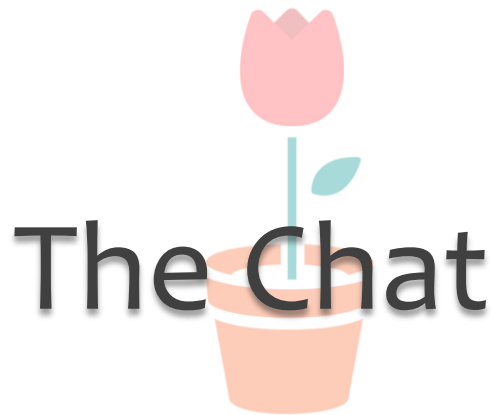
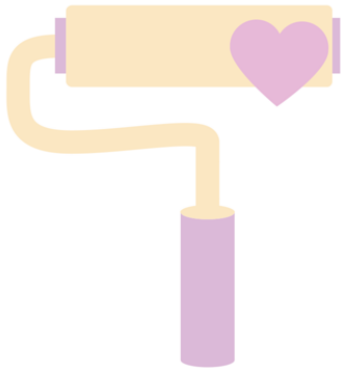




# Session #5



## The Chat



The Interior Design Business  
*Success Studio*

- This is how're able you choose your ideal clients
- You're going to prevent them from shopping you
- Work with more clients, in less time, and with fewer hiccups
- Qualify them as a REAL Client
- Explain your system
- Establish your expectations of them during the project

This scripted discussion was designed by not only myself, but by a group of hugely successful interior designers who have figured out the easy way to have a happy design business.

We all agree that it doesn't come from cutting corners or making compromises, it comes from having very clear expectations literally spelled out to your clients. You're going to explain how hard you're going to work for them, and in return they will trust you and cooperate with your system.

If you learn and get comfortable with this process, you'll find that your "nightmare clients" are few-and-far-between.

## “When would you like your project finished?”

### STEP ONE: TIMEFRAME

Have a calendar handy and walk them through the timeline if needed.

Remember:

- You need to two weeks for the design.
- Custom furniture takes on average 8 weeks to arrive.
- Window treatments take 6 weeks to order and install.
- You need a little wiggle room for back-orders and reselects.



## “When would you like your project finished?”

Have a calendar handy and walk them through the timeline if needed.

They may say “By Christmas”, “By Graduation” or “Really not in a hurry”. Red flag indicating serious planning is required.

Get commitment and get business out of the way first...too awkward if done later.

Remember and explain:

- You need up to two weeks for the design.
- Custom furniture takes an average of 8 weeks to arrive or 8-12 weeks.
- Window treatments take 6 weeks to order and install
- You will need a little wiggle room for back-orders and reselects.
- Need to get things finalized, including the time of the other folks involved, it’s not going to be quick; just lets the client know about restraints.

“How much were you thinking of investing on this project?”

## STEP TWO: BUDGET

You need to work from a budget, so you're going to have the tough talk with them.

- It would be embarrassing if you over shot the budget, or appeared cheap because you didn't expect enough.
- It's a waste of time for both of you if you have to redesign.
- You're only here to make them **happy!**



## Budget

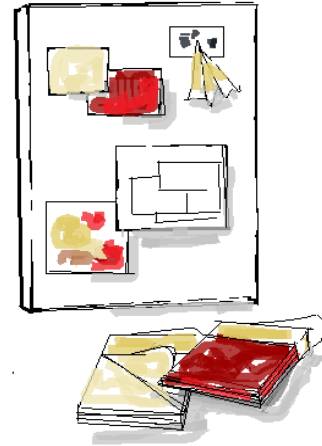
“How much were you thinking of investing on this project?”

- You need to work from a budget, so you're going to have the tough talk with them.
- It would be embarrassing if you over shot the budget, or appeared cheap because you didn't anticipate enough.
- It's a waste of time for both of you if you have to redesign.
- You're only here to make them HAPPY.
- Want to give best design possible within constraints of client's budget.

“Which rooms are your first priority, and are you ready to get started right away?”

