



Episode 5

Introduction to Maria and What is a HENRY





Jason: [00:00]

Is your client a HENRY? And do you know what that is? If not, stay

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.

Jason: [00:21]

Welcome to Designer Discussions. We are here today with Maria, and she is the interior designer of the group. So how are you doing, Maria?

Maria: [00:30]

Hi, Jason. I'm good. Thanks.

Jason: [00:32]

So before we get into HENRY and what that is, let's talk a little bit about you. So we have learned a little bit about Mirjam and myself. So let's talk a little bit about

Maria: [00:44]

Awesome. Well, I am an interior designer. I went to the University of Texas, and I double majored in both art and interior design. And I have been servicing people in the new home construction industry ever since about 2000 here in Austin, Texas. And I have seen the evolution of our design industry over that period of time. And as I am getting older and I've been doing this for a while, I've really started to dive into what are the real problems that we're having? Why do these things happen? And what can we do to make the industry better for people who are new and coming into it? I've created an app to try to help make new construction a little bit easier and to help people that are in the remodel phase. It all came from me working with a specific builder. He gave me 25, \$1 million plus homes that I needed to speck out in one year. And it was like an experiment for me. I was meeting a lot of new people. They all had different, interesting backgrounds.

**Maria: [01:22]**

They all kind of wanted the same thing. They have the same request, the same experiences. And since then, I have put a lot of time and energy into researching. What is that? And who are these people? And why is it that it doesn't matter what their socioeconomic backgrounds are, but once they get into this price point of home, they are similar. And why are they similar? And what does this look like? So I've been pretty excited to dive in a little bit deeper and learn more about who that person is. And that person is called a HENRY. This was a term coined in 2003 by Fortune magazine. They're a high earner, but they're not rich yet. So that's the acronym for HENRY. And what's great about these people is that they are the same. And there's a lot of reasons for why they're the same. First is they all are going to be like a single income of \$250,000 a year or as a family, about \$500,000 or more. And what they're doing is they are all participating in building their financial assets. They have jobs. They go to work to make the money so that they can live a lifestyle that they want to live. They have children at home, or they're paying for them to go to College. They are affluent, but they're not luxury affluent yet. However, this is a stepping stone for becoming a luxury affluent person. And a luxury affluent person is not going to have to work to be able to maintain and support the lifestyle that they want to live. And the interesting thing is about this perspective. They all are looking for a similar client experience when they are working with an interior designer. And it's coming from what they know, what they've experienced and what it is that they like and what and it doesn't have anything to do with color or their aesthetics. It has to do with what their experiences are and what it is that they're looking for. So I would just like to define this for people so that they understand what we're really dealing with. They are new to design services.



Maria: [04:15]

They probably never used an interior designer before. They are watching HTTV. And they do get design magazines. So their idea of what a budget is or what a design aesthetic is is typically something that's being mailed to them in the mail. And they are all the same life stage that we talked about. They are going to work each day. They are paying for their assets. Their assets could be a vacation home, their current home. They're investing in something that they hope will financially benefit their whole family in the long run. But their resources are limited. And when they're coming to an interior designer, they don't understand what we do. And they don't understand how we work. But they want a design experience. They want to design experience because they're traveling and they're traveling in a luxury lifestyle. So they are going to these really nice resorts. They're going into these beautiful, exquisite hotel suites, and they're staying on the rooftop terrace of exotic resort somewhere. And they can afford to do this in their life. And they're wanting to bring these things, these experiences back home with them. And so they understand what luxury is, but they don't know how to build it themselves. They don't know how to put it together themselves. And they have very limited resources on figuring out how to do it except for the Internet and Pinterest. And sometimes all that does is overwhelm them and make them more confused. So when you're talking to a HENRY, it's good to understand that their resources are the magazines that are showing up in their mail, the HTTV that they see on their TV, what they're friends experiences were like, I, what they're seeing in social media right now and what they can resource on the Internet. So how does this tie in to when you're working as an interior designer and you're meeting with a HENRY and you're wanting to create a design experience for them? Well, there's a lot of factors that are going to impact why they're going to make a decision. Are they going to make a decision because it feels comfortable or are they going to make a decision because they think it's going to help them to achieve a goal? We don't really know until you dive in a little bit deeper and learn more about your clients.



Maria: [06:39]

And so one of the things that I like to do is I like to dive into what are internal factors that are impacting why your clients making a decision the way that they are acting, the way that they are or doing the things that they're doing, and what are the external things that we can work with to try to make it so that it's easier for them to make decisions or to pursue what it is that's best for their interest. And I'm going to give you an example of that without really diving into a lot of information about client development. And I'm just going to give you a little bite size example of what it is that your HENRY likes and does and how you can help them through those processes. One of the things that impact your clients ability to make a decision is that internally they're fighting with certain biases. They are thinking in their brain now, no, I don't want anything if it's too new. If it doesn't look like something I've seen a bunch of times, it's not comfortable. It's not familiar. They're going to say no. And they may even think that something that's super familiar is better than something that's actually better for them, because familiarity typically is going to win over what the facts are. And then they are wanting to trust you, but they don't know how to. And it's actually our responsibility to build that trust with our clients. And so I really like to dive into understanding all of that. But on this podcast, we're just going to lightly go over one thing and we're going to talk about bias. So first thing is new is always no. This is how trends come about it's. After someone sees something enough times they decide that it's good enough and good enough for them. It was good enough for this person. So it's good enough for me. And so we always have to be prepared. The your client is going to say no. And I think a lot of people come into the design industry thinking that if someone says no, they mean no when really all they mean is either no, not right now, or you haven't explained to me. I don't feel comfortable enough yet or what that is that you showed me. It seems too unfamiliar for me to say yes. And honestly, I do a lot of, like, opportunities where my client can tell me now. I like to pull out one thing that's way over budget or just way out of their design aesthetic and be like one of these I don't like guess which one it is and just see if they are comfortable to say no to you because if they're comfortable telling you no,



Maria: [09:10]

they're comfortable with telling you yes. You don't want a client who's yes. Yes. Everything yes. Because what happens is they go home, they talk to a friend, they talk to a neighbor, they interact with other people and change their mind. So it's more important for people to learn their voice when they're meeting with you and that they can say no to you. They trust you. They can say yes to you. And then their yes is actually mean yes, and that they're not someone just yes manning, you to try to either move a project forward or have the experience go by faster and not actually feel happy with it, and then come back at you and say, I don't really think I like that or that you push that on me, and that's not how I like it, and I don't feel comfortable. So another thing, too, that is important as a designer is that once again, they, like, familiar is more important than what's better for them or what a designer might pick out that's new is that you got to make sure that you're using repetition, that you are making associations with objects or things in a way like I can sell a Navy blue sofa to anyone, because I say it's as good as having a good pair of jeans. They can understand from that perspective right there, that stuff all good with everything else that they want to put in their home. And so we just want to talk more about these conversations, discuss why something might be familiar to someone, and why it might be a good Association or a bad Association. And we want to talk about how we can start implementing easier business practices into getting our clients to do what we need them to do and also comfort them along the way. Because as an interior designer, we spend more time comforting our client than we do doing design.

Outro: [10:59]

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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