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Why Cynthia Spence Believes It's Good Business To Invest In An Interior Designer



By Morena Duwe



As the tech world continues to expand beyond the Silicon Valley, creative minds such as Cynthia Spence have found a place within this vast market. Spence works specifically with the high-tech industry, turning homes and work spaces into places of tranquility. “Layering is a careful balance as you need layers to create warmth and interest in a space but too much can become visual noise,” she explains in our interview. “I think life is noisy enough.” Her particular style and design intuition is what attracts her clients which often leads to a chain reaction of referrals. So far, the majority of her clientele has been built by word of mouth.

Being born and raised in the South Bay in Northern California, Spence has seen the birth and explosion of the high-tech industry first-hand. She came to the world of interior design indirectly by working in marketing with the tech and entertainment industry. Through marketing, design has always been a part of her work, but it wasn’t until she decided to take a hiatus from the corporate world and help a few of her friends with their home design projects that she realized she could create a career for herself.

Spence felt an innate familiarity to the tech world having grown up right in its backyard so it was only natural to combine it with her newfound passion for interior design. With no formal training in interior design and a strong background in business, Spence was able to establish a successful design firm. “I have worked in the industry, am very comfortable with it and forever in awe of its next imagining coming to realization,” Spence says about the tech industry. “I think a good design sense is much like the ability to draw: you can learn theory but at the end of the day, you either have it or you don’t.”

Working with high-tech clientele poses unique differences compared to most private design projects. “Many of my clients are not as familiar with the world of design so they are often unaware of the vast resources and options available to them working with the trade,” Spence says. “Their first visit to the design center is illuminating!” She begins with texture and rich neutrals as her foundation before introducing patterns and accent colors. This creates the perfect canvas on which she can build a customized design based upon the client’s lifestyle and personality. “I endeavor to design a space that functions beautifully for them and captures their individual essence,” she explains. “Starting fresh each time in what truly inspires me.”





In addition to her inherent design intuition, Spence’s business acumen is a large part of her firm’s success. She believes that interior design is more than just improving the aesthetics of your home — it is an investment. “If you retain a money manager for your financial portfolio, why wouldn’t you engage a design professional to guide you in the improvements to your real estate?” Spence points out. “There is research to demonstrate that, done well, a kitchen/master bath remodel can recoup from 100-125% of the cost in added value.” She believes that a well designed home ensures a maximum return on the buyer’s initial investment, especially because of the South Bay’s current real estate bubble.

Spence also believes that improving the design of your home improves how you live in your home. Functionality is a large part of her work as she custom creates a space that works with an individual or family’s needs. “I want to come home to a calm space free of unnecessary stuff,” Spence describes. “Designers are particularly adept at space planning for your own personal and functional needs. A cabinet manufacturer might offer that kind of service but their goal is really to sell cabinets, whereas a designer’s touch lives on in how the space functions for you.”

While Spence is happily continuing to expand her business, designing homes and work spaces for the big minds of the tech world, her mind is always seeking higher aspirations. “In the future, I would also like to expand my business to work with architects and high end builders from a project’s inception,” Spence dreams. Her design work is popular because of her impeccable taste and her business is successful because of her experience. A true entrepreneur embodying the spirit of Silicon Valley, Cynthia Spence will continue to grow, evolve and adapt so long as her passion drives her.

