

Property market: What Dave the removal man did next...
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We know that these are tough times for housebuilders, but how is the rest of the property industry coping? Cherry Maslen reports



THE INTERIOR DESIGNER

Jo Love is an interior designer based in Clapham, London

"A lot of the work I do is for developers," says Love, "so I've definitely seen changes over the past year. The most important thing is to be flexible - the money is still there but it could be going somewhere unexpected. One client started investing in commercial buildings rather than homes, so I ended up doing office interiors, which wasn't

what I'd planned."

Love could hardly have chosen a worse time to set up on her own - July 2007, just as the market began to slide. "I'd had my own business so I had contacts," she says. "But I knew I couldn't survive on the standard 90-day payment process, so I had to negotiate better terms with clients. And I do work very hard. In this market, it's even more important to deliver, no matter what it takes.

"You can't afford to be complacent even when you've got work," she says. "And I've stepped up the networking. I make an effort to call all my contacts and go to everything I'm invited to for leads.

"It helps that I don't have to worry about staff. I've got several other designers I call when jobs come in - we all work together, but they're on contracts. And they're mostly mums, so want to be flexible anyway.

"Developers will go flat-out to keep clients happy, so you just have to go with them. I've been contracted to do interiors for a developer with clients who want to move in this September. Instead of following the developer's brief I've been working for both them and the buyers, trying to keep them all happy. I've made it work but it could have been a nightmare." www.loveinteriors.co.uk