

DESIGNER DISCUSSIONS



Episode 3

Introduction to Mirjam
and PR 101 for Interior
Designers



**Maria: [00:00]**

As an interior designer, we all know that when we're looking online to buy something, the first thing we look for is a review. And as an interior designer, we know we need our clients testimonials to help us get that next project. But what we really want and what we really look for is that third party with bigger credibility that wants to acknowledge us for who we really are.

Intro: [00:05]

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

Maria: [00:39]

Today we're going to talk with Mirjam Lippuner, the founder of Get Ink DIY.

Mirjam: [00:45]

Thank you. I'm very excited to be here. And this is our first show about PR.

Maria: [00:53]

So when we get into it a little bit more to Mirjam, I want to hear why you. When we dive in a little bit deeper into PR, I want to hear that part of it, too, that this has been hidden from us for so long, and it has been towed and costed out to us in such a way that it's scary and expensive and overwhelming, you know.

Mirjam: [01:23]

Do you want me to tell you why? Okay, let me tell you. Okay. So I have a great. I've had a very long career in PR. I started doing PR. Oh, I have to do math. It's seriously, like 25 years ago. Okay. That's a very, very long time. And I've worked on the agency side. I've worked for non profit. I've worked on the corporate side, and I have spent most of my day in corporate at Kohler Company here in the United States, almost 15 years.

**Mirjam:** [02:00]

And I've seen. I've pretty much seen it all, I would say. And of course, to me now it seems easy. But I do remember when I first started out in PR. I was working for an agency in Zurich, and I had this bank client, which is not really my favorite topic to pitch anyway. But I was in charge of pitching it, so I had to cold call the media and tried to sell them my story, which was about some mutual fund I don't even remember. But it doesn't matter what. It was scary to pick up the phone and reach out to somebody you don't know. It is scary to write that email, basically asking them to pay attention to you and then hit the send button. And the reason why it is scary is that we are all afraid of being rejected. Nobody likes to be rejected, and I think it does become easier over time. But the reason why it becomes easier is because you change your mindset. It's all about the mindset because you have to understand that's not about you. Don't make it personal. You also have to understand that you're not asking them for a favor. It's a synergetic business relationship, but that does not mean that you're never going to hear the word no and now if it's not no, it's not now. No doesn't mean no. It means not now. And if you do a good job and you approach the media professionally and you give them what they want, you will have success. I guarantee it. There's no way around it. And the reason why I'm here and now I'm not just doing the PR, but I'm teaching it to interior designers is because I know some secrets, you know, that I have a mastered over the years, and I know it does not have to be complicated.



Mirjam: [04:08]

And, you know, the PR industry is like every other industry, really it's a business, and you're trying to sell your service to your clients. And there's a lot of excellent PR people out there, a lot of excellent agencies. They do great jobs. They're very creative, but they tend to be focused on the bigger clients, and they tend to produce massive plans and all these out of the box thinking, you know, that's great if you have a million dollar budget. But most companies, number one, do not and most small businesses definitely don't have that kind of budget. So when I left the corporate world and I started to think about what I want to do, I was talking with an interior designer to find a friend of mine, and she said to me, she said, Mirjam, I think there's a hole in the market. There's a niche that's under served, and it's affordable PR for interior designers. And she told me it took me a good two years to get my stuff together. I have to tell you, but I did a lot of thinking about how I can make it simple enough and focus on the most efficient steps that you just have to repeat over and over again. And you can have success, and anybody can do it. You don't even have to be the principal of the firm. You can have your assistant do it for you. It's that easy. So I came up with by now a proven process where I can say, if you plug into my system and you spend one or two hours every week consistently, I will guarantee you that you are going to get pressed. So it's not hard and it can be affordable. It does require a little effort, but nothing that's worth it in life is completely free. And what I thought I talk about today is the top three things that I think every designer needs to know, so he or she can actually decide whether or not they really want PR and whether or not they're actually willing to do what it takes to get it. Okay, so let's dive right in. There's three things I always emphasize. The first one is you have to be ready. And what I mean by that has really nothing to do directly with PR, but it's something that you should have in your business anyway, you should have your branding, your personal branding set up.



