

7 STEPS TO CREATING A SUCCESSFUL **INTERIOR DESIGN** BUSINESS

CHECKLIST



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This checklist will help you identify the missing links to more income more time off, and less stress.



Hi, I'm Gail Doby...

I started coaching interior designers in 2010. Today, I personally work with designers that have achieved at least \$1 million in sales per year, and in one case, nearly \$8 million.

What makes my clients unique is their determination to create their lifestyle business. They've addressed and mastered the 7 keys to building a successful million-dollar plus business.

These are some of the struggles that I find many designers face and how they have overcome them with our help.

MOST DESIGNERS THAT STRUGGLE FINANCIALLY DON'T HAVE ENOUGH CLIENTS.

If you lack a consistent "business development system," the result will be an exhilarating and scary roller coaster ride of too many clients and then the frustration of too few. This inconsistency leads to stress about money.

MOST DESIGNERS WORK TOO MANY HOURS.

Without proper time management and planning skills, you will burn out. The problem is easily solved with systems for project management, delegation, and time management. And, of course, it means that a team is required. Working alone is just a job, and when you are sick or on vacation, the money flow stops. That doesn't work for most people.

MOST DESIGNERS DON'T MAKE ENOUGH BOTTOM LINE PROFIT.

Salary and draws means you lack a profit model for your business. With a clear understanding of your business finances you'll achieve different results. Every CEO needs a budget, you need to understand how to read your financial statement, and how to project future sales.

Are you ready to change your results?

This checklist is for you if you want to achieve a six-figure income and beyond.

Enjoy the checklist we created for you...

Mindset

Step 1

Do you worry about money, feel overwhelmed, fear you're not a good enough designer or business person?

You're not alone, these are quite common thoughts for interior designers. Successful designers have learned how to break free from these self-limiting beliefs. You can too.

For example, I have one client that jokingly says he wants to achieve "world domination." I truly believe he will do it in this industry. In less than five years, he and his partner have built over a million-dollar business and are on track to earning \$10 million in the next year or so.

CHECK OFF YOUR "WINNER'S" MINDSET CHARACTERISTICS

- Confidence** - In your work, your skills, your abilities is essential
- Act in spite of fear and insecurity** - Focus on your desired result and act
- Sense of urgency** - There is no better time than now to work on the right things
- Relentless determination** - Never give up on your dreams
- Willingness to work harder and smarter than others** - That includes everyone around you
- Awareness of competition without intimidation** - Know your secret sauce
- Likeability and authenticity** - Believe in yourself and focus on your client's needs
- No excuses** - If you don't like your results, get the help and fix the problem.
- Hire consultants to help where you don't have the necessary skills** - Hire the experts to help you vs. staying stuck

MINDSET CHARACTERISTICS TO WORK ON	THOUGHTS

Clarity

Step 2

Having clarity is having a clear vision for your business from the inside out. *If you don't know where you're going, how will you know when you've arrived?*

For example, often designers don't know how to identify their ideal client. It's more than people with money!

When you have a laser focus on your ideal client you won't worry about competition. Attracting your perfect client will be easier, because you'll stand out from the crowd in all that you do.

Have you considered this?

- Know who you should and can serve.** Knowing who your ideal client is will clear the way for branding, messaging, and your vision statement.
- Have you defined your culture?** Your culture is based on your values and needs to be adopted by your team.
- Do you have specific goals and plans to achieve them?** Dreams without action don't add money to your bank account.
- Do you have a defined client experience?** It begins with - "Hello." Everything needs to be carefully planned to leave an outstanding impression with the client.
- Who needs to be on your team?** Successful firms have a well-oiled team working with them.
- Do you know when to say no?** Saying yes to one thing means you're saying no to something else. Make sure you use your values, culture, and clear goals to direct your daily activities.

CLARITY CHARACTERISTICS TO WORK ON	THOUGHTS

Brand Vision

Step 3

Without a clear brand vision, you can't deliver a great brand experience. Your brand vision must be clear, compelling, and well-articulated at every touch point of your business.

It's the foundation of your business. What is your signature or stamp for your design business?

How will you distinguish yourself?

Soft skills count, and those include your demeanor, the way your telephone is answered and how you make people feel.

What could you be doing to better brand your business?

YOUR BRAND VISION CHARACTERISTICS TO WORK ON	THOUGHTS

Skills

Step 4

An average designer with excellent marketing, sales and business skills can easily out-earn an amazingly talented designer that doesn't know how to run a business!

Remarkably true!

If you have above average design skills and are business savvy, you have a winning combination. You need a unique point of view that is visually clear, but that is even more compelling with the right words.

How do your skills stack up?

- MARKETING** - Your marketing strategy should include a handful of specific tactics that can be executed with excellence.
- SALES** - Your number one job - bring in the work... at all times. Honing your skills will be a lifetime assignment.
- LEADERSHIP** - A leader makes hard decisions and addresses challenges directly and quickly.
- COACHABILITY** - Being coachable, adaptable, and a willingness to accept feedback is the key to constant improvement.
- PRODUCTIVITY** - Distractions and lack of clarity will kill your productivity.
- TIME MANAGEMENT** - You'll accomplish more when you're strategic, clearly focused, and motivated by your goals.
- ORGANIZATION** - Lack of organization creates chaos, errors, unhappy clients, and lost revenues.
- ABILITY TO IDENTIFY AND GROW TALENT** - Seek the best talent you can afford and your life will be easier.
- PROBLEM SOLVING** - Problems are your opportunity to shine and grow. Solve them quickly and decisively.
- INTUITION** - Pay attention to your intuition about prospective clients and employees. Don't ignore your gut instincts.
- EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE** - Is like sand in an oyster - it makes pearls. Welcome challenges as an opportunity to grow. Take a few minutes to get in touch with your thoughts and feelings. Increase your emotional intelligence every day to live a happy and joy filled life

YOUR SKILLS TO WORK ON	THOUGHTS

Knowledge

Step 5

Schools teach us to improve our weaknesses, but that is counterproductive. Improve your strengths and outsource or delegate your weaknesses.

If you don't have the knowledge to do something, find people who do and get them to teach you. Or, give you an appreciation for what is needed.

The objective is to grow your business and bottom line, not be to be good at everything. Coaching and consulting fill in the gaps and get you to your goals quicker.

Know what knowledge you need to run a successful business first.

Design skills are only 10% of what it takes to run a successful business. Focus on learning the business skills during business hours. Seek inspiration outside of business through travel, music, art, human interaction, and cultural activities.

Are you wasting your time and talents trying to learn things that don't make you money?

YOUR KNOWLEDGE TO WORK ON	THOUGHTS

PR & Marketing

Step 6

Your best results will come with a focused and clear intent. Without a laser focus and clear intent, you'll find yourself with scattered results.

Social media takes a vast amount of time to learn, master, and manage. You'll find that your time is better spent creating a solid vision and business framework while outsourcing tasks to specialists. Keep your focus limited and go deep with each tactic.

What marketing efforts do you need to improve?

- EXCELLENT PHOTOGRAPHY** If you're striving for recognition and the best work, then hiring the least expensive photographer is the wrong move. Hire the best photographer you can afford along with a great stylist to dress the room correctly. Get feedback. Find a photographer that works for your target shelter publication, hire them to walk a job with you, and give you feedback.
- IDENTIFY** no more than three tactics that you will focus on during a ninety-day period. Work methodically and with purpose. Life is a journey not a sprint.
- PR & MARKETING** is a daily endeavor. It is common to have a lot of jobs at one time and that is when most designers stop marketing. Sometime in the future, you will experience a lag in client flow - the solution is to market at least two hours per day. You don't have to personally do the work, it just needs to be done.
- MARKETING CALENDAR** Few firms have a marketing calendar that includes all of their PR & Marketing activities. Create a 90-day, or better yet, a full year calendar for your blog, social media, your newsletter, etc. Make sure to include a budget for those tactics so you don't spend more than you can afford. Your budget should be between 3 - 12% of your total sales. The lower percentage is for larger firms.

MARKETING PLANNING TO BE DONE	THOUGHTS

The Plan

Step 7

Planning is the lifeblood of every successful designer. From start to finish you're planning to make your designs sing and delight your clients. To have a sustainable design company you need a solid plan.

What plans have you put in place and what needs to be done?

- A budget** - If you want to grow your bottom line then you're going to learn to love your numbers. It will relieve stress and tension as you plan ahead.
- Cash flow projections** - Avoid tight cash flows and being hampered by low balances. Plan for slow periods.
- Goals** - Keep everyone around you continuously focused on your goals along with your vision statement. Everyone loves being part of the winning team.
- Improvement and training** - Keeping your business skills sharp will earn you higher fees and better bottom line profits.
- Plan for things to go wrong** - Successful designers know that unforeseen events do happen, and they have a plan to work through them. You should maintain cash reserves of at least 3 if not 6 months of payroll and overhead expenses.
- What tasks would be better outsourced to free up your time to grow your bottom line?** - Consider outsourcing your marketing, communications, photography, web-design, sales, and accounting to experts. An assistant is a life-saver for day-to-day activities that don't need a CEO.

HOW HAVE YOU PLANNED FOR THE FUTURE?	THOUGHTS

Your Next Move

You're obviously interested in building a successful design business. Now it's time to decide whether you're ready to 'play smart' or whether you want to enjoy your business as a hobby. Either way, we encourage you to choose a path that includes proven business practices.

You don't have to take this journey by yourself. Join other professional designers who have created their own success stories and are now enjoying profitable, creative lifestyle business.

If you've been looking for the right opportunity to take your business to the next level, schedule a Coaching Call call with our team to find out how we can help you.

I'm not sure if this is for you, but we'll make a recommendation of what else you can do or who else might be a great fit. Wouldn't it be worth fifteen minutes of your time to see for yourself?

 [Click here to find a convenient time and date to chat.](#)



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