

INTERIOR DESIGN YEARBOOK 2016



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Getting Started: Your design brand

By Polly Williams

Designer Advisor and Founder, **Camberyard**

Camberyard is an advisory firm founded by Polly Williams, offering bespoke marketing and business solutions to interior designers, furniture and lighting companies, fabric and flooring providers and bathroom and kitchen specialists. Polly works with her clients to develop their business strategy, increase revenue and gain media exposure. With over 12 years' experience advising a leading interior design studio in London, Polly knows how to launch a brand and make it an international success. Using a unique 360-degree framework, Polly brings a holistic approach to working with her clients in the interiors sector. By pinpointing the areas in their business, which they need to focus and consolidate, Polly takes her clients' business to the next level. Her skills include PR, marketing, social media, blogs, web design, trade and retail shows, collaborations and industry networking. Here, Polly offers advice to those looking to start up in business.

Designers are so creative, but do not necessarily understand the need for business and marketing strategy, which is where I come in. As with all businesses, whilst you understand the ins and outs of your work, others may not. The minutiae of building a social media presence or networking often feels stifling, that's how I can help. Marketing and pr strategy, proposal planning, rebranding, it all comes under the remit of a designer advisor. With the explosion of the internet, the traditional role of the interior designer has changed. The world of interior design and the marketplace is ever changing; clients don't need interior designers in the same way they used to. Previously, they



C A M B E R Y A R D

Above: Camberyard are designer advisors



Above: Polly and her team are here to help you establish your new brand

benefitted from trade accounts, the interior designer's knowledge of what was new, on-trend, the latest brands, and they used print media, e.g. magazines for inspiration and vision.

Increasingly, potential clients are sourcing their own products and suppliers are offering discounted prices to their clients. Take Pinterest, for example, where you can now create your own mood boards online, potential clients are much more educated in what they want to achieve than the old school clientele.

It is widely believed that the majority of new businesses fail for two reasons: lack of demand and cash flow.

It is so important to keep this in mind when creating your brand and to implement business and marketing strategies, which steer your company during its first

year, so you continually build your presence in the market place. Securing clients is all about strategy; if your potential clients cannot share the design vision you have for them, then converting them into your clients will be impossible.

I firmly believe in using a 360-degree framework in creating your brand. Building a business is very much like building and designing a home. Designers create floor plans and dimensions before starting to design a home; as a consulting firm, we look at the floor plan and dimensions before we build a business. A house can't be built with three bathrooms, one kitchen and no bedrooms, in the same way a company should not be built without a clear business strategy. At Camberyard, we use this analogy to construct a bespoke

business strategy for your needs. If you take the analogy of house building, we look at what kind of house you want to build, how it needs to adapt to your life and what your budget is. The first stage is putting in the plumbing and electrics, to ensure everything is in place for building your walls. Finally, we decorate. Each stage of the business and marketing plan is tailored to exactly those requirements. For creative professionals who are launching their business straight from graduation, or who want to streamline their operations, we need to go back to the initial design. We work out the key elements that will make your dream 'house' – how your business can fulfil all your needs and provide stable foundations to grow that business in today's markets.

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So, for example, we do not provide marketing and pr services. We look at exactly what your business requires for marketing and promotion, and develop a strategy before you might approach a marketing and pr firm, so you know precisely what you want and can afford. I can recommend a number of wonderful agencies if required, and I work with my clients to find the perfect partnerships for their needs.

