



Episode 45

You Have to Give to Get The Power of Reciprocity



**Jason: [00:00]**

Welcome to Designer Discussions with Jason, Mirjam and Maria. Today we're going to talk about the power of reciprocity, why you have to give to get.

Intro: [00:05]

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

Maria: (00:38)

So in our continuation of how to influence client behavior, we've been talking about behavioral economics. And this is one of the concepts that are used in business in both PR, marketing and in your client experience. Reciprocity. This concept is consistent across all cultures. The only demographic of people who are not influenced by reciprocity are young children, the sick, and the elderly because they have to have so much more care. They're used to having more care to keep them moving forward. But as independent individuals, we are positively impacted by other people's generosity. So reciprocity can be used in a way to try to manipulate someone, but it can also just be used in a way to show good faith. And whenever reciprocity is used, you usually do get something in return. And the reason why we wanted to talk about this today is because I think everyone should look at what they're doing and ask themselves, am I actually giving something? Because if I'm just asking for something, I'm not going to get anything. And the rule is you have to give first to get something in return. A good story that will apply to everyone is that if you go to a restaurant and you receive your ticket and you're ready to pay and they're handing you the little piece of plastic with your receipt and you hand over your credit card.



Maria: (02:18)

If the waiter hand you a Mint, that waiter is going to get a higher tip than if they didn't give you a Mint. And it's proven that they even get a larger tip if they walk away from the table first say, oh, I forgot to give you a Mint, and then dig around for the Mint and retrieve the Mint and then come back to the table. So the amount of effort they even put in to finding that one last thing they want to give you for free can actually result in a much higher tip for them as the wait staff and a happier family sitting at a table. So reciprocity is in play all the time. It's constantly happening, and we're going to talk about five ways in your interior design business that you should be looking to give first to get what you want. The first topic we're going to talk about is how you should be participating actively and giving in PR to get the kind of PR that you want.

Mirjam: (02:58)

I love this topic because this is the foundation of PR, which, as we all know, stands for public relations. So it's all about relationships. And I think it's also what a lot of people get wrong when they do public relations because they approach it more from like a sales perspective, but that's not what it is. So when you want to get PR, if you want to work with the media, that's the relationship that you're trying to cultivate. And the way to do that is to think about what the media needs, and then you think about how what you have can help them with what they need. So it's like you're at their service in a way. And if you build and cultivate that relationship, they can take a long time. This is an ongoing effort, but at the beginning, it's a little bit like dating, and then it's more like any kind of relationship or friendship. I have friendships with a lot of journalists that I've worked with for a very long time, and that's where you want to get to, because if they know that you care about what they need, they are going to be so much more inclined to give you what you want. Right. And so it's a very symbiotic synergistic relationship. So the law of reciprocity is 100% key to anything you do in PR media relations.

**Maria: (04:38)**

The second way that we want to make sure that you're using reciprocity and your business is going to be in your email newsletter. Jason, would you like to talk to us about that?

Jason: (04:48)

Sure. So an email. If you refer to episode 19 where we had talked about email marketing tips, I went over a lot of what I'm about to talk about now, but high level. If you remember in that episode I had told about a design client that we have here, we brought her on and she did not believe in email marketing. She thought it was just a waste of time because she did email marketing for over a year and she had no results. She had an email list of over four days, and after a year, it dropped by almost half. And she was saying, email does not work. So we have to take it over to say, okay, let us try and see how we can enhance and help you. And so what happened is once we looked at the email, we saw that just about 100% of the email, if not 90% or higher, was all about her. She's an award winning designer. Great information, but it was all about her. It was nothing about the end user. And so in the reciprocity aspect, it's all about the 80 20 rule for us, 80% value, 20% self promotion. So when we flip that and we started to have a lot of value, and we found out, like I always preach, know who your target audience is. So when we drill down who her target audience is and wrote that 80% to what they want to hear, what they want to know about. And we had value in their 80%. Then the 20% also tied into the 80% of whatever the value was. Over time, her email list grew, her open rates were higher, were more and she started to have sales over and over and over again. And it's all about value. Reciprocity, the 80 20 group with the email marketing site.



