

RETAIL STRATEGIES

EXTENDED FAMILY

Top showrooms in the furniture space share their best advice.

There's something to be said about learning from the experience of others — in personal matters and in business. Mom-and-pop shops have more in common than not, and those in related industries can truly relate, empathize and learn from each other. Here, three influential home furnishings showrooms share their tips, tricks and advice for success.

Merchandising

IBB Design Fine Furnishings in Frisco, TX, is a 40,000-square-foot full-service store and design center. Shay Geyer, partner and Head Designer, says at IBB, they aim to please clients who want unique pieces and instant gratification.

"We sell right off the floor and don't stock multiples of an item so people know to get it when they see it because it likely won't be there the next time."

IBB Design has two visual merchandisers that update the floor daily — they even change the paint color every three to four months.

At Slifer Designs in Edwards, CO, a 5,000-square-foot showroom with an interior design studio, Showroom Manager Lisa Mikels says their motto is "change, change, change."

The team switches out a few of its



IBB Design Fine Furnishings in Frisco, TX, creates a residential vibe in its store by creating vignettes with wallpaper, drapery, window coverings, chandeliers, built-ins and various flooring.

vignettes every Wednesday to keep things fresh, giving clients a reason to keep stopping by.

Marketing

Leon & Lulu in Clawson, MI, sells not only furniture, but clothing, housewares, custom framing, decorative accessories, gifts and more, all with a whimsical edge.

Co-owner Mary Liz Curtin says her store uses social media and an extensive e-mail marketing campaign to spread the word, but also participates in charity-related special events.

"We make frequent contributions to silent auctions and raffles," she says.

Geyer's IBB Design is constantly considering new marketing strategies to host current and potential customers. The store publishes its own quarterly



magazine, *IBB at Home*, which Geyer says is one of the most successful marketing vehicles.

"It's full of design eye candy, design trends, yummy recipes and articles by our team and area influencers," Geyer explains. "We mail to more than 15,000 households and thousands pick up issues in-store and at local charity events."

Golden Words

What's the best piece of advice these showrooms can give?

"Be flexible and be able to change gears," Mikels says. "In this day and age, you have to be ready to switch gears at a moment's notice."

Curtin and Geyer also point out the importance of finances.

"Cash is king! Operate your business debt-free," Geyer says. "You'll never truly be profitable if you're always paying someone back, and it's an added stress that no one wants."

WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE YOUR SUCCESS TO?

1. "We have the best team around. From the receptionist that first greets a client walking in, to the designer working with the client, accounting and delivery, we strive to make each aspect of their project and purchases pleasant and stress-free," says Shay Geyer.
2. "We're on-trend and willing to take risks. Our clients come to us because they're confident that we know what's hot in design," says Lisa Mikels.
3. "We follow the words of Marshall Field: 'Give the lady what she wants,'" says Mary Liz Curtin.