

A CANADA - U.S. ROUND TABLE IN MILAN HIGHLIGHTS MACRO-TRENDS AND TOP ISSUES

A round table took place last October 24 at the Milan fairgrounds during Host, the International Exhibition for the Hospitality Industry. The meeting was a great opportunity to speak about design, construction, interiors and new tendencies, and later to report in an article the opinions of some of the most influential figures in the interiors community in North America.

The participants in the informal meeting were: **Mr. Randy W. Fiser**, CEO, American Society of Interior Designers (ASID); **Ms. Olga Odeide**, director, Industry Partnerships, ASID; **Ms. Susan Wiggins**, CEO, Interior Designers of Canada (IDC); **Ms. Tracy Bowie**, vice president, IIDEXCanada; **Mr. Enrico Cleva** and **Ms. Sara Viarengo**, Italian architects, international business development consultants for IIDEXCanada, IDC and ASID; **Mr. Pietro Giovanni Ferrari**, publisher, WebandMagazine in Milan; and **Ms. Paola Govoni**, editor-in-chief, World Furniture Review.



DESIGN AS A BUSINESS

The **annual ASID Interior Design 2015/2016 Outlook and State of the Industry** report explores design as a business, thus providing a unique overview of the design industry on its size, scope and financial impact. According to the report, total revenue of interior design business in the United States was over 9 billion US dollars in 2014, with an estimated 13,257 interior design firms, 17,100 self-employed designers, and 43,724 designers employed in architecture and design services firms or other industries.

The report extrapolates data from educational, research and labor statistics, and from tax information related to the profession of interior design. It's a survey on people in the profession and how much work they are doing

and the prospects for business in North America. Every month the market has improved in the U.S. over the past 16 months. Indicators from the ASID outlook suggest that interior design has fully recovered from the recession, with the total number of employed interior designers (60,824), the total number of design firms (13,257), and total sales (\$ 8.6 billion) now approaching or over pre-recession levels.

THE FOOTPRINT OF DESIGN

On the other side of business, there is the impact of design on human beings. ASID is investing a lot to investigate, in collaboration with universities, the footprint of design, the impact of the physical environment on productivity, and how design can help improve

the spaces we live in and the surrounding environment.

Interior design is not just growing, but also evolving. There are macro-trends and sub-trends that one always has to consider when working on design projects. Holistic design thinking, higher sustainability standard, design for healthy behaviour, and the Internet of Things are among the most transformative and fastest moving issues.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental and sustainability issues are in the foreground today. This is mainly related to materials. Concerning the relationship between wood and construction, Canada has plenty of wood available, and the trend is towards the use of local raw materials. Local

designers are pretty aware of the opportunities offered by Canadian wood species. Sustainability and local wood sourcing is an issue. You've got to know where logs are harvested, the vicinity of forest is important. Close attention in the system is paid to materials and chemicals and to what goes into the air and how the entire life cycle of the product works. Young people, the millennials, are growing up fast and, when making a choice, they choose sustainability. Sustainability is now a given in the community. To be in the market you have to be sustainable.

WELL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Another step is being made at this moment in North America, a follow up of the consolidated LEED green building certification. It is the WELL Certification program, promoted by the International Well Building Institute®. The concept is based on the belief that people's health and wellness have to be the center of design. Not only the environment, but each single person is involved here, and the Well-Building Certification has an impact on people. Buildings should promote the well-being of the users, not only have a zero impact on the environment.

The Well-Building standard is a performance certification applied to the living environment. Commercial and institutional buildings are the typologies where the Well Building Standard is applicable for the moment, although the institute is developing pilot versions of the Standard to test and refine how WELL can be applied to new building sectors.

HEALTHY LIVE AND WORK

We have to consider that 93% of our time is spent at home, and 70% of our time is spent sitting. We definitely have to redesign our built

environment in order to improve the health of people when they are at home, while they are working in the office, or out of doors.

The developers are concerned about what will happen to buildings in the mid- to long-term. No one knows what happens in the future, but for sure work will be different and it will take place everywhere. We have to consider that people have totally different paths related to work and the way they plan their time and move. IDEXCanada in Toronto focuses on the themes of the future.



The **American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)** is "a community of people committed to interior design." The Association strives to advance the interior design profession, to promote the value of interior design, and to celebrate its contribution to a better and healthy life for people. Founded in 1975, ASID is headquartered in Washington, D.C. and boasts more than 24,000 members. ASID Industry Partners include over 2,000 member companies with 6,000 individual representatives. Some 5,000 students of interior design are included as well.

Founded in 1972, **Interior Designers of Canada (IDC)** is the national advocacy association for the interior design profession and represents nine provincial associations as well as more than 5,500 members. Headquartered in Toronto, Ontario, IDC provides members with marketing efforts and promotional activities, training and insider information, meeting with public institutions and government officials, job search, and other benefits and services. Reportedly, IDC works with provincial governments and professional organizations to advocate for the full regulation of the interior design profession in every province of Canada.

IDEXCanada is Canada's national design and architecture exposition and conference taking place in Toronto and celebrating 31 years in 2015. The annual show focuses on all areas of design, including workplace, healthcare, hospitality, retail, residential, education, architecture, landscape architecture, lighting and sustainability, wellness, and accessibility. IDEX Canada is now held concurrently with the Building Show, North America's largest exposition, networking and education event for design, construction and real estate with 1,600 exhibitors, 500 speakers, 350 seminars and tours, and 30,000 Canadian and international trade attendees.