

# SPOTlight HEALTHCARE

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## Jason Poorboy

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### 1. Your path to a position as a Space Project Manager is an interesting one. Can you tell us about it? How have you been successful in your position without a traditional design degree?

*It's true, my degree is in Musical Theatre! I've always loved interior design though and did take interior design courses after my Musical Theatre degree but did not finish the program.*

*The courses I did take, allow me to drive finish selection for the hospital and effectively demonstrate cost vs aesthetic vs durability. You must be able to explain why the decisions*

*being made are the right ones, beyond "this will look great". While I don't sing at work, my Musical Theatre degree really taught me to communicate and, while it sounds cliché, I bring a "the-show-must-go-on" mentality to everything.*

*Besides that, I come from a very "blue collar" family and was always around some form of construction growing up. While not a direct path, basically everything I've done to this point in life checked a box for something the hospital needed. They created this position for me and it allows the hospital to fill many hats with one position.*

### 2. How do you think Covid-19 has impacted the importance of designing psychological safety?

*One word, plexiglass! After we are back to an adjusted normal, I never want to see, use or deal with plexiglass again. Immediately after lockdowns began, you started seeing plexiglass everywhere; restaurants, grocery stores, airports, even McDonalds drive throughs. I was asked to make all public space in the hospital COVID compliant. Meaning, we were following CDC guidelines and recommendations, as well as looking towards other hospitals. Even now there's no real science, that I've read, behind plexiglass barriers. It's a placebo. However, I argued early on that we had to hit both, the perception of safety and real safety. You can't go into grocery store and be asked to stand behind plexiglass for your safety and then come into a hospital and not see plexiglass anywhere.*

### 3. We've all had to pivot (a lot or a little) in the last year. What are your internal clients asking about? How has your approach to projects changed in the last 12 months?

*Well, of course, plexiglass. Beyond that, everyone wants more and more signage that explains restrictions and directs people in the new process. I tend to believe in minimal but impactful signage. There's an inflection point where people will ignore all signage, if there is too much signage.*

### 4. What was one of the most memorable projects you have worked on in your career?

*Courtyard. Our courtyard is actually a roof. The roof needed repair and another project manager handled the construction, then I was asked to "make it pretty". It was amazing, I didn't have to do any construction and was given a huge blank canvas, with the simple instruction, that it be pretty. There was a lot of interest in the space, so I was given a large budget without any real limitations. Shockingly, I talked administration into a water theme. I was told I couldn't use real water but I was able to evoke the feeling of being near a marina by using Adirondack chairs, blue tumbled glass and common boardwalk colors. We also devised a furniture plan that had a lot of flexibility. There's enough room for staff to have meetings there on nice days or a family can find a private area to cry and grieve. It's been a really big hit*

*I think the reason this project sticks out so much is, it's one of the few places I get to experience the effect of my work. I walk by the courtyard several times a day and get to see people laughing in the sun or sometimes crying. It can be sad, but the design accomplished the goal.*

### 5. Have you had a memorable mentor in your career? What words of wisdom did they pass on that still stick with you?

*My mentor and voice teacher died last month. I was taught by Florence Birdwell, who has taught multiple Tony award winners and was just this one-of-a-kind being that had a gravitational presence. You can take gravitational as, people wanted to be near her and in her orbit, but she could also send you crashing into earth if you soared inappropriately high. My voice teacher left an incredible mark on my life, that I experience as pre and post Birdwell. She had a unique approach to voice lessons, that had little to do with notes and everything to words. She taught me that every single word mattered whether it is a noun, verb or tiny "to, but, and or's". Never say anything you don't believe or no one will believe you.*



A photo of Jason's favorite project, the "Courtyard".