Mirjam: [06:47]

Ideally and especially important when it comes to the media is your website, because that's where they're going to go when you catch their eye, that's where they're going to go to do research on you. So it's super important that your website is complete. It has all the information about who you are and what you do, where you're located. Very critical. It has a portfolio of projects, it has your press coverage, and it has contact information. It's just the basics. But it's so important that it's all set up and it reflects the look and feel of your brand. So if they go to your website and then after they head over to your social media, which is the second place that they're going to go to take a look at what you do, so that all speaks the same language and makes the impression that you want to convey. So the website is number one. Actually, they might be equally important because some journalists may first go to Instagram. I'd say Instagram and your website are the two places where the media are going to look you up and so on your Instagram. It's definitely important that it is aligned that the content and the look and feel is aligned with everything else that you, especially on your website. It's also important that there is some activity. I'm not saying you have to be posting all the time, but it is important that you have some recent posts that show some of your recent work and ideally some of you. So they can really get an idea of your personal flavor and the types of projects that you do and figure out if you might be a fit for the story that they're working on. So be ready and have your website and your social media, especially Instagram, ready and select of your personal print. Right. That makes sense. Everybody should have that right. And if you're not watching, you're listening more and chasing or nodding their heads. So I think I'm on to something. The second point that I always make is actually the most important, and it's being Proactive. And this we'll talk about this at the very end because this is something you really have to reflect on and think about whether or not this is something you're willing to do, because in all honesty, media coverage is not just going to happen to you, at least highly unlikely.



Mirjam: [09:35]

Maybe you've heard these crazy stories, you know, where somebody got somebody project that discovered on Instagram, and then they landed a big feature in a national magazine. I am not saying that never happens, but is it very, very rare, and it's not something I would rely on if getting pressed really is one of your objectives. So what do you do? What do you have to do in order to be Proactive? Because everybody is on social media especially on Instagram and PR stands for public relations, and it's really all about the relationships. So you have to start to cultivate these relationships. And a good way to do that is to follow relevant journalists on social media. So go find not just the media outlet, but find the actual editor or the freelancer who writes the types of stories for the magazine that you would like to see yourself featured in. So follow them and just start interacting in an authentic way. Comment and like their posts. If you see something exciting, if you share, if they post articles that they are working on, if you share that they will love you, that's a really good way to get immediate person's attention. So that's number one, I would say pitch them not on social media unless they ask for it. That's just a general rule. And when I say pitching is contacting proactively. Contacting a media outlet to ask them to feature you in something or to ask them to publish your project. So don't do that on social media unless they specifically ask for it a little bit. It's not good manners in the PR world, but pitching via email is what you need to do. So don't worry about that on social media. When it comes to tagging, I see this quite a bit. I see interior designers tag media outlets for what I would call no good reason. And I know there are differing opinions out there on this, and I'm not saying I'm right. I'm just going to tell you what my personal take on this is. I say do not tag a media outlet in a post of yours unless they ask to be tagged in specific posts, then it's okay.



Mirjam: [12:27]

And some of them do that, then tag them. But don't do it. I call it is the cheap way of pitching. Don't tag them in your post in the hopes that they're going to see your project and they're going to like it, and they're going to ask you to feature it. That's not how it works. Okay. So only tag them if they ask to be tagged in a certain style of photo, or if you have been featured in a media outlet, then you can tag them when you say, hey, thank you so much for mentioning me in this article. Then they will love you too. Okay. I think that makes sense. Right? And this is not directly related. But let's talk for 1 second about tagging brands, because the situation there is very different. The brands are always going to want you to tag them in their post. And especially so if one of their products is featured in a project that you're featuring in your social media feed, they will love you for that. They might even repost your post, which in turn will help, you know. So don't be shy, even if it's just whatever a piece of hardware or a faucet or a little something. You don't even have to specifically mention what the product is, because the brand people, the social media brand people, they're going to recognize it. And if they reposted, they can shout out their own product. So it's very different. It's like apples and oranges complete. So be Proactive on social media in all these different ways. Then when it comes to being Proactive with actually reaching out to editor, this is really the crux of PR. This is really what it's all about. It's like you have to go contact the media and tell them what you want them to know about you. So you should reach out to media with interesting projects and story ideas, even just to introduce yourself. And there's a lot of people are a little intimidated. And it's hard when you reach out to somebody that you don't know for the first time. But I can promise you that the journalists and Editors, the magazines, the freelancers, they all want to know more talented designers.

