

design notebook

BY AMY MCINTOSH

5 PRODUCT DESIGN & LICENSING TIPS

Product design often is a next step in an interior designer's career. We asked five designers for their top product design and licensing tips for newcomers to the field. One theme stood out: trust in your partners is key.

"The key to a successful licensing partnership is all in the relationship with the vendor. Don't just seek out a vendor because they're a big name. Approach a vendor that you have a good working relationship and a high level of trust with. A licensing partnership is just that, a partnership, a collaboration. Don't enter into one with a vendor that only has their interests in mind."

- AUSTIN HANDLER

Mabley Handler Interior Design, The Hamptons, NY

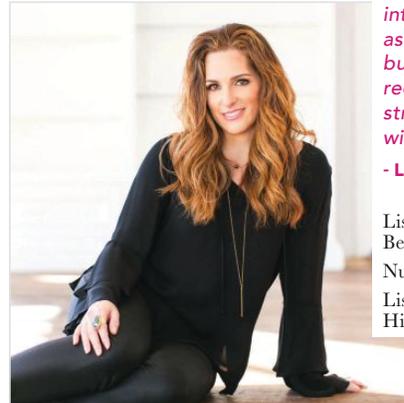
Mabley Handler for Kravet Furniture and Kravet Fabrics



"Understand that this is a major investment of your time. This is not a dial-in meeting handing off some ideas and then you miraculously have a collection. From the initial concepts of what your collection will bring to the marketplace to marketing, public relations, sales-related planning and ideally, in person events; understand that you need to dedicate a major part of your life to this launch to make it a success. Your name is on it and hopefully it will get global recognition, so it is important you are 'all in,' as they say!"

- BETH WEBB

Beth Webb Interiors, Atlanta, GA
The Beth Webb Collection for Arteriors



"Know who you are going into business with! In as much as a licensing agreement is a business partnership, it also requires a base of trust and a strong, established relationship with your suppliers."

- LISA MCDENNON

Lisa McDennon Design, Laguna Beach, CA
Nuance Home + Lifestyle Boutique
Lisa McDennon Collection for Hinkley

"Your brand is your promise, so make sure to partner with companies that can help you deliver on that brand promise and not compromise it."

- STACY GARCIA

Stacy Garcia Inc.
Life-Styled.net

Licenses with more than 20 companies, including Klaussner Home Furnishings, IMAX Worldwide Home, Crypton Home, York Wallcoverings, Brintons Americas and TileBar



"Spend the time needed to understand who it is you are designing for and figuring out what it is you do that will make their daily lives better. When you have a good sense of that, you will be making helpful, relevant, smart products and consumers will gravitate to them. What we don't need is more furniture that's made to fill up rooms and fill sales floors. Really do your homework first."

- CHRISTINA ANSTEAD

Interior Designer
HGTV Host
Christina Home Designs for Spectra Home