Name

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English 3010

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Interior Design Writing Genres

Introduction

The interior design community uses writing as a way for professionals to share their ideas and plans with clients. Writing within this community often is a response to client questions, inquires, or possible project plans. This often takes the form of either a concept statement, email, or blog post written by an interior designer. I will perform a rhetorical analysis on an example of each of these writings with the help of an interior design professional to find expectations, patterns, and purposes of the writing genres within the interior design profession. Christine Sampier is an assistant interior designer at Cyrus Interiors in Ann Arbor and will help me perform a proper rhetorical analysis that has insider support and explanations for the writing found within this community. I interviewed Mrs. Sampier at Cyrus Interiors on March 29th and she offered me further information on writing within the interior design profession. Along with Mrs. Sampier's expert information, I will follow Bawarshi's "Guidelines for Analyzing Genres" in order to study the situation, identify patterns and analyze what these patterns reveal about the interior design community's writing, to create a rhetorical analysis for each of the three previously identified writing genres.

Genre Analysis

Concept Statement

A concept statement is created by interior designers in order to convey their ideas and propose their plans for a specific project to a client. The concept statements I will be analyzing is for the expansion of The Nelson Atkins Museum of Arts by Steven Holl and for the student lounge at the Waukesha County Technical College by Designs in Perspective. Concept statement's main purpose is to persuade the client into advancing with the interior designer's proposed plan. It is written after plans and drafts for a project have been completed and is a collaborative writing between all interior designers involved in the project in order to produce a short but detailed explanation for the client. They also use descriptive language to explain how the project will impact the space. Key elements within a concept statement are the color scheme, seating arrangement, materials used, and the new mood for space. Interior Designer Christine Sampier explained in our interview that the concept statement must "sound complicated and detailed without being confusing to the client in order for them to agree with your proposal" (Sampier).

These concept statements, like others within the interior design discourse community, have a specific layout. It is a short piece of writing by an interior designer and is intended for a client to read. They commonly use ethos and pathos to persuade the client who would be reading this piece. Interior designers use ethos to build their credibility by writing with a professional language and sounding knowledgeable on the topic. Information about how the space will benefit from the project, such as saying how the overall mood of the room is changed based on the new color scheme, is also included and is an example of pathos. Concept statements are typically around a paragraph long and include descriptive language for the space being designed. Concept statements use complex sentences and lack technical jargon in order to sound credible but not to confuse a customer with diction they are unfamiliar with. The detailed language but lack of interior design specific terminology proves that concept statements are intended to be understood by individuals who are not a part of this community.

Email

Emails within the interior design profession are typically in response to a client or possible client. Christine Sampier explained during our interview that emails to clients are typically written by the head interior designer and she rarely answers them since she is the assistant interior designer at Cyrus Interiors. This made finding samples of emails especially hard, but I was able to find a partial email template by Alycia Wicker to analyze. Emails within the interior design field typically answer questions about a current or future project or address fine details within the plan. They often include many smaller ideas such as the next steps to take, changes in original plans, or a schedule change within the project. Emails within this profession are meant to further persuade the client to continue working with this company and educate them on updates of their project.

Emails within the interior design profession are simple and concise since it is easier to talk about design projects in person. Similar to emails that most people send in their personal lives, interior design emails begin with a greeting. They are then broken into small sections based upon idea or topic which are indicated by a new paragraph starting and conclude with another greeting that identifies who sent the email, the company they work for, and the position they hold at this company. The main part of the email often uses a strong sense of pathos in order to make the client feel excited about the project and be more likely to continue working with this company. This can be seen when the email template says "I'd love to work with you on your home. I can definitely use what you have now and build upon it" (Wicker). Although this writing genre uses a lot of pathos, a professional tone and sense of credibility, or ethos, is also established. Pathos and ethos are used within these emails to continuously persuade the client and further the project being discussed.

Blog Post

Interior designers often write blog posts to give tips and tricks to other interior designers or the general population. The blog posts I will be analyzing are "Three Chic Upgrades to Make to Your Bedroom ASAP!" by Emily Osmond and "Tips for Bunk Beds" by McGee Studios. In my interview with Christine Sampier, she said that she often helps her boss, the head interior designer at Cyrus Interiors, develop ideas and prewrite her blog posts. Senior interior designers are the typical writers for this genre due to their lengthy experience and knowledge on the topics. Christine Sampier also explained that blog posts are typically written when interior designers only have a few projects going on, this is because there is more free time within the working day to write posts when you are juggling fewer projects. Blog posts in this field typically have the same central purpose, to educate the reader on simple steps they can take to improve their interior spaces. Although this is the main purpose, there is also an ulterior motive for the interior designer's writing these blog posts which is to advertise and publicize their company to receive more projects to work on while the company is experiencing little workload.

The sample interior design blog posts are roughly a page long and are broken down into smaller sections. These posts, like most within this profession, include pictures and subtitles within the writing to separate each section. The subtitles are typically capitalized or bolded to show the reader what is coming next. Photos of work that the writer's company has done are used as real-life examples for information they are giving. This also builds ethos because it demonstrates that the author is experienced on the topic. Interior designers typically use professional language in order to sound knowledgeable but try to stay away from specialized lexis in order to make the piece understood by the general public. Although the writing is professional, it is often more casual than the other writing within the interior design community. This relaxed type of writing is used to show that the designer is a normal person, just like the audience, and can relate to how the audience feels. This is a type of pathos to make the reader feel connected to the author and can be seen when Emily Osmond asks if the audience has ever felt confused as to why magazine bedrooms look better than their own. She does this to make the audience feel like she has been in a similar situation and is therefore educated on the topic.

Reflection

Through analyzing the three main genres within the interior design field, concept statement, email, and blog post, and conducting an interview with an interior designer, I was able to grasp an understanding for the expectations, goals, and values of writing by interior designers. My analysis of concept statements, emails, and blog posts by interior designers demonstrated that writing within the interior design profession is geared towards customers. Interior designers value writing that is easily understood by their clients and work to create writing that sounds professional yet does not include jargon. While the interior design field has specialized terms for drafting, perspective, and architectural elements, these everyday writing genres lack these terms in order to be palatable to the clients reading them. Little in-depth knowledge of interior design is needed for readers to understand writing within this profession. Along with assuring the general public can understand their writing, interior designers also attempt to persuade their reader. Writing within the interior design community relies heavily on pathos and ethos as a way of persuading clients. In concept statements and emails, the interior designer is actively trying to persuade the audience into moving forward with the project and working with the company, while blog posts are working to draw in new customers and persuade them to begin a project with the writer’s company. Overall, writing within the interior design community allows clients to understand what is happening with their project, feel included in the drafting and designing process, and get affirmation and persuasion to continue working with this company.

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Copies of Genres Analyzed

Concept Statement 1

The expansion of The Nelson Atkins Museum of Art fuses architecture with landscape to create an experiential architecture that unfolds for visitors as it is perceived through each individual’s movement through space and time. The new addition, named the Bloch Building, engages the existing sculpture garden, transforming the entire Museum site into the precinct of the visitor’s experience. The new addition extends along the eastern edge of the campus, and is distinguished by five glass lenses, traversing from the existing building through the Sculpture Park to form new spaces and angles of vision. The innovative merging of landscape, architecture and art was executed through close collaboration with museum curators and artists, to achieve a dynamic and supportive relationship between art and architecture.

Concept Statement 2

Designs in Perspective will provide Waukesha County Technical College and Student Life with a conceptual design for the Student Lounge in the Pewaukee Campus College   
Center, located in Pewaukee Wisconsin. The new design will include space planning to   
provide the students, staff, and faculty a Student Lounge with a variety of seating options that   
will allow the space to take on many different functions. The design will also enhance the   
flexibility of the space while providing a comfortable setting for students studying, relaxing, or   
meeting friends. There will also be power sources added to the floor throughout the Lounge,   
to accommodate the increasing popularity of laptops and electronic devices. The newly   
designed Lounge will become an urban/modern space through the creative use of   
architectural elements and updated furniture. A warm and inviting atmosphere will be created   
through the sensible use of warm colors such as reds, yellows, and oranges that will be mixed   
into an overall neutral color scheme. The colors will bring the style and environment to life   
through the finishes selected. These durable and cleanable finishes will mix texture and   
pattern within the space to provide harmony through variety, while withstanding the daily use   
of the Student Lounge. Lastly, Designs in Perspective will make a conscious effort to make   
selections that consider the students, faculty, staff and the environment.

Email

Hi Chloe,

Thanks for reaching out and I would love to help you work on your home.

I'd love to work with you on your home. I can definitely use of what you have now and build upon it in most cases.

My process is very simple. After you purchase a design service I put you on my project calendar and send you my ‘Getting Started Packet’. It will walk you through the process but here is a brief outline:

I'll have you fill out a questionnaire and collect photos. The questionnaire gives me a crystal clear picture of you and ...

Sincerely,

Alycia Wicker

Senior Interior Designer

Company Name

Blog Post 1

Bunk beds are the epitome of our childhood dreams. Reminiscent of summer camp, or big family vacations. Maybe you grew up on a bunk bed and don’t feel as excited about them, but you have to admit they’re convenient for space planning. And when you build them the right way, they’re totally luxurious.

We’re always excited when we get a chance to design a custom bunk room. We worked with our builders at Killowen Construction to give you the best tips and tricks when designing your own.

BUILD BASICS

Let’s start with the basics! The spaces between each bunk should be about 40 inches, with the mattress next to bunk. If your ceilings don’t exceed 9 feet, it might be a little difficult to built a bunk with substantial space. For really high ceilings you can add built-in drawers or even a trundle bed!!

These rustic white oak built in bunk beds are bright and youthful, with wire details on the railing as an industrial feature. We keep styling in each bunk room uniform and streamlined, so we use the same pillow and throw styling for each bed. It brings the space together and feels cohesive! We stuck with a gender neutral green, for the pillows.

If you have an open window between the bunks, it’s the perfect opportunity to add a window seat! We maximize comfort by getting custom cushion seating. Add throw pillows for bonus coziness.

We also had an opportunity to create built-in openings that could host frames, books, and more. Sure, they’re convenient but they’re also just beautiful, and tie in with the storage drawers lining the bottom of the bunks.

THINK ABOUT THE KIDS

This feels like a no brainer, but it’s important! Think about the safety and comfort of the people who get to actually enjoy the space. We start by using an LED lightbulb because they don’t get hot.

Outlets can be a polarizing topic when it comes to safety. You don’t want your younger kids playing with them or sticking anything in there!! But it’s also nice for the older kids to have somewhere to charge. Most new outlets have a tamper-proof safety feature, but you never know!!

Be carful when designing rails for the top bunks— find the balance between high enough that the kids don't roll off versus making the bunk look like a prison cell.

Blog Post 2

Do you ever find yourself wondering how on *earth* that bedroom in the magazine just looks so… good?!

And then you compare your own bedroom and think… “where the hell have I gone wrong?!” I hear you! But sometimes just a few small upgrades to your bedroom are all that you need to transform the space and make it worthy of any magazine shoot.

Bed styling is an art unto itself – so today I’m sharing 3 simple ways to turn your bedroom from mediocre to marvelous! So, let’s dig in…

**1. Super King Quilt Covers**

If there was a simple way to make any bed look more chic, it’s to go one or two sizes up on your quilt cover! Quilts that don’t quite drop over the sides of the bed can look a little, well, stingy. Sometimes bigger actually is better – so treat yourself to a gorgeous super king quilt cover for a more luxurious look!

**2. Statement cushions**

Is it just me, or can you smell a boring cushion a mile off?! Plain cushions from cheap fabrics will simply not do your bedroom aesthetic any favors. So, choose a one or two quality, statement cushions that you adore – and make these the star of your (bedroom) show.

**3. Color through paint**

As you might have gathered through my Instagram or other blog posts, I’m a big fan of white. However, when it comes to our bedrooms, and creating a sanctuary, a splash of color on the walls can really make all the difference. So be bold, take a chance, and choose a gorgeous deep tone for one or more of your walls. Then bring that color in through your cushions, throw rugs and quilts to bring this chic magazine-worthy look together.