you need access to them? Thinking through how you use your office will give a better picture of what this space needs to become.

2. Write it Down

This is extremely important. If you're like many, no matter how much thinking goes into what is needed, distractions occur - especially when walking into a store to shop. Not only will it help you to remember, it helps prioritize and carry out a plan – as noted in the following steps.

3. What Do You Want/Need?

Move into thinking about what kind of furnishings will make your office functional while demonstrating your style. Create a list of furniture pieces that will work for you.

- Will you need four drawers for office supplies, or will a small box do?
- Does your desktop tend to get cluttered? If so, think about a pull out writing area; it will be less likely to become piled with papers since it will slide open & closed.



- Do you prefer a bookcase with cabinet doors, or an open style? Speaking of style – what appeals to you most?
- Do you prefer a traditional look to go with the rest of your home, or does a glass-topped desk and funky cabinets on wheels suit you best?

Referring back to the things you have written will help this process so that you don't leave out needed work areas or furniture pieces. Consider at this point preferences regarding quality. For example, make note if one piece will get more use than the others and must be top quality, while you may be less concerned about another. This will help in the budgeting step as well.

4. Measure and Plan Accordingly

Don't forget. Like a designer, measuring is the threshold that takes the design process to the next level. Many "do-it-yourselfers" overlook this step. As a result, that bargain desk becomes an added expense because it doesn't fit, function and is useless. Measuring also allows creation of a space plan. Designers use drafting skills, but an easy way for homeowners is to use graph paper; each block equals one foot. Refer back to your list again to make sure you have allowed adequate space for each function.

5. Budget the "Nitty Gritty"

Designers always ask about budget during the planning process. Do the same for yourself. Why? It allows you to think through all the details of function, dream about what you want, and not limit your style choices. If budget constraints become an issue, it is much easier to prioritize and cross through items after you've written down your functions, listed your wants/needs and developed a design plan. At the same time, you may be surprised at what you

can afford even if you thought you couldn't. Don't be afraid to share with furniture sales associates or your interior designer the budget. If you're not aware of what items cost, sales professionals and designers can help.

6. Think Outside the Box

You have planned and written down the functions, furnishings, measurements and budget for your home office. Now, focus on the more creative process of bringing all of these together to create a fun, functional and fabulous workspace. A kitchen table may work best for your desk, baskets are more practical and decorative for paperwork, or an old suitcase hanging on the wall gives you a stylish way to hide a project in progress.

Enjoy the process and be involved. Enjoy your new productivity in an effective, well thought out home office.!

This article brought to you by the Triangle East Interior Design Society (IDS).!

