

BUSINESS OF HOME



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What do you look for in a new hire?



By Marina Felix

Spring is a time of change and growth, and as designers search for new talent, it's worth asking: What should you be looking for? Here, we ask four designers—**Melissa Sanabria**, **Alison Giese**, **Tracy Morris** and **Annie Elliott**—what makes a potential employee stand out from the pack.

AHEAD OF THE GAME

“There are indicators that I look for before I even read a resume. I really like when a potential hire proactively reaches out to us about a position even if we are not hiring—it demonstrates initiative. If we aren't hiring, I thank that person for the interest and keep the information in my file for future opportunities. Beyond that: Did the applicant proactively attach their resume to the introductory email? I value efficiency and that they appreciate my time. I'd rather not have to write back to request a resume. Finally, was the applicant's email professional and well written? I want to make sure that each person on my team can communicate with our clients if necessary. The introductory email is a good indicator of their ability to communicate.” —*Melissa Sanabria, Sanabria & Co., Washington, D.C.*



Melissa Sanabria Meredith Hanafi



Alison Giese Angela Newton Roy

GUT FEELING

“Honestly, my best employees have found me. It helps if they have had exposure to the design process, but it’s more about a feeling I get that they are honest, kind people who believe in my work and want to be a part of my team.” —*Alison Giese, Alison Giese Interiors, San Antonio, Texas*

BE NIMBLE

“The job market today is a unique one. Potential hires are questioning what is important to them, which has made job seekers schedule interviews across the country—if not the globe—looking for what makes them happy. In our office, we have tried many different strategies to attract potential candidates. As a team, we decided the number one attribute we are looking for in a new hire is agility. That means a person who is willing to assist with all aspects of the business, whether that’s helping with an installation, thinking strategically about pieces in a client’s home or being able to pivot when a client says, ‘No.’” —*Tracy Morris, Tracy Morris Design, McLean, Virginia*



Tracy Morris Courtesy of Tracy Morris

UNEXPECTED SKILLS

“I’m intrigued when a candidate has unusual work experience. Before she got her design degree, our most recent hire was an occupational therapist specializing in hands. That told me that she is dependable, great with clients, highly organized (as she scheduled her own appointments and dealt with unintelligible hospital paperwork) and kind. I predicted that she would also have the soft skills necessary to be a supportive colleague, and I was right—she’s a wonderful addition to our team.” —*Annie Elliott, Annie Elliott Design, Washington, D.C.*



Annie Elliott Stacy Zarin Goldberg