



ONE PURPOSE. A designer's rendering for Laviano Jewelers in Englewood, NJ, gives clients a better idea of how the plan will make selling jewelry easier.

S T O R E D E S I G N 1 0 1

ANALYZE THIS

Keith Kovar, Ruth Møllergaard (with Sarah Yates)
say planning a redesign is best based on the way you've always been running your store.

A DESIGNER WILL HELP YOU analyze and develop your ideas for that renovation or that new store you've dreamed about. As part of the design team, your input and decision-making skills are essential throughout the planning, design and construction phases.

Renovations generally start with a designer visiting the site, while with new construction your first meeting with your designer may be over the phone. In either case, to get your money's worth, focus on the analysis. Consider it a day of consultation and learning — for both you and the designer.

All jewelry stores have some

aspects in common, but everyone approaches business differently. "We have to listen to everything the client says. It's not unlike going to the doctor and telling him your symptoms before he diagnoses your illness and prescribes the proper care," says Frank Vargas, principal at Brand Allen Architects.



HOW IT WORKS. Van Gundy & Sons Jewelers drew from experience that dated to 1957 to devise a plan for its new Camarillo, CA, location.

"If there's a language already established by watch vendors, it is part of our job to fit those parameters into the overall design of the store."

Often when retailers say their store is old-fashioned or it hasn't been changed since dad first opened the doors in the 1950s, they're not only saying what it looks like but how it

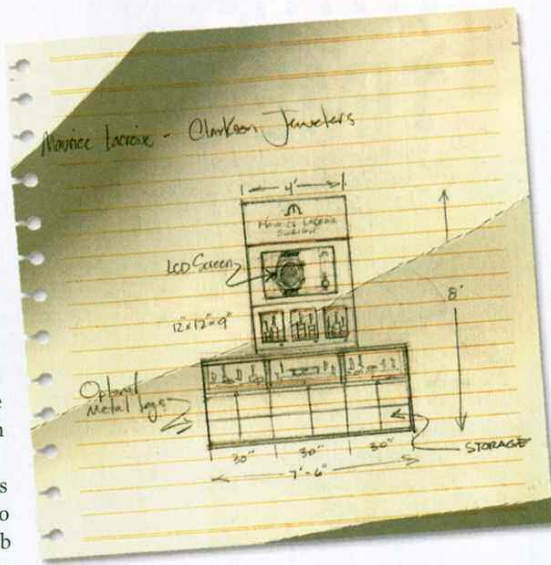
works as well. Planning is about operations. It's based on the way you work as a retailer.

Outline the way you work in as much detail as you can. Some designers prefer a wish list. If that leaves you tongue-tied your designer may use a questionnaire. Are you moving your casework? Does your jeweler manufacture custom items or focus on repairs?

"A client has to do his homework and know who he is aiming at," says Herb Schottland of Store Design and Fixturing. "A jewelry store has one purpose in life: to sell jewelry, and everything we do should make that easier."

It's not just whether you like terra cotta or aqua blue. Your designer needs to know whether you have 10 people or two on the floor at any one time, whether you have a watch repair on-site that you want to get rid of or a jeweler you think needs to be visible. Do you dream of having a sit-down diamond room or are you aiming at a more hip fashionista crowd?

When clients complained to us about customers feeling uncom-



fortable entering a store in which the staff is clustered near the back, we planned workspaces in the middle of showcase islands. People are territorial; if they have a place to be, they'll actually be there and get more done.

Planning the spatial layout for support spaces like the back room, jewelers' and watch repair rooms and the case layout for your merchandise presentation happens once the information about what's needed has been collected. Even when you've defined the goals of the project, they aren't cast in

stone. People can and do shift gears as the process evolves and as the designer produces initial sketches. Sometimes seeing it this way helps you to understand things for the first time and to see where changes are possible. At GRID/3, it's very much a team effort. Communicate, share your ideas and remember what you are trying to achieve. For everyone, it is slightly different. Ideas come from knowing your store's personality and interpreting it in

design.

The design process is connected to planning, developing and fleshing out your ideas to create the ambience you want your customers to experience. If you tell your designer that you want the feeling of a lodge, as one of my clients did recently, that directs not only the layout of the cases but the materials and finishes chosen to provide that warm contemporary look.

Depending on the scope of your project, designers may present a couple of mood boards made up of material swatches, textures, colors

and pictures that convey the look of the store. Elevations and black-and-white sketches provide a more concrete presentation.

Once you've agreed on the plan and signed off on it, your electrical, plumbing, mechanical and construction drawings will be based on it. If you haven't already contacted a fixture contractor about constructing your wall cases, showcases and other fixtures, this happens next.

"Clients need to recognize how long the process can take and to develop a timeline that absorbs the unknowns that always happen," says Steven Kidwell, vice president of design at Chippenhook. "If you spend money in expediting fabric and fixture materials from one end of the country and from across the world, you run up bills that are parallel to construction costs, including overtime."

In planning for construction, you can't make any assumptions. Ask plenty of questions. Speak up and contribute what you can.

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