

My career: Valerie Hogan: Interior designer and company owner of Hogan Interior Design

Valerie has designs on your house

Describe your job in five words: Exciting, rewarding, challenging, interesting and stressful.

Describe yourself in five words: Reliable, imaginative, patient, energetic and happy.

Personality needed for this kind of work? You really need to get on with and enjoy dealing with people.

You must be able to listen to and communicate your ideas to your client very clearly. You need to be completely confident in what you're doing and not afraid to try new ideas and styles.

How long are you doing this job? 17 years.

How did you get this job? I left school at 18, completed a secretarial course and started work in First Southern Bank. After 10 years, I took a redundancy package.

I then did a correspondence course with Rhodoc International for one year and started a new course in interior design at St John's College in Cork which I completed after two years.

I immediately began work as an independent interior designer and completed many projects in both the residential and commercial sector over the years.

Do you need particular qualifications/experience? It is not essential; however, very advisable.

Describe an average day at work: Every day is different but every morning I would check the post and e-mails, check my diary and prepare for appointments on that day.

If I am meeting clients at their house, I gather my sample books of fabrics for curtains and furniture, samples of carpets, wallpapers, lighting, poles and tiles. This would all have been previously sourced in my library and various shops in the city.

On meeting with the clients, we would go through the window treatments, flooring, lighting etc until everyone is happy with the design concept.

On my return to the office, I would check with other clients who may have on-going work, making sure

everything is running smoothly — painting, tiling etc — and dealing with any problems that may arise. This may entail a call to the site to confirm various details such as placing of sockets, light fittings, radiators and bathroom ware.

The end of my day is usually taken up with paperwork, making sure everything is up-to-date and ready to go again the following day.

How many hours do you work a week? 40/45 hours.

What do you wear to work? What I wear to work depends on where I am going. For example, if I were going to a building site I would wear jeans, warm top, visibility jacket, safety boots and my favourite hard hat! To a client's house or office I like to dress smartly in dresses, trousers and jackets with either boots or shoes.

Is your industry male or female dominated? Mostly female dominated.

Does this effect you in any particular way? I would like to see more males involved. It is good to get a male perspective on design because at times we can be quite different in our ideas and approach.

Is your job stressful? Yes, like any other business it has its ups and downs. The most stressful time is when your orders haven't arrived on time. There are so many people depending on the deliveries such as tilers, electricians and plumbers — if the goods are not on site, the workers may go to another site and this all costs extra time and money. I would rate it a six out of 10.

Do you work with others or on your own? I work on my own but it never feels like that because I am involved with so many others associated with me in different areas during any given day.

When do you plan to retire or give up working? Maybe in 10 years time I would think of retiring or taking a step back and working two or three days a week.

Best bits? To see a job completed is a fantastic feeling, to see all the hard work come alive. When I see how happy

clients are with their new surroundings and they realise that they too have played their part in the whole project.

Worst bits? There is lots of hauling and dragging which can be quite tiring and frustrating.

Advice to those who want your job? Be prepared to work long hours, there is a lot of physical work involved behind the scenes. Do your research, go to the design shows, trends change all the time so you must keep on top of it. It is very important to surround yourself with the best tradespeople, these are the people who are going to make you work look its best and last the test of time.

Any other comments? I have had many challenges in my work over the years but the most recent was taking part and winning *RTÉ Show-house* last March in Schull. It was hard work but so different in that you were working in front of cameras but what a wonderful sense of achievement.



Name: Valerie Hogan
Age: 47
Lives: Passage West.
Job title: Interior designer and company owner.
Salary: €45,000-60,000
Educational background: Regina Mundi, School of Commerce Secretarial College, Rhodoc International Correspondence (Interior Design), St John's College — two-year Interior Design course.
Hobbies: Walking, sailing and gardening.

Valerie Hogan of Hogan Interior Design. Picture: Darragh Kane

