

DESIGN



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Streamline the Workflow

Project Management Resources for Interior Designers

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Keeping abreast of new technology in the market to help your company perform at its best can be pretty daunting and downright confusing. We have a plethora of programs to aid in the design process, but what about organizing and streamlining your business? Would you know which program to choose? We reached out to two ASID New York Metro Chapter members for their insights on this topic.

Past ASID New York Metro Chapter President Phyllis Harbinger has owned her own design firm, Harbinger Design Consulting, since 1993. In addition to her expertise in both commercial and residential interior design, Harbinger serves as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) and is the publisher of The Interior Design Productivity Toolbox which focuses on workflow organization for the interior designer.

Q: What program do you currently use for your design studio?

A: Design Manager, since 1995.

Q: Was it a hassle to switch from one program to the next, or initially set up and implement a program?

A: The firm had been open for only two years when I first set up Design Manager, and it was the first program I used. There was no hassle inputting all the information into the program. I had considered Studio Webware (at a later time), but it would have been a big investment and taken a lot of manpower and time to transfer all our information.

Q: Are there features you would like to see in future generations of Design Manager?

A: Being a Windows-based software program, it is easy to use and has great features like purchase orders and invoices, and I love the ability to add images to orders that you can email to clients. I would like, however, to be able to copy and paste in more fields.

Q: What tips would you give designers shopping for a project management tool?

A: Some designers or companies might perceive how expensive these programs can be as

a pitfall, but you need to spend money to make money. The tools within the programs allow for freedom to focus on the design aspects more and can save you from liabilities. There were numerous occasions where the purchase orders that I had saved served as proof when an order came in incorrectly, preventing me from incurring unnecessary costs. Designers and studios should set aside a budget for these programs, just as they would for other programs they need for design.

Another thing to look out for is whether the program is desktop or cloud-based. If cloud-based, you have to consider the vulnerabilities that come with storing all of your project and client information online. Design Manager currently gives both options, but beginning in Fall, 2017 they will no longer support the desktop version and will transfer to all cloud-based programming.

Q: Is any studio or firm too small to use one of these programs?

A: No, not even if you are a one-person firm. There was a client who chose to hire me over another designer because of my use of technology and how streamlined my work was; it gives you an edge.

We also asked ASID New York Metro Chapter Director at Large and interior designer Vanessa Deleon, owner of Vanessa Deleon Associates (VDA), for her perspective on this topic. Her energetic team juggles residential and commercial projects as well as a branding and licensing venture, media appearances and much more. Deleon is active in several design associations as well as the statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in New Jersey.



Q: What program does your design studio currently use and why?

A: Fuigo. I look for progressive, intuitive interface that is easy to understand and operate and can provide my team with a strong support system and top-notch customer service.

Q: How has Fuigo transformed or streamlined your operations?

A: In the design business, project managers are not accountants, and accountants are not project managers. It has taken away the burdensome hours my designers spend on the accounting part of the project. With Fuigo, our project managers devote more time to creativity, design, and most importantly, our clients.

Q: Is it a hassle to switch from another program into Fuigo?

A: No. It's a smooth transition. Once you enter all your clients' information into the new system, you are up and running in less than 24 hours.

Q: Are there features you'd like to see in future generations?

A: Yes—more flexibility in the invoicing structure. And 24-hour (customer) service, at VDA we never sleep! ■

Getting Started

Take advantage of the demonstrations that many of these companies provide.

- Ivy Marker
- Studio Designer
- Design Manager
- Fuigo
- Mydoma Studio
- Designer Logic
- Connexionsoft (ConnexionSW)
- Design Docs
- The Smart Designer
- Spec Sources