



ANGELA KENT, NCIDQ

Founder & Design Principal at Storyful Design LLC

Angela is the Founder and Design Principal at Storyful Design, LLC, a Philadelphia-based boutique interior design firm, specializing in residential and commercial projects. She has 12 years of professional experience, first obtaining a bachelor's degree in interior design from Arcadia University and then working at various architectural firms in the Philly region before starting her business in 2021. She currently serves on the Board of the University City Historical Society and is working on an archival project to document historic interiors in West Philadelphia, where she has resided the past decade with her family. Her other interests include gardening, travel, writing and hosting parties.

Q: Brief intro/What type of work do you do/ where do you work?

A: I work on a combination of residential and small-scale commercial projects. I currently work for myself and have a home studio. This is a big change for me after first working at 50+ person architectural firms on mid-to-large scale commercial projects for 10 years.

Q: When did you decide to take the NCIDQ Exam? How did you decide what order to take them in?

A: I took all 3 exams in the fall of 2020, after 10 years of professional working experience. I had a greater window of time due to the pandemic to study and prepare and decided to take them all in one administration.

Q: Did you fail any exams/retake any? How did you stay motivated through that process?

A: Fortunately, I did not fail any of the exams. I stayed motivated to study and prepare because I gave myself a finite window to take them and think it would have been challenging for me personally to spread the exams out over a longer period of time. I also had the benefit of more years of knowledge from working experience to help in preparation.

Q: How long did you study for the exams? What did you use to study?

A: I spent 3 solid months, about 1–2 hours per day, studying for the first 2 exams, which I took 2 weeks apart. Then I gave myself another 6 weeks to complete studies for the final 3rd exam.

I rented a book from Amazon, “Interior Design Reference Manual: Everything You Need to Know to Pass the NCIDQ Exam, 6th Edition,” by David Kent Ballast. In the beginning of the book, they had this helpful table that broke down which chapters applied to which of the 3 exams. I made a schedule for myself and read the book in order of preparation for each exam. In the schedule, I allowed days off because I knew it was not realistic that I would find time every day. I also paid to take online practice exams and that was very beneficial.

Q: Has the practice of interior design lived up to your expectations that you had as a student? Any surprises or disappointments?

A: I had a very different perspective of interior design as a high school student who first envisioned studying interior design, but college started to redefine that for me. My professors were all full-time working interior design professionals, so I developed a good picture of what their lives were like. I did not realize all the paths one could take as an interior designer. I originally had envisioned interior designers working on a small scale, mostly residential projects. I imagined celebrity interior designers I saw on HGTV like Candice Olson, because I didn't know any interior designers in my own life or anyone who had ever worked with one. I had little idea of all the directions one could take within the larger commercial side of the industry from hospitality, to corporate, to healthcare, to being a sales representative. I also didn't fully grasp how

much more I could focus on architectural design vs. decorative till my college and professional experience.

Q: What advice would you give to current students that you wished you had received?

A: In your first 10 years of working, diversify your experience as much as possible if work and opportunities are available. Try residential, try corporate, try healthcare, education, work at a big-firm, work at a small 4-person practice. Save your money for 6 years and then go travel for 6 months. Take risks and figure out who you are and what is important to you. You have many options and no one's path is the same. All these experiences and people you meet along the way will enrich your life and make you a more dynamic professional and human being.

Q: Why did you become NCIDQ Certified/why was it important to you?

A: It was a professional goal of mine for years. It signaled to me that I had done the work and taken the time to affirm the knowledge I have gained over the years and communicate that to others. I put off taking the exams, thinking I never had the time, but finally realized there's never really an ideal time to complete any major goal, you just make up your mind to do it and dedicate the time needed to complete it.

Q: How has having an NCIDQ Certificate benefited you and your career?

A: It gave me a level of self-confidence to have that accomplishment as a I started my own business. Since I added those letters to my email signature, I have received several questions from people asking what they mean or letting me know they Googled them to learn more. It has led to conversations in educating folks about what interior design certification is and in a few of those conversations, has led to new projects for me.

Q: Have you/are you interested in pursuing any other credentials/certifications or licensure/registration/certification in a jurisdiction? If so, please provide those details.

A: I am interested in taking the Well AP exam and recently signed up to take it.

Q: What could the industry do to overcome obstacles from diverse individuals being represented and having equal opportunity?

A: Leadership in organizations needs to reflect the diversity we aspire for the organization as a whole. Women, people of color, and LGBTQ folk need to be promoted to leadership positions in greater numbers. The people currently in positions of power in making hiring decisions need to use that power to make impactful change that everyone can see in representation. Respect and inclusion in the workplace and on job sites must be priorities. We can also do more to connect with young people and help them realize our industry should be for everyone and mentor them in their path to get there.

Q: What are common misconceptions people have? How can we combat these misconceptions and communicate more effectively?

A: A lot of people still really don't understand what interior designers do or the full range of services they offer. People commonly think decoration-only service, which is totally an important and impactful element of design, but there is so much more to this profession. On social media and my website, I try to share as much about my process and behind-the-scenes day-to-day work as possible, so folks see what we are doing and not just the pretty, finished pictures. I tell clients that I want this to be an educational journey for them. By the end of the project, I want them to fully understand what interior designers can offer and be able to share that information with other people too.