**Mirjam:** [15:01]

They're interested in getting to know you. They're interested in what you do. They're interested in knowing what you think about trends. You know, there's so many things that they're interested in that you can help them with. So don't think of it as you're bothering them. But it's a very mutually beneficial relationship between interior designers and design editor. So don't be scared to reach out. They are waiting for you, I promise you, because in reality, what is the worst that could possibly happen? Well, they may not respond. If you pitch them a project that you'd like to get pressed for, maybe they're going to say no. Believe me, a lot of people have said no to me very many times, but it doesn't bother me because it's not personal. It just was not what they were looking at at the time when you presented it to them. But that doesn't mean that they don't appreciate it. And that does not mean that they're never going to be receptive to what you share with them in the future. Not at all. They may actually remember you next time and say, oh, you know, yeah, I don't know. Sue over there so helpful, you know. And I'm like, I remember when she sent me that it wasn't a fit. But maybe this one, you know, she tried again. You know, she's really putting in an effort. They do notice these types of things. So just realize that the burden is on you. So you are the one who has to reach out and make yourself known to the media. Be Proactive. My number three point is being responsive, and this mostly comes into play. Once you have established that initial report with a media person, that's the most important step. But then it's just as important to maintain and cultivate that relationship. And the best way to do that with media is by you adopting what I call an attitude of service. It's almost like they're a client of yours. So you are giving them what they need when they need it, because usually Editors, freelancers, they always work on deadline.



Mirjam: [17:33]

So it's very time critical that when they want something, you usually don't have a week or two to get it to them. But you should pretty much drop everything you're doing and get them what they need. And if you do that, you're going to become one of their favorite people, which also means that they're more likely to come back to you when they need more input or a project or a comment on a trans piece, they're going to say, oh, you know, sue over there. She was so helpful and so quick the first time I talked with her that I'm going to go back to her because she's going to get me what I need right away. That's the person you want to be, and that's going to dramatically increase your chances of landing more coverage. Also, remember that when they are asking for something and you want to provide it to them, it does not have to be perfect. You are not the one who is writing the article. You are the one who's providing the ideas and the content. You know, I'm like I'm not a fan of typos and emails, but it doesn't have to be poetry. You know, it's like you just give them. You give them your expertise, and you can put it in bullet points. You know, you can I always say the best thing is to write it as you speak, because that comes naturally to you. So then you don't have to spend a lot of time trying to write these elaborate statements, which they probably edit anyway. If you think about the pieces that are published, it's usually fairly simple language. So if you write in spoken language, you're in a good place and it's quicker. It's easier for you. It's easier for the editor to take it and integrate it into an article. So do that. Don't make it perfect. Just get it done, get it done quickly, and don't overthink it. And my final point in being responsive is at the end, you don't overload them with information they're not asking for, but always offer more. Okay, here's what I have for you right now. If you need anything else, please don't hesitate to let me know. I'd be happy to provide more information on X, Y, and Z.

**Maria: [20:01]**

You may have just emotionally made people feel a little overwhelmed, but it's not overwhelming, and people can do it right. And everything you gave was small and viable, and it was not complex. Okay, just because I'm saying emotionally, they may feel overwhelmed, it's just because they feel like PR is so intimidating and scary. Okay, so now I want you to understand that you just told them a whole lot of really easy things to do to get some control over PR. But they are scared, and they think it's really hard and that and that they're going to fail, and they're not going to be perfect at it, and they're going to feel this way. Right. So my question would be like, how can we get over the emotional barrier that people are going to have to wanting to start thinking about doing PR and getting more information on it is what it takes?

Mirjam: [20:55]

It's not complicated. It's not hard.

Maria: [20:57]

It's not hard. And it's not complicated. It's just that we're really bad at prioritizing ourselves because we are attitude of servitude and we're attitude of servitude for our clients. And if we don't have that journalist or editor on our pursing wanting us to serve them, we don't get there easily. And it seems like a big barrier.

Mirjam: [21:25]

Actually take the first steps to start is the hardest thing. I've seen this over and over again, and most people quit before they start, sadly. But I do have a proven simple system that within an hour or two a week, you can start getting pressed.

Maria: [21:45]

Can you train my assistant to help me get pressed?

Mirjam: [21:50]

I've done that before. Yes.

**Maria: [21:51]**

So I could have an inhouse assistant that could help me to get all of my PR done.

Mirjam: [21:57]

Absolutely. You are going to need to provide input and guidance, but the work can be done by anybody. Yeah. So those are my three points. Be ready. Be Proactive. Be responsive.

Outro: [22:15]

We hope you enjoyed this episode of Designer Discussions. What was your takeaway? Care to share your thoughts and tag Jason, Maria, and Maria 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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