



## Episode 4

# Introduction to Jason and Marketing 101 for Interior Designers



# DESIGNER DISCUSSIONS



**Maria: [00:00]**

Welcome to Designer Discussions. Today, we are going to be speaking with Jason of Kitchen and Bath Marketing Solutions, and we are going to learn about where do we start?

**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: [00:26]**

So, Jason, tell me, why are you different and how can you help me? Because all I know about marketing is these terrible phone calls that I get from people from a foreign country telling me my Google business listing is not done, and they want to charge me a fortune for it. And I feel like all of these people that are coming at me aren't actually there to help me. They just want to charge me for things that I don't know enough about. How can you help me to understand more about those things? So I know I'm making good, wise decision.

**Jason: [00:57]**

In episode one, you heard just a small aspect of my history and I get a little more into that. So I'm actually an architect by trade, and I'm actually a partner in an architecture firm. We've had the architecture firm since 2008 where we work mainly on school design, University planning, and also commercial design. So that's what we do in architecture. From around 2012, we had an interior designer here within the Dallas area that reached out to us and ask for some help on marketing because she said she didn't understand about this whole SEO then. And so at the time, I was also a professor at Southern University and at the LSU, teaching architecture and interior design. So I was actually helping our firm on the architecture side do marketing. And so when one of the interior designers that we work with reached out to us to do marketing for her, we helped her out, have some success. And then a few months later, one of her colleagues that reached out to her and said, I see you more online now. What are you doing? And she said, Well, Jason helped me out with Sinektiks..



### Jason: [02:14]

That's our architecture firm, Sinektiks. And she said they helped us out. So reach out to him and let him help you out helped her out. A few months later, we started to get more referrals. And so I went back to my architecture partners in 2013 and said, we need to monetize this because we don't really have infrastructure to help out a lot of the designers that are being referred to us. So that was a start of kitchen and Bath Marketing solutions that was in 2013, and the whole purpose of it was to help interior designers, home remodelers and residential architecture do marketing, because what I've seen and what I've learned over the years in architecture industry is we were excellent at what we do. We know design. but we were never taught in school because I taught school. We were never taught the business side and how to do business development and marketing. So that was one of the aspects I felt that we can help with, because I taught a lot of the business development and marketing classes at LSU. So I knew a lot of the aspects to help out. And since we helped out some of our own interior designers that we work with, and we had, as I said, why don't we do this on a larger scale? So what ended up happening is in 2020, we all know the world change with Corona. Every year we do market research. Ever since 2016 we have started to do market research every year just to see what was happening in industry. But in 2020, it was vital because what was happening is that a lot of small businesses in the design industry, we're having to work from home for the first time, and they had no idea what to do. So what we did, we created a marketing guide eight page guide, which is on our website. And it showed you how to market. Now, in this environment, which was in 2020, around the Corona virus, it showed you how to work from home. Because remember, in March and April, a lot of people didn't even know how to work out. It shows you how to communicate on platforms like Zoom, Google Conference, GoToMeeting and all these other things and what you should use. So it was a resource guide to help you market and run your business. Now, from that, we got a lot of interest from business owners saying, what should we do?



### Jason: [04:40]

This is great information. What else do you have for us? And to be honest, I said to them, I said, well, we have something. Let me get back to you. And to be honest, I have reached out to my team. I didn't really have nothing. I'm just being honest. I don't really have nothing. But I knew I was hearing from a lot of business owners saying that this is great information. How else can you help us? So I actually talked to my team. I had them throw out some ideas about how they can help or how we can help. I was hearing some ideas, but nothing really clicked. A lot of these business owners reached out to us. Why don't we reach out to them? Why don't we hear from the end user what they want? Like I always tell our own clients, do your research so you can know what your end user wants to know who your ideal client is. So why don't we reach out to them? We reached out from April 2020 all the way through July 2020 to over 400 business owners in the design and remodeling niche. We interviewed business owners from every American state except South Dakota. I'm not for sure why we didn't interview anybody in South Dakota, but that was the only state we didn't interview. So that doesn't mean a whole lot. But I just thought that was interesting that we interviewed a business on them from every American, Alaska, Hawaii, even Puerto Rico, and even Washington DC, which is a territory, but not South Dakota. I don't quite understand why. Maybe in future episodes we could find out why. Maybe we could have a designer from South Dakota that can help and we and I can interview you to understand. But back to why. So we interviewed over 400 business owners to hear, what were the gaps in the industry, what were they missing and what could we offer to actually help them? And that was actually the creation of our resource library, which you can find on our website, which has a lot of free information, free videos, free marketing tips, training videos, CEUs and whatever. And we created that aspect of our website to help out designers that are not in a position to buy now or to hire a designer now to learn what they need to know to grow their business.