## STEP THREE: PRIORITY

- This is where you learn if they're serious or not.
- You won't be wasting anyone's time.
- You are going to get a financial commitment from them to seal the deal.



### Priorities

“Which rooms are your first priority, and are you ready to get started right away?”

- This is where you learn if they're serious or not.
- You won't be wasting anyone's time.
- You are going to get a financial commitment from them to seal the deal.
- If they are going to move forward, the deposit of \$250 is mandatory. They need to pay for your time; it should be bigger if the project is bigger. Depends on how much of your time it takes to complete it as designed.

## “THIS IS HOW I WORK WITH MY CLIENTS”

You will discuss this while walking them through your contract...

### **Your commitment:**

“I’m going to spend one week working solely on your project.

I’m going to reserve your fabrics, furniture, and accessories.

I may be calling you to verify a few things or run something by you.”

### **Their promise:**

“I’m going to need you to commit to me that you’ll be available and engaged if I need you for anything. I don’t want to waste any time having to reselect because we lost a piece by waiting too long.”

## **“This is How I Work With my Clients”**

### **My Commitment:**

“I’m going to spend one week working solely on your project.

I’m going to reserve your fabrics, furniture and accessories.

I may be calling you to verify a few things or run something by you.”

### **Their promise:**

“I’m going to need you to commit to me that you’ll be available and engaged if I need you for anything. I don’t want to waste any time having to reselect because we lost a piece or price by waiting too long.

## MAKE SURE THEY'RE READY TO COMMIT

You are not going to design for one minute without \$\$\$

Go over your letter of agreement.

Collect a deposit or retainer fee.

Create your schedule and timeline.

➤ This is simply to make sure we both understand the expectations.

➤ I will collect a 50% deposit today to get started.

➤ I would like to meet you next week on \_\_\_ to have a short "touching base" appointment.

➤ I will present your final design on \_\_\_\_\_. That's where I will collect a deposit for any orders and really get started managing your project.

### Do not design for minute without \$\$\$

#### Go over agreement

- Go over your letter of agreement
- Collect a deposit or retainer fee
- Create your schedule and timeline

#### Making sure we both understand the expectations:

I will collect a 50% deposit today to get started.

I would like to meet you next week on \_\_\_ to have a short "touching base" appointment. That I have caught all the details.

I will present your final design on \_\_\_\_\_. That's where I will collect a deposit for any orders and really get started managing your project.

\*\* If you're dealing with a big project, and you're income from furniture or window treatments, you may want to keep your design prices appropriately adjusted.

\*\*Customers may want to order things themselves, just make sure you're getting a percentage, even if they order from Ikea or another source.

# LET'S TALK ABOUT YOU

All of this is to protect you, your time, and your talent.

Don't get too off course when walking through the home.

Have the difficult talks now to break down the walls.

Never agree to take on the job without a deposit.



## Protect your time and talent

Don't get too off course when walking through the home.

Have the difficult talks now to break down the walls.

Never agree to take on the job without a deposit.

Being open, honest and professional at this point, you'll definitely be successful.

Never leave a potential job without a deposit on the first step. Promise, promise, promise me that you won't leave without it..



# LET'S TALK ABOUT YOU

All of this is to protect you, your time, and your talent.



I wouldn't agree to let them help, or shop with you.

Find out how involved their spouse is. Don't let him ruin the design in the final stretch.

Keep building their trust and respect.

## **All of these ideas are to protect you, your time, and your talent.**

I wouldn't agree to let a client help or shop with you.

Find out how involved their spouse is. That's OK, but don't let them ruin the design in the final stretch and let me know up front so I'm not surprised. We need to keep building their trust and respect.

Example:

Shopping for wallpaper...spent 4 hours and the client eventually apologized and gave me the deposit and let me buy everything in the future. It never happened again, at least with this client. When it comes up, explain that there's lots of legwork...might best let me come up with the first go-round. It's much easier in the long run if I do it myself. I can always return it. All this is asking for freedom to do the design for which they're paying, and building trust and respect, especially if it's the first project or very big.



HOMEWORK FOR  
SESSION #4  
PRACTICE YOUR CHAT