

ASID 2021 Interior Design

RESILIENCY REPORT

AMERICAN
SOCIETY OF
INTERIOR
DESIGNERS



RESEARCH

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Benjamin Moore®

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact us despite the breakthrough in vaccines. We've seen progress in many areas and have demonstrated resiliency as we trek on the road to recovery from this major global disruption. While many positive signs have emerged since, the world and our way of life have changed, whether it be realized now or later. The impact from the pandemic is intertwined with how people perceive and experience space, and thus, has a significant impact on interior design and its future.

The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) 2021 Interior Design Resiliency Report is part of a multi-phase study conducted in partnership with Benjamin Moore that began in 2020¹ to assess interior design resilience during times of disruption. This study examines the pandemic impact, experience, response, and recovery, and explores changes necessary in design and the profession to move beyond recovery and thrive.

Here are a few key takeaways from the 2021 report:

We made progress in our practice but need to work on taking care of our people.

The impact of the pandemic on our personal and professional lives has lessened and the profession has made progress in recovery. This research shows several positive signs of business and industry resilience; however, burnout is still frequently reported and connected to increased work hours. Moving forward we need to focus on empowering our creative talent to regenerate and thrive at a time when the importance of interior design is being highlighted.

- The average level of impact on interior design business/industry in 2021 was 20% lower than 2020.
- 62% of respondents reported no changes in work status and benefits.
- Similar to 2020, 71% of respondents experienced burnout to some frequency over the past 12 months.

¹ Review the [ASID 2020 Interior Design Resiliency Report](#) for key findings from the first phase study.

We implemented changes in design but anticipate more changes to come.

The scope of interior design work has expanded as clients reached out to designers for consultation and other services that differed from typical pre-pandemic work. More blending of practice areas was also seen. This research shows that we saw increased positivity in the perception of interior design, have experienced changes that we had projected in 2020, and also reveals more changes necessary for the profession to advance. Moving forward we need to keep being nimble through the changes and work collectively towards more positive change.

- The proportion of respondents that saw the perception of interior design to be in the positive direction increased from 58% in 2020 to 67% in 2021.
- Industries that found more solid ground during the pandemic were quicker to adopt and implement changes necessary to move forward.
- Similar to 2020, 70% of respondents believe that change is necessary to some extent for the profession to advance.

We need to think beyond immediate solutions and design for the future.

The pandemic has disrupted our processes and pushed us to adjust how we live, work, play, heal, and learn. This research shows that we project some shifts to be temporary and some to continue in our practice. As the pandemic and its impact prolongs, this is an opportunity for us to think through changes for the long haul. Moving forward we need to advocate for broader and deeper solutions to rethink the human experience in spaces.

- The inclusion of flex space in the home had exceeded 2020 expectations by 11%, reinforcing that the home has become a hub for a multitude of activities.
- Changes were experienced in all parts of the design process but are mostly expected to be temporary changes except for virtual activities (e.g., virtual client meetings, remote work, continuing education online, etc.).
- Changes expected to remain more than three years include mailing samples to remote work locations (identified by 60% of respondents), locally-sourcing materials/products (59%), and e-design (50%).

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact us despite the breakthrough in vaccines. We've become somewhat accustomed to the pandemic impact and have found ways to sustain activity. We've seen progress in many areas and have demonstrated resiliency through this major disruption as we continue down the winding road to recovery. Regardless, the world and our way of life have changed, whether it be realized now or later.

ASID designed a multi-year research study that examines the resiliency of the industry and profession by measuring response from the impact of COVID-19 on the individual regarding their personal and professional life, and on their organization/business during the pandemic. The first-phase study in 2020 focused on agility and adaptability in the face of disruption² and this second study focused on tracking the industry and profession's strength during recovery. In partnership with Benjamin Moore, the 2021 study tracks interior design performance in adversity and reports on best practices for continued and improved resilience, with special focus on how the interior design community has pivoted and adjusted to changes and how design has evolved and innovated during this disruptive period.

Core research questions asked in this study are:

- How did the interior design community fair through the pandemic over the past 12 months?
- How resilient is the interior design community?
- What changed within the interior design community during the pandemic over the past 12 months?
- What changes are here to stay?
- What further changes are needed in the interior design industry and profession?

² Review the [ASID 2020 Interior Design Resiliency Report](#) for key findings from the first phase study.

Main hypotheses tested in this study are:

- The pandemic led to different experiences across the interior design community, among region, firm size, and career stage (i.e., years of experience).
- The interior design community exercised industry, business, and personal/professional resilience over the past 12 months.
- The interior design community is better recognized by the value it brings to human health and well-being due to the pandemic.
- The interior design community implemented changes that were expected in the design practice due to the pandemic.
- The interior design community identified areas of change necessary for the industry and profession to advance.

ASID developed a survey based on the research questions and hypotheses, with topics including general perceptions, self-reported personal well-being ratings, changes in work, experienced changes in design, and projected adoption of these changes, and deployed this survey throughout the industry.³ Additionally, ASID led two focus group discussions with interior design specialists varying in professional role, firm size, career stage, and practice area that had participated in 2020 to better understand the changes in practice, strengths of the profession, and expectations for the future. Lastly, ASID conducted in-depth interviews with leaders at three firms that had implemented exemplary changes during the pandemic, identified during the focus group discussions in 2020, to capture best practices and lessons learned.

This report reviews key findings that emerged from the survey (data analyzed using statistical software⁴) and focus group discussions, and includes a summary of best practices from case study firms. The report is organized by the interior design community's progress during the past 12 months (i.e., since the ASID 2020 Interior Design Resiliency Report) and by explorations of the future of interior design. The report offers direction for the interior design community to strengthen its resilience to go beyond pandemic recovery and thrive through disruption.

³ See the Appendix for more details on the research process and survey sample characteristics.

⁴ See the Appendix for more details on the data analysis process. Statistical significance is reported at the $p < 0.05$ level (*) and at the $p < 0.01$ level (**).

PROGRESS

The first phase study in 2020 found that the pandemic was a global shared experience, yet each person had experienced the impact in a different way; this second phase in 2021 confirms that this difference in impact remains. The impact of COVID-19 continues, but to a lesser extent as we adjusted to its existence and work our way through the trauma we experience from it. Vaccinations have eased some concerns, but COVID-19 variants add turbulence to the path towards recovery. Our journey through the pandemic is still bumpy and we continue to experience challenges, but our personal/professional, business, and industry resilience have been actively working through the disruptions.

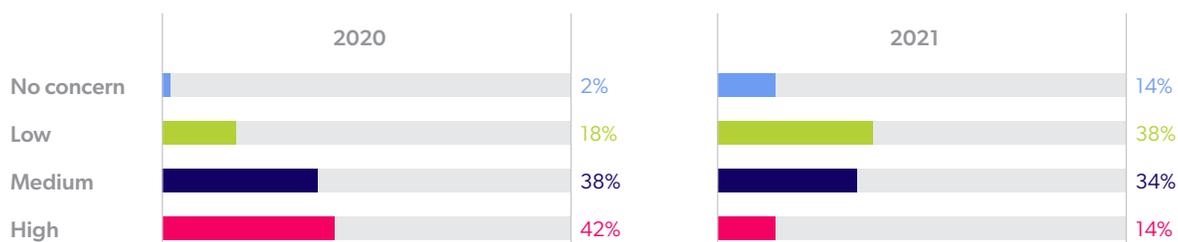
Here are key summary points that emerged from the survey and focus group data:

WE FOUND STABILITY AMID CONTINUED DISRUPTIONS.

