



Research on Design Firms

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Exploration of three Interior Design/ Interior Architecture Firms

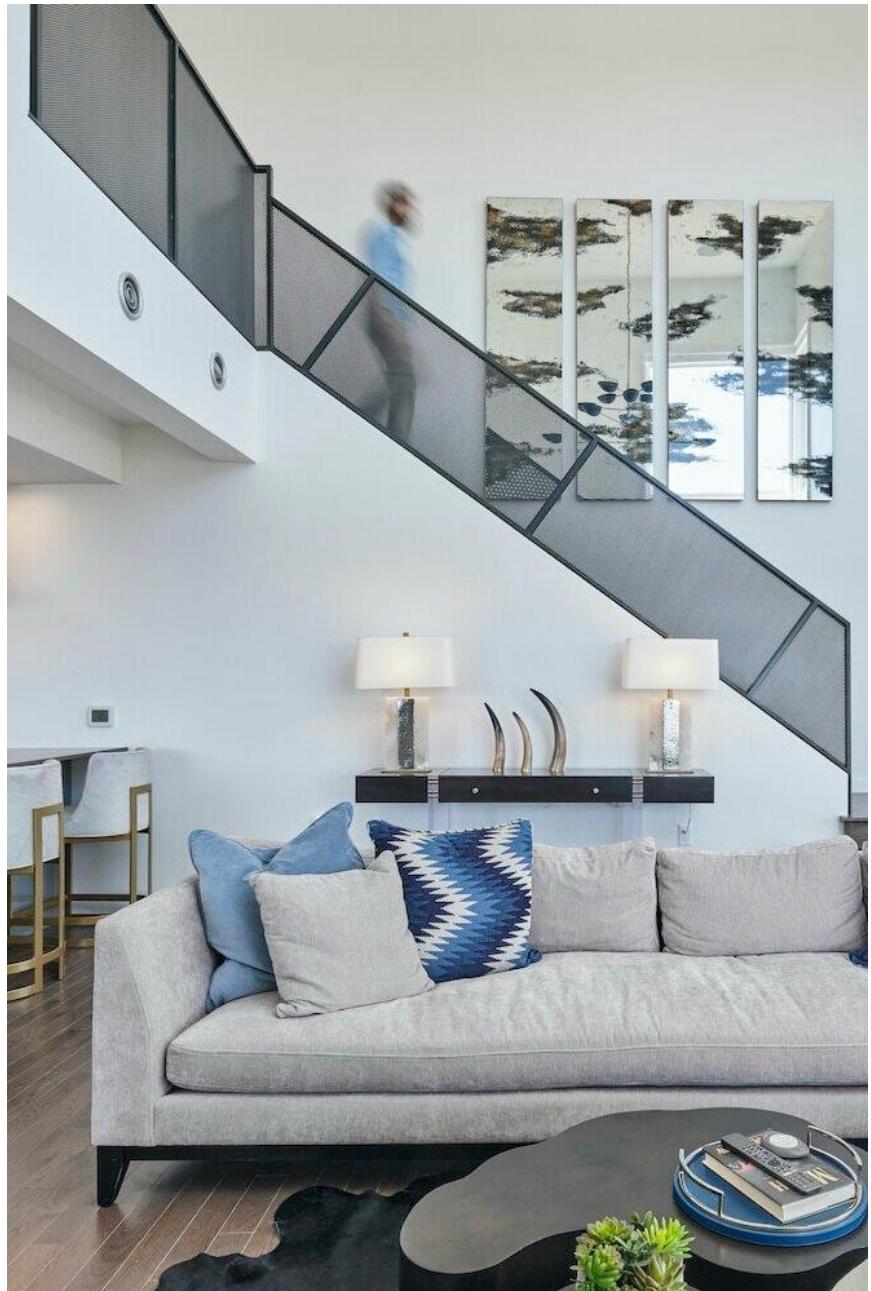
- [AU] WORKSHOP: SMALL-SIZED MULTI-DISCIPLINARY FIRM IN COLORADO, USA
- BLACKSHEEP: MEDIUM-SIZED HOSPITALITY FIRM IN LONDON, ENGLAND
- HOK: LARGE- SIZED COMMERCIAL FIRM IN SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

