

On 29th may 2006 the victorian commercial interior practice group of the design institute of australia held a unique event at euroluce gallery in melbourne.

Top ten by ten provided an opportunity for ten eminent designers to share their top ten tips on a broad range of subjects with a receptive and enthusiastic audience.

The presenters ranged from established designers to rising stars, hailing from large to small organisations and working in various areas of the commercial interior design industry. Their topics and presentations varied from the inspiring to the pragmatic, the humorous to the enlightening.

The tips are reproduced in full in this brochure as a record of the event for those that were able to attend and for the information of those that weren't. We hope that some of the tips, if not many, will strike a chord and improve the knowledge of practising designers and those interested in the design industry alike

James Harper
Commercial Interior Practice Group
Victorian Chapter



DANIEL DALLA RIVA EXPONENTIAL DESIGN

SEAMLESSLY INTEGRATING INTERIOR,
GRAPHIC AND PRODUCT DESIGN

1 Never lose focus of the 'macro' when dealing with the 'micro'.

Projects that integrate interior environments, two dimensional graphics and three dimensional product design can be complex. Each part is totally reliant on all other parts for a successful outcome. The sum of all parts is the end result, so never lose focus of the 'macro' when dealing with the 'micro'.

2 Maintain a common thread.

Seamless integration surrounds us in nature, and even in the man made world we continue to shape, there exists a common thread. We should embrace all disciplines of design, from art to architecture, landscape to skyscraper, street sign to street art. Learn from them, be inspired by them, and understand the way that they co-exist and relate to one another.

3 Think Zen and the art of seamless integration.

Buy the book 'Zen Gardening' by Sunniva Harte and be absorbed by seamless integration. Beauty, balance and harmony in the physical and emotional aesthetic – truly inspirational.

4 Stick to the basic principles of the design process.

When contemplating a project that requires the integration of various types of design, stick to the basic principles of the design process. Identify and define the brief, the budgetary and the logistical boundaries to establish creative parameters. Aim to meet the budget and exceed the creative expectations of the client, but never forget the business of design – make money, or you'll be flipping burgers before the next edition of Artichoke lands on your door step!

5 Keep your finger on the pulse.

New materials and manufacturing techniques inspire and deliver innovative solutions. Research, research, research, BUT be careful not to introduce a new technique just for the sake of it, make sure the design needs it.

6 Ask the experts.

Involve your network of reliable suppliers who fully understand their medium and ultimately can help you realise your vision. Identify the cross over points of the mediums, put experts together or perhaps keep them apart. Build on your knowledge and experience with their knowledge and experience. Listen and learn from the experts, let them compliment your ideals.

7 Ask your mother.

Seek inspiration and opinions from your colleagues and peers, but always remember that innovation should never be out of reach of 'normal' people! Never forget the human element – after all, who is it that are we designing for?!

8 Test the unknown.

Mock it up, 3D model it, prototype it, print it, fold it, melt it, burn it, glue it, fix it, cut it, roll up your sleeves and prove yourself right...or perhaps wrong. Eitherway, here lies the truth – does 'it' integrate, moreover does 'it' integrate seamlessly?

9 Get Dirty.

Embrace a hands on approach where designers work closely with the production teams that bring our ideas to life – from the drawing board to the building site.

10 Make your Mark.

To conquer a complex project that incorporates interior, graphic, and product design, aim to fully resolve the solution. Consider this simplified equation: seamless integration = the success of the sum of all parts



MICHELLE SKINNER RICE AND SKINNER

PRODUCT LIBRARY –
INFO BANK OR BLACK HOLE

1 Create a filing system.

If you can't find a product then it's pointless having a library. Create a system of filing eg. alphabetically, categories, etc. No matter how simple or complex, the system needs to be understood by everyone in the practice. Your library is only as good as how it is filed and therefore how readily information can be found.

2 Be discerning.

There's so much information available on the web that it is only necessary to keep samples and hard copies of products that you love, are new, want to use or are tried and tested. A smaller product library is easier to find information in. Give honest feedback on products to Product Reps. Don't accept products into your library that you will never use.

3 Circulate new products.

Create a method of introducing new products in the library so that everyone is aware of what's in there.

4 Allocate staff or time.

Manage/file the library each week to keep it up to date.

5 Product Reps are your friends.

Plan ahead what samples you need to avoid last minute panics. Make an area where it is comfortable and easy for Product Reps to come into your space and update the library.

6 Ban mini libraries.

No one should have their own library or keep products at their desk where they cannot be shared.

