

Ask the Experts

Grow your business with using other professionals

by Kathy Wall

If you're reading this column, you're likely a window-covering professional, interior designer, or retailer selling custom window covering. And this magazine is your go-to source for inspiration and industry education—but there's a lot of opportunity for your business to grow looking outside of this specific industry.

With three decades of experience in marketing, specifically in the home furnishings industry, we know that companies sometimes overlook the obvious—people can't buy from you if they don't know you exist. Which is why using an outside source for the kind of public relations initiatives that build your brand and awareness of it provides valuable ROI.

Taking Strategic Steps

Crafting your brand is the first step. Communicating it is the second. A good agency—either on an hourly consultation basis or ongoing retainer—can help you fashion a narrative to set yourself apart from your competitors. And, then they will employ traditional and digital tactics to leverage it.

In today's marketplace, you need a firm that not only provides public relations expertise, but assistance in social media, creative services, media planning, and brand strategy. If someone outside your company handles these details, you're free to run your business and concentrate on your product or service. And a fresh, outside perspective ensures you don't look like everyone else out there.

Consider a Coach

Creative entrepreneurs aren't lacking in business savvy, but likely just haven't received this type of training. That's where business coaching comes in. Choose an

individual or firm with experience in the interior design and home decor business. An experienced business coach can help business owners break through self-imposed boundaries, or recognize patterns that need to be changed if the company is to achieve further growth. They can provide an objective look at your business, no matter how long you've been in business.

Lisa Escobar of Lisa Escobar Design in Las Vegas, Nevada recognized they needed to improve productivity and work more efficiently. Escobar hired Gail Doby Coaching & Consulting who provided them a "road map" of added structure, greater efficiencies and time-saving



procedures. Escobar said, "Their coaching gave us the ability to think bigger and yet have more balance. That ultimately helps us better serve our clients." Yes, these coaches offer proven ideas on working smarter and increasing profitability.

Take License

Consider licensing if your brand has a distinct viewpoint that allows it to stand on its own, or if your unique designs could be licensed to established companies. To determine if licensing is feasi-

ble, consult with a reputable licensing agent. Gregory Vargo is owner of Vargo Design Licensing, based in New York City. He notes, "Many designers have developed signature window treatments for their client's unique projects, which frequently address a specific client need for functionality and design. In each case, the designer harnesses her own creative arsenal to solve custom design requirements with a combination of tools including new materials and technology, unique construction or tailoring techniques, distinctive architectural integration, and other options revealed in the course of her career." As a licensor or a licensee, the world of licensing your brand or custom designs could provide you with additional revenue stream.

If you'd like to grow your business take a look at these consultation services with an eye on long term relationships with experts in public relations, business and financials, and licensing. ✖



Kathy Wall is president and ringleader of The Media Matters, an agency in the Triad area of North Carolina, offering marketing, advertising, and brand strategy to a roster of international

clients. Kathy has shared her talents with the home furnishings industry for three decades before forming her own business 17 years ago. Her motto? "We don't work with jerks."

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