



Episode 32

3 Tips to improve your clients experience



**Mirjam: [00:00]**

Hello, everybody. Welcome to Designer Discussions in today's episode, we're going to talk about the power of repetition and in the world of marketing, when you think about media planning, running and running ads in a magazine, typically, we say that if you only have money to run one ad, it's not even worth it because it won't be retained. We're going to take a look at how this concept applies to the business of interior design today.

Intro: [00:10]

Welcome to the Designer Discussions podcast. Tune in each week where we discuss marketing, branding, PR and business advice for design professionals.

Mirjam: (00:25)

So today, our resident interior design business expert, Maria, is going to talk to us about how the different concepts that involve repetition are going to help you improve your client communication. Maria, where do we start?

Maria: (01:02)

So, number one, I think interior designers are such smart, perfectionists, and we're such visual learners that we see something once, twice, maybe three times, and we catch on. We are aware of what's going on, and maybe we spend 100 hours working on a client project. And when we present it to our clients, we just assume they're going to see it and think, wow, this is so amazing, and I love everything about it. And if the client says, Wait a minute or they're not sure on why they want to confirm everything, then the designer might feel like he failed. But I think if we look at how other businesses, including the marketing industry, use repetition as a way of communicating what people want and make it familiar to them, that we can apply this to our design businesses to help improve our client experiences. When I was working for a builder, one of the things I found so interesting was that we would have to say something eight times through the process. It would be on the website. It would be in the email, it would be at the sales call.



Maria: (02:20)

It would be on the email. For me, it would be on the phone. It would be when I saw them, when people would hear what they were going to experience over and over and over again. It set them up for success. It made them feel super comfortable. It made them feel very familiar with the experience and that they were being pushed through in a way that made them feel comfortable. And as designers, I think we just assume our clients are showing up and ready to go and they're just as excited as they are on the first day as they're going to be on the day when they need to make 40 or 100 decisions. And the thing is that's not how it works when items are unfamiliar, when things aren't being repeated. It's just like running that one time ad. It's not going to create the impact that is best for the client and best for your business. So there are three factors at play that are happening in our client appointments, their psychological phenomenon. And I want everyone to understand that they happen not just in our industry, but in every industry, and that we need to look at our business practices and see if there are some things that we can do to help our clients have a better experience by understanding that they exist. So the first one is called mere exposure effect. It's spelled M-E-R-E. And we're going to have it in the show notes. And that's just the idea that familiar is what is preferred. So this is the items that people see all the time, the items they have pinned, the items that they have saved. These are the things that they are going to prefer. It's just like going to a town where you feel familiar there you're going to prefer that over something that's new and more scary or unusual. And so people will tend to say no to unfamiliar. The second fact we're going to talk about is that there's an illusionary truth effect associated with repeating something eight times. And this is pretty interesting. We've all delved into a book called Cultish, where it talks about how you can create culture inside of businesses or even cult like experiences in exercise classes by creating something that people can experience eight times. And the more they can experience over and over, the more familiar becomes, the more that they will crave that experience.



Maria: (04:55)

And so when we start looking at these things, we learn that having something be familiar is super important, and the way something becomes familiar is through repetition. So when you're looking at your business practices, if you're getting pushback from a client in a certain area, look back and see how many times they experience what it is that you were going to do, and if they had seen it before or if it was all just a wild surprise to them. And then last, we want to talk about the idea that people are going to forget. So just like that one time ad that you run, your clients are going to forget. The one time you tell them something, the one time you show them something, the one time they looked at it on your website. So you aren't giving your client the best experience or doing them any favors by not repeating yourself. And as interior designers, we think we're so cool and so smart and so cutting edge that everything needs to feel edgy and cool and cutting edge in our social media, our business campaigns, anything that we do. But the reality is we're all humans, and we need to look at the human experience and work within it. So maybe next time you get your photos done from a photo shoot and you think, oh, well, I've already posted that picture. Maybe you Zoom in on a corner and then another corner and then another corner and you post four pictures from that same one photograph and not feel bad about it. And then repost it again. In fact, I want to see your old design projects, things that are a year old. I've already forgotten what they look like. So this is how we should start looking at our design businesses from the same lens that business looks at business so that we can start to help our clients have a better experience.

Jason: (06:47)

Yes, I'll just add on there if you refer back to So Nine, where I had talked about the residential project that we had. And we had the husband and wife. And for the first aspect of the project, I did all of the design work and all of the meetings and the consultations with the wife and the husband was not involved when she tried to relay everything to him over time. It was not the same thing I said, and it was jumbled up and we all know if you were to tell someone anything and then have them tell someone again on and on and on.



Jason: (07:27)

By the time it comes, all the way back around has changed. And so not until the husband got involved and he was able to hear firsthand was the project able to move forward and we were able to accomplish all that we were able to do it.

Mirjam: (07:35)

I think it's so powerful. And all of these concepts are very much interrelated. And when I hear you talk, Maria, it makes me think of like, it's not just something that you put on your to do list and then say, Check, I've done this done that. But you really go about it in a much more strategic way and you map it out and you have all these points of repetition built into your process so you can make sure that you're actually helping your client remember. And in the process, you help yourself convey your message better.

Maria: (08:10)

I like to think a lot about how I was taught about the Ebbinghaus for getting curve. And Ebbinghaus is spelled H-A-U-S. And it's the same factor that people look at when they look at school education. It's how much information can a student retain after they leave school and spend the summer? Like, how much do we have to start back over and reiterate at the beginning of the following year? This is the same thing that we're dealing with during our design appointments. The client forgets over 50% of what they were just presented when they walk out the door. And so if you're working with a client and you're thinking that it's benefiting you to have gaps of time or you Ping pong back and forth solutions with someone one Z, two Z here and there. You will literally make no progress because people are not going to get enough repetition, enough familiarity. And they're also not going to remember why that solution was important to the whole design. One of the things we did at the building company that I was at was we did our appointments back to back, and it would be here's your first appointment.



Maria: (09:20)

And then here is your following appointment, because if we spaced anything out over 24 hours or, God forbid, gave him a full weekend, they would have 20% to 30% of their knowledge of what they saw. If they took photographs. We would even say during the appointment, take photographs because you will not remember this. And this is the same concept of you may have like, a super ultra conservative wife come in with a husband who doesn't want to waste his time in the client appointments to look at things, and she's like, Well, I'm just going to give him the highlight. He trusts me. Everything will be okay. And then you don't understand why you're getting kind of like side swipes from the backside of the project with a grumpy husband who feels like so much has been pushed through without him knowing. And it has everything to do with the fact that you are not setting anyone up for success. And as a business person, if you want to grow, if you want to have more staff, you have to have systems in place that permit people to understand what they're going to be going through, how they're going to go through it, and if what they're picking and how it's done is going to be good for them. And you start that from your marketing and you start that from your social media. So remember your three things that you need to take away from this conversation is reiteration creates familiarity, familiarity creates like and trust. And people forget at an alarmingly fast rate. And I know that these design appointments you've put a ton of time into and you know every ounce and detail nook and cranny of the whole entire project. The reality is your client does not. They will not. They cannot even absorb that much information and they will not remember it even moving forward. So you are not setting yourself up for success. If you aren't looking at this from a strategy standpoint and putting it into place in your business.

Outro: (11:39)

We hope you enjoyed this episode of Designer Discussions. What was your takeaway care to share your thoughts and tag Jason, Maria and Mirjam on social media? You can find them on all platforms at DesignerDiscussions.com. Don't forget to like, subscribe and leave a review or comment for this episode from wherever you are listening.





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