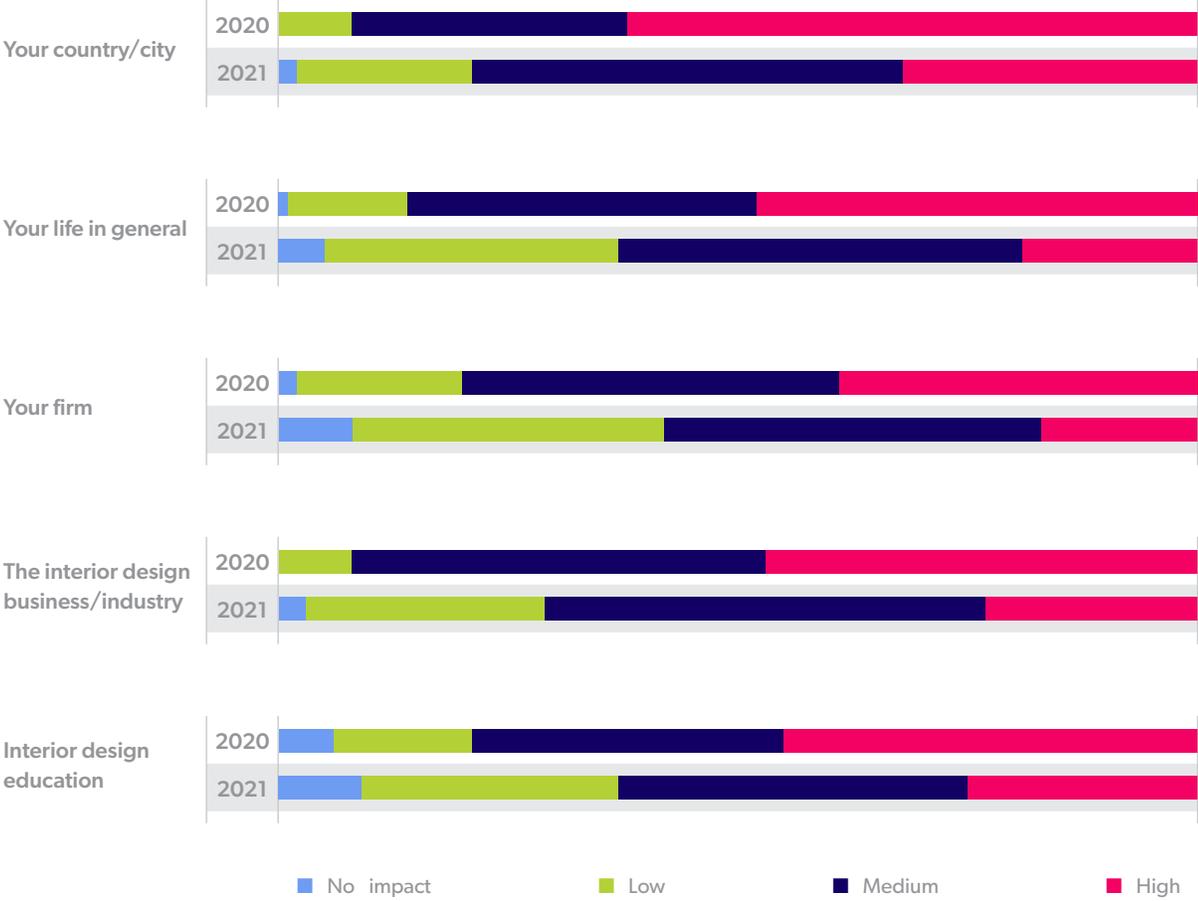
We have adapted to the disruptions from our surroundings due to the pandemic. Although uncertainties remain, we have endured through the initial shock from the novel virus and are applying lessons learned.

Overall concern of the impact of COVID-19 on professional life and the perceived impact on multiple areas of professional life have eased significantly** compared to the same period in 2020.

LEVEL OF CONCERN



Average impact ratings were significantly** lower in 2021 compared to 2020: impact on interior design business/industry decreased 20%, firm 23%, and life in general 24%. Medium impact was the most frequent level of impact responded in 2021 for all aspects of professional life (cf. high impact was most frequent in 2020, except for level of impact on firm).



COVID-19 impact

on interior design business/industry decreased 20%, firm 23%, and life in general 24%

We put people (i.e., clients and occupants) first in our design projects. The pandemic has put a toll on all people, and we learned from research, peers, and other industries how to provide the best solutions in our projects. In addition to the people we serve, interior design professionals are the profession's lifeline and should be put at the core, too. The road to recovery for our professionals' well-being is headed in a positive direction but requires more support.

- Changes in work status and benefits were at a lesser degree when compared to 2020. Respondents that indicated no change were the vast majority (62%, compared to 50% in 2020), and three times more than the group reporting the most prevalent change: pay cuts, which were experienced by 20% of the respondents (27% in 2020).

WE MADE SOME STRIDES IN PERSONAL/ PROFESSIONAL WELL-BEING AND RESILIENCE.

We faced many challenges from the pandemic yet have grit and are showing signs of positivity from a personal perspective. Our well-being is integral to our professional lives, and our current and past experiences can help strengthen resiliency for the future.

WELL-BEING RATINGS



Physical Well-being

7.9

-1% change from 2020



Mental Well-being

7.5

+2% change from 2020



Social Well-being

7.0

+8% change from 2020

- Self-ratings on mental and social** well-being increased from 2020 to 2021; however, physical well-being had decreased.⁵
- Residential designers reported significantly* higher mental well-being ratings (M=7.7, SD=1.9) than commercial designers (M=7.3, SD=1.9).⁶
- More years of experience was associated with higher well-being scores** . Respondents with more than 40 years of experience reported significantly** higher physical, mental, and social well-being ratings than those with less than 10 years of experience.
- Consistent with 2020, higher well-being (physical, mental, and social) ratings were associated with higher personal resilience scores measured by CD-RISC⁷ (i.e., positively correlated**).
- Personal resilience scores demonstrated a significant** increase from 2020 to 2021.⁸ Scores now align with the U.S. population score during “normal” situations.⁹

⁵ When running a paired t-test for respondents who completed the 2020 and 2021 surveys (n=66), the difference was not statistically significant.

⁶ Mean (M; average) and standard deviation (SD) based on 10-point scale for well-being ratings.

⁷ Personal resilience scores were measured using the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC); 10-item version was included in the survey with permission. Further information about the scale and terms of use can be found at www.cd-risc.com. Copyright © 2001, 2018 by Kathryn M. Connor, M.D., and Jonathan R.T. Davidson, M.D. This version of the scale was developed as a work made for hire by Laura Campbell-Sills, Ph.D., and Murray B. Stein, M.D.

⁸ When running a paired t-test for respondents who completed the 2020 and 2021 CD-RISC test (n=66), the difference was not statistically significant.

