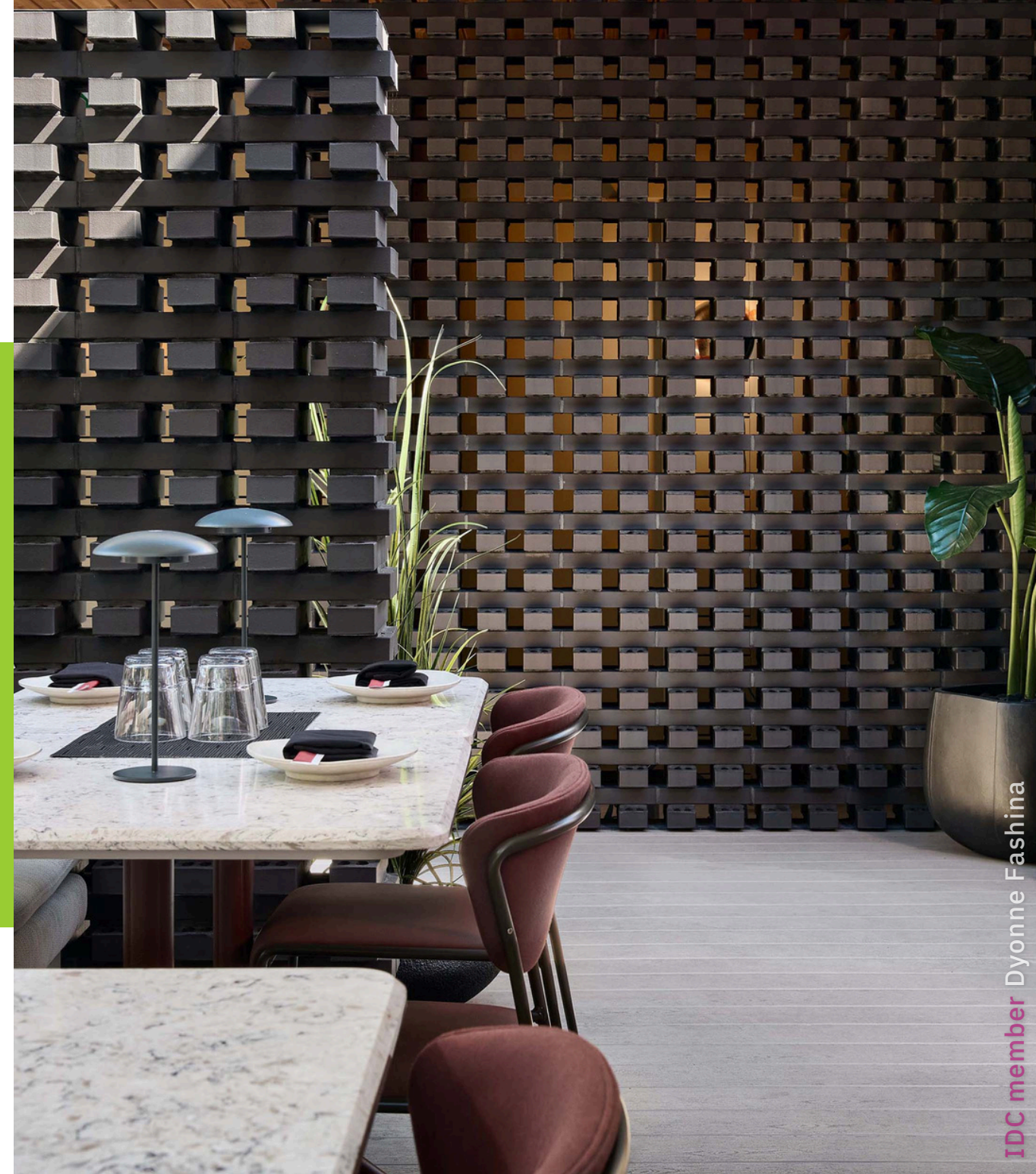




interior designers of canada  
designers d'intérieur du canada

# STRATEGIC PLAN

# 2026 – 2029



IDC member Dyonne Fashina

# RESEARCH PROCESS

This Strategic Planning Project was executed in a two-phase process:



## Qualitative Research

Conducted through interviews with current, former and potential new IDC members to capture sentiment on the greatest opportunities for organizational impact.



## Strategic Planning Workshop

Held to apply insights, align on priorities and establish an informed Strategic Plan to drive the organization forward.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

01

## **Strengthening the Identity of Interior Designers**

IDC's goal is to elevate the profession by advocating for title protection and increasing public awareness of the value of trained interior designers.

02

## **Expanding Business and Career Education for Members**

By offering more resources on business development, client management, and contracts, IDC can better equip designers for long-term success.

03

## **Enhancing National Engagement and Accessibility**

IDC can offer more opportunities for peer-to-peer connection and mentorship. Expanding events and digital programming across Canada (and even connecting regions) will strengthen IDC's reach and better connect designers across Canada.

04

## **Benchmark Other Associations to Create Even More Value**

IDC can support designers by pulling best practices from other associations that promote fair pricing, ethical business practices, and upskilling professionals.

05

## **Streamline + Enhance Membership Process**

IDC will ensure that it's easy to find and join the association, and that there is a meaningful connection to being a part of the IDC movement that helps member recruitment and retention.

# BUSINESS CHALLENGES



## Limited job opportunities in certain regions

Some designers, especially in smaller provinces (e.g., New Brunswick, Alberta), feel isolated and struggle with fewer job openings.

## Lack of business education

Many designers, particularly recent graduates, feel unprepared for the business side of design, including client interactions, contracts, and marketing.

## Technology and software adaptation

Keeping up with new tools and technologies is a common challenge.

## Client education and trust

Convincing clients of the value of hiring a trained interior designer over an unqualified decorator or DIY approach remains an unsolved challenge.

## Industry burnout and work-life balance

High expectations and workload demands are leading to burnout, with senior designers taking leaves and younger generations having misaligned expectations.



# Member Voices

“

“Marketing and business development at this exact moment—because we are designers and not businesspeople—that is really our biggest challenge. If there were more business classes that supported design, it would be better.” – Former IDC member

“

“One specific challenge is keeping up with technology and new software.” – IDC member

“

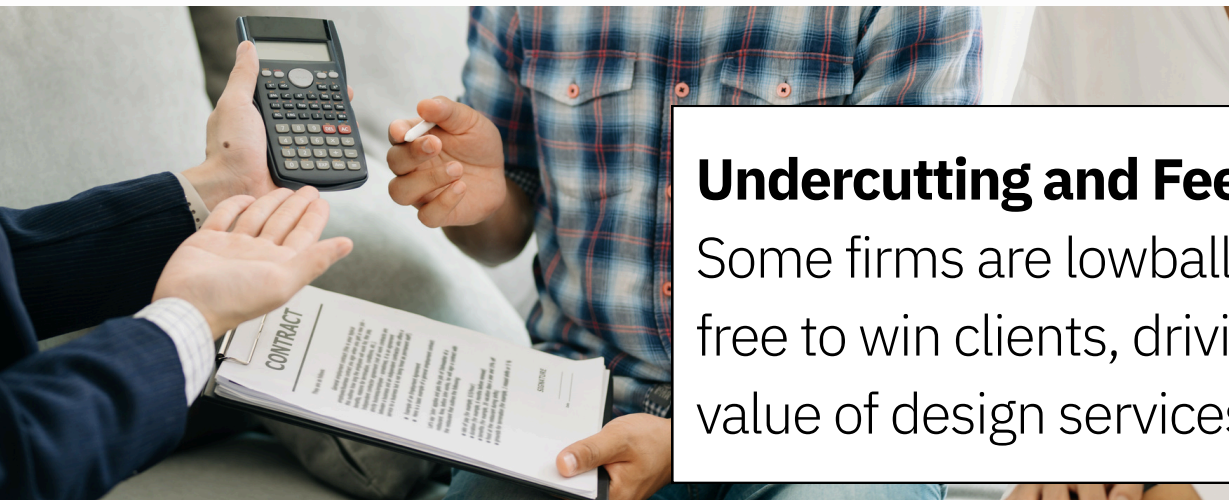
“I don’t believe that interior design students are prepared for some of the non-technical aspects of the job. There are many things I wish I knew from industry people while in school, such as problem-solving skills, communication skills, client management, and relationship building, which are so integral to what we do, and they are not taught in school.” – IDC member



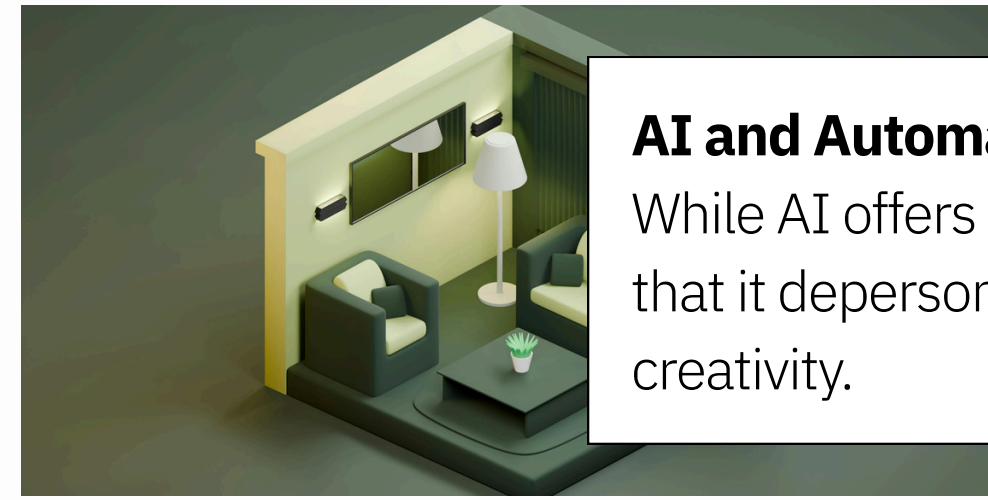
**Shortened Project Timelines**  
The “Amazon era” is forcing our industry into a fast-paced "better, faster, cheaper" model, making it difficult to maintain high-quality work.



**Lack of Regulation and Title Protection**  
Many designers feel frustrated that unqualified individuals can call themselves designers, lowering industry credibility.



**Undercutting and Fee Competition**  
Some firms are lowballing fees or working for free to win clients, driving down the perceived value of design services.



**AI and Automation**  
While AI offers efficiency, there are concerns that it depersonalizes design and removes creativity.



**Media Misrepresentation**  
HGTV and social media oversimplify the role of interior designers, making it appear as if it’s just about decorating.

# THREATS TO INDUSTRY



# Member Voices

“

“In line with the undercutting of fees, it’s driving down the professionalism within the design industry. The work, or what is provided to clients, is losing its value. It’s perceived as something that can be done quickly—this has been seen across the industry (at all levels).”

– IDC member

“

“The biggest challenge right now is that the market is so competitive with clients, and we are starting to see a lot of design firms undercutting fees in a poor way – lowballing fees, doing work for free, just to secure the client. It’s driving down the professionalism within the design industry.”

– IDC member

“

“I think about—how will AI impact our industry? Will Meta take over our relevance as designers? My friend posted something about AI rendering tools... Hopefully, this isn’t a threat, but it’s something we will need to adjust to.” – Former IDC member



# STRENGTHS

## Networking

Members have access to valuable networking opportunities, fostering connections that can lead to collaborations and potential business growth.

## Engagement

Strong online engagement allows IDC to reach a wider audience and encourage participation in events, fostering a sense of community.

## Access

Members benefit from access to research and professional development resources, which help them stay competitive in an ever-evolving market.

## Credibility

IDC is recognized nationally, enhancing professional credibility for members, which solidifies trust with clients and industry stakeholders alike.

## Commitment

IDC is dedicated to advocacy and regulation efforts, ensuring that interior designers' interests are consistently represented and upheld in the industry.

# Member Voices

“

Here in Alberta, we feel that Toronto is usually centered, and we'd love to see more events on the West Coast and the East Coast. For us to go to Vancouver is super fast and easy, but to head to Toronto for an event is more complicated. – IDC member

“

A resource that would be helpful would be a reference for construction pricing. Having a really useful tool on the IDC website would be great. – Former IDC member



# ADVOCACY SUPPORT



## Public Education

Promoting the value of hiring professional designers is essential for increasing public awareness and understanding of interior design benefits.

## Encouraging Regulation

Advocating for title protection and regulation will help establish standards and credibility within the interior design industry.

## Visible Lobbying

Strengthening lobbying efforts ensures that the interior design profession is represented in legislative discussions and decision-making processes.



## Better Outreach

Engaging allied professions through outreach initiatives fosters collaboration and raises awareness about the importance of interior design services.

## Strengthen Pathways

Creating clear pathways for new designers will enhance entry points and support for emerging professionals in the interior design field.



# Member Voices



“

Advocating at a legislative level for the NCIDQ exam is important. The profession struggles when retailers offer free design services with product purchases, which takes up a huge segment of potential clients from trained designers. IDC should speak loudly about the profession’s economic impact and importance.

– Former IDC member

“

IDC should encourage the provinces to take ownership and leadership of advocacy efforts in those provinces, with IDC supporting that— not necessarily financially, but through resources and guidance.

– IDC member

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION



## Diverse Representation

Increasing representation in leadership roles ensures that diverse voices contribute to decision-making within the interior design community.

## High School Programs

Outreach programs in high schools will inspire the next generation of designers, nurturing interest in the profession from an early age.

## Diverse Projects

Showcasing diverse design projects highlights the rich variety of perspectives and cultural influences shaping contemporary interior design.

## Accessible Profession

Making the profession more accessible encourages participation from underrepresented groups and fosters innovation in design practices.

## Partnerships

Collaborating with advocacy groups strengthens efforts to promote diversity and equity within the interior design industry.

# Member Voices

““

IDC should do more advocacy within other professions that work with designers—contractors, carpenters, construction associations. Some outreach within other professions would help clarify what designers do.

– IDC member

““

Like any design or architecture field, the use of an interior designer and what they bring to a project should be better communicated. How can they help the everyday person benefit from their insight?

– Former IDC member





# LOOKING AHEAD

## Stronger Advocacy

Enhancing public awareness on the value of professional interior designers is crucial for increasing demand and support for the industry.

## Diverse Voices

Promoting diverse perspectives within the design community will foster innovation and better representation in projects across Canada.

## Training for Students

Providing comprehensive business and client relationship training will prepare students for real-world challenges in the interior design profession.

## Stronger Standards

Establishing rigorous industry standards will ensure quality and professionalism among interior designers, helping to elevate the profession as a whole.

## Economic Impact

Highlighting the economic contributions of interior design will demonstrate its importance, influencing policy and investment in the sector.

# INTERIOR DESIGNERS OF CANADA

51 Wolseley Street  
Toronto, ON M5T 1A4

t: 416.649.4425

tf: 877.443.4425

e: [info@idcanada.org](mailto:info@idcanada.org)

[idcanada.org](http://idcanada.org)

IDC member Andre Davignon

idc

interior designers of canada  
designers d'intérieur du canada