

DESIGNER DISCUSSIONS



Episode 1

Introduction to Designer Discussions



Maria: [00:00]

Thanks for joining designer discussions, we're super excited to have you here.

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/Jason/Mirjam: [00:19]

Hey, guys, thanks for joining us. Over here at Designer Discussions. It's Maria, Jason and Mirjam.

Maria: [00:27]

And we are here to help you with your design business. We are a team of professionals from different sides of the industry, and we're here to research, find out information and get you the best solutions for your business. I'm Maria Martin. I'm in Austin, Texas, and I am the founder of Design Appy.

Jason: [00:48]

I'm Jason Lockhart in Dallas, Texas, and I'm the CEO of Kitchen and Bath Marketing Solutions.

Mirjam: [00:55]

And I'm, Mirjam Lippuner in Kohler Wisconsin. And I'm the founder of Get Ink DIY, a PR platform for interior designers.

Maria: [01:04]

Each one of us have had different approaches to our careers and all of our paths have diverged and led us to where we are today. So, for example, as a professional interior designer, I've learned that the programs and the resources that we have available to us just don't make our life easier. And so I created my own app. It's called Design Appy. And I did that because I know we all want a better lifestyle and we want to take care of our clients and make our clients better behaved clients

Jason: [01:38]

I'm an architect by trade and how I got into marketing is because I actually have an architecture firm with three other guys. We began an architecture firm around 2008. Around 2012, one of the interior design clients I work with ask us to do marketing for her because she saw all all about this SEO thing that she was hearing about. So she didn't know what that was, but she said it can help her out. So we started to help her out, had some success. She referred some of her colleagues to us, had some success. And then afterwards I went back to the partners. I said, we need to monetize this. So that was the start of Kitchen and Bath Marketing Solutions that aims to help home remodelers, interior designers with their marketing.

Mirjam: [02:20]

Yes, like I said, I am here in Kohler, Wisconsin, which probably gives away part of the story because I just so happened to work for the company with the same name for almost a decade and a half. And when I left corporate life almost four years ago, I was sort of trying to figure out what I was going to do when I was growing up. And I was talking with a lot of people. And one interior design friend of mine actually said to me, she said to me, Mirjam, you you should do something for interior designers. You know, there's a big hole. There's a big niche in the industry where designers are looking for PR services, but they can't find an offering that works for them. So as I was pondering that, it took me probably a good couple of years to actually really get my program together. But my whole objective with getting DIY is to provide successful interior designers, the PR services that they deserve so they can build their own brand and mostly do it themselves without spending a bunch of time and money.

**Maria: [03:38]**

As a group of trade professionals, we have decided that the most important thing that people can get from us is knowledge. It's access to experts that can precisely show us how we can make ourselves better business people. And we are super excited to come together on a weekly basis and share with you what it is that we think might be able to help your business. And I want to let you know that I got a divorce while I was working as an interior designer. I also had a small child at home. And there was one thing that I learned is that you can work wiser and less hours and take care of everything that you need to take care of and you can take care of yourself. And so for me, I feel like it's my duty now that I've been in design for over 20 years to help the people who are coming through the industry making their lives easier.

Jason: [04:30]

For me why I love to share is in my history, I used to be a professor at Southern University and at LSU, Louisiana State University in the School of Architecture and in a school of interior design. So helping, sharing is just a part, honestly, of what I do. So it's just a passion of mine to educate not only our clients, but just the industry on marketing practices to help them grow.



Mirjam: [04:58]

And the reason why I like to share is that in my actually over 20 years of experience as a PR professional, I've seen it all and I've worked for everybody. I worked for corporate. I've worked for agencies. I've worked for myself. And there's a lot of excellent PR professionals out there. But a lot of what is done in the industry is a lot of noise and it's a lot of stuff put on paper that doesn't actually generate results. And I know from my experience that what actually brings you the results are the very basic things that you just have to do over and over again. And in reality, you don't have to be a PR expert to do those. Pretty much anybody can do it if they just learn how. So that's where my thought has come in, especially. I also like to help small business owners and interior designers who are solo-preneurs or small entrepreneurs normally, as am I. So we all have common goals. And I want to share with everybody the very small and simple things that you can do. So you can do your own PR and get the media coverage that you deserve. It's not rocket science. It's really not.

Maria: [06:18]

I was lucky enough to hear about this amazing publicist that had recently left Kohler, but was getting her feet wet by helping other interior designers to help promote their products and their design businesses. And so I reached out to Mirjam because I was creating my app and I knew I didn't know enough about PR. I needed someone to help me out. And I have been so fortunate to have her in my life. She has become a friend, but she is also someone who I can get together with on a regular basis and she helps me grow in my business and I am super excited to have her with me when we talk about design business and what we should be doing better. She introduced me to Jason. Let me have her tell you a little bit about that.

**Mirjam: [07:04]**

Yes. And I have to think back and and put together how it all happened. But I know that you need help.

Jason: [07:11]

I can help you here. So if I just interject, I'll just interject here. So how I met Mirjam. I met Mirjam on my...

Mirjam: [07:22]

That sounds wrong!

