**CHALLENGE:** I have been awarded a job that involves many commercial window treatments. I have little experience in this area, as my business concentrates on residential interior renovations. The building I will be working on is a large interior space that houses three different businesses: 1. Real estate sales; 2. Business consultants; and 3. Online sales.

The businesses are located on one floor and the open office plan offers many challenges for me. Could you offer some suggestions that will assist in completing the look of the space with a professional presence?

The palette choices of the client are browns, neutrals and black. The space is located in an upscale business district of New York City.

**SOLUTION:** As with all commercial spaces, make sure your first step is a visit to the city offices or department responsible for building codes and requirements to make sure all of your design changes will be approved. And be sure to check on the city, county and state laws on related topics such as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and flame retardancy laws.

Once you have received the information governing these requirements, you then can proceed with making your choices for fabrics, furniture and all other interior selections. Many textile manufacturers offer beautiful flame retardant fabrics that are new, innovative and with up-to-date styling.

Many of these manufacturers have researched the market and have found that interior designers and architects are demanding more stylish selections for textiles in these areas.

A theme that flowscurroundings, casual or elegant? As for the window treatments, do you prefer a more tailored look for this space or a softer, casual look for the windows?

Are there issues as to privacy factors and environmental needs?

How important is ease of maintenance?

Be sure to survey the outside of the building for visual issues as they relate to the window treatments. Continuity from the outside is important and possibly will be demanded by the building owner.

Suggestions such as box pleated valances, elegant swags, pleated draperies, pleated tiebacks, pleated valances, shutters, wood blinds and metal or vinyl blinds are just a few of the

When designing a commercial space, how the space will be used, the client’s design preferences and furnishing needs are important. Don’t forget light control and privacy when it comes to windows. Here, Plunkett Raynych Architects, Milwaukee, WI, chose MechoShade Systems’ Thermashade shade in black/brown for light control, uniform appearance from the outside and to coordinate with the client’s color choices.
possibilities for commercial settings. The important choice is to meet codes and regulations governing textiles in a commercial setting.

These are just a few of the many questions you need to have answers for in order to adequately develop a client profile for each of the three clients. I then would try to incorporate a design solution using color, texture, pattern and various surface selections to tie the areas together, while still keeping them separate and addressing the needs of each client that will occupy the space.

Privacy issues for three businesses occupying a space are crucial. Working in rooms dividers that are moveable, yet also serve as noise barriers, are good choices. Furniture and accessories that are functional as well as stylish are important here, too.

Overall, the key issues here are:
1. Meeting the clients' needs, including the building owner.
2. Addressing issues of function and form.
3. Continuity in design and flow of style.
4. Color choices met, yet following the principles of good design.
5. Creating a professional look to the space without compromising design preferences.

As you work on your new commercial design job you will place yourself in a window situation by following the above suggestions.

Editor's note: This is a continuing series of articles written by Sharon L. Anderson that will answer some of the many questions we receive at Draperies & Window Coverings as well as questions Anderson has encountered in her own business. If you have a question you would like Anderson to address, please send it to.

Design Solutions
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Be sure to check on city, county and state laws on ADA compliance and flame retardancy laws.

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