

DRