



Material/Finish Boards + Board Composition:

Tips for FCCLA Interior Design Participants



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Following are some tips concerning how to develop an interior design material/finish board including ways to arrange materials/finishes on the board to develop a professional-looking composition. The tips are not in order of importance.

1. Determine materials/finishes and color scheme EARLY in the design process.
2. Order materials and finishes (more than you think you will need), as soon as possible so they can get to you in time to develop your boards.
3. Talk to nearby designers/decorators to see if they have samples you may use and keep. Or write them and ask if they can send you some in the color scheme of your choice.
4. Materials can also be ordered online from various furniture/fabric manufacturers. Just call or email to make your request. Many times they will pay postage to send you the materials. Make sure you explain you are a high school design student. You are their future client.
5. Once you have your materials and finishes, group them into rooms/spaces where they will be used. Make adjustments as needed.
6. Place your materials on the board where they will appear in the interior space: flooring on bottom, walls above the flooring materials, and ceiling color/materials at the top of that section of your board.
7. If you have general materials/finishes to be use throughout the entire house/building, such as flooring, you may want to group the general materials together.
8. Avoid letting your materials/finishes overwhelm the “message” you are sending to the client.
9. Note that the scale/size of the materials indicates amount and importance of the color/texture in the space.
10. Board composition deals with “composing a message” to the client. Following are some tips.

What message you are trying to convey to your Client?

- What are you trying to say? Keep the message clear and clean to enhance client understanding.
- Don't let the details overpower the message.

Layout and Composition

- Best tip? Draw or sketch your board composition before you begin to cut and glue/adhere the materials/finishes. Draw several ways to “compose” the board and message and then evaluate the best one to use.
- Second best tip? As when you design a room, determine your focal point of the board! What do you want your client to look at first? Is it text? Is it color? Is it the material? If so, which materials are the most important? Avoid multiple focal points because your client won't know what to look at first.
- Mount samples/finishes only to the front of your board. Clients won't turn the board over for additional information.
- Think about the design elements: line, shape, color. Use them effectively to move the client's eye and interest around the board.
- Make sure your boards have actual or implied borders. This can be done as you mount your materials, or add a piece of paper under the materials, or with a drawn line, or with a mounting tape.
- Use a straight edge (e.g. ruler or other) to ensure items do not slant. The human eye picks up a slanted line very easily. If it is only slightly slanted, it will appear sloppy.

- If you want to place items on a diagonal (different than a slant), use a straight edge to ensure consistency. Realize that a diagonal will attract the client's eye faster than any other line type. The human eye will follow the diagonal right off the board (which you don't want!) unless you have something that stops the eye at that point. So, avoid using a diagonal unless you want a strong impact message.
- The FCCLA guidelines require solid black or white boards. You are trying to sell the materials/finishes/furniture – not the board.
- Label or code your materials clearly. If you code the materials/finishes, make sure you include a key. Use a professional method of labeling (e.g. computer). Again, use a straight edge when you mount labels. Even a single letter (“A”) can look slanted and ruin the professional look of your board.
- Select a simple font type to clearly communicate. Avoid using multiple, hard-to-read font types. Make sure the font color does not blend too much with the board. Use some contrast. Remember that during your FCCLA presentation, the evaluators will be several feet away and it is not permissible to hand boards to them during the presentation.

Mounting Samples/Finishes/Furniture

- Design boards are part of the business package for your client. Avoid making them too “floofy”.
- Trim or wrap samples/pictures before mounting them to your board. Again, make sure you use a ruler/straight edge.
- Plastic laminates or other materials may have manufacturing names/numbers. An electric eraser can many times remove this information as it is distracting to the client. Be careful not to burn a hole through the material/finish. Samples may also be overlapped so that that this information is not visible.
- There are different types of adhesives to use when mounting materials/finishes.
 - A consistent, thin, white glue can hold many of the heavier materials in place. If glue is used with a lighter material or paper, it may pucker the fabric or paper. Therefore, double-sided tape, rubber cement, or spray on adhesives may work best.
 - Hot glue can sometimes work well with medium weighted materials. Use sparingly.
 - If you have a very heavy material, you may need to cut a square/rectangle in your board and mount it from the back. Place another piece of matt board behind the material to hold it in place. Adhere it in place from the back. The use of a “Liquid Nails” type product may also be used, if appropriate.

Multiple Board Presentations

- All boards should run horizontal OR vertical. Do not format one board horizontal and the other board vertical.
- Use the same colored background/board for multiple boards
- Use same brand/logo and business card in same spot on each board.

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