⁹ Campbell-Sills, L., & Stein, M. B. (2007). Psychometric analysis and refinement of the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC): Validation of a 10-item measure of resilience. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 20*(6), 1019-1028. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.20271>

PERSONAL RESILIENCE SCORE

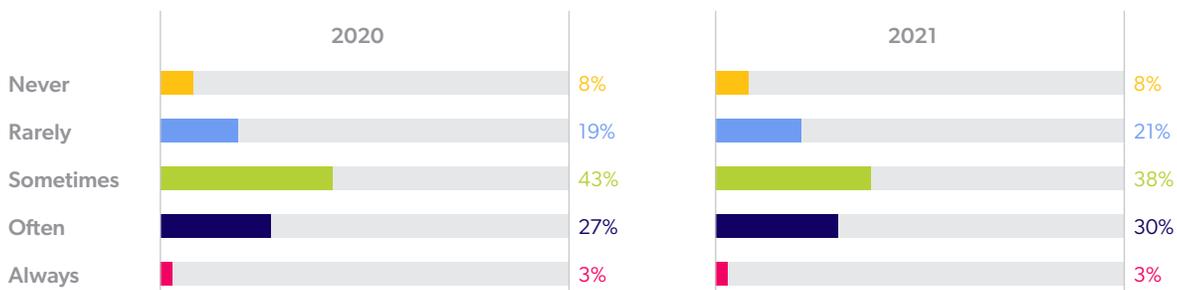
| | U.S. Population (General; 2007) | Interior Design Community (June 2020) | Interior Design Community (June 2021) |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| 25th Percentile | 29 | 26 | 28 |
| 50th Percentile | 32 | 30 | 32 |
| 75th Percentile | 36 | 34 | 36 |

WE CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE WITH BURNOUT.

Our experience with burnout remained unchanged, and rather may have been escalated and elongated, due to the pandemic. Unfortunately, 42% of respondents reported that no efforts from firms were made to reduce/prevent employee burnout during the pandemic.

- 71% of respondents indicated that they experienced burnout to some frequency over the past 12 months, which is an extension from the 73% reported in 2020.

BURNOUT FREQUENCY



- Firm size is a significant** factor related to burnout: employees from larger firms tend to report higher frequency in burnout. More specifically, respondents employed at firms with 10-99 employees experienced significantly* more frequent burnout (M=3.2, SD=1.0)¹⁰ than self-employed (M=2.7, SD=1.0).
- Commercial designers reported significantly** more frequent burnout (M=3.2, SD=0.9) than residential designers (M=2.9, SD=1.0).
- Consistent with 2020, burnout was more prevalent among those that indicated increased work hours**, lower personal resilience scores**, and lower physical**, mental**, and social** well-being ratings.

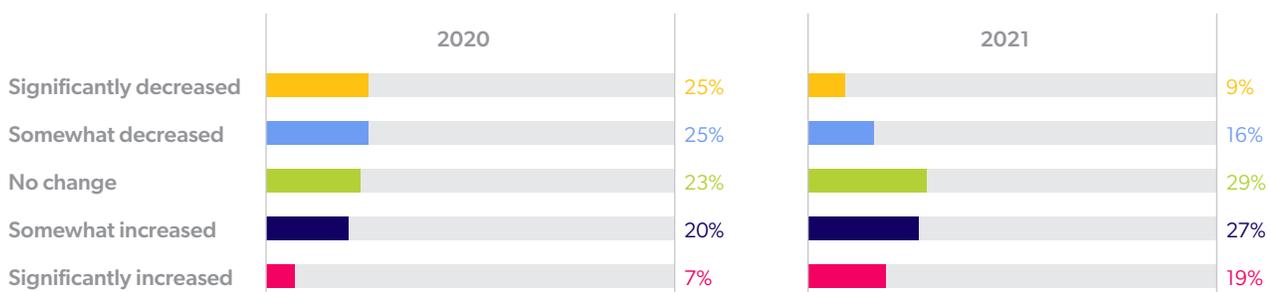
“I’m passionate about what I do—I will step in and fill any role that I need to, to get the job done well, on time, and within budget. I work plenty of weeknights but taking back my weekends, Friday at five through Sunday night, has been a refreshing change for me. I’m so much healthier now, physically and mentally, and changing my schedule has been mind-blowingly positive. Setting new boundaries due to COVID in how I approach my work/life has been huge and working for a firm that supports a healthy lifestyle is amazing.

SARAH COLANDRO, FASID, IIDA, NCIDQ
 PRINCIPAL, DIRECTOR OF INTERIOR DESIGN, AECOM

TIME

- Anxiety/stress (60%, compared to 64% in 2020) and virtual meetings (53%, compared to 53% in 2020) remain the leading factors impacting time management. A rising factor was workload being too much (45%, compared to 25% in 2020).
- The direction of change in work hours shifted significantly** towards increased change when compared to 2020.

CHANGE IN WORK HOURS



¹⁰ Mean (M; average) and standard deviation (SD) based on 5-point scale: 1-never, 2-rarely, 3-sometimes, 4-often, 5-always.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Passion is commonly used when describing the interior design profession. We take pride in the work we do and in how we can positively impact people through design. We rely on technology when communicating and documenting projects, but we stand by the importance of human connection and appreciate the ease in collaboration that can be experienced when sharing a physical space.

- Travel, conferences and tradeshow, and hospitality were the top three industries that had experienced the most impact from the pandemic, as reported in 2020, and have experienced the most change in the past 12 months (identified by 76%, 59%, and 44%, respectively).
- The housing market and manufacturing industry had not experienced much impact in the first half of 2020 (selected by 7% and 23% in 2020, respectively), but was indicated to have experienced much change in the past 12 months (selected by 38% and 41%, respectively).

WE SEE STRENGTH IN OUR PRACTICE.

Firms/institutions have been reported as most stable amid the turbulent disruptions when compared to other areas of our personal/professional life. The perceived impact may not have been what was actually experienced by firms, but exemplifies the security we see in establishments.



Travel, conferences and tradeshow, and hospitality experienced the most impact from the pandemic in 2020 and the most change in 2021

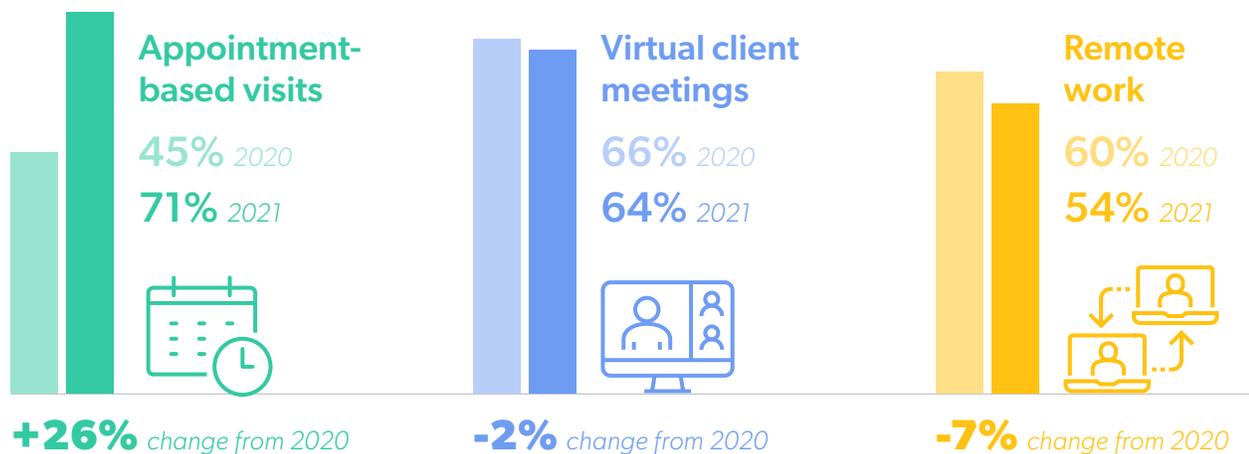
- Changes in the practice were made mostly in areas identified as well-prepared: 35% of respondents indicated changes made in client engagement, which was the most well-prepared area in 2020 (reported by 63%).
- Not many employment changes were made by firms: 60% indicated no change (compared to 64% in 2020), and 14% of business leaders reported new employee hiring.

