

Modernize Your Restroom With Easy, Affordable Updates

Simple solutions to go from sterile to stylish.

By: Lisa Huntting

From hotels and restaurants to office buildings and dorm rooms, the look of today's commercial restrooms is less industrial and more warm and welcoming — and for good reason.

"The décor and cleanliness of the bathroom often becomes the basis of our opinion about an entire space," states Kate Hart, leading home stager/interior designer and owner of Hart & Associates Staging and Design. "It's the same reason why kitchens and bathrooms sell residential homes."

"The opportunity to make a positive impression here should not be overlooked," continues Hart. "Fortunately, incorporating a clean, modern, home-like feel into a commercial bathroom can be done easily and affordably — without a major renovation."

For the most cost-effective, high-impact updates, efforts should be focused on a few key areas including paint, mirrors, lighting, hardware, accessories and some environmentally-friendly additions.

Paint

Paint provides the biggest bang for your buck.

Use beiges and pale tones to create a relaxed, spa-like setting or simply paint just one accent wall to add pop and personality.

Interior Designer and Project Manager for Design Directions International Amy Gleghorn specializes in hospitality design, spas, country clubs and historic restorations and is noting a resurgence in the use of grays as well.

"Anything from blue-grays to brown-grays are very popular today," explains Gleghorn.

Select a glossy paint that will give sheen and is easy to clean.

And, don't forget to freshen up the trim with a coat of bright white — or get a modern look by painting the trim black.

Mirror

The mirror is typically a restroom's greatest focal point and often remains

unframed, unfinished and suffers from de-silvering around the edges over time.

For an up-to-date, designer look that is both stylish and practical, simply add a frame.

There are a wide variety of framing solutions available today, including retro-fit frames that apply directly to the mirror, covering clips and de-silvering in a matter of minutes.

It's a simple and affordable way to give a dated mirror new life — without the



With low-cost, aesthetic upgrades, you can transform your restroom from dull and dingy to fresh and invigorating.

headache of tearing down what's currently there.

A popular choice, especially in hotels, is a black frame — giving a warmer feel than harsh, cold silver.

Another option is to match the frame to the countertop for a cohesive look.

Lighting

"The most important and overlooked change is in your lighting," says Gleghorn. "Adding dimmers or simply changing out a light bulb's color to work with the colors you have can make a big impact."

Brighten and soften the lighting in the space by replacing bare-bulb or fluorescent fixtures that cast a harsh or dim light.

Then, make a statement by adding fixtures with sconces above the mirror or flanked on either side of it.

Hardware

Most importantly, ensure all drawer pulls, handles, latches and locks are in working order.

Where feasible, give the room a coordinated feel by swapping out dated hardware — a simple fix that can bring the room together.

Choose oil-rubbed bronze to hide fingerprints or go with an always-in-style chrome finish that coordinates with the lighting, faucets, switches and receptacle covers.

Gleghorn notes that bronze and antiqued gold are making a comeback, too, so don't do away with them altogether.

Pair them with warm beige or paint in shades of gold to brighten and bring together the room.

Accessories

While accessories won't work in all settings, there are some easy ways to say goodbye to stark walls and windows.

A single piece of artwork secured with safety hardware will jazz up a blank space.

A decorative soap dispenser adds a home-like feel and wicker baskets for towels or trash cans bring texture and warmth to the room, ridding the space of an industrial feel.

Are the blinds dated, dingy or dusty?

Try a frosted window film or spray that will provide privacy while keeping it light, bright and easy to maintain.

Whether tackling them all or just a few,

these quick fixes and additions will help pull the room together with one modern, cohesive look and take not only the restroom, but the entire space into the twenty-first century.

The goal is to make it light, bright and airy by combining clean with a feeling of comfort.

"It is about being industrial without feeling industrial," concludes Hart. *CM*

Lisa Huntting is the president and inventor of MirrorMate frames, a manufacturer and retailer of custom frames for plate glass restroom mirrors. The patented framing system features high-quality, durable wood and medium-density fiberboard (MDF) frames and are used in both residential and commercial properties. MirrorMate is approved for use by most major hotel chains. For more information, please visit the retail site at www.mirrormate.com, the commercial site at www.mirrormatecommercial.com or email lisa@mirrormate.com.

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