Maria: (06:38)

The third way that you should be using Reciprocity in your business and actively using it is in your social media. So if you show a beautiful project that you've been working on, you may want to talk about something that you either changed or transformed or was able to solve a problem for someone. When you reference that design, not necessarily about how beautiful it is, because we do know it's Super, super stunning. And then also consider releasing some information, some secrets like my favorite paint color for or I always can use this countertop and it really does look beautiful. Or even the fun stories where people will say which countertop material do you think is more expensive? And then you teach, right? All of those are behaviors where you're generous and you're constantly giving back to your community. So then after maybe three, four, five posts where you are giving, you can ask for something. So you might ask, would you want to join my newsletter to learn more about my favorite paint colors? Would you like to join my newsletter so that you can get more of my favorite vendors or my new favorite products that are coming out before everybody else does? And then they also feel like even joining your newsletter and having that opportunity to get that information from you is a benefit to them. And they will want to move from your social media into an email or an email list. Right? So when you look at what you're putting out in your social media, yes, you're going to want to gain following, get a greater group of people on your social media for your social proof. But you also want to look at it as a tool to bring people into your business and off of that platform. Another thing that I like to recommend is if you are doing videos of your design projects, once again, beautiful pictures will make people stop and look. But if they're not getting anything from you, you're not going to get the follow. So if you're the person who tells the secret or says, oh my gosh, the newest thing I would love to share with you or look at my other videos or I'm building on this and you continue to perform sort of like a four or five touch point, and then you ask for something from them, you will find that people will be super responsive because they're going to think that you've been so kind and so generous to them and they will return and do something that you need them to do.



Maria: (09:38)

So keep in mind, this is why the rule of reciprocity is out there. You are going to want to leverage it by participating in some of this behavioral economics. The fourth item on our list, Jason, is going to talk about is how to use reciprocity with your website.

Jason: (09:40)

So with website, what you'll see is a lot of the free offers. A lot of the times when you go to a website, they may offer either book for free. They may offer free information like an article or kite, something like that. For designers, that can be an aspect of your free consultation. But just beyond the consultation, why should they do that with you? So is there something special about the consultation that you're doing in terms of a color consultation rendering or something else that you can offer just besides the free consultation? So offering something in exchange for them wanting to put their information in and no more is that aspect of reciprocity because you're giving value to have them want to actually talk to you to find out more information.

Maria: (10:35)

Another, more obvious way of using reciprocity in the fifth and final way that we're going to talk about in your design business is to give clients gifts. So at the end of a project, whenever you're coming in, you're doing your photo shoot, it's a good idea to leave your clients with some type of gift or send them even a holiday card of some sort. Maybe it's an anniversary card of when they completed their project each year, just by reaching out to them and remembering them and thinking about them, you will get in return some kind of like, oh, they thought about me, how crazy it's been one year since we've been in our beautiful new kitchen. So always look at opportunities to show that you're giving something to your client over and over again whenever it's there so that they do feel that generous gift that you've given them. Another way that's more quiet, something you wouldn't think of or something that you wouldn't perceive as reciprocity is actually letting your client have a different price than your consultation rate per hour. So if your consultation rate where you're coming out for 1 hour, here, 2 hours, there is much higher rate.

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Maria: (11:38)

And then when you're on a larger contract with someone and you have a longer duration of project and you have maybe your design fee is less per hour during the construction project, just showing them because they made a big commitment to you and then your hourly fee is reduced a little bit over what it would have been if you just came out here or there and helped them out. It's also just another one of these ways where you're showing them how you are being generous with them and you are giving them something special because they are taking these longer projects, bigger design fee, minimum expenditure type projects with you. So all of those are ways that you can see that we are actively using reciprocity in our businesses and that whenever you're trying to do something and you're not getting the response that you want, try sprinkling in a little bit of the sugar. Try sprinkling in a little bit of this generosity and see what kind of reciprocity can help that power to leverage and get you something out of the situation. So if you have any questions we would love to hear from you. If this episode is helpful to you and your business, share it with a friend and we would love to hear from you. If you have any feedback on these topics that we've been talking about here on Designer discussions.

Outro: (13:20)

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