7 Label samples and brochures.

What, where from & when. There's nothing worse than finding the dream tile in your library but no idea who supplies it.

8 Get help.

Books, websites and RAIIA practice notes outline how you can create or organise a product library.

9 Regularly review and cull.

Every year, cull unused or out of date information, if you haven't used it, loose it.

10 Put old samples to good use.

A small powder room can easily be tiled for nothing. Call up each stone supplier for a tile sample of Carrara marble!

TOP TEN BY TEN

10 industry leaders
10 indispensable tips

6–8pm 29 May 2006
EuroLuce Gallery
20 Russell Street
Melbourne 3000
Australia



Design
Institute of Australia

Presented by the Victorian
Commercial Interior Practice Group

Major Partners

Euroluce
LIGHTING

planex

Media Partner

Print Partners

Cornwell sustainable living
FABRICS

ARTICHOKE
MAGAZINE



Paperpoint





HARLEY ANSTEE
NEXUS DESIGNS
HOW TO SURVIVE IN THE DESIGN INDUSTRY

- 1 You will need to be passionate about design.**
- 2 You must be committed to a clear design philosophy.**
- 3 Establish a resolute business policy.**
Set financial budgets, monitor regularly, analyse results, constantly monitor and protect your Company image.
- 4 Actively foster and encourage a team spirit within your staff.**
Give designers the opportunity to grow in the business.
- 5 Enthusiastically embrace change.**
Don't have a closed mind, be open to all forms of external influences from both within and outside the design industry.
- 6 Concentrate on your strengths.**
- 7 Don't under or over estimate your clients.**
Service them in the best possible manner, establish a clear and concise Client Brief and then a Scope of Works and Fee Proposal to minimize any misunderstandings. Clearly define and communicate 'terminologies'. As designers we often take for granted client's understanding of the design process and the terms we use, eg concept, design development, documentation etc. Challenge your clients, yourself and those who work with you.
- 8 Foster an Australian ethos in your work.**
Use the best of art and craft, commission Australian furniture designers.
- 9 Only work with excellent suppliers and contractors.**
Build up a team you can really rely on. Your reputation is often in their hands.
- 10 As a designer you will need a sense of humour, endless curiosity and lots of optimism.**
You need to be flexible, adaptable and tenacious. You must enjoy your work.



ROBERT BACKHOUSE
HASSELL
DESIGN STUDIO CULTURE

- 1 It is important to be process led not style based.**
i.e. first principles as related to client aspirations and meanings.
- 2 Benefits from a studio environment.**
Work is on display in progress and input from others is encouraged.
- 3 Always try to incorporate critiquing as part of the process.**
i.e. pin up and seek broad review and debate as a formal process.
- 4 Develop a stable of designers not a "hero-led" studio.**
This facilitates output which is more diverse and varied, with both client and designers contributing different preoccupations.
- 5 Define your design values.**
Communicate them, debate them, evolve them through practice.
- 6 Publish or Perish.**
It's really that simple, building reputation is essential.
- 7 With each of your projects, be sure to self-critique.**
And reflect when seeking publication.
- 8 It's all about the photos.**
Ensure that you record your work.
- 9 Develop a process for photography.**
This will cover budget, brief and directing the shoot.
- 10 Manage your relationships with editors.**



TONY BATTERSBY
SJB
DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABILITY

- Become an ESD (environmentally sustainable design) champion.
- Make ESD relevant to your client.
- Integrate ESD and do it early.
- Use passive solar design solutions.
- Creatively adapt existing buildings.
- Innovate with new heating and cooling strategies.
- Embrace WSUD (water sensitive urban design).
- Support urban consolidation (2030).
- Set a global example.
- Encourage ESD attitudes in students and children.



STEVEN CORNWELL
CORNWELL DESIGN
BRANDING A DESIGN BUSINESS

- Articulate your vision.
- Branding is not marketing. Don't confuse the two.
- Seek content over style when developing your identity.
- Capture and disseminate research
- Don't become your clients
- Sustainability is not a marketing angle.
- CSR. Get off your lazy butt and give something back
- Refrain from committing newsletter suicide
- Invest in people
- Make every interaction with your clients count.



