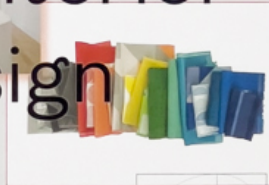
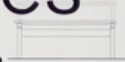




Kelly Harris Smith  
and Chris Grimley



# Universal Principles of Interior Design



100 Ways to Develop  
Innovative Ideas, Enhance  
Usability, and Design  
Effective Solutions



## 31 Emphasis

The center of interest or focal point of a composition.

When speaking, emphasizing something means calling attention to a particular word or phrase. Similarly, in interior design, emphasis is used to direct attention to a specific design element—a freestanding object, a wall element, or a lighting fixture—within a volume. Emphasis can be used to allow for visual pause, to direct an occupant through a sequence of spaces, or to reduce or punctuate the acoustics of a room sonically.

Emphasis is an important tactic in interior design. By highlighting the room's focal point, the designer can direct the viewer's attention to a specific location. A space without a focal point can come across as scattered rather than cohesive or harmonious.

There are two methods of emphasis that a designer can deploy

### Emphasis by Strategic Placement.

This method varies by project type. In a retail interior, clients may request to emphasize signage, products or customer service counters. A commercial office might emphasize elements in a lobby, or lead users toward meeting or event spaces. In a home, art work, a large window or dramatic double height spaces function as the focal points.

There are several different ways to add emphasis



**Emphatic**  
Natural or architectural focal point. Prominent and clearly featured.



**Dominant**  
Any feature added to a composition dominates the design of a space.



**Subdominant**  
Smaller features such as rugs, artwork, and mirror furniture.



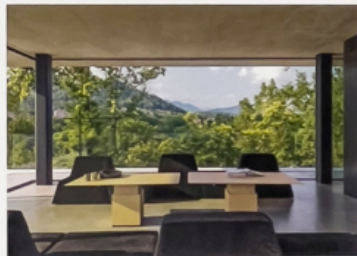
**Subordinate**  
Includes accessories and end featured décor.

70

Universal Principles of Interior Design

See Also  
Alignment  
Composition  
Hierarchy  
Proportion

In the Tava House in Biele, Italy, designed by Federico Pedersoli, the strategic placement of low furniture across the large windows and the view of the surrounding Italian landscape to become the focal point.



Another way a designer grabs the eye with a statement is the headquarter of Parkside Bridge & Chicago. This space is that bright open space so inviting machines around the city.

31 Emphasis

71