WE RECOGNIZE THAT VIRTUAL IS HERE TO STAY.

Continuing education online and virtual conferences made an imprint on our professional lives. The pandemic allowed the profession to experiment with more technology and remote systems in our projects. Although the continued practice of remote processes may depend on the work culture, the experimentation opened our eyes to new ways of work.

- Expectations in keeping appointment-based visits as part of practice increased 25% whereas expectations in remote work decreased 7%. Although expectations slightly decreased, 75% of those that expected remote work to continue saw this as a permanent change.

TOP 3 SERVICES TO CONTINUE IN PRACTICE

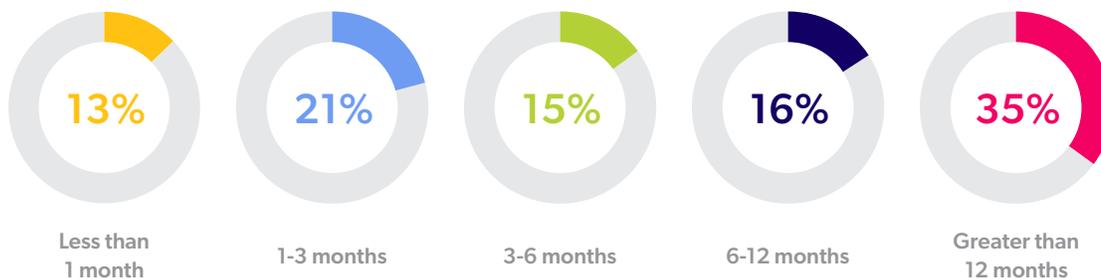


- Half of the respondents believe that e-design services (50%) and virtual vendor meetings (49%) will remain for more than three years.
- More than half of 2020 respondents were looking forward to video conferencing technology (54%) and virtual tours (52%), but implementation during the past 12 months differed: video conferencing technology was implemented by 61% and virtual tours by 25%.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

- About half of the interior design community worked from home for less than six months. 35% of respondents have worked fully remotely for more than 12 months.

REMOTE WORK DURATION



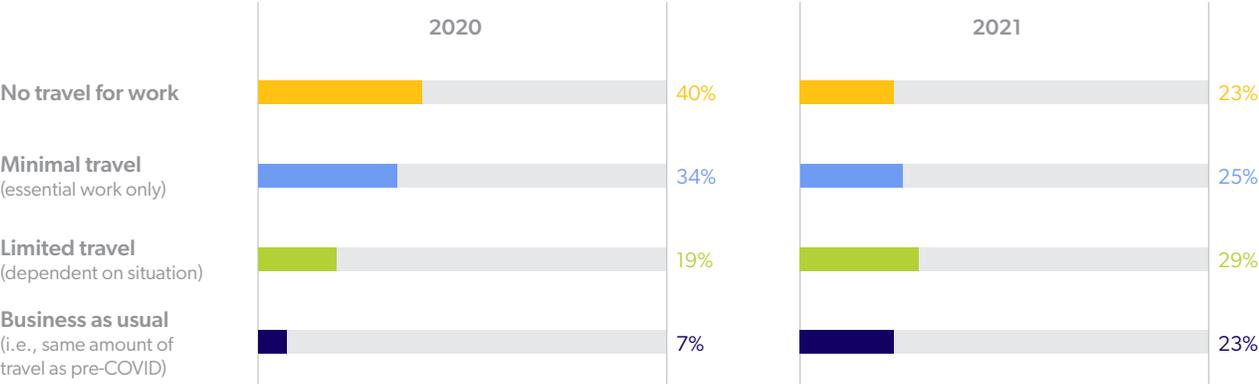
- 71% have returned to their pre-COVID workplace to some capacity compared to 46% reported in 2020. For those that returned to their pre-COVID workplace, 59% were at least somewhat satisfied with the minor changes made to the workplace (e.g., signage, hand sanitation stations, increased frequency in cleaning, occupant capacity adjustments, etc.).
- Business leaders identified work efficiencies as the top reason (43%) to return to the pre-COVID workplace, along with access to resources (38%) and business operations (31%).

“Where you really start to hit the crossroads of needing to go back and needing to be together is to establish trust, that essential element that allowed us to function at such a high level while remote, especially as we’re building new teams with new people who are onboarded virtually.

MARGI KAMINSKI, ASID, NCIDQ, CLSSGB
PRINCIPAL, DIRECTOR OF HEALTH INTERIORS, CANNONDESIGN

- Work travel is still to-be-determined. About a quarter continues to not travel for work (23%), while another quarter (24%) has returned to pre-pandemic levels (i.e., business as usual).

WORK TRAVEL STATUS



work travel
is still to-be-determined

PROJECTS - DESIGN CHANGES

Changes have always been a part of interior design. The pandemic accelerated certain trends and identified some to be adopted more permanently. These changes have expanded the scope of work interior design professionals are capable of and demonstrate the importance of space.

WE IMPLEMENTED CHANGES, BUT AT A DIFFERENT PACE.

Design can address immediate needs but is best achieved when it delivers a solution to a deeper need. Industries that found more solid ground during the pandemic were quicker to adopt and implement changes necessary to move forward.

- Design changes in practice areas that were from industries that saw a lot of fluctuations (i.e., hospitality and education) were experienced lesser by interior design professionals than what was expected in 2020.
- Offices and healthcare were quicker in experiencing expected changes.

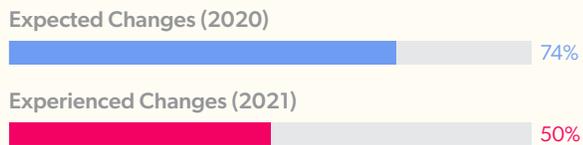
CHANGES IN DESIGN PRACTICE AREAS

These industries did not see as much implementation as expected.

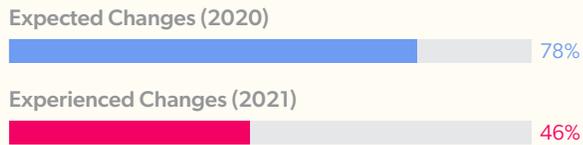
Entertainment



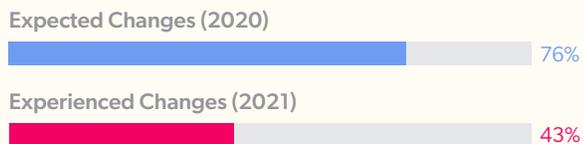
Hospitality



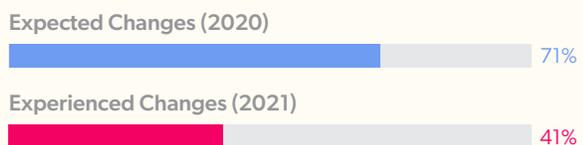
Shared living facilities



K-12 education

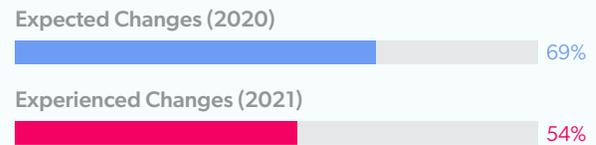


Higher education

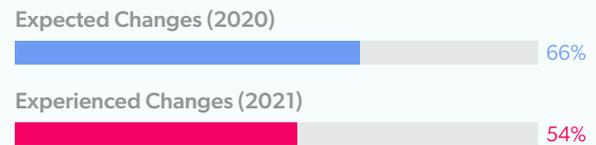


These industries experienced a level of implementation closer to the expectation.