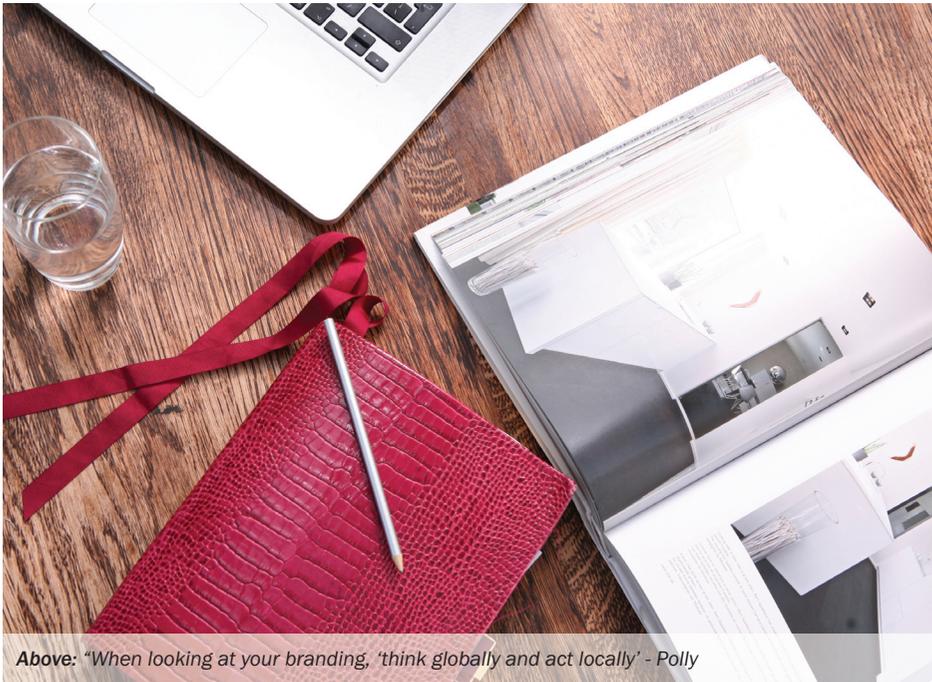
Let's begin with your unique selling point (USP). You need to develop your USP for many purposes: marketing materials, business cards, website, brochures, press releases etc., but also for small talk and networking, which may well lead to your next big project. Remember too, if you are hiring staff, they must be 'on brand', so you need a clear company

identity for them to convey whilst dealing with your potential clients. A clear company identity helps you identify where you position yourself in the market, and which projects and future clients to whom you pitch. Just because you are offered a certain project, does not mean you should accept it, if it does not sit within your business and marketing strategy.

Whilst developing your USP, highlight any particular skillsets, training or experience you have. Note your professional qualifications and any relevant work experience. Remember, you must stand out from the crowd and showcase why you are better than anyone else in that design arena. Focus on what you enjoy most, because if you do what you enjoy, then you are more than likely to succeed.

When looking at your branding,

'think globally and act locally', remember, you want to be recognised for your design, but you also want to act locally to build a reputation in your home environment. Start with the name of your company. Do you want to name the company after yourself and add a service such as 'interior design' to clarify what you do? If you want to establish a brand, do you need a creative name, which has the potential to grow as you diversify into other areas? When building your brand, it's important to subcontract to experts in their field, who really know what they are doing, from branding agencies to graphic designers, freelance photographers, web and SEO companies and copywriters. Find an expert in graphics, let them treat you like a client and provide your business with the full service you deserve. Ask yourself first,



Above: "When looking at your branding, 'think globally and act locally' - Polly



Above: Whether you are a new designer embarking on your career or have an established interior design business, we can advise on what your brand should be known for

what is the name of my company and do I want a logo? A logo is nice to have though not essential, as it is more aesthetic than practical. However, if they design you something you like then of course you should use it, but we recommend not getting hung up on having one!

Across all your marketing materials – business cards, stationery, brochures, website, blogs etc., all graphics should be consistent and create an integrated, overall look. Think about who you are and what type of work you want to do. Then ensure the graphics, identity and feel of your marketing materials reflect this. Once you have your identity, you can use it across all

your promotional materials and electronic communications. This may be someone's first impression of your company, so it's important to convey your key core values. Think about whether you need printed materials, business cards and brochures are a great idea, but think carefully about printed letterheads and materials too. Perhaps you are traditional and prefer sending printed materials, or maybe you are contemporary and want to send all communications via the internet. Whether you are a new designer embarking on your career or have an established interior design business, we can advise on what your brand should be known for.

What unique characteristics do you bring to your business, your life and your clients? Your USP is fundamental, and we help interior designers understand, develop and finesse it. Being the Designers' Advisor is something I love. It's an exciting relationship, getting to know my clients, understanding their aspirations for their business and advising them creatively and strategically. As I mentioned before, the interior design and soft furnishings market is ever expanding. At Camberyard, our focus is on you, your talent and your USP to make your business stand out and succeed.

www.camberyard.com