[au]Workshop

1. Name of Company and Location: AU Workshop in Northern Colorado, USA
2. Area of Specialization: "Urban, Civic, and Commercial"
3. Size: Seven Lead Employees+ support staff. Private Company. Organized by "Workshop" leaders, dreamers, managers, and designers.
4. Company's Philosophy: "Helping Clients Realize Their Visions, Striving To Add Value By Elegantly Organizing Uses, Creating Great Places, And Developing Cost Conscious Design Strategies Are The Basis Of [Au]workshop's Mission." ¹
5. Work Culture: "We listen to and work closely with our clients to realize their visions, strive to add value by elegantly organizing uses, create great places and develop cost conscious design strategies. These goals form the basis of [au]workshop's mission. We believe in the power of good design and strive to create quality in everything we do—from the smallest to the largest task. We fully incorporate current technology into our process. We try to make everything we design as sustainable as possible." ²
6. Project Images: See to the right and next slide
7. Website: ¹ <https://auworkshop.co/>

²<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5116772ce4b0a31c035e701a/t/5fb6dfa4a707b320aa11254e/1605820325005/201029+auworkshop+FACT+SHEET.pdf>





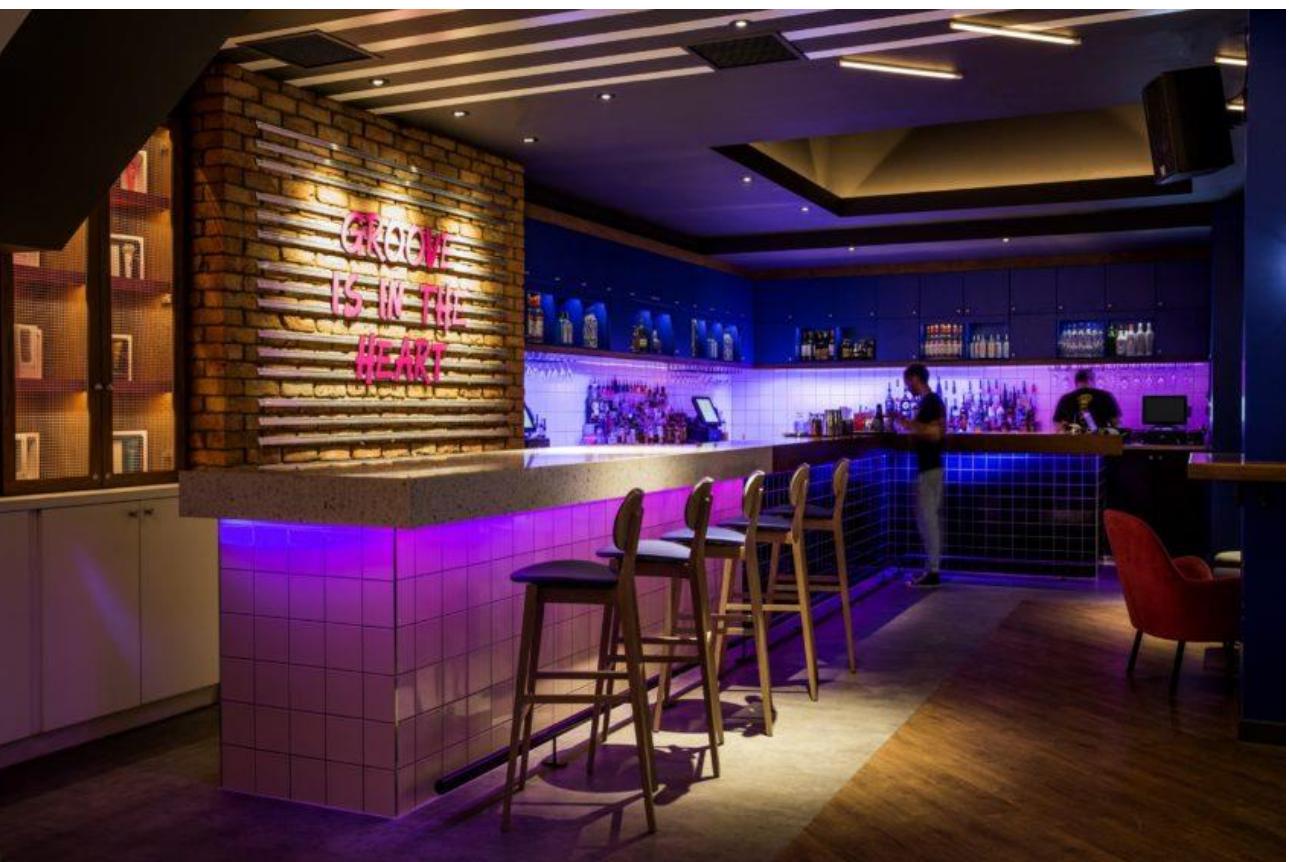
[au]Workshop

Multi-disciplinary Firm in Colorado, USA

Blacksheep

1. Name of Company and Location: Blacksheep In London, England
2. Area of Specialization: Hospitality
3. Size: 1-50 Employees, Private Company
4. Company's Philosophy: :"Blacksheep is an international, creative, lead-design studio based in Shoreditch, London. Specializing in hospitality, food & beverage, the studio uses a multidisciplinary approach to deliver complete guest experiences." ¹
5. Work Culture: 64% of employees would recommend Blacksheep to a friend and approve of the CEO. Per Glassdoor Employee reviews, the teams are great, caring, and have lots of opportunities. ²
6. Project Images: See to the right and next slide
7. Website link: ¹<https://blacksheep.uk.com/>

²https://www.glassdoor.com/Overview/Working-at-Blacksheep-EI_IE1140006.11,21.htm





Blacksheep

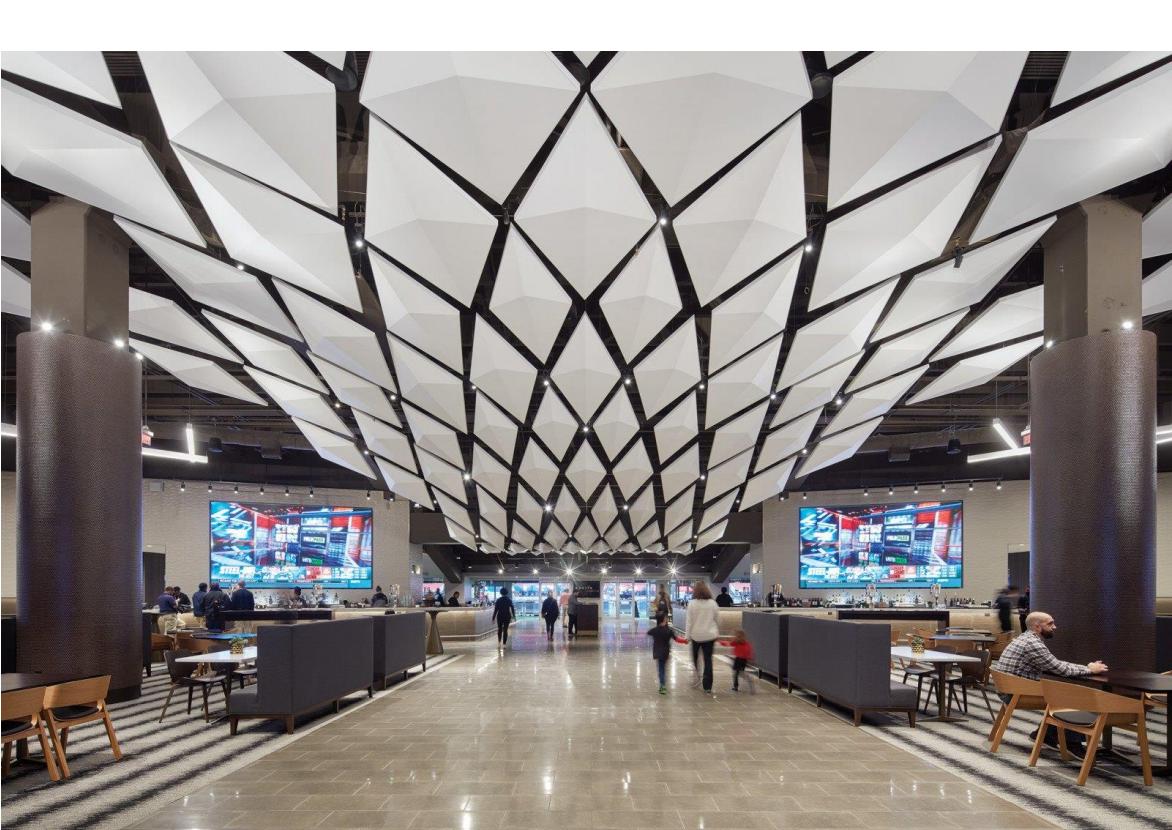
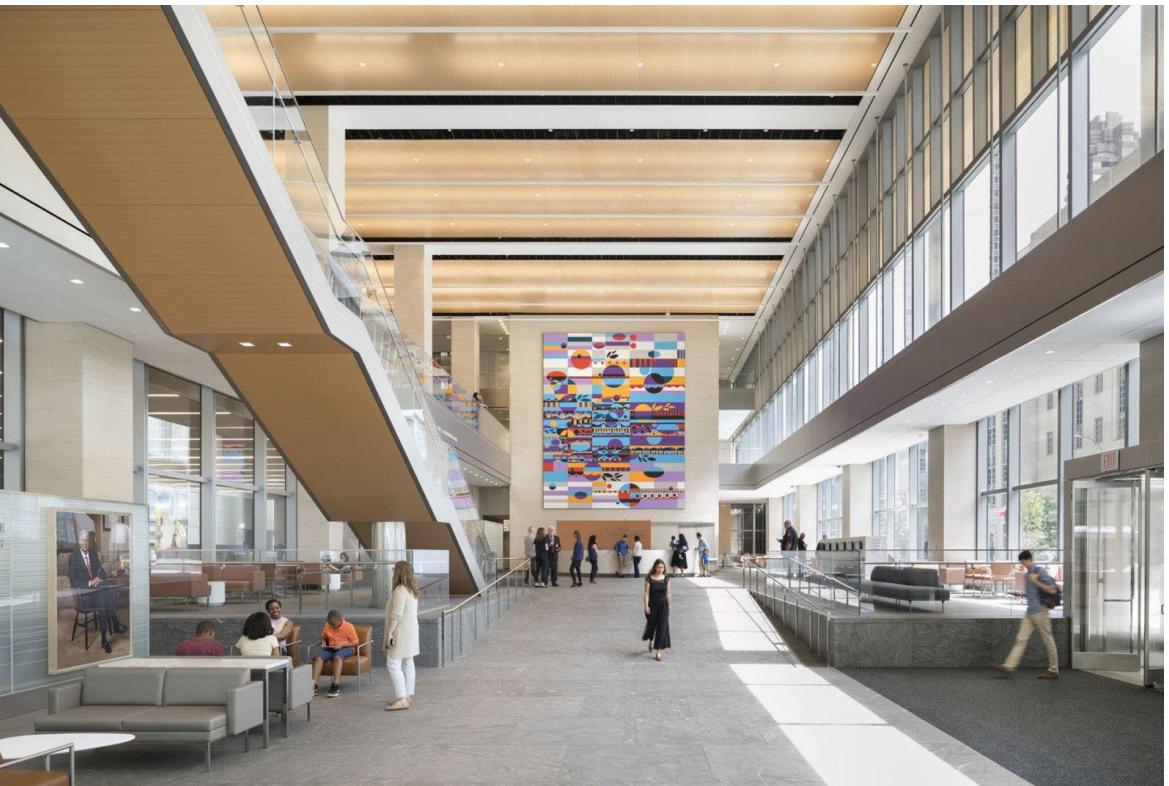
Hospitality Firm in London, England