GARRY EMERY
EMERYSTUDIO
INTEGRATING ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS INTO COMMERCIAL INTERIOR PROJECTS

- 1 Liquid design.** Entails ideas about freedom and spontaneous, erratic behaviour; about openness rather than enclosure; about dynamic interaction rather than hierarchical communication.
- 2 Immersive environments.** Have the potential to be powerfully persuasive, engaging all the senses.
- 3 Balance globalism with localism.** Celebrate both; project what's authentic and culturally grounded.
- 4 Trust your instincts** Logic is great. But first and last, trust your instincts as a designer.
- 5 Think holistically.** Understand the entire system you operate within. Environmental graphic design engages with architecture, urban planning, transport and infrastructure planning, landscape design, lighting, art, advertising, commercial developments and the community.
- 6 Wayfinding doesn't always mean signs.**
Many different kinds of intuitive signals and materials can provide alternatives to intrusive sign interventions.
- 7 Interactive design.** Digital design makes it possible to enter virtual three-dimensional environments and to pick up information experientially and dynamically.
- 8 Effortless orientation and information.** Signs can take many forms that enable people to feel oriented and informed without making an effort to read, naturally engaging emotions and the senses.
- 9 The signage dilemma.** Businesses want signs to stand out and be noticed, but at the same time to blend in with the context: large enough to attract attention, but also subtle and discreet. You cannot always fix poor planning with signs.
- 10 Create a definitive sense of place.**
Creating places that are distinctive, memorable and attractive is a goal that all contemporary urban developments strive to achieve. A strong sense of place enhances identity, provides legibility and wellbeing, and makes wayfinding easier, safer and engaging.



DAVID HICKS
DAVID HICKS DESIGN
STARTING UP A DESIGN PRACTICE

- Have determination
- Find a niche market
- Keep overheads low
- Publicity, publicity, publicity
- Establish yourself as a player
- Learn MYOB
- Negotiate high fees
- Service clients
- Decrease publicity
- Chase payments



ROBYN LINDSEY
GEYER
PRESENTATIONS & UNDIES

- 1 Understand**
Client expectations, audience dynamic, presenting environment, presenting facilities
- 2 Nerves**
Imagine your audience in their undies, practice making speeches, talk about the topic to others, know the content deeply, never rely on notes.
- 3 Deconstruct**
The content, use a disassociated audience for critiquing, simplify it to the 3 critical points, debrief afterwards and learn from mistakes.
- 4 Empathise**
Demonstrate empathy, place yourself in your client's shoes before you open your mouth, people get different things out of the presentation each has different needs, get them all right, focus on the individual not an audience.
- 5 Rapport**
Find common ground, pace to match their mental processing.
- 6 PowerPoint**
Don't rely on it!, more than half the audience will not care about the visuals, detail detracts from what you are saying, make it fool proof.
- 7 Anticipate**
The hardest questions from the audience, practice the answers beforehand.
- 8 Natural**
Don't fake it!, believe in what you say or don't say it!
- 9 Take two of everything**
CDs, powerleads, batteries and laptops.
- 10 Senses**
Don't overdose on perfume/ aftershave, personal Hygiene fresh!, check breath?, sweaty palms?, volume of voice?, final check – fresh undies?



ASHLEIGH PARKER
PARKER DESIGN
MERGERS, ACQUISITIONS AND OTHER METHODS TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS

- 1 You might be in the Design Business but you are also in the Business of Design.**
Think of your business like any other business and never be afraid to talk about money. This isn't a cottage industry, don't treat it like one. Mergers, acquisitions, takeovers and ASX listing are all options.
- 2 Think carefully about the type of business you are in.**
Design has many facets, often there's a cross over with Project Management, Facility Management, Architecture or Advertising so think also about how those businesses operate.
- 3 Identify the best structure for your company.**
Sole trader, Partnership, Subsidiary, Board of Directors, Shareholders? Think about this before considering 'ad-hoc' opportunities that arise.
- 4 It's not easy on your own.**
Receptionist, bookkeeper, secretary, librarian, gopher and Managing Director all rolled into one!
- 5 Remember, Partnership is like a marriage.**
In the long run, compatibility and respect outweigh passion and excitement!
- 6 Merging businesses is easier than merging cultures.**
It's easy to look at their financial records but think about how you can look inside their heads.
- 7 Distribute equity within your practice.**
This conveys generosity of spirit, helps to retain good staff, spreads responsibility and reduces risk.
- 8 Grow it if it's working.**
Raise equity, build on success, move onwards and upwards, don't be afraid, actively seek new opportunities.
- 9 De-merge if it's not working.**
Don't panic but do it quickly, objectively weigh up the options, seek advice.
- 10 Start with the end in sight.**
Where do you want to be in 10 years time and how are you going to get there.