Jason: [07:26]

So let me explain how. So we met on LinkedIn. So every year we do data analysis just in the industry to find out what's happening. And so I came across Mirjam's profile, reached out because she's in PR and we don't as a marketing agency, we don't do PR. So I said let me meet her and let's develop a relationship. And over time we've developed a relationship and become great friends. And so how she introduced me to Maria is the clubhouse. So, as you may or may not know, clubhouse is a new social media platform. It's been up since I think it was around January 2020 is when it started. It was actually January 2021. Mirjam said, I want to have you on clubhouse to talk about marketing. And I said, Mirjam, I don't need to know about any new social media platforms. We already know enough and I don't need to get into anything new. So she said, well, I'm a have you speaking on Maria's clubhouse a bit. And I said, Maria, who is that? She said, she's an amazing interior designer. You need to meet her. I think you ought to have a lot in common. So I said, all right, so I said, this will be a great way for us to start to promote our sales. So I was on the clubhouse then with Maria. We hit it off. I talked about marketing and then the rest was history.

**Mirjam: [08:53]**

That is so true. And interestingly, I think that what makes our group so great is that we all learn from each other. I can tell you that in the time that I've known both of you, I have learned so many different things from each one of you. And it's, I don't know, it's just been really fun and it's only getting better and I can't wait until we can share more of what we've learned, what we know and what we learn from each other with everybody else.

Jason: [09:22]

And I'm just add that, Mirjam. She will not do it for her own, but I will do it for her. She's amazing. Since I've known her. I've been in four publications and I've been on two interviews because of just, you know, the knowledge that she's bestowed onto us. Some of the information I actually passed on to our clients. Our clients they were published in a local Dallas magazine. They recognized me and then they reached out to me to be publicized in that same magazine and afterwards I got on a podcast. And so all of this is directly from Mirjam. So she won't talk a lot about how great she is. But I'm here to do it.

Mirjam: [10:07]

I'm only as good as my students, you know

**Maria:[10:13]**

Well, you've got a lot of really good students and your course, I've seen their work come out and their projects and the publications that they've finished, so it's been awesome. I do believe, though, that interior designers can benefit from the demystification of PR services. It is a very expensive financial burden for someone to carry if they don't have like a large team. And I do think as a solo-preneur, having access to a course that can help you to learn how to manage and do some of the work yourself or have your assistant do it for you and then be taught. It is a really big game changer for the industry. I think this is a course we should all have in college personally. And I also think that we should also be taking marketing courses as well that apply to our businesses. And I'm super excited to always be able to bounce off of Jason, like, how does this apply to my business and get like hard cold facts on what that looks like and how I can apply it and do it.

Jason: [11:12]

And one of the reasons I wanted to have the podcast with these two lovely ladies is, one, because we have a PR perspective on everything we do and we actually have a practicing interior designer that can bring in real world knowledge on what is happening today. And a lot of podcasts that I hear out there offer great information. But where we're going to be a little different from everybody else is you have three different perspectives on the same topic that's going to add more flavor and one of the things I want to try to bring to every episode is to have a nugget that you can take in your business and operate and institute or implement right now.

Mirjam: [11:55]

Yes, I agree, because I think we all agree that we're not here to impress anybody. You know, we're really just here to share the nuts and bolts of what it takes to make your business better.

**Maria: [12:09]**

And any time I can give real life experience as to things I've applied, that I have learned through this group, I will always be able to chime in and say, I applied this. This is the change or the thing that I have seen from this, or if Mirjam is talking about PR and I don't understand an aspect of it or why that is the fact, then I will ask those questions from an interior designer standpoint and get the clarification so that we can actually use these things, move forward with them and see the differences in our business.

Mirjam: [12:45]

You know, it's funny, Maria, you always say you don't speak another language, but you actually speak designer. And you have helped me learn that language. So that's been invaluable, honestly, because I can speak PR really well. But that's not always very easily understood, as you have helped me understand.

Maria: [13:06]

So designer is its own language. It doesn't translate to marketing. I've learned that through this course of meeting with you guys and doing the clubhouse talk keyword searches, those types of things are actually different words because it's supposed to not be designer. So I appreciate when you guys tell me I'm talking too much designer and I need to talk like users and people who are going to be our consumers.

**Jason: [13:37]**

No, but I actually like that. And one of the other things that will happen on this podcast is we we're going to aim to have it fun, entertaining. So you're going to hear three different perspectives. And we're all professional, but at the same time, we're going to give our own interpretation of the topic. But we're going to have some fun because in our own lives, if you see how we interact with each other, it's interesting, it's entertaining. So we're going to bring a lot of it to this podcast. So when you're listening, you're going to learn a lot. You're going to have tips and tricks. We're going to have guest on that will teach you a lot. But we're going to also entertain you as well.

Maria: [14:15]

Thank you for joining us at the Designer Discussions. We are so excited to have you with us on this path. We are available on DesignerDiscussions.com for our website. If you need anything or if you want to ask us questions. And we are going to be here each week. So please hit the subscribe button so that you don't miss anything that's coming from us.

Outro: [14:15]

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