Healthcare



Office



WE ACCEPT THE DIVERSIFICATION AND BROADENING OF SPACE.

Design changes seen in the past year at home, in the outdoors, and beyond have been accepted as part of everyday life.

With the increased amount of time spent at home, our homes have become a hub for a multitude of activities over a longer period of time and more permanently.

- More defined office space or workstations at home was expected by 75% in 2020, experienced by 68% in 2021, and of those that experienced major changes, 90% see this to be permanent.
- Most respondents (78%) experienced an increase in demand for outdoor space (expected by 72% in 2020), and 89% of those that experienced this change anticipate this will be a permanent change. Additional outdoor seating and covered outdoor areas were also experienced by the majority (75% and 68%, respectively; and expected by 65% and 62%, respectively, in 2020) and projected to be permanent (87% and 92%, respectively).



More defined office space at home

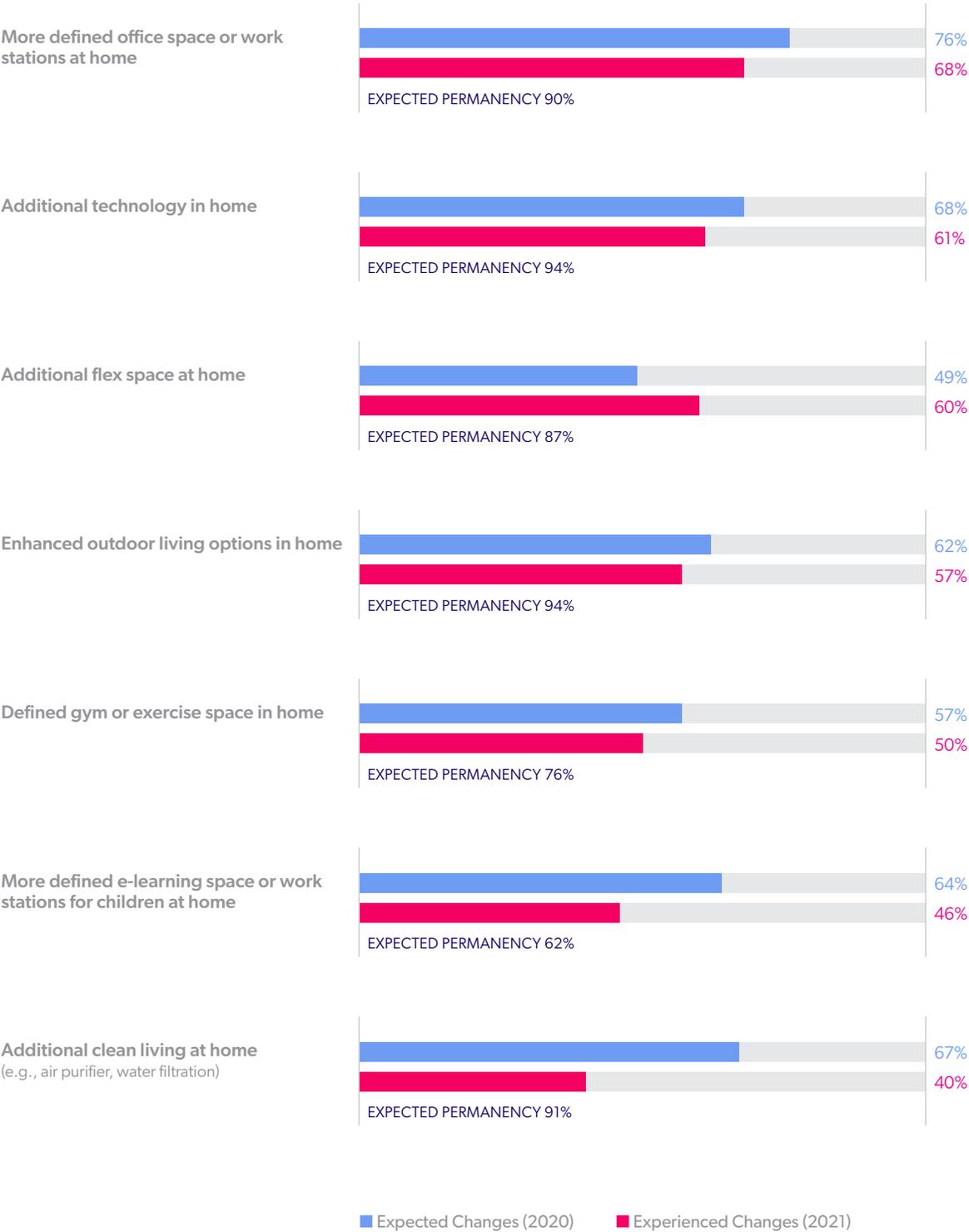
was experienced by 68%, and 90% of those that experienced change see this to be permanent.



Demand for outdoor space

was experienced by 78%, and 89% of those that experienced change anticipate this will be a permanent change.

CHANGES IN DESIGN PRACTICE AREAS



EXPLORATIONS

We have a good pulse of the industry. Projections in 2020 of the changes expected to happen were considerably experienced in interior design over the past 12 months. As we charter through the still uncertain impact of the pandemic, we examine the changes that were made and assess whether they are necessary for the interior design profession to advance.

WE EMBRACED CHANGES AND SEE THESE CHANGES TO BE IN FLUX.

Changes are inevitable, especially during times of disruption and uncertainties. We experienced major adjustments in our work process over the past 12 months – most have been shifts to fare through the pandemic temporarily.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- Networking, marketing, and social media were the top three activities that respondents indicated major changes in over the past 12 months. Changes in marketing and social media were expected to be permanent; however, changes in networking were considered to be temporary.

CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

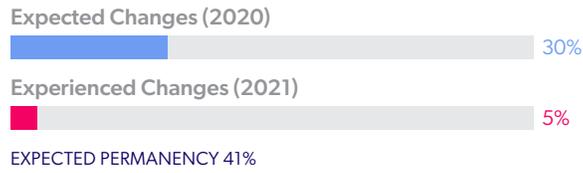
- Changes in client meetings were experienced by most (74%), followed by tradeshow attendance (60%), showroom/store visits (60%), and site visits (52%). All of these activities were expected to be temporary changes. These were also areas that experienced changes in the first six months of the pandemic and areas identified for needing improvement in the 2020 report.

