

# Designing

## *Home Interiors & Busting Myths*

Free user guide for first time home interiors buyers: Busting myths of the industry.

Exposing the Myths and giving Do's & Don'ts of Home Interior.

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# DISCLAIMER

Please note that much of this publication is based on personal experience of past 15 years. You should use this information as you see fit, and at your own discretion. Nothing in this document is intended to replace common sense, legal, or any other professional advice, and is meant solely to inform the reader.

# INTRODUCTION

INDIAN HOME INTERIOR USERS ARE BEING TRAPPED TIME AND AGAIN BY THE UN- ORGANISED SECTOR.

LACK OF ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO EDUCATE THEM ON THE PROCESS, FURTHER CATALYSES THE SCENARIO!



In these times of luxury and accessibility, building a home is just not limited to “brick & mortar”, but has developed into a whole new meaning. It has now become a reflection of one’s own life style preferences and a status symbol ecosystem. People want their home to speak of their life style and also their story of success and desire.



In India, people are unknowingly becoming the victim of a phenomena called “Home Interior foul play”. There are a lot of challenges faced by the First time Home Interior End User – a substantially unorganized design and project execution market with abundance of inexperienced companies/freelancers/middleman and lack of information & knowledge on latest design trends and materials . This often results in wrong choices being made and hence, burning of a lot of Hard-Earned Money and Time on rework, replacement and a general feeling of dissatisfaction and distrust on the service providers. In most cases, an Interior project ends with a lot of client dis-satisfaction due to bad execution, procurement of bulky costly furniture, upholstery, gaudy color combinations, lack of aesthetics and a sub optimal utilization of space and budget.

With the abundance of online information and suggestions from friends & family, a first-time user is overwhelmed and gets along with the “herd mentality”, leading to self-dissatisfaction. This is the most common problem faced by such users in the country today.

*With the above general experience of end users in mind, I am tempted to share Top 6 Myths of the Home Interior Dos and Don'ts for your knowledge and understanding:*

# Myth 1

DIY (Doing it Yourself) – “I can do it myself and don’t need any professional consulting. This will help me save money and give me freedom of choice.”



*DIY --> Isn't this the first thought which comes to the mind? I know it does.*

A large part of the population is still hung on the conventional methods of the home designing-“DIY”. To DIY they would view fancy designs online, get ideas from friends and subsequently, hire a “local carpenter/freelancer” to execute the project.

We need to understand a couple of things here before we OPT for DIY. Once a User is clear of the challenges he/she can opt for DIY:

1. The design inputs from the internet or from friends may **not** effectively integrate with the design of your home and space available within and around it. Only an experienced home design expert can provide you with the best of ideas & solutions after understanding your expectations, likings and lifestyle. They are trained to do it .( Just like a specialized doctor)
2. Generally, the material(s)referred in the online image are very unique and expensive. Their availability may be restricted, sourcing may be difficult due to limited knowledge of the execution partner and project execution may be tardy due to lack of quality and process orientation of the contractor. People generally end up using cheaper alternatives, inconsistency in aesthetic integration of used materials, sub standard quality and hence a general feeling of being less/not satisfied with the outcome of the project.
3. Limited knowledge and experience of such carpenters/freelancers on latest concepts, principles, processes and materials of interior designing leads to limited value addition and options.

Home Interiors is like an Art. It is more scientific and complicated than it is presumed to be. Apart from the design, an extensive knowledge of build material & product is needed to get that desired look within the optimal budget. Please remember, a carpenter can't solve your home interior problems.

Hiring the right Home Interior Expert/Company can actually help save you a lot of Money, Time and Un-necessary pain of execution.

However If you still feel DIY would be what you would want to opt for, do consult a good Interior Designer for consulting and understanding how the process works, before stepping into it. You may need to be prepared to invest Time and Bandwidth for DIY. The consultant will help to understand the whole process of Design, Execution & Material Selection before you deep dive into it.

Please make sure to use the right choice of consultant because a wrong decision can leave you with a big dent on your pocket and very dis-satisfied interiors.

*“A mechanic can only repair a car; he cannot build one for you.”*

*Do DIY with an EXPERT 'S Guidance*



## Myth 2

### CHEAPEST IS THE BEST



*Cheapest is the Best – “I am getting a good deal on my home interior, just got the cheapest offer in the market. ”*

Being Price Conscious is good but Being Realistic is equally important.

Home Interior, unlike any other commodity purchase like car, home, TV, etc., needs to have a REALISTIC BUDGET allocated to it. An end-user cannot expect a home interior of his taste and liking to be done at a price of their choice. He needs to define the budget in accordance to his requirements.

Firstly, a user needs to have clarity as to how he defines “Home interior”. For some, it may be defined as basic woodwork-like wardrobe, kitchen etc. and, for others, it can mean a unified & singular theme for their home which includes Wardrobe, Kitchen, Ceiling Designs, Furnishing, Lighting, Furniture, Claddings, Consoles etc. It is for the Users to define what exactly they want . Approaching the market without understanding one’s own requirements and trying to find a budget matching ones comfort zone, is going to create lot of confusion, dissatisfaction and mostly a wrong selection of vendor. This mostly would result into a shoddy or incomplete project execution.

Secondly, home interior Companies/Freelancers are happy to meet such clients who believe in the concept of “*For Your Ears Only*”. These companies will falsely give a “nod” to every word you say and what you want to listen, words like “in your budget”, “premium quality”, “and no hidden charges”. They desperately want to get into your pockets and will say anything to please and get your affirmation. This is a cobweb and hence, the end-user needs to be mindful of it.

**Please remember if it is cheap, then the cost is being compromised somewhere.**

Lot of clients compare between multiple Home Interiors Companies/Freelancers and take decision based on the last line of the Proposal i.e. “Total Cost of the Project”. However very few understand that this is a wrong matrix of comparison. An exact apple to apple comparison is what is required for checking the price point. The User should look into the real working drawings OR needs to have clarity of his working drawings (Working Drawings is a drawing or a blueprint based on the designer’s explanation. They define all the external & internal details of all woodworks/related products which are coming under the gambit of home interiors) which will enable him along with the material specifications for price point comparison.

Most companies give bare minimum prices to attract clients. Lack of knowledge of First Time Users of Material specifications and final product Specification results into wrong decision (which are mostly based on Final Pricing) and hence lead to a bitter experience at the end

***“One cannot get Kiwi at the price of a banana”***

## Myth 3

**THE BIGGER THE HOME INTERIOR COMPANY, BETTER THE WORK!**



*Judging the book by its cover– “This Company has got a great online presence and has a big swanky office in the city. I think we should go for it”*

This mistake is frequently made by the first-time client who approach such companies ,having a big presence on hoardings as well online and which showcases themselves as “market leaders” in the sector but generally have very limited interior design sense , does not have strong quality orientation, lack on timely delivery and work with unskilled/semi-skilled work force.

Home Interiors Life-cycle consists of 3 Phases - Designing, Execution and Project Management. All is well with such companies till the Designing stage. Mostly the designers are consulting designers who are generally fancy & super courteous and offer great solutions but all goes for a toss when execution starts.

If I may put, these “All Talk & No Show” kinds of companies have mushroomed in last 4-5 Years. Their principal idea lies in only Sales and Marketing. Their modus operandi is to showcase an extensive library of beautiful designs in apparently suspicious “reasonable/low budgets” to attract and get hold of the client. Many of such companies don’t even have the experience nor the in-depth knowledge and even time to invest in this beautiful and technical world of home design. Even if they try to invest in experience, which they generally don’t, they would have to increase the manpower exponentially and hence, cost to the client will be very high, which is not desirable to the “Investors”.

Hence, they rely more and more on the products which can be manufactured in mass volumes at the manufacturing unit. General terminology is Modular furniture and I would term them as “**Box Structures**”. They are nothing but pieces of Lego stacked together and do not help create the aesthetics and feel of a professionally done interior project.

Customization is a big challenge for them, as it involves a lot of personal involvement of all stakeholders and not only the Designer, which includes Product selections, Project Management Team and most importantly Execution teams. However such models are not promoted by the ideology of these companies as it can be a big hindrance for them to scale, which is not suitable.

Remember Home Interior has to be bespoke and hence you need to identify a company who can spend time & a lot of time with you to understand what you need and hence offer the best solutions in your Desired & Realistic Budget.

Home Interiors cannot be an automated process and hence bigger companies mostly cannot offer personalized service due to resource and bandwidth issues (which will directly increase their costs and reduce profits for their investors) and hence they intend to make home interiors automated/factory based process. This limits them in use of materials. Rather than going to these companies, clients can go to furniture stores to buy Modular Wardrobes, Kitchens and other wood works off the shelf.

Customization is a big challenge with all these companies. They mostly push clients for modular works which restrains the home interiors to a large extent due to product limitation. Convincing clients for modular execution helps them save time, cost and also scaling up which is the major goal of their investors.

*"All that glitters is not always gold"*



## Myth 4

WHAT IS HOME INTERIORS? IS IT JUST MERE WOODWORK OR SOMETHING MORE!



*Watching only the tip of the iceberg – “I want to get Home Interiors done as soon as possible. So, let’s get the Kitchen & Wardrobes, and tit-bit woodwork here & there, and it will look exactly like the design we saw on the Internet the other day”*

Home Interior companies/Freelancers generally create or copy beautiful 3D views of interior designs and options, available on the internet, for their customers. However, unfortunately, post execution, the home does not look even close to the Initial 3D Designs shown or does not match our expectations.

Guess why? Well, this is primarily because the 3D views created are a combination of lot more things than just a mere woodwork. The iceberg like “Home Interiors” has a lot more beneath than what meets the eyes. A complete Home Interiors consists of:

- 1) Wood Works
- 2) Soft Furnishings
- 3) Fixed Furnishings
- 4) Lighting Effects
- 5) Painting Effects
- 6) Home Décor & Essentials.

There is a need to understand the taste, likings and life style of the user group and customize/selectively identify & fuse things under each category of above product range to create a winning combination for the eyes of the user. This is a unique art which has to be painstakingly created and not merely copied from internet.

Many of the Designers do not educate the customer with this necessity to achieve the desired 3D look and feel. And, this can be due to the following factors:

- 1) Inexperienced Designers.
- 2) In some cases, even the experienced designers do not put extra efforts to introduce the clients about the essentials of Home Interiors, nor does try to understand their lifestyle, likings and expectations. This could again be due to limited understanding of the concepts of interior designs or urgency to complete the project in a short time, as per client's expectations.
- 3) Designers readily agreeing to the "on a tight budget" clients, not taking pains to explain them a complete picture of what minimum should be done to get a satisfactory result out of the planned spend. This is generally done to help them sign up the project at any cost. The end result is generally a shoddy project execution or a steep overrun to integrate newer found or reworked ideas, midway.

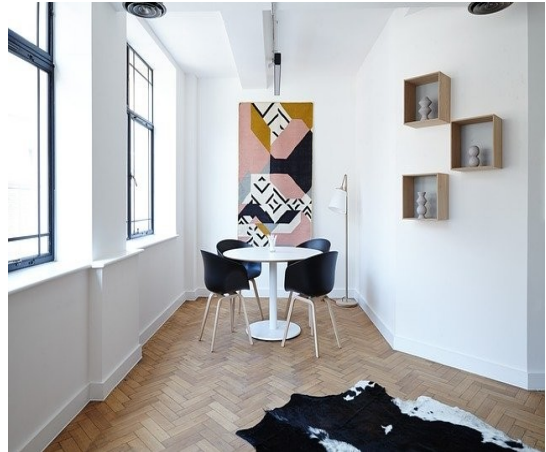
This very lack of proper consulting in the Indian eco-system is primarily fueled by the scarcity of the well-educated, experienced, and trained designers. A well-educated designer is someone who has gone through and has completely held the whole project cycle of Design & Execution for a good amount of years and spends time on understanding the likes, dislikes and expectations of the user group. He also has, on an ongoing basis, complete updated knowledge of latest trends, materials, new design solutions and related processes and techniques and , therefore, can integrate them with customer's life style to provide an option to his/her liking in the stipulated budget and time schedule. Any different person or approach will land any customer in to a situation of frustration and let down on the project only.

The learning is to do your homework wisely before choosing your next Home Designer.

***“Remember, Messi was just not an overnight success . Beneath the prodigy, there is years of building, training and shaping of the player..”***

## Myth 5

### 45 Day Project Handover Promise! –



*First time home buyers can get easily tempted by the delivery date of the project as it gives them an idea of comfort to move in faster, and subsequently, avoid paying the rent as the new home's EMIs would already be started.*

However, it is very crucial for the client to understand what exactly is being delivered in 45 days? Let me show you the picture. The handover, most commonly and only includes Modular Kitchens, Wardrobes, Storages, basically if I may put, it's a BOX INTERIOR. Any customization done to the design and the timelines can go completely haywire leading to false commitments being made to match up the projected/advertised timelines OR the clients are pushed in agreeing to the interior firm's library of preset modular designs to meet the timelines. At such juncture, the clients are fragile & vulnerable with all the mental pressure of the already started EMIs and Rents. This viciously erupts into wrong decisions.

Let's have a look to another aspect of this. The project completion date is also very crucial for the clients to carefully decide for Housewarming, Vacating the existing accommodation, Relocation logistics, Children's school etc. Any delay in the project execution can turn out to be a nightmare for the client.

I have seen people (family, friends, and acquaintances) moving to Hotels for weeks together because of such delays and, losing a lot on money and, most importantly, mental peace.

Who do we go to for the rescue?

An expert guidance from an experienced **Designer/Consultant** can be of great help for users to get real information in terms of timeline. Any seasoned player in the Home Interior Market shall finish the modular furniture in less than a month as the process is pretty open, uncomplicated and very mature in the Market. But as soon as the real Home Interiors come into the picture (as explained above in Myth 4) most timeline promises are left unfulfilled as these companies are mostly not equipped to carry out the customization. It needs a lot of focused attention and project management support (PMC) which is lacked by many Designer firms. (As explained in Myth 3)

*"For your Ears only can be a big Point of Concern "*



## Myth 6

### LUXURY HOME INTERIORS ARE UBER EXPENSIVE!



*Cost is a major decision factor for most of the clients and hence this myth buster can be a game changer for those clients who are not able to take the right decision for their home interiors which could be made better with a small-delta increase in the budget.*

Choosing premium range of products may definitely increase the price by some delta but not exponentially. It is imperative for you to get the right CONSULTING before you settle down for basic materials for your home like laminates or veneers. It may be highly possible that you may add premium products and a very reasonable price increase.

Due to fear of “assumed high cost”, a lot of the people do not opt for better products which would have otherwise added much more elegance and finesse to their home. This general perception amongst the people has been advocated by the money hungry/ inexperienced Designers.

A seasoned designer who has the complete knowledge of Design, Products & Materials, Execution and Project Management and has repeatedly done these in their career shall be the best choice to guide you correctly. What jinx most of the companies is, having an arsenal of different people possessing only limited knowledge of the attributes mentioned above but unfortunately, due to poor integration, the project suffers. Hence, please do your research and interview the company before choosing and make sure the Designer you work with is capable to handle and has knowledge of not only 3D Designs but also Products, Optimum Costing, Execution, Timelines and Project Management as a whole.

***“ALL THAT GLITTERS DOES NOT COST IN GOLD ALWAYS”***

## About Saurabh



**Saurabh Gupta** is a home interior market veteran with more than 15 years of hands on experience in the field. He is a part of an award winning Interior Firm “Artscape Projects” where he heads the Design & Execution Teams and has successfully delivered multiple projects under his expert supervision.

He is considered as a Home Interior Expert and his extensive knowledge of the entire project cycle from Design to Execution has helped a lot of people to get their dream home.

**Currently he is on a Mission to Help 10000 people to get their Home Interiors, Just Right! Help them make the Right Choices and Achieve what they Dreamt Of.**





## RESOURCES

WEBSITE : <http://www.artscape.co.in/>

FACEBOOK : <https://www.facebook.com/artscapeprojects12/>

LINKEDIN : <https://www.linkedin.com/in/artscape-projects-334638b7/>

INSTAGRAM : <https://instagram.com/artscapeprojects?igshid=1akvtk7vqij8f>