

Are your clients seeking less-expensive containers in response to the economy?

Interiorscapers are helping clients cut container costs - without cutting plants out of the big picture.



Kathy Valentine,
President,
The Plant
Professionals,
Lansing, MI

In our market, there has been moderate adverse economic effect. New clients frequently prefer to see color boards on major projects showing that suggested plants and containers complete the design intent of the architect or interior designer.

There are so many wonderful container options available, and high-quality marketing materials are provided by companies such as Primescape Products, Topsiders, Planter Technology and others. Most facilities' professionals are comfortable with our suggestions. It is our job to sell benefits, not just the products themselves.

Initially, we prefer to present options for a leaner plantscape when budgets are a concern, filling out the original design as the client's budget permits. Continually adding value, building relationships, remembering to say 'thank you' and working hard to earn our clients' business every working day is key. I began my interiorscape career in 1980, and have never forgotten the importance of watching where the dollars go as well as continually building business to insure our continued success. ■



Brian Mahoney,
Owner,
Horticultural
Concepts,
Shoreham, Long
Island, NY

Lately our company has seen varying container price ranges. Recently, we had a contemporary office building that went through renovations.

After meeting with the client, we came up with a scheme of modestly priced fiberglass containers.

Upon review, the client then asked for fewer containers in a more expensive line. This cut back on our plant sales and maintenance fees, but the customers got great quality containers.

One of the malls we maintain has deteriorating containers that are only four years old. After looking at options within the same line, our customers chose to wait until the next fiscal year to "Get it right at that time."

Another one of our mall accounts has a new food-court project underway, and our customers there recently purchased top-of-the-line BenchMark planters.

It seems that some of our clients who are planning new construction demand higher-quality containers, while existing accounts are staying within their current lines.

I am glad to report that faux terra cotta containers are things of the past. ■



Bob Maupin,
President,
Interiorscapes of
Memphis,
Memphis, TN

If our clients are not closing offices or canceling accounts, then they're not making any adjustments so far, as far as cutting costs on containers and planters.

On the contrary, we've had a couple of buildings upgrade their containers lately. I think it has more to do with the look than the cost.

Most of our office business is lease or the clients buy their containers.

I don't think it has changed much from what it was prior to the economy going bad. If people are considering interiorscaping, then they have budgets. In the past, they were always somewhat cost-conscious. Those who will spend the money for containers are still spending the money. Those who weren't, still aren't.

If clients want to lease plants and they want a container, we have a small factor in the price of the plants that includes the plant and the container. But if they want ceramic and special colors, then we ask that they buy them. The ones that we include are reasonably priced.

I'm seeing that people want a more expensive look, but they don't want to spend megabucks for it. ■

Interested in sharing your thoughts or have a question in mind? Fax your name, address and phone number, along with topic ideas, to INTERIORESCAPE at (727) 786-9772 or write us at 2410 Northside Drive, Clearwater, FL 33761-2236; yourturn@interiorscape.com.