



Episode 15

Do You Need a Publicist



**Maria: [00:00]**

Hi. And welcome to Designer Discussions. Today we are going to discuss, Are you in a place in your business when it is time to hire a publicist?

Intro: [00:20]

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

Maria: [00:25]

Thank you, Mirjam, for helping us understand why it is that a publicist is an asset for any interior design business and how it is that we can use that to help us grow and leverage our business presence.

Mirjam: [00:40]

I think that's an excellent topic, and I love to talk about it, of course. But I first think we need to take a step back and just think about, do you want PR for your business? Do you want to get publicity? Do you want to get pressed? Do you want to get published? And I'd say that every designer I've ever met in my life would say yes to that question. And then from there on, we have to realize that PR is not something that's just going to happen. It's some yeah, I know. It's devastating. I wish. No. Then I'd be out of a job. So. But it's not just something that's going to happen. It's really something that you have to be intentional about, and you need to build it into your marketing plan, and you need to plan resources for it. And there's two kinds of resources that are most important when it comes to PR. And that's time and money, like for a lot of other things. But PR really is a long term endeavor. It should be. I'm not saying that you can't do a project here and there, but ideally, it needs to be part of your mindset when you think about growing your business and promoting your business and doing the marketing for your business.

Maria: [02:09]

Would I need to have, like, five or six really expensive, super fabulous projects on my pipeline that need to be photographed to warrant having a publicist.



Mirjam: [02:21]

Well, if you were to have a publicist, that would definitely help, you know, but projects are not the only thing that can be publicized, right? So it really I want to approach it from a slightly different angle. You know, it's where you need to figure out if you need a publicist, if that's going to help you, or if just maybe you can do it yourself. Because in all honesty, as an interior designer who's trying to get press for their business, you don't need to be a full blown PR person. You don't need to know everything up here. You don't need to know everything. I know. You just need to know a few things and you need to be able to apply them. So you don't have to have any special skills. You have to be willing to take action and be consistent. And I think that's true. Whether or not you have a publicist or you do it yourself. You know, sometimes people think one of the reasons why Pi so attractive or getting pressed. It's supposed to be free, right? It's like free press. I hear this all the time. Let's get some free press. But then people think it's free, and they also think they don't have to do anything for it or pay anybody to help them get it. And that's just too good to be true. That's not how it works in life, right? Actually, when in my old corporate days, we used to call when we were frustrated with expectations, we would call it, oh, they're looking for free or or er. You want. Everything else has died. You know, let's do some pro. That's not how it works. You need a good story. You need a good project in order to make it work, but factors that you need to consider when you think about. Well, first you have to decide, do I want PR? Am I willing to make an effort to get it? Be that financial or time wise, and then you have to look at your resources. It's like if you want to go the DIY approach, I'm like, are you willing to invest the time and learn the basic skills to do it yourself and then apply that consistently? If, yes, great. That's the route you should go. Okay. If you have a team, you have somebody on the team that can maybe do that for you. It's a great option. I've seen it work really, really well.

**Maria: [05:05]**

So when you're talking about the PR that interior designers can get, it doesn't have to be an actual interior design project, publication and placement in the magazine. It can be the testimonials and quotes from experts and multiple types of publications. Am I correct?

Mirjam: [05:25]

That is correct. There's easy ways to get quick PR and mentions in the press that a lot of designers don't know about. And when you think about features, it's like there's not just project features, but you can get a profile in a magazine. You can be part of a line up. Now, there's other ways that you can get pressed, so you don't just have to reduce it to coverage for your projects. So that also means that you can start early. You don't have to have a whole portfolio of amazing projects with celebrity clients and million dollar homes. There's a lot of need for content in the media that it can be much simpler than that at any stage in your design business. There is a place for PR, right? It just depends. And I'd say at any stage in your business, there is a place or you can do your own PR. But it can also be helpful to hire somebody to do this. However, you have to be aware that PR people like to get paid, like interior designers, and they're not cheap. So if you want to hire a publicist, typically, you would do that on a retainer, so you would pay the person on a monthly basis, and it's going to be a few thousand dollars a month. You're going to be really hard pressed to find somebody to help you for less than that. So you just have to be aware that there's a cost. And typically placements are not guaranteed because you pay the PR pro for the time that they spend. And even when you have a publicist, you're going to have to invest the time to work with the person you have to be. You have to provide the information you have to have strategies that session so they know what is most helpful for you.

**Mirjam: [07:32]**

Despite the fact that you have somebody doing it. You're the strategic lead of this. You are the one who decides which way this is going to go. So it's still going to be a little bit of work for you.

Maria: [07:43]

So there is a time commitment that you would also have to set aside if you were to commit to hiring a publicist, it's going to require time on your part of the definer, even if you're hiring an expert to take care of things for you.

Mirjam: [07:59]

That's entirely correct, because the way I like to look at it is like you're a team, right? So you're hiring the per expert, the publicist to be part of your team and help leverage all the good work that you're doing and building your brand and whatever your goals are. If you want to become an influencer or you want to charge higher rates or you want to expand geographically, there's different ways you can apply that strategy and get media that will help support that. But yes, whichever way you go, it's going to require some time and effort.

Maria: [08:41]

So you're telling me that I could get pressed for advice and ideas about trends and seasonality of products, and I could also get projects published. Both of those are pressed, and a publicist can help with that. That's amazing. Is this something that I could do on my own? And what kind would it be? A similar time commitment as hiring someone to do it for me? Or what would you say that that would be?



Mirjam: [09:13]

Yes. You can definitely do this on your own. It's not rocket science. Honestly, you just have to be willing. I think the biggest obstacle is to actually get started. And I think that's true for both going at on your own and for hiring a publicist. So let's go back to what I said initially effect, you need to decide, do you want PR? Okay. If that answer is yes, then you need to decide, am I willing to make an investment be at time or money in it? If the answer to that is no, that means you really don't want PR, so you can just move on to the next episode. If the question to that is yes, then you can think about, do you want to do it yourself, or do you want to hire somebody so if you have a large business and you have a large budget, you may want to hire somebody. It's definitely there's a lot of very capable publicists out there, and that can do great service to your business. It can really take it to the next step. So it's not something I don't recommend, right. But if you're not quite direct, if your business is smaller, maybe you've intentionally kept it small. Or maybe you're just starting out. You can definitely do this by yourself. I'd say at the beginning, when you start out, you want to make time for it, build it into your schedule, maybe an hour or two a week. There. I offer a service that helps you do your own PR, which makes it more affordable, but at the same time, you have some coaching, so you know what to do. So there's hybrid options out there that you can take advantage of. But definitely I'd say that generally speaking, for the majority of designers that I have met over my 20 plus years in this business, I'd say DIY PR is a great approach for designers, and the media love it because the media love to talk. They like PR. People like me, too, but they love talking to designers. It's like a match made in heaven. So there's so many synergies, and I think it's definitely doable. You just have to make a decision, budget the time and take action.

**Maria: [11:40]**

Wow. That's awesome. I so wish I was taught this in school, and I am so grateful that you are out there teaching it to interior designers now, because this has been such a valuable asset.

Outro: [11:52]

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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