DESIGN PROCESS

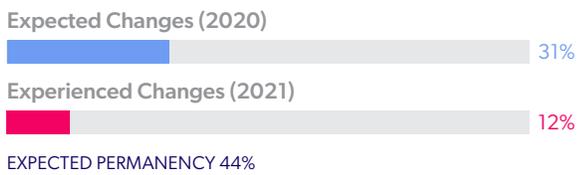
- Changes in the overall design process and related activities were not major but concentrated mostly on the implementation and delivery of products and services.
- Changes in the earlier phases of the design process were experienced less in comparison to what was expected in 2020.

CHANGES IN DESIGN PHASES & PROCESSES

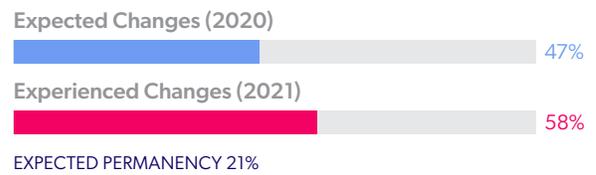
RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT



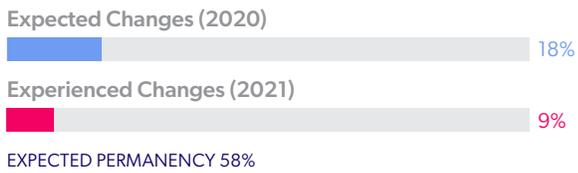
PROGRAMMING



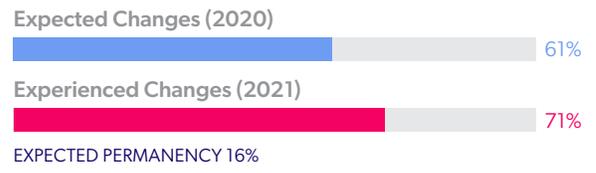
MANUFACTURING



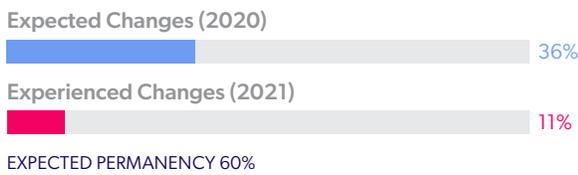
SCHEMATIC DESIGN



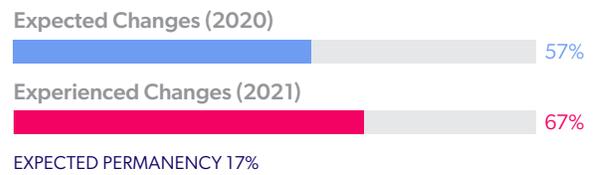
SUPPLY CHAIN



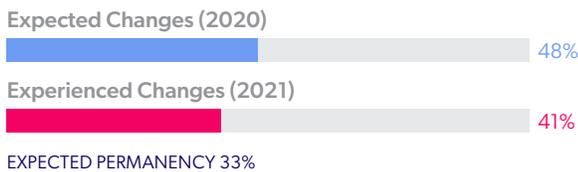
SPACE PLANNING



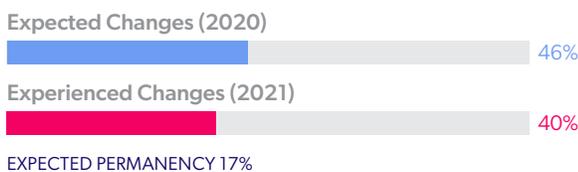
DELIVERY & INSTALLATION



FF&E



CONSTRUCTION/INSTALLATION



- Changes expected to remain for more than three years include: Mailing samples to remote work locations (identified by 60% of respondents) and locally-sourcing materials/products (59%).

“This is the moment where the design professionals can start putting pressure on the market to source more things locally or within a smaller distance from where the project is, which could just add more richness to the variety of localized work that we do across the country.

DAVID EUSCHER, NCIDQ, ASID, IIDA, ASSOC. AIA, WELL AP, LEED AP
VICE PRESIDENT, INTERIORS STUDIO LEADER, CORGAN

WE SEE MORE CHANGES NEEDED.

The perception of interior design has been positive throughout the pandemic as clients turned to the interior design profession for overall guidance in the interior built environment for health, safety, and well-being, and for changes at home. Although we had experienced changes in the design process and in projects over the past 12 months, the interior design community still saw an increased necessity for changes in interior design to advance.

“One of our biggest challenges as a profession will be to try to stay ahead of [what is going to last] as much as possible and to understand what it is we'll be needing to respond to and support.

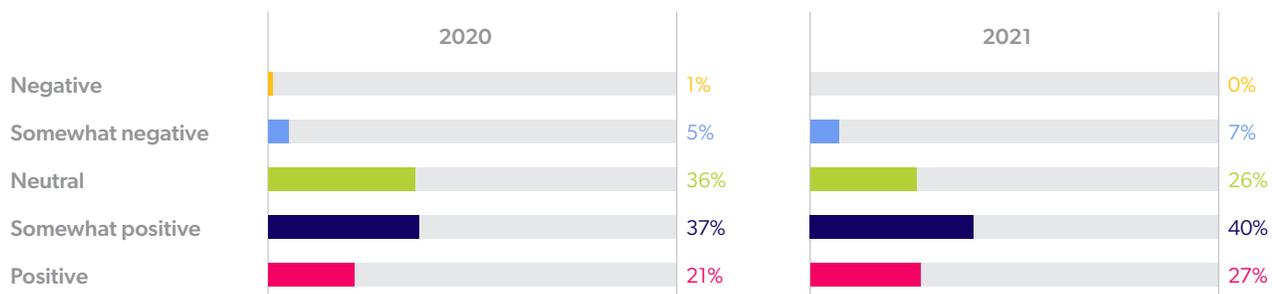
STEFFANY HOLLINGSWORTH, FASID, NMLID
FOUNDER, PARE, LLC

“Relationships with your vendors are more important than ever. Right now in order to make us successful with our clients, we have to work with the trusted vendors that we know will supply what they need to do for our projects.

JO RABAUT, FASID, IIDA
FOUNDING PRINCIPAL & PRESIDENT, RABAUT DESIGN ASSOCIATES, INC.

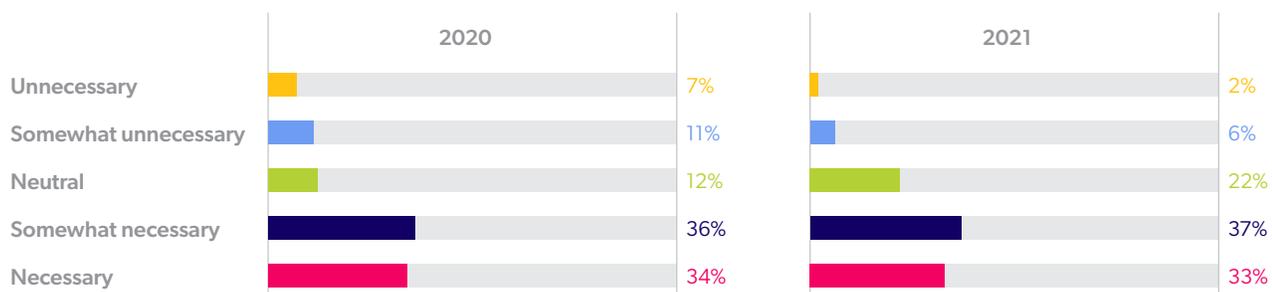
- The most challenging design issue that needs to be resolved for interior design to advance post-COVID-19 is product and materials (identified by 47% of respondents), which is a change from public policy (45%) reported in 2020. Resolving process inefficiencies (23%) followed.
- The perception of interior design has been somewhat positive over the two phases of this study with a significant** trend towards increased positivity.

PERCEPTION OF INTERIOR DESIGN



- Residential designers indicated a significantly* higher positive perceptual change in interior design (M=4.0, SD=0.9)¹¹ than commercial designers (M=3.8, SD=0.8).
- Changes in interior design have been perceived as somewhat necessary in both years of this study (2020: M=3.8, SD=1.2; 2021: M=3.9, SD=1.0)¹² and is seeing a significantly* increasing trend. In 2021, all groups within the interior design community agreed (i.e., no significant differences among respondent characteristics) that changes were necessary for interior design to advance.

INTERIOR DESIGN CHANGE NECESSITY



¹¹ Mean (M; average) and standard deviation based on a 5-point scale: 1-negative, 2-somewhat negative, 3-neutral, 4-somewhat positive, 5-positive.

¹² Mean (M; average) and standard deviation based on a 5-point scale: 1-unnecessary, 2-somewhat unnecessary, 3-neither unnecessary nor necessary, 4-somewhat necessary, 5-necessary.

BEYOND RECOVERY TO THRIVING

We found signs of strong industry, business, and personal resilience over the past 12 months as we endured the ongoing pandemic. The ASID Interior Design Billings Index (IDBI) has reported record highs in business performance, especially during the spring of 2021. This report also found increased positivity in the perception of interior design as more and more people reach out to interior design professionals for work. However, our goal is not to just recover from the losses experienced from the pandemic, but to demonstrate the important role design plays to enhance the evolving lives of all people, including interior design professionals.

Here are some key points mentioned during the focus group discussions that posed questions and identified areas of improvement for the profession to thrive:

WE SHOULD THINK AHEAD ABOUT THE CHANGED EXPERIENCE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS.

We each experienced the pandemic differently yet have all been impacted by the disruption. For many, this disruption caused multiple activities to collide into one space, whether it be at home or in the virtual realm. The once diverse experiences we had as we moved through several places (i.e., passageways) have condensed without much movement – physically, perceptually, nor cognitively.

- How do we create contextual layers through design for multi-purpose spaces that not only aid the given activity, but also trigger our memory of transitions from space to space that were offered in the past?
- How do we understand this phenomenon in advance and stay ahead of this expected changed experience so we can offer design solutions post-pandemic?
- How do we provide meaningful experiences in our own profession that fulfill our basic biological needs for socialization in a safe way that still builds community?

“One of the psychological implications of what we’re facing now is that we no longer have a sense of coming and going and being able to put a period after the sentence because you experience everything in one space. So that sentence has become a run-on for a lot of people and it’s overwhelming to be accessible all the time. We’re going to see some shifts in how we look at our residential work-life, and how we’re looking at workplace—how we accomplish separate, but together, and still foster human connection.

TONI GOCKE WYRE, FASID, ASSOC. AIA, LEED AP, WELL AP
SENIOR ASSOCIATE, INTERIOR DESIGNER, POLK STANLEY WILCOX | CLINICAL
INSTRUCTOR OF INTERIOR DESIGN, UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS

WE NEED TO REVISIT DESIGN INTEGRITY AND EXPAND DESIGN EQUITY.

Social media broadcasts interior design transformations as quick-fixes to the public but unfortunately these do not depict reality. We have the responsibility to offer healthy, safe, and quality design to our clients, to stand behind the evidence-based design solutions, and to ensure the designed project is what is experienced at the end (not the value-engineered solution).

- How do we make good design accessible to all and create equitable design solutions?
- How do we effectively communicate to our clients the realistic timelines, raw good shortage information, lead times, and shipping delays to make them aware of the design process up-front and expand their knowledge of design overall?
- How do we empower interior design professionals to be design advocates for the value of services they provide in enhancing people’s lives?

“One of the most impactful cultural shifts this past year has been a refocus on the equity of design. Companies, organizations, and media partners have launched initiatives, sponsored scholarships, and built programs around the movement. We have come to realize that real change takes time and layered education.

KERRIE KELLY, FASID, NKBA, CAPS
CEO & CREATIVE DIRECTOR, KERRIE KELLY DESIGN LAB

WE SHOULD MOVE BEYOND SUSTAINABILITY AND INTO REGENERATIVE SOLUTIONS.

The pandemic has augmented issues and conversations in climate change, but sustainability applies to more than the environment. As we rely on our resiliency to get through the pandemic, we hope we will spring forward to not just recover from the damage done but also revive to bring about more positive ways to renew life.

- How do we encourage clients to think beyond the immediate design solution and consider deeper implications (i.e., environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues) related to design?
- How do we push the profession to collectively think through holistic sustainability (i.e., environmental, financial, human, etc.) and regeneration when we are pressed for time on projects?
- How do we apply this to our own profession and ensure emerging professionals and leaders are being sufficiently mentored and empowered to revitalize the next generation of interior design?

“We have to make sure that we don't lose focus on sustainable practice and really push towards regenerative design to not just doing less harm but to actually healing the damage that we're doing. How do we change the industry to do that? To me, it starts at a university level where there's more courses on evidence-based design, universal design, wellness, and sustainable design, and moving into regeneration as the next level. And we have to engage today's clients in a conversation about how their projects can better contribute to their surrounding communities on multiple levels.

SCOTT BRIDEAU, CDT, LEED AP O+M

WORKPLACE STUDIO PRINCIPAL, LITTLE DIVERSIFIED ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTING, INC.

The pandemic has opened our eyes and minds to new questions, challenges, and opportunities. We have experienced changes in the way we live, work, play, heal, and learn and expect that changes will continue as we proceed through the pandemic. Our experiences in spaces are evolving and so must the design solutions we generate. What changes do you see in interior design and what must we do to propel it further to where we want it to be? We hope that you will join us not only in conversations but also in taking action to strengthen resiliency and thrive.

CASE STUDIES: BEST PRACTICES & LESSONS LEARNED

Exemplary practices emerged during disruption: redesigning existing programs to accommodate rising needs, creating support groups to foster engagement and deeper connection virtually, and investing in rebuilding culture to reflect changes and renewed values, to name a few. This is a collective summary of lessons that were shared among the three firms we had interviewed to get a closer and deeper look into how firms adjusted and pivoted through the pandemic:

Transitions

Keep fluidity in the practice by testing different technologies, diversifying your portfolio, sharing knowledge, and examining processes. Our path is forward, not back.

Touch points

Understand the power of partnerships/relationships and engage with clients and staff by applying a people-first/people-centered mentality. Our strength is in empathy.

Transparency

Communicate changes, challenges, and the unknowns to empower more choice and control during times of uncertainty. Our goal is to solve problems together.

Talent

Recognize, appreciate, and mentor talent by providing them a voice and equipping them with resources and opportunities to thrive. Our most precious asset are our people.

Trust

Rely on the foundation of design and practice, rooted in promoting health, safety, and welfare while supporting and enhancing the human experience. Our resiliency comes from our instinctual passion and mindset for positive impact.

EYP ARCHITECTURE & ENGINEERING

EYP is the leading architecture and engineering firm developing new ideas and design solutions with mission-driven clients in higher education, government, healthcare, and science & technology. Our interdisciplinary Total Impact Design™ approach empowers clients with buildings that profoundly impact human behavior and performance as well as energy and the environment. Dedicated to People, Purpose, and Planet, EYP design liberates human potential to transform performance; actively helps clients advance their mission; and maximizes available resources to advance sustainability. Inspired by our clients, design is how we make a positive impact on the world.



INTERIOR DESIGN PRACTICE AREAS

Government, Healthcare, Higher Education, Science & Technology



OFFICE LOCATIONS

Albany, Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Orlando, Raleigh, Washington DC



FIRM SIZE

425+ Employees



OF INTERIOR DESIGNERS

35+ Interior Designers



ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

People-first; Inspire, Thrive, Connect



EMPLOYEE PROGRAMS (SAMPLE LIST)

Virtual Town Halls

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs: Mental Health, BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, Young Professionals, Women, Care Providers)

HLGstudio

At HLGstudio there are 3 key drivers: experiential design, small firm - big ideas mentality, and the power of partnership. HLGstudio knows that their sustained success is based on the success of their clients.

HLGstudio was founded nearly 16 years ago and is recognized as one of the leading design firms of workplace, education and healthcare environments. counting Cox, WarnerMedia, Georgia Tech Northside Hospital, Tanner Health System and Piedmont Hospital, among others as clients.

HLGstudio believes that people and ideas are their most valuable asset.



INTERIOR DESIGN PRACTICE AREAS

Workplace, Healthcare, Higher Education, Hospitality



OFFICE LOCATION

Atlanta



FIRM SIZE

30+ Employees



OF INTERIOR DESIGNERS

25+ Interior Designers



ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

People-focused; Partnerships; Tribe mentality



EMPLOYEE PROGRAMS (SAMPLE LIST)

Weekly and monthly Scrums

Forums: leadership development, presentation skills, Health and Wellness workshop, Financial Health, Community outreach

Little Diversified Consulting Group

Little Diversified Architectural Consulting, an international architecture and design firm, is recognized for developing exceptional design solutions that generate business results in the workplace, community, healthcare and retail industries. Little delivers results beyond architecture by combining expertise in architecture, engineering, interior architecture with proficiency in additional services (land development, CAFM and occupancy planning, branded graphics, building technology applications, and digital media services).



INTERIOR DESIGN PRACTICE AREAS

Workplace, Community, Healthcare, Retail



OFFICE LOCATIONS

Charlotte, Durham, Washington DC, Orlando, Newport Beach



FIRM SIZE

375+ Employees



OF INTERIOR DESIGNERS

50+ Interior Designers



ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

One-on-One; Care, Stretch, Spark



EMPLOYEE PROGRAMS (SAMPLE LIST)

One-on-One; Care, Stretch, Spark

On the Boards (Internal jury)

Online internship (Lecture series)

Little Day Makers (Gift for colleague or client)

Elephant in the City (Social justice)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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GRAPHIC DESIGN

Think Baseline

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Benjamin Moore

As part of a collaborative research project with Benjamin Moore, ASID refined the 2020 survey according to the second phase study's research questions and hypotheses.

SURVEY PROCESS

The survey was tested internally and was built on an online survey platform (Alchemer). The survey included an informed consent page at the beginning, including information on the purpose of the study, survey length (approximately 20 minutes), confidentiality, anonymity, use of data, and survey incentives (respondents that completed the survey received an automated report of their personal resilience score with more information on the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) and a \$10 Amazon e-gift card, if email address was provided). The survey was open July 13, 2021, until August 10, 2021 and was promoted to ASID members and other purchased lists of the interior design community (i.e. non-members), which replicates the participant recruitment method in 2020 excluding social media. A total of 390 complete responses were collected and included in the analysis.

SURVEY SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Overall, the survey respondents are a representative sample of the interior design population. This section reviews characteristics of the survey respondents, including demographic information and employed firmographic information. Based on completed responses, the survey sample was 81% female (13% male; 6% preferred not to answer) and 77% white. See below for full tables of sample characteristics in comparison to the 2020 survey sample and the known interior design population, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

SURVEY SAMPLE

| GENDER | 2021 (N=390) | 2020 (N=503) |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Female | 81% | 81% |
| Male | 13% | 13% |
| Prefer not to answer | 6% | 6% |

| ETHNICITY | 2021 (N=390) | 2020 (N=503) |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 4% | 4% |
| Black or African American | 3% | 2% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 4% | 4% |
| Native American or American Indian | 1% | 1% |
| White | 77% | 76% |
| Multi-Ethnic | 2% | 4% |
| Prefer not to answer | 9% | 9% |

| AGE | 2021 (N=390) | 2020 (N=503) |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Less than 25 | 4% | 3% |
| 25-34 | 18% | 14% |
| 35-44 | 16% | 17% |
| 44-54 | 19% | 24% |
| 55-64 | 22% | 21% |
| 65+ | 17% | 16% |
| Prefer not to answer | 4% | 5% |

| EMPLOYMENT STATUS | 2021 (N=390) | 2020 (N=503) |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Full-time | 85% | 77% |
| Part-time | 13% | 13% |
| Furloughed/Unemployed | 2% | 6% |
| Semi-Retired/Retired | 0% | 4% |

SAMPLE COMPARISON WITH U.S. INTERIOR DESIGN POPULATION

| REGION | 2021 (N=350) | 2020 (N=440) | POPULATION |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Midwest | 22% | 19% | 21% |
| Northeast | 16% | 20% | 17% |
| South | 39% | 37% | 34% |
| West | 23% | 24% | 28% |

| FIRM SIZE | 2021 (N=351) | 2020 (N=453) | POPULATION |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Self-Employed | 31% | 34% | 54% |
| 2-9 employee firm | 26% | 29% | |
| 10-99 employee firm | 26% | 19% | 32% |
| 100+ employee firm | 17% | 18% | 15% |

| YEARS OF EXPERIENCE | 2021 (N=390) | 2020 (N=503) |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 0-10 years | 34% | 30% |
| 11-20 years | 19% | 24% |
| 21-30 years | 21% | 21% |
| 31-40 years | 15% | 17% |
| 40+ years | 11% | 8% |

| PRACTICE AREA | 2021 | 2020 |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|
| Single-Family Residential | 24% | 23% |
| Office/Branded Environments | 15% | 17% |
| Healthcare & Senior/Assisted Living | 10% | 12% |
| Kitchen & Bath | 10% | 11% |
| Education (K-12, Higher Ed) | 9% | 5% |
| Hospitality | 8% | 8% |
| Multifamily Residential | 7% | 8% |
| Product & Materials | 6% | 6% |
| Retail & Entertainment | 5% | 6% |
| Government | 5% | 3% |
| Environmental Graphics & Branding | 1% | 1% |

Note: Respondents selected up to three areas of practice. Percentage is based on total number of responses.

SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS

Survey data was analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics online subscription version. Basic descriptive statistics and frequency tables were generated for most questions. One-way ANOVA was used in comparing differences in samples characteristics (i.e., firm size, years of experience, region, employment status, etc.) and between 2020 and 2021 datasets, with Tukey and Bonferroni post-hoc tests to determine significant mean differences. Checklist questions were analyzed through multiple response frequencies and cross tabs (when comparing across sample characteristics). Correlation tables were used to determine strength in relationships between scale/ordinal variables.

AMERICAN
SOCIETY OF
INTERIOR
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RESEARCH

asid.org/research