

designers' guide

09
23

The Age of Influence
How Megan Molten turned
social media buzz into
real-world success.



DALLAS
MARKET
CENTER

**DALLAS
DESIGN
WEEK**
SPECIAL ISSUE

Attention, Please!

Looking for the best ways to raise your profile? Check out these expert-approved tips that will take you and your design business to new heights.

Text Laura Kostelny

Share with Care

Just because there are more than 100 social media platforms doesn't mean that you need to be present on all of them. In fact, Melanie Venture, managing director of brand development at The Dove Agency, says she actively recommends her clients avoid certain ones—especially if they're not adding any cold-hard value to the business. "Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest are typically the most important platforms for our clients. We recommend LinkedIn for some, especially those with a large commercial design business," she says. Unlike a more colorful personal account, a professional account will benefit from strong and consistent company branding. The specific focus should actually make posting simpler. "We find two extremes hinder our clients: One is posting anything and everything and posting just to post without considering the value it brings to the audience and overall brand. The other is overthinking every single post to a fault, which can also have a negative impact. There should be a balance and a weight of importance appropriate for each client's accounts."



Nicole Arnold, who designed this space, has gained numerous clients by focusing on networking through professional and personal organizations.

Court a Mix of Media

"We live in a digital world, but many people still love reading books, magazines, and newspapers," says Forehand. "I'm guilty of having stacks of shelter publications on my home office floor—it's a danger of the profession!" She advises that her clients stay open to different ways of telling their story: Build a strong Instagram following and that can lead to opportunities in more traditional media like a feature in an interiors magazine or a book deal, which can then be used as marketing tools. "I believe in the value of print and digital press for our clients. It's essential to have a strategic marketing mix to expand designers' brands and pipelines, including traditional outlets," she says. Whether it's digital, social media, television, or good old-fashioned print, Forehand says it's important to ask yourself if the audience is the right one for you and how the exposure will help you meet your long-term business goals.

Pitch Like a Pro

Just like you, the editors of your favorite shelter magazines and websites are bombarded all day, every day with emails! To make your project stand out in a pile, Natalie Forehand, manager of public relations at The Dove Agency, advises providing pertinent information from the get-go. That means the subject line of your email. "Typically, it should include the designer or firm name, location of the project, or project details that suit the specific publication." Once you hit the body of the email, highlight what makes the home or commercial space special—but don't get too verbose. "We aim for project descriptions that are around 150 to 200 words," Forehand says. "The goal is to provide enough information for the editor to understand the project's overall scope, design direction, how the homeowner lives in the space, and any relevant special stories." Remember: A good pitch can garner attention, but alas, a photograph is worth a thousand words. That's why Forehand always advises her clients to invest in professional photography. "It's the biggest asset for successful public relations efforts," she explains.

GET MORE INSPIRATION
AT DALLAS DESIGN WEEK

DALLAS
DESIGN
WEEK

02 pm

21
Sept

"SNAG THE COVER: HOW TO RAISE YOUR PROFILE"

D Home magazine editors along with designers Bryan Yates of Yates Desygn and Eddie Maestri of Maestri Studio will share tips to help improve your brand and get your work published.

Sponsored by *D Home*.

World Trade Center
Atrium

Bryan Yates of Yates Desygn gained recognition, media exposure, and new brand collaborations all thanks to his participation in the Kips Bay Decorator Show House Dallas.



This home by John Lively features soaring ceilings and beams.

THE BEST WAY FOR BUILDERS, ARCHITECTS, AND DESIGNERS TO WORK TOGETHER AND ACHIEVE PROJECT PERFECTION? STOP, COLLABORATE, AND LISTEN.

Noting that the most successful custom builds and renovations are the result of seamless collaboration between an architect, designer, and builder is a little like saying, "Summertime in Dallas is hot." It's pretty obvious. But that doesn't mean pulling it off is easy. Although these three professionals are ostensibly working toward the same goal—making the client happy—they all come to the project with their own experiences, talents, and agendas. Even so, there's nothing quite like working with team members who share a vision and the capabilities to achieve it. Set the stage for successful collaboration with these five simple rules.

Natural materials meld into a warm, modern façade by John Lively & Associates.



Ginger Curtis of Urbanology helps architects turn ideas into reality through her acute focus on the use of materials, finishes, and details.



SHM Architects collaborates with landscape architects and interior designers on homes that deftly blend into the environment.



3D renderings from Plano-based John Lively & Associates (at right and below) give team members a realistic vision of the end result.

