

# INTERIOR DESIGN YEARBOOK

A modern living room with a large window overlooking a city skyline. The room features a low coffee table, two armchairs, and a large textured blanket draped over a chair in the foreground.

Edited by Alexandra Bushby

Foreword by Lester Bennett, President, BIID



**Polly Williams:**  
Founder, Camberyard

# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

## BY POLLY WILLIAMS

Founder, Camberyard

*Polly, inspired by her love of helping designers and brands launch or expand their business, founded the multi award-winning **Camberyard** in 2015. She is now one of the UK's leading business development consultants for interiors, brands and designers. Polly now offers expert business advice, mentoring and networking to interior design professionals. Taking a holistic, step-by-step approach, Polly has created a strategic framework that puts personal and professional growth alongside business development. In addition to helping clients launch, grow or streamline their business, providing advice on PR, social media, USP, marketing and business strategy, web design, and trade and retail shows, she specialises in bringing designers together. Inspired by a belief that collaboration is better than competition, she formed the Camberyard Collective, a select group of like-minded designers, brands and creative professionals. The Collective regularly meets, often in Camberyard workshops and round tables, to share ideas, barter services and support each other. Here Polly discusses the creatives behind the creatives and how to add value to your design business.*

The interiors world is vast, teeming with talent and creativity. There are the designers and brands on the frontline, helping to create stunning interiors for their clients – and filling the covers of magazines, leading talks and launching brands and interior services at design fairs. As I've helped designers and brands to help launch, streamline or grow their business over the years, I have come across – and, indeed, work with many myself at Camberyard – a wide and inspirational range of the creative professionals who support the designers and their businesses. From photographers to branding agencies, graphic designers, web and SEO specialists, journalists, copywriters and more, a huge number of dedicated and highly trained creatives work behind the scenes to make the magic happen. I have had the pleasure of



**Above: Victorian Terrace Renovation designed by Camberyard Collective member Hubner Studios Photography by Edmund Dabney**

## POLLY WILLIAMS

witnessing first-hand the value these 'creatives behind the creatives' bring to interiors businesses: providing stunning, professional photographs; sparkling copy; impactful articles; cutting-edge web design; creative branding; press connections; social media promotion and support – the list goes on. A strong business development plan always includes input and collaboration from experts in other specialities. Not only can this outside expertise and knowledge expand your thinking, create new opportunities, and add to or improve your offering; perhaps most importantly, it can save you time and headspace, allowing you to focus on what you do best. And, by extension, outsourcing certain elements can allow you to work smarter; increasing your profitability as well as providing more time to network with those all-important future clients.

As the Designers' Advisor I constantly work to connect these talented professionals as part of my own business strategy, which is based on the belief that collaboration is better than competition. Through the Camberyard Collective, a diverse group of creative professionals who come together to network, share knowledge and take part in workshops and events, I am able to unite these various strands across the industry. My aim, as part of an initiative I have just launched, is to give these creatives further insight into the amazing world of interiors, as well as to connect them with the brands and designers in the Collective. As part of this new initiative, I recently interviewed eight of these creatives for Decorex International – photographers; journalists; digital

marketing, branding, PR, and communications specialists – to find out more about what they do.

Amongst other things, I was keen to get their tips on what makes a successful working relationship with designers and brands!

The findings were clear: having a productive and enjoyable collaboration or client-employer relationship relies on some key points: clear communication with defined objectives and roles; good listening; co-operation; well-managed expectations; an eagerness on the designer and brand's part to learn and grow as well as an openness to fresh input and new directions; realistic budgets and timescales; mutual trust and respect; having the freedom to run with a brief; and last, but not least – an attitude on both sides of not only fulfilling the brief, but having fun doing it!

Their responses supported what I've found to be true in my role as a business development consultant in the Interiors sector. Especially that, to develop positive, successful working relationships requires proactivity, positivity and importantly, taking time to create connections on a human level. I always encourage clients to look at their business with a holistic,

360-degree approach, where they're taking into account their personal as well as professional health or success. Tied to that philosophy is the idea of making a genuine connection with someone, where you find a shared passion and desire to engage in a piece of work together. The best projects usually involve all parties finding creative inspiration and fulfilment in the collaboration, working together with energy and enthusiasm to make something fabulous. That's a goal to aim for!

Now, stop, breathe and contemplate. Do you feel you have a good support network around you professionally? If not, think about the areas you could use help with – and reach out to a trusted friend or fellow professional or mentor to find those specialists to support you. If you have already begun to build that team of support around you, take the time to fully convey your USP and target market, and continue to make emotional connections and find out what you don't know from those experts – the Creatives behind the Creatives!

**[www.camberyard.com](http://www.camberyard.com)**  
**IG: [@camberyard](https://www.instagram.com/camberyard)**

