

INTERIOR DESIGN YEARBOOK

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POLLY WILLIAMS



Getting Started: Support

By Polly Williams
Founder, Camberyard

Camberyard is an award-winning advisory firm founded by Polly Williams, specialising in bespoke marketing, business and social media solutions and mentoring for interior designers, galleries, photographers, garden designers, furniture and lighting companies, fabric and flooring providers and bathroom and kitchen specialists in the interiors sector. 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 a success. Here Polly discusses how to pursue your dream career in interior design.

So you're passionate about interior design, the next question is, how do you become a professional interior designer?

At Camberyard, we often work with clients who would like to become interior designers. Perhaps they have recently graduated, perhaps they are looking for a complete career life-change, or perhaps they wish to turn a lifelong love of interior design into their dream job. But whatever their path into the profession, our advice is always the same. If you are passionate about becoming an interior designer, take the time to work out what kind of designer you want to be, your aspirations, and how to achieve this before embarking on your career



Above: Polly helps new and emerging designers with their business



Above: establish what kind of designer you want to be

journey. This can be one of the most helpful steps of all. Many of our clients love the idea of becoming an interior designer, and I highly recommend researching, and then researching some more, the areas you want to specialise in, to be certain this is the route you want to take. Typically, your days will be extremely busy, varied and exciting. You'll need to be highly motivated and organised; developing stunning spaces for your clients doesn't just happen overnight. You'll put in many hours of creative thinking and planning, liaising with clients on every level to ensure their design needs are met. You may find you are responsible for sourcing everything, from fixtures and fittings to architects, builders, soft furnishings and much more. Creativity is key, as are excellent communication skills and minute

attention to detail.

However, it is important to recognise that the role of a designer is not just about creativity, but also about the practicalities of running a business. Do you understand invoicing; can you pitch to clients and negotiate fees successfully? Just as importantly, does your portfolio stand out in a crowded market of other interior design students? At Camberyard, we strongly believe in a 360-degree framework, which focuses on building these key business skills into your 'Career Transition Path' action plan. This is vital; firm foundations are necessary to grow and be successful in your chosen career.

First steps

Developing which path to take is all about discovering the answers to these key questions:

Who do I want to be as a working interior designer? What are my motivations and aspirations, strengths and weaknesses? How am I going to become the kind of interior designer that I dreamed I could be – either working in a design studio or one day opening my own practice?

It is essential to contemplate these questions, as they will directly influence the choices you make. Additionally, consider what is your biggest motivation: career, money, industry recognition, continually educating yourself? What other skills do you need to land your dream job? Are you going to work full or part time? Our mentoring of designers through this phase is key to their progression. Often, our clients are driven by the desire to make a change, without fully realising the options available to them. By really taking the time to work out

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the key ingredients of their career action plan, we show them how essential it is to lay the foundations for their new career.

Study

There are multiple routes into the interior design industry such as interior design degrees over three years, or an intensive year-long diploma, which can be undertaken at schools like the KLC School of Design in London. There are also a number of shorter courses and open learning courses. They are available through these design schools, to help you start off with smaller projects to build your portfolio. Ideally though, you would need to pair these with specialist courses, e.g. technical drawing to help you with specification on aspects such as journey or bathrooms.

Design style

For creative professionals who wish to work in the interior design sector, you need to establish some strong foundations in your new career choice. Maybe you come from a business background and need to start thinking creatively or maybe you are creative and don't know which skills to develop. Perhaps you have had a career break and now wish to break into the world of interior design. Whichever category you fall into, you now need to put a career action plan in place.

How can I further my career as an interior designer?

Remember that strong foundations are built on the power of networking. Familiarise yourself with suppliers and brands. Visit trade shows for

inspiration. Join organisations such as The British Institute of Interior Design (BIID), which is highly regarded in the UK and worldwide.

Follow your favourite designers, architects and brands on social media and interact with them. Be brave and ask the designers you admire to tell you how they did it – there is nothing so helpful as hearing advice from someone you respect. When it comes to becoming a successful interior designer, ensure you know exactly what kind of interior designer you want to be. Then you will be ready to begin your career journey, one contemplated and planned step at a time.

www.camberyard.com



C A M B E R Y A R D

Above: Camberyard, founded by Polly Williams