



JEREMY CHEFF, ARIDO, NCIDQ, APDIQ
Principal, Registered Interior Designer at CLIQ Interior Design

I am the principal of my firm, CLIQ Interior Design. In 2022 I was one of the unfortunate people who were laid off due to the pandemic and its negative effects on the economy worldwide. Luckily, being the optimist that I am, I turned what should have been a terrible situation into a new and positive experience for myself. Additionally, I had recently passed all my NCIDQ Examinations so the timing couldn't have been more perfect.

Being the sole proprietor of my business, I currently lead everything within the company such as marketing, invoicing, designing, drafting, business development etc., you name it. I've always been a big fan of entrepreneurship and love that I have dived right in.

I've been practicing interior design in Canada for the past 10 years, and even side barred a little bit for two years designing luxury homes and apartment complexes over in Ecuador.

Being a highly organized, hardworking, passionate, warm-hearted and motivated person, I continuously strive for success, no matter the challenge. I am heavily involved in the industry locally and regionally and stay up to date on current challenges the community faces. I also regularly partake in initiatives to better the profession for new and upcoming leaders. With my diverse experience in private, commercial, institutional government, and coastal luxurious residential properties, I bring a unique and diverse skill set to every project I undertake.

I'm surrounded by hard working, passionate, and confident women, and because of them and their trust in me, I've been able to continue growing in my profession and currently hold the title of ARIDO-EOC President (Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario – Eastern Ontario Chapter).

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

A: I do work that ranges from institutional government, to private, to multi-residential. Although the design process stays relatively the same, working on a wide range of project types forces me to constantly stay on my feet and be prepared for the different types of situations that might arise. I currently do work in parts of Ontario, Canada but have completed projects in Québec, Canada as well as Manta, Ecuador. My goal is to continue building my company over the next few years and working on large scale commercial projects in my area.

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

A: After graduating in 2013, I knew right away that I

wanted to take and pass my NCIDQ Exams. Over the course of the beginning of my career, I was always hearing about how long and arduous the exams were so I put it off as long as I could while continuing to gain as much experience as possible.

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

A: I failed all exams at least once. After my second attempt, I passed the IDPX and the IDFX, and finally on the third try, I passed the Practicum. It was difficult to stay motivated, but I kept telling myself that every fail wasn't a wasted attempt, but an opportunity to be better the next time. Each time, I went into it knowing how the tests are worded and with more knowledge than I had the last time.

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

A: The practice of interior design has more than surpassed my expectations. During school, my knowledge of what the industry was like was fairly limited. I was fortunate to be volunteering as a student rep at my college for ARIDO (at La Cité collégiale, in Ottawa) and that's how I landed my first job at a large commercial firm. I've since learned and experienced all aspects of a project.

In Ottawa, we hold a student "Table-Top" event where local representatives from all facets of the industry host a table while students rotate and the representatives describe the type of work that they do. We have design firms, furniture suppliers, lighting representatives and others attend in order to let the students know there are many different options once they graduate.

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

A: Network. Network. Network. I would never be where I am today if I hadn't made sure to network and volunteer my time on committees that I knew would benefit me in the end.

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

A: Becoming NCIDQ Certified proves to your peers and to the public that you are qualified to do the work that you do. More than just adding the letters after your signature, it's proof that you understand not only how space works from an aesthetic point of view, but also from a life safety standpoint. Unfortunately, the public and self-proclaimed designers lack the knowledge behind what it actually means to be a Certified Interior Designer. In Ontario, we are constantly working towards creating more awareness and education for being a member of an organization that supports your certification.

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

A: The obvious misconception is that interior design is easy. Television has created a narrative that anyone off the street can take up the profession and with pure luck, can design beautiful spaces. Unfortunately, this has led to unqualified individuals calling themselves interior designers and offering a service they aren't qualified to offer. In Ontario, we are constantly working on creating more awareness, but I believe interior design, whether commercial or residential, should be accurately portrayed to the masses.

Q: Anything else you'd like to share?

A: No — but THANK YOU for including me in these interviews!!