

INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE & PRODUCT DESIGN

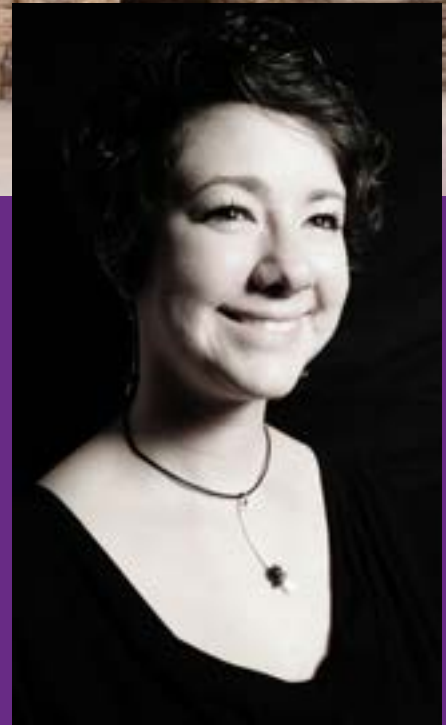
IAPD ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Andrea Nelson is a 2010 K-State graduate with her Masters in Interior Architecture and Product Design and she is our first Alumni Spotlight of the semester. In March of Andrea's final semester she started looking for full time positions at A&D firms. 2010 proved to be a challenging time to find a job due to the recession. By April, she decided to redirect her focus back to her studies and pick up the career search after graduation. Soon after she made that decision, she was approached about possibly applying for an internship with Herman Miller.

The last thing she wanted to do after graduating in 2010 with a master's degree in Interior Architecture and Product Design was an internship! Once she thought through the opportunity, she applied, interviewed and was offered a six month internship. Andrea said, "I am so thankful I took the position! I was able to grow and learn in unimaginable ways." Herman Miller ended up offering her a full time project manager position on the Colors, Materials and Finishes Team.

Her current position is Product Manager Magnus Olesen Design Collection + Surface Materials Strategy at Trendway Corporation in Grand Rapids, Michigan. What does a product manager do during a day? Well, Andrea is responsible for the processes to define, develop, launch and manage ongoing Trendway surface materials for all products and the Magnus Olesen Design Collection. Her responsibilities include establishing and leading the surface material additions, refinements and deletions to ensure functional and aesthetic conformity with existing products, profit margin objectives and responding to demands and trends of the marketplace.

Andrea is also in the process of leading the phased-in launch of products which means she gets to select products to launch in North America. In order to select the products, marketplace information must be analyzed and recommendations made to preserve Trendway's competitive advantage, including discontinuing surface materials that are no longer relevant.



Andrea Nelson
2010 IAPD Grad

"My time at K-State in IAPD benefitted me in the workplace in so many ways! I have found that the diversity of the education I received has been the most beneficial." Although she is currently doing product management, Andrea is able to work with marketing on graphic design layouts, sketch an idea and think about space in different ways than other product managers. "I am appreciative of all that IAPD taught me!"

If Andrea could give current IAPD students a few words of wisdom it would be to assess what you want out of your career, both professionally and personally. When presented with a job offer, consider whether it fits into your personal career goals. If so, gratefully accept the offer. If not, move on. Something will come along that will be a great fit for both you and the company.