**Jason: [06:53]**

When you ask about hearing phone calls from all of these agencies about Google listings and all that, I hear that all the time. I hear that all the time and what we've created. And one of the reasons I also want to do his podcast is just another way for us to get information out there to help business owners to grow their business. It's all about and I've always been about value. It's all about value. How can we help the end user? And so that's what I'm all about. So that just answers a little bit about who I am. And just one more thing. Every year my team go to at least two to three conferences, digital marketing, social media. And we spend as much, if not more money than we ask our clients to spend on research and education and marketing, because we want to try out all of the techniques and all that, so we don't have to try them out on our clients. We only use what our clients where works. And so we do all of the research and training and all of this every year to make sure we're bringing you the best, the broadest, the most up to date information. So a lot of this information we have in the Houzz is because we've done a lot of the due diligence to find out what works.

**Maria: [08:13]**

I just got the why and why the podcast exists and why Jason is important and that he's not here to just push marketing. So where do we start? Where does an interior designer start when looking at what their marketing is for their business?

**Jason: [08:34]**

I'm going to be talking about three tips that you need to know to start your marketing today. And I'm going to talk about three tips that you can do now where you do not need a lot of money and you should already have the assets right now. So just an overview. The three things I'm going to talk about will be social media, email and website. So I know a few of you out there may be rolling your eyes. Like I already know those things. Where do you go talk about?



### Jason: [09:03]

But I'm actually show you how you can implement this stuff now and start to have success. So to start with social media, one of the things I hear a lot from designers is what platform do I need to be? They are either on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Houzz, all of these platforms, and they said they don't know which one they need to be on. So what I say the first thing you want to do if you reference what we had talked about in episode two with Johanna know your ideal client. So once you find out who your ideal client is now, you could determine where are they on social media. And once you know where they are on social media, that tells you what platform you really need to be on because you want to reach them where they are. So if that's Instagram, that's where you need to be. If that's Pinterest, that's where you need to be. And you want to decide what the platform is, because each of the platforms have their own algorithm on how they rank you and show your post. So by knowing which ones you want to be on, it helps you organize all of your content. Once you decide on the exact platform you're on, now, you could curate that content for all the other platforms. So if you're on Instagram, you can do Instagram videos, reels, stories, posts, and all of that information. You could curate that for Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and the other platform. So first figure out where your clients are, then find out what platform they're on and that's the platform you want to be. But I'm actually show you how you can implement this stuff now and start to have success. So to start with social media, one of the things I hear a lot from designers is what platform do I need to be? They are either on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Houzz, all of these platforms, and they said they don't know which one they need to be on. So what I say the first thing you want to do if you reference what we had talked about in episode two with Johanna know your ideal client. So once you find out who your ideal client is now, you could determine where are they on social media. And once you know where they are on social media, that tells you what platform you really need to be on because you want to reach them where they are. So if that's Instagram, that's where you need to be.



### Jason: [10:46]

Once you're on that platform. This is basic and simple, but you'll be surprised how many times I hear that this is an issue. Fill out every portion of your platform. That may seem super simple, but I actually come across designers all the time that do not have their business profile filled out. And you want to make sure you have a business profile, not just a personal one. You want to have a business profile, because on a lot of the platforms on Instagram, Pinterest and all of these other platforms, when you have a business profile, you have access to the analytics where you can see and analyze what's happening with your post. So make sure you have a business profile and that every aspect of their profile is filled out. You want to have your name, you want to have the description, you want to have who you are, links, everything filled out. Okay. Seems simple, but you will find it funny how many clients I work with that do not have a complete profile. Okay. Next, once you have the profile complete. Create a content calendar. It seems overwhelming. Like I have to do all this, but it's actually easier than anything you want to look at. What do you do that enhances you over everyone else in the field? So what is your unique selling proposition? Your USP, what sets you apart from everybody else in the industry? And those are actually post that you can start to plan. So how do I want to lay all this out? So as you define who that is or who you are and what that is for you, you can use that information to help you create the content out. And you can use the events that are happening throughout the month to help you as well. So usually you have a design week. You have a home remodeling month KBS event, which is in February. So you could plan around a lot of these events and plan your content calendar according and laying out where you're going to have projects. You could plan those intermittently into your count. So as you develop your content calendar, what that does is that helps you to now block out your post. So now you don't have to worry about doing all of the posts every day.