A WINNING TEAM

RULE 01

ASSEMBLE A TEAM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

The best way to align is through early connection. "Every house has a story, and it's really the client's story to tell. But if the builder, designer, architect, and even the landscape architect aren't involved from the start, there are going to be a few missing chapters from the book," says architect Mark Hoesterey of SHM Architects. "The strongest projects happen when everyone is part of early schematic design decisions because they cross over to the exterior and interiors."

Sometimes the team comes together organically. Other times, a client may look to one professional to refer another. Dallas-based Maestri Studio handles architecture, landscape architecture, and interior design in-house, so they're able to begin with a very holistic design plan. "Some clients already have a builder, and they understand the importance and value of an architect," says the firm's principal architect and creative director Eddie Maestri. "Other clients lean on us to identify the right builder for the type of home they're designing. Some builders are better at ultra-modern and others can handle a historical preservation better. We want to make sure that the team has the right strengths to achieve the design goals."

Text Laura Kostelny



Ginger Curtis brings a cozy nook to life with furnishings reflective of the environment.



RULE

CRUNCH ALL THE NUMBERS

Building a budget is another reason to get everyone involved from the very start. After all, nothing is more nightmarish than letting a client know that the numbers are way off a month into construction—and not in a way they’re going to like. As Chad Hatfield of Alair Homes explains, it’s often up to a builder to guess what kind of tile, cabinets, and surfaces are going to be installed when a designer isn’t involved at the earliest stage. “All that initial pricing is done with allowances—aka guesses—and there’s a lot of pressure to guess low,” he says. “Without decisions on all those specific—and often costly—elements, the clients aren’t operating with enough information. They’re signing construction agreements, and they don’t really know what they’re buying.”

A serene space by Ginger Curtis.



A sprawling exterior by SHM Architects.



An open and airy respite by John Lively brings the outdoors in.



SHM Architects knows how to make an entrance.

Mark Hoestery of SHM Architects favors designers who share the firm’s core values and enjoy easygoing collaboration.

RULE

ESTABLISH LANES

As the team comes together, it’s important to define roles clearly. “As an interior designer, I typically communicate my areas of expertise, which include space planning, material selection, color schemes, fixtures, lighting design, and overall aesthetic vision. I share my knowledge of current design trends or what’s too trendy, industry standards, and ultimately keeping the end goal, since we will be the ones taking the final project details across the finish line,” says Ginger Curtis of Urbanology Designs. “I expect the architect to bring their knowledge of structural design, building codes, and spatial functionality. They provide architectural drawings, site analysis, and ensure the overall integrity of the building. The builder offers practical construction expertise, cost estimation, and project management skills. They bring knowledge of construction techniques, materials, and can advise on the feasibility and implementation of design concepts. Overall, I rely on the architect and builder to bring their technical knowledge and experience to help translate design ideas into reality.”



Dallas-based Eddie Maestri handles architecture, landscape architecture, and interior design in-house for seamless, comprehensive design.



Renderings (here, and top right) by John Lively & Associates.

A sculptural scene by Ginger Curtis.

RULE

MEET OFTEN

Even as each team member leans into their respective lane, weekly recap meetings, whether in-person or via Zoom, are imperative to maintain cohesion between the architecture and interior design. “We start every new project design from scratch, never reusing any previous designs or projects. When working with designers, we look for the same, whether that means using unique materials, colors, or lighting,” architect John Lively of John Lively & Associates explains. “Designers’ input can significantly influence the project’s success. With all the textured materials such as tiles, wall panels, and masonry, it truly helps to see sample boards or high-quality 3D renderings, which enable everyone on the team to visualize the materials in the context of a room and how they will reflect ambient or external natural lighting.”



RULE

BE RESPECTFUL

Not only will working in concert help build the best home possible, the hope is that solid long-term professional relationships are also being built. “The designers we like to work with are organized and share our core values. Personality, humility, and compassion are a big part of that,” says Hoestery. “I like working with nice people. The designers I have the strongest relationships with are people who are easygoing and okay with somebody else chiming in from time to time. We want to know their opinions, too. It’s nice to make everyone feel part of the process.”



GET MORE INSPIRATION AT DALLAS DESIGN WEEK

DALLAS DESIGN WEEK

3.30 pm

19 Sept

“CREATING A SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERIOR DESIGNER, ARCHITECT, AND BUILDER”

Ginger Curtis, Chad Hatfield, and John Lively will discuss the collaborative design process and how architecture influences design.

Sponsored by Modern Luxury. Trade Mart 3—North Elevator Lobby