

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a black and white patterned top and black pants, is sitting on a large, circular, blue modular sofa. She is looking at a laptop computer. The sofa is made of several large, blue, curved segments. The background is a grey tiled floor.

**THIS**

is what I  
do for a  
living.

YOUR GUIDE TO HELPING PEOPLE  
UNDERSTAND THE INTERIOR  
DESIGN PROFESSION.



Association  
of Registered  
Interior Designers  
of Ontario



**YOU'RE AT  
A PARTY  
AND YOU'RE**

**CONVERSING  
WITH PEOPLE  
YOU'VE JUST MET.**

The question inevitably arises. "So, what do you do?"

When you say, "Interior Designer", they likely form an idea in their head about what that means.

And usually, it's inaccurate.

That's where this guide comes in, because it's not just at parties that the public has misconceptions about the profession.

ARIDO is a professional organization with more than 3,300 members creating awesome spaces around the province and around the world. That's an impressive number of people doing impressive things, and it got us thinking.

What if everyone could work together, and speak from the same script when promoting the profession?

It would go a long way toward educating the public on what makes Registered Interior Designers essential to a project. The better they understand the profession, the more confident they are in the professional.

**Take some time to read through this handbook, share it with your team, and keep it nearby for reference.**



# THE ELEVATOR PITCH

**Feel free to put these sample elevator pitches in your own words of course, but here are a few examples you can use to capture the essence of the profession in 30 seconds.**

“Registered Interior Designers do more than select paint colours and furniture. A Registered Interior Designer will think about your lifestyle, family / workplace and needs, and consider these carefully in a project. If you’re working on a bathroom or a kitchen project / workplace remodel/restaurant redesign, you will definitely want to speak to an Interior Designer. We think about health and safety concerns, accessibility, lifestyle and sustainability when designing a space.”

“Our professional code of ethics and standards of practice provide peace of mind for our clients. Registered Interior Designers in Ontario are required to carry professional liability insurance in order to practice and regularly complete professional development.”

## FINISH THESE STARTING POINTS TO CREATE YOUR OWN PERSONAL ELEVATOR PITCH.

The project I'm working on is...  
/The project I just completed was amazing. It was...

We were asked to create/build/renovate...

This project was a challenge because...

We were able to use innovative materials like...

It was designed and built to...

## KEY MESSAGES AND TIPS

Every encounter with your clients and the public at large is an opportunity to promote the Interior Design profession. Use this sample copy for your own promotion, in email blasts, advertising and other promotion.

### The Profession:

- Interior Designers create functional, accessible, and beautiful design solutions for your home/family/business/workplace in a collaborative process which considers your vision, your lifestyle, and your budget.
- An Interior Designer will map out your space in a set of technical drawings that include electrical wiring, plumbing, flooring, and the way people move through that space.
- Interior Designers know when building permits are required for projects and they have the knowledge to apply for a building permit on your behalf.
- Interior Designers will work with trusted tradespeople including contractors, plumbers, and electricians, among others, to complete your project.
- A lot of people think an Interior Designer is just responsible for the way things look in a space. But we work on what's below the surface too. On a project, we will address both form and function.

### The Title:

- The title 'Interior Designer' is regulated in Ontario. ARIDO Registered members may use the title 'Interior Designer', as we have completed a rigorous training process to earn this credential.

### ARIDO Standards

- ARIDO protects the public by setting and enforcing the standards for the profession. To become a Registered member, individuals must meet ARIDO's current standards, of a CIDA approved Bachelor of Interior Design, supervised work experience under a qualified professional and pass the 3 part NCIDQ practice exam.
- You have peace of mind engaging a Registered Interior Designer on your project because we adhere to an established code of ethics and practice standards, and maintain professional liability insurance.

# Common questions you might be fielding



## *Oh, I'm an Interior Designer, too!*

**A** You might not know, but Interior Designer is a protected title in Ontario. That means you have to be a Registered member of ARIDO to use it. The Title is regulated to make sure the public knows who is qualified to practice interior design. ARIDO regularly sends cease and desist letters to individuals who use the title without the right.

## *So exactly how is Interior Design different from decoration?*

**A** While decoration is the styling of a space to make it look fashionable and beautiful, Interior Designers create functional and beautiful design solutions for your home/business/workplace which consider your vision, your lifestyle, and your budget. An Interior Designer can create designs for an interior space, apply for a building permit, create plans for plumbing, and electrical, space planning and more.

## *Don't decorators have to be accredited?*

**A** Interior decorating is commonly mistaken for interior design. In Ontario, 'Interior Designer' is a highly specialized accreditation. On the other hand, anyone can call themselves an interior decorator, which does not require the same level of technical training. The title 'Interior Designer' represents an educated professional who has met the high standards for education, work experience and examination to gain Registered Membership, as defined by ARIDO.

## *What does an Interior Designer actually do on a project?*

**A** It might sound clichéd, but no two projects are the same. Interior Designers typically specialize in different sectors, from residential to commercial which includes retail, workplaces, healthcare spaces, public spaces like libraries and museums, to restaurants and hotels. Interior Designers might focus on the entire space, or just one part of the space, like a lobby or home bathroom project, or may be hired to complete a brand-new space. However, an Interior designer will always start with the purpose of a space, and its current or intended function.

An Interior Designer will create a set of drawings illustrating the project details which can be used for building permit submission, tender, and construction. They may manage or oversee the construction process, provide relocation support, furniture placement, as well as the final styling of a space.

### *When should I hire an Interior Designer?*

**A** Before you begin your project. An Interior Designer would meet with you to determine your goals and your budget, and can kickstart the project with the initial drawings and permit application. Interior Designers bring valuable expertise which can substantially save on time and budget down the road. Consider us project managers, making sure proper contractors and other suppliers understand the goals of the work, and their role in its completion.

### *Why is it important to hire an Interior Designer?*

**A** Beyond functionality of the physical space, we understand the inner workings of a space. This means we understand building codes, plumbing, and electrical requirements, accessibility requirements etc. We work in tandem with a contractor and other tradespeople, to ensure the project is completed to the design. On some projects, we will also work with architects.

### *What does ARIDO mean?*

**A** ARIDO is the Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario. It's the professional body for Interior Designers in Ontario, and sets standards for the profession and regulates who can use the title 'Interior Designer' in Ontario.

### *Why are you a member of ARIDO?*

**A** I've been an ARIDO member since\_\_\_\_\_, and it's really important to me to use the title Interior Designer, and get their support for the profession. It keeps me involved with the industry and encourages me to keep my knowledge up to date. The profession is changing because of ARIDO's important work and I believe we're stronger together.

### *Can you come over and help me pick paint colours?*

**A** I'm always happy to take on a new project. Here's my business card. Give me a call and we can discuss the scope of work you need done and I can give you a quote for my services.





SHOUT IT  
FROM THE  
HVAC ON THE  
ROOFTOPS.

# You've earned your title.

## Reinforce your title

Use the title 'Interior Designer' wherever you can. When you are introducing yourself to new clients make sure you use the title 'Interior Designer', not just 'Designer'. Promoting the title clearly with the public also works to grow their understanding of the profession.

Whenever you're holding yourself out in the public, like giving interviews to the media, writing blog posts, appearing on a panel, jurying a design competition, teaching a seminar, giving a talk on design, speaking to students, or other professional public situation, introduce yourself as 'Jane Smith, Interior Designer'.

Your personal branding should include your title. Items like your business cards, website, professional social media accounts, email signature, professional bios and other marketing collateral about you and your work can include that information. Registered Members can also make use of the 'Registered' ARIDO Logo on their website and marketing collateral, available in the Member Gateway.

### Employee Bios: Example

As a Registered Interior Designer with more than 20 years of experience, Jane Smith is passionate about design. Jane has successfully led many design projects around the world, managing teams large and small. . .

## Promote your career as you promote the profession.

Think about your promotion strategy as a small business owner or employee. Your website and professional social platforms can educate the public on the Interior Design profession while promoting your work and business. Many members post about projects as they progress, and from the initial drawings, to the construction process, and the all-important final project photos. ARIDO uses hashtags like #IDontario #ARIDO and #RegisteredInteriorDesigner in promotion.

If you're working at a firm, you can inform colleagues about the title, and its protected status in Ontario. Share this guide with the marketing and communications team at your firm, so they are aware of the protected title and promotion opportunities.

BLOG//ARIDO is the platform for Registered Interior Designers to showcase your work, promote your businesses, and contribute to the public's understanding of the profession. It's a public facing information hub for people looking to hire an Interior Designer, get inspired, and learn more about best practices.

If you haven't built a profile on BLOG//ARIDO yet, you should make it part of your regular marketing efforts. Visit: [blogarido.ca](http://blogarido.ca) to learn more. Find the Get started Guide on BLOG//ARIDO on the member's side of the ARIDO website.

Make sure you use the ARIDO Registered logo on your website, promotional material, business cards, and portfolio. You can find the current year's logo in the Membership Gateway. Include a brief explanation of what it means to be a Registered Interior Designer, (see page 7 of this handbook for content examples).

# Public-speaking and the hazards of short-hand.

## It can happen in any profession.

Inside-speak. Jargon.

The terms and language we all use in our work lives can sound like a foreign language to the public. It can be easy to slip into a kind of short-hand when speaking about a profession. Watch for this, and follow Rule #1 of public speaking: know your audience! If you're talking to a room of architects or building officials, you would explain things differently to them than if you are speaking to an audience of homeowners.

Words like:

- Space planning
- Footprint
- Massing
- Building Envelope
- Skin
- Finish
- Acoustical panels

Page 7 of this guide is a good resource for key messages to add to your speaking engagements. Get familiar with them so you've got a quick response when a question like this pops up.

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# A special note to Interns and Students

You're working your way through the path to becoming Registered. This process may seem challenging to explain to others.

Remind people that this training is similar to other professions like architecture; it's rigorous, detailed, and based on the practical and technical considerations of the field. Once you are qualified, you must continue to maintain professional liability insurance, adhere to the code of ethics, and complete regular professional development training, as per ARIDO's current standards.

As an Intern or Student member, you are not yet permitted to use the title 'Interior Designer', you may, however, use the titles, 'Intern, ARIDO' and 'Student, ARIDO' as they apply to your membership category.

If you're looking for a concise explanation of the Path, here's one ready-made:

The current requirements to become a Registered member of ARIDO involve completing a CIDA approved Bachelor of Interior Design degree, followed by supervised work experience under a qualified design professional. Intern Members are also required to pass a three-part exam called the NCIDQ which focuses on the technical and practical aspects of interior design in order to qualify for Registered membership. Intern members are also required to complete professional development training under ARIDO's regulations.

Finish



Association  
of Registered  
Interior Designers  
of Ontario

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