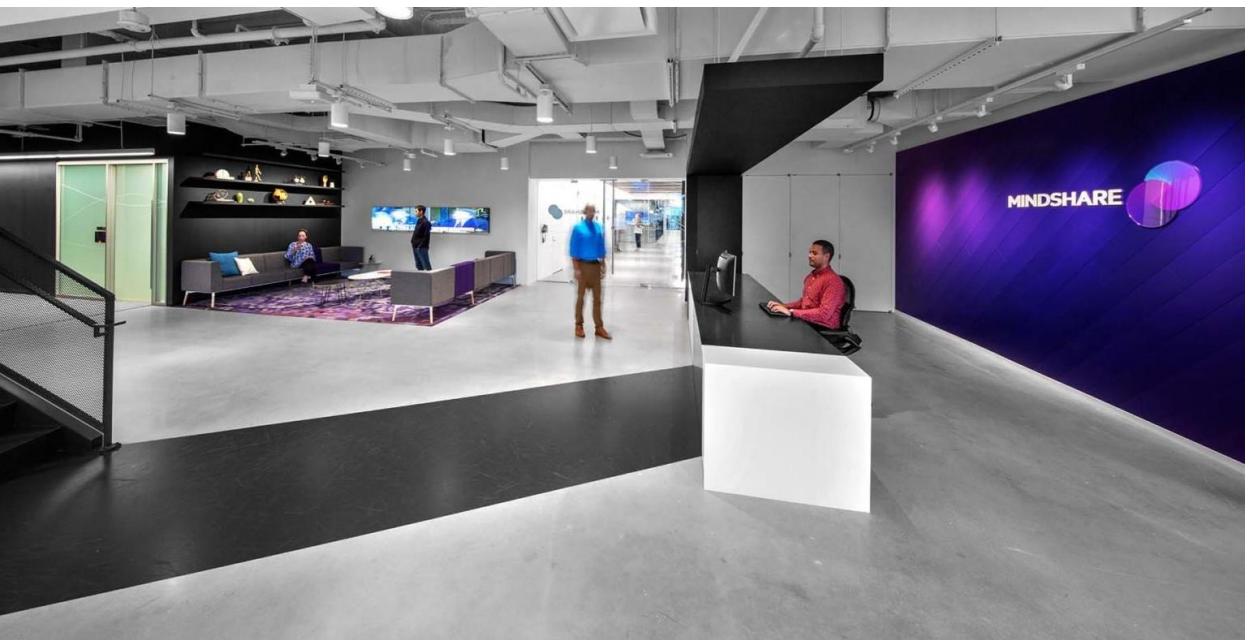
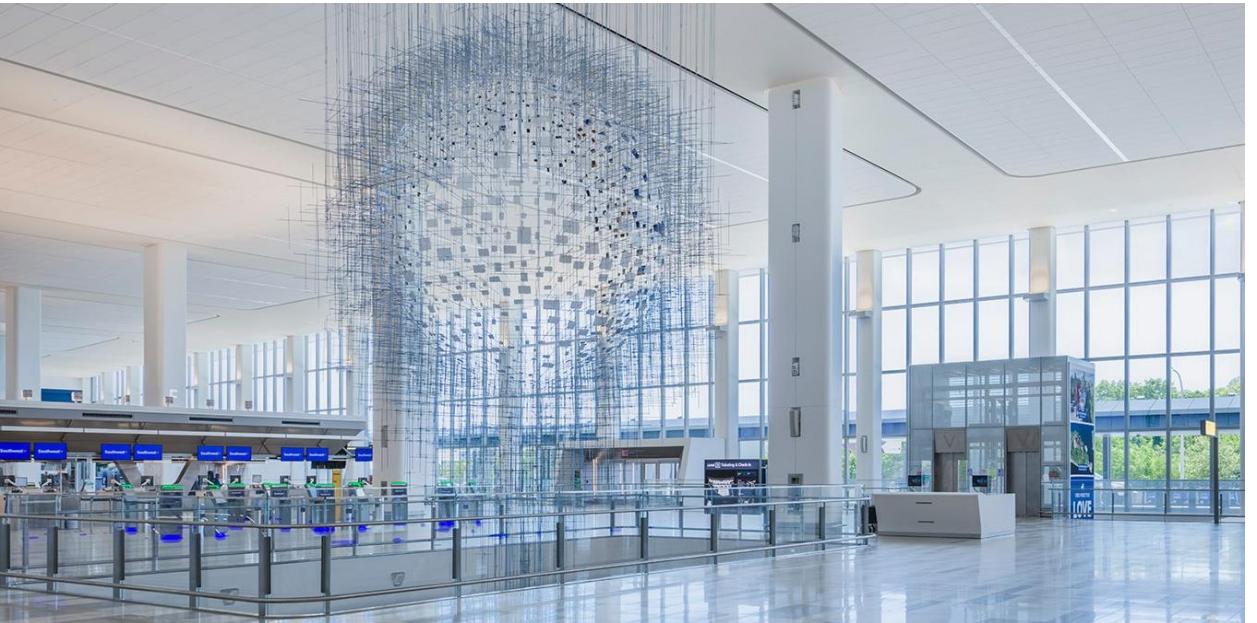
HOK

1. Name of Company and Location: HOK in Saint Louis, Missouri (HQ, offices globally)
2. Area of Specialization: Commercial (primarily, though they are multi-disciplinary)
3. Size: 1001-5000 Employees, Private Company; Separated by Executives, Firm-wide Leaders, Principals, and Studio Leaders
4. Company's Philosophy: "HOK provides design excellence and innovation to create places that enrich people's lives and help clients succeed."
5. Work Culture: "Warm Culture. Cool Work", "We think the warm, friendly culture in our studios—each with its own local vibe—is pretty special. We're a highly collaborative group of people who enjoy working together and are generous about sharing our knowledge, research and innovations. We think of ourselves as a global network of designers made up of small teams of friends working together to solve complex problems."¹ 74% of employees would recommend HOK to a friend, and 86% approve of the CEO.²
6. Project Images: See to the right and next slide
7. Website: <https://www.hok.com/>

¹<https://www.hok.com/people/culture/>

² https://www.glassdoor.com/Overview/Working-at-HOK-EI_IE7639.11,14.htm





HOK

Commercial Firm in Saint Louis, Missouri
(And other global locations)

Conclusion and Analysis

What is the difference in working at different sized firms, what is it like to be an intern at different types of firms, and does location and firm philosophy have any bearing on what it is like to work at a particular firm?

Though there are pros and cons for each individual firm, certain things can be assumed about a design firm. First, is the type of work you want to do. This will lead you to commercial, residential, hospitality, or multi-disciplinary firms. Next, the size is a big factor in deciding how you want your work-life to be. In a larger firm, there may be more opportunity for specialists and getting really good at one thing (e.g. lighting). This may also hinder you into venturing into other creative explorations. For a smaller firm, there may be more options to create on many different levels and many different projects, but benefits like a larger paycheck, benefits, and professional growth reimbursements may be limited.

I have personally found that firm philosophy and approval of the CEO or Founder to be really important. The culture is dictated by the head and this translates through the pipeline, therefore if the CEO/Founder is not a good person, or does not have ideals that align with yours, it will eventually make your work-life less enjoyable. This may be seen in "small" ways, like not recycling, or in "larger" ways, like not having the appropriate materials or software to get your job done.

Location is obviously important, being that you will want to either be near family, or you may have to move your immediate family. Making sure that your immediate family is okay with moving for your job is a decision that must be made. Another talking point is how much traveling may be needed for your job.

Overall, I would like to work for a medium-sized Residential or Multi-Disciplinary firm. I enjoy changing client's homes and the personal touches that can be included, as well as the client's happiness in a project I created that changes their everyday lives. I do see the benefit and the creative opportunities in doing some commercial or hospitality based projects, which is why I wouldn't mind working for a Multi-disciplinary firm. I strongly believe in sustainability, both in design and in workplace procedures; as well as constant and effective continued learning. For that reason, I would like the firm I work for and the CEO/Founder to have the same beliefs that would allow me to exercise those ideals. Location, relocation, and travelling are not necessarily a hindering point for me now, since my husband is also in school and looking for his dream career. In conclusion, the firm I want to work for would be primarily Residential, medium sized, location- flexible, and would be sustainability and continued education forward.