### Jason: [13:12]

Now you can schedule. You can actually schedule a time either once a week or once a month to develop all of your posts, and you'll have them for the weeks. There are times that you're not gonna want to do social media. You're not because I was actually on a clubhouse event a few weeks ago, and they were asking, how do you do social media on the days you don't feel like my simple answer, block out your posts because there will be days that you don't feel like doing this. So on those as you already have preplanned evergreen post. And what I mean by Evergreen, that means you could post at any time, and it's not date specific. So for instance, you don't want to have something about the Corona virus because that may apply in 2020 or 2021. But say in 2024, that may not apply. But if you was to write something about light or write something about style or color that can apply at almost any time. So those are Evergreen posts. So if you have the Evergreen post now, you have a library of information on those pages that you don't feel like it. You have something to post. So that's social media. So now I'm a lead into email marketing. So with email marketing, a lot of designers talk about that waste of time, and that's something that you should not do, because it's just a way to talk. What I tell a lot of designers that say that is you're doing it. You're doing it the wrong way. That's why it's a waste of time. Your email list is one of the property that you own, and I'm talk about that really when I also talk about website. But email is one of the properties that you own, and that is your list that you create that you build up over time. And if you build it up right, this will be a moneymaking proposition for you. So just one of the clients we have here within the Dallas area when we brought her on, she did email for about three years, built up a list of over 10,000. And by the time she brought us on, it was at around 1800. So you heard me right. It went from 10,000 to 1800 in three years.



### Jason: [15:38]

Now you may ask, how did that happen? Simple. Once we analyze it, we saw that most of her emails were about her. She's an award winning designer and excellent at what she does. But you have to remember what email. It's not about you. It's about the end user. So when we took over her email campaigns, we said, We're going to restructure this and we're going to make it about the end user and about your clients and your prospects. Once we did that, we positioned her in the field as an expert in the industry. And not just all about her, it is about them. So it was a lot of how to a lot of this is what you do. This is how you work with a designer. This is how you work with a contractor. And it was information that the end user wanted to know. So over time, we re built her audience up to about 4500. And after we hit that, that's when we started to add in CTAs and call to Action, which you need to have in all of your all of your email campaigns. You need to have a call to action because you need to tell people what you want them to do. And so what happened after about the eight month time frame, she had her first sale. It was not from her immediate clientele. It was from one of her readers that had a neighbor that said, oh, you talked about XYZ, and that's what they were looking for. Gave her her name. She called, had a client, and there for six months straight. After that, she had a sale for every single email for six months straight. And it was all because we re built her email campaign around the end user, not around her. Now she's a believer in email. So when I hear designers say that email does not work, like I say, I say you're doing it the wrong way. So you want to make sure that email is focused on the end user. What can you do to help them out and educate them on design. So like I said, use how to. You can even talk about a day in the life you as a designer. What is the day in a life in your practice? And you can explain that. And then in there you could talk about how you work with clients. You could talk about different aspects that help you in the design. What were the good and the bad? Because the end user will actually pick up points where they may say I actually have that happening in my house. That may be a situation that I may have to overcome. And now they're relating to you. And now you have that report. And as you know, people will not buy from you unless they know I can trust you building that report.



### Jason: [18:28]

Now they know and like you, and now they're going to probably reach out to you, learn more about who you are, view you as an expert. They're going to trust you, and now they'll buy. So doing that in email will help you out. And I'm just high level. Right now, we're going to have future episodes where we will get into all these aspects in more depth. But right now I'm high level. So the third one, and probably the most important one, is website, you may say, or you may have a website that you have not designed or you not have not dealt with in years. And we have designers that built the website five years ago and really haven't touched it. They may have added a project here or there. They may have updated their portfolio, but the messaging is the same, really. Everything is the same, and it's really not doing them justice. If you heard Episode two with Johanna about branding, if you want to have a higher quality clientele, you really got to focus on your website. And I even know designers that do not have a website, they have social media, but they do not have a website. So let me tell you why that's a bad thing. We actually we actually had a client that came to us for website design because they had a Facebook business page. The Facebook Business page got shut down because one of their employees did ads on the page and then use the wrong terminology, because if you don't follow all of the policies and procedures of all of these platforms, you could get your account shut down. Their account got shut down, and for over six weeks, they were not online. You just want to think about that for six weeks. You're not online. So what would that do to your business if you were not online for six weeks? You don't have to answer that. I already know that will be devastating. So she came to us for web design. And ever since then, I love to tell that story because I say you only own two properties. That's your website and your email list. And so that's why I said before email, you own that property. Social media, Facebook, Instagram Pinterest, Houzz you don't own those platforms.



