



Running The Show 101: The Ins And Outs Of Running A Home Design Business

ESTATENVY connects with Cathy Thomasson to hear more about how to run a successful home design business

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Sidney Cardel's is owned by mother-daughter duo Cathy Thomasson and Cara Burky. Thomasson has always had a flair for fashion and design and has been decorating businesses and homes for years. After graduating from Florida State University in Fashion Merchandising and Fashion Design, Thomasson knew she wanted to open her own store. Sidney Cardel's is named after Thomasson's mother who was a woman of outstanding character. Thomasson has worked on numerous projects in both commercial and residential design, including HGTV's Dream Home and HGTV's Green Home projects as a "Designer Liaison."

How did you get started in the Home Design industry?

Having a double major in fashion merchandising and fashion design, I thought the path of my

life would really take me more towards the apparel industry. While I do carry apparel in my store, Sidney Cardel's, and my earlier years led me in fact, into the "fashion" industry, it was focused more in the home and gift field. I became a Key Account Sales Representative for a group based out of the Atlanta market. I worked with larger retail chains developing products, planning programs and strategies in around their marketing goals. We followed fashion trends in the industry, and worked usually a year in advance when products would be launching. That stage of my life was instrumental in running my own store now. I have resources and knowledge of how and where to find these resources, and to have products developed for my store exclusively.

At the time, my daughter was only four years old, so this job allowed me to work for myself and set my own schedule so I could be a "Room Mom" and "Picture Lady" at my daughter's school, go on field trips, etc. It was a great position as a single mom to manage my priorities and make a living at the same time!

Always having the gift of an artist's eye, I've been the decorator for my family and friends for years and even did a few design jobs as a Designer Liaison for HGTV. It wasn't until I opened my store in 2011, however, that it became more of a full time job. Customers who shopped in my store started asking me to decorate their homes and it just took off.

How do you stay involved?

All it takes for me is to see something, anything really, to motivate me. Examples could be a piece of fabric, a particular color, something old or vintage, a cool piece of furniture or art - and a theme or concept immediately just develops in my brain. Then I can't seem to move fast enough to pull it all together.

Do you have any advice for up and comers in the Home Decor and Design Industry?

Probably would advise or suggest one to think about what specifically within this industry they'd like to focus on, because it's pretty vast. There are many directions one can go. You can work for a manufacturer, internal or outside sales, represent product lines or become a designer.

Is there a home designer that you look to for inspiration?

My brother actually initially inspired me - Jack Thomasson. He is a Professional House Planner and is best known for his designs of the HGTV Dream Home, HGTV Smart Home and HGTV Urban Oasis projects. He was also the founder of Coastal Living Magazine. He has a great eye for design and implantation of a project, so we bounce ideas off of one another from time to time. He's a pretty cool brother!

How do you spread the word about your business?

In the past we've done quite a bit of print advertising in various magazines, but mainly through social media and email campaigns. Our website has also been instrumental in marketing my

business. It's currently undergoing a revitalization as we speak with a fresh look and soon we will be set up with an e-commerce site for online sales. Mainly though, I'd say I really don't spread the word about my business as much as our customers do. Word of mouth has and probably always will be our biggest campaign for growth of Sidney Cardel's.

What's exciting about the future of home decorating?

For me personally, it's that really anything goes anymore. You can mix old and new of anything, mix patterns and colors, antiques with midcentury modern, make something simple and minimalist, but eclectic, and on and on. I love the challenge of incorporating pieces that mean something to a client or customer with their current pieces to give them a fresh look. As long as your entire space balances, whether by weight or color (and sometimes that can be one and the same) then it will work!

What are some trends you are seeing in home design and decor for 2019?

A hot new color called "Nightwatch Green" has been coined as the top trending color for 2019 by Architectural Digest. I'm obsessed with this color and actually earlier this year had my entire front area of my store merchandised in this color and various shades of it. Another new hot trend will be boho, ethnic and tribal inspired prints and fabrics.

Wallpaper has come back with a vengeance and is only going to become more important. It's not the old wallpaper of the early 20th century by the way, but features big, bold patterns and realistic looking papers that can fill an entire wall and make a huge statement. I currently carry a wallpaper line from the Netherlands in my store that I actually found in Paris. It's the look of reclaimed wood, concrete, marble and elements that one would never think of using as wallpaper. It looks so realistic that customers actually think it is!

Eco-conscious and green living appears to be coming on strong again and I see it being bigger than ever in 2019. People will be bringing live greenery inside more, from living walls, grasses, succulents and herbs for your kitchen. Bringing the outside in, you can build your own ecosystem "inside" your home or room!

More and more people are downsizing in this world of ours, so having furnishings that are multi functional that can adapt to different and/or challenging spaces, but still have great style will become huge in 2019.