

Q + A with Crystal Arreola of Studio Interiors, Inc.



What do you think are key factors in designing a successful hospitality space?

For me, it has always been form and function. First, you need to ensure the interiors are an extension of the facility brand. When I plan any new space, I take the time to learn about the company, their history, and who their target market is. The function of the space is also key—understanding how clients interact with the space and what staff will need to enhance service. Then, once we integrate the function seamlessly with the interiors in a purposeful and planned way, we know we have been successful.

Is the integration of technology into all things changing the way you're designing spaces?

Absolutely! With advances in technology we are integrating more touchdown spaces and break away zones in all areas of the built environment: integrating power and data ports into mobile furniture, creating spaces for audio privacy within an open space. Furniture and finish vendors are keeping ahead of the market by providing amazing designs that are flexible and that integrate fully with advances in technology. We are also seeing advances in less obvious arenas like textile design thanks to technology. We are now able to utilize copper in healthcare to eliminate bacteria, work with vinyls that are die transfer resistant, and specify carpets that utilize negative ions to repel stains and bacteria.

How do you see the consumer's awareness of green design affecting hospitality design?

I believe we are at a point where consumers expect public spaces to be sustainably-minded. There are many programs out there to

measure the success of sustainable standards. Owners are asking more and more for better indoor air quality, easy to maintain and sustainable products in their projects, and end of life recyclability.

With advances in bio-mimicry and bio-filic design, we have a lot of opportunities to work with products that not only are earth friendly, but can enhance our lives in ways we are just beginning to understand. Most major manufacturers have subscribed to 'green' design, and costs are no longer a premium when working with sustainable materials.

You recently helped us redesign our senior living catalog, how has designing for seniors changed over the years?

I think in general, as we are seeing the baby boomer generation enter retirement, they are healthier and living longer than past generations. It has been exciting to see that the industry itself has gone from a 'hospital' sterile mindset to a 'hospitality' mindset. We are making strides to integrate these communities into mainstream living, and starting to understand the science behind aging. Weakening eyesight and mobility issues are tackled in new ways. Senior living has grown up, so to speak, and this allows us to take more risks and design for living...not dying.



What are your favorite trends happening in the design community now?

Where to start? Resimercial is a buzzword we are hearing a lot about. Senior living, health care, and hospitality lines are blurring and I love it! We are now able to push creative boundaries that enhance the human experience, which is at the heart of my profession. Making spaces that connect to the outside world, creating comfort and warmth, keeps me moving forward.

What advice would you give to a newly-minted designer entering the workforce?

My advice is to find your niche. Dip your toe in many of the varied avenues of design and learn from your peers before you commit to one industry or another. In the beginning, I thought I was going to focus mostly on residential design, but as I grew in my career I really found the challenges of the hospitality and entertainment world suited me best.

About Crystal:

Crystal had design in her blood from a young age. After starting a family, she decided to pursue this dream full time and spent years learning the business from residential to commercial. Having over 15 years of experience within the Interior Design field, she founded Studio Interiors in 2011. It was her hope to be able to provide quality client-focused services and create longstanding relationships. Her firm has had the privilege to work with clients in a wide variety of projects across North America. Having had the opportunity to work on both large and small scale, commercial, hospitality, and entertainment projects, her team has become experts in providing solutions for every need.