### Jason: [20:52]

So those could get shut down or taken away at the drop of a hat at any time. So you want to make sure that you own the property that you have control of. And so with web design, with your website, you own this property, and you want to make sure it's always up to date. So on your website, make sure you go in there at least once a month for about a half hour. It will not take long. It doesn't even have to be you. It could be someone on your team just to make sure everything is up to date. Make sure all of your contact information is up to date. Make sure you have a portfolio on there that you like. And I'm just talk briefly here if you remember from episode two, where we're with Johanna and I talked about with your clientele you want to make sure that you have your best projects on your website. You do not want to have every project, especially if you've been in this industry for any amount of time. You've done over 15-20 projects. You don't need to have 15-20 images on your website. You want to pick the best that represent you going back to the USP. What's your unique selling proposition? What sets you apart from everybody else? You want to emphasize the projects that enhance your USP, and you want to put those on your website in your portfolio. And so when you do that, now you're attracting the people that you want to attract, because we all have worked on projects, and I'm an architect. So I have projects that I've worked on that I'm not really proud about. It paid the bills. But the end, the end result of design was not what I really wanted. And so that's not on my website. But we all have projects that we've worked on that we're not happy about. On the other end, we have projects that we worked on that we love and that really represent the clientele that we want to go after. Those are the projects you want to have on your website. So you want to make sure that you are checking your website. At least this is a minimum, at least a half an hour a month.



## Jason: [22:54]

That's really all it takes just to look over your website to make sure everything is up to date. Also, you want to make sure that your images are not slowing down the speed of your website. We're going to talk about SEO in a future episode, but SEO is one of the ways SEO is search engine optimization. That's one of the ways that you're found online. And one of the aspects that can hurt you is speed of your website. So if you have a slow Loading website, it hurts your rankings. One of the aspects that I see in designers that slows their website down images and video. So with the images, we all have a lot of projects that we work on. We all have amazing professional photography that is four to five megabytes big. And so if you put each of those images on there like that, it's going to slow your website. So one website you want to use is [tinypng.com](https://tinypng.com). That's where you can put your images into that website, and it'll shrink it. It'll hold on to the image quality, but it will shrink the image size. So that way you could put those on your website and not slow it down. But you still have the quality there. And you have the speed that the search engines are looking for. Check your website, go through every image, make sure all of the images are optimized for search. Also, with the images you want to alt tag, you want to add descriptions, because this is something else that we're gonna get into an SEO. But I'm just doing a high level right now. But you want to describe the image because remember, a search engine, when they're crawling your website, they're crawling text. They can't look at images and see what the image is about. So that's why you want to do alt Tags on your images, and you want to describe the image what it's about. And you want to add in keywords, which is a SEO term. Like I said, we're gonna talk about all this, but we're on website, and this is on your website, so it ties in right now. But you want to tag alt of your images, so you have the description of what it's about, and then that's gonna help you with search engine optimization. Something else you want to look at it with your website. You want to make sure that the layout is user friendly. One of the things that will make the end user bounce, and you do not want to have a high bounce rate, because what that is is a bounce rate is when somebody clicks on your website and they do not see what they're looking for, and they immediately get off your website.

**Jason: [25:32]**

So if you have a high bounce rate, that's a negative for search engines. So one way you can lower that bounce rate is to make sure that your website is user friendly. That what your end user. And again, you've already done the research. If you listen to Episode 2 about finding out who your ideal client is. And so now you know who that is. And so now you know how to develop and lay out your website accordingly to what they're looking for. And so now when they come to your website, they are finding what they're looking for, and they're staying and clicking on different aspects of your website because they want to know more. That is something that will help you out. So one overall website I want you to look at is called GtMetrix. So that's GtMetrix. com. GtMetrix actually analyzes your website and tells you where the flaws are in terms of speed, in terms of SEO, in terms of user friendliness. So that is a website that is free. You can put your website in there and give you a score from A. Hopefully, you'll have an A. Honestly, I hardly ever see as to start. But if you have A, that's amazing, and I'm happy for you. But more than likely, you're gonna have a C or A D. Because you may not have messed with your website in a while, but you'll have an outline of what you need to do now to work on your website. Those are the three marketing gifts that I had wanted to talk about today. Again, social media, email, marketing, and your

**Outro: [27:12]**

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 comments for this episode from wherever you are listening.



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DIGITAL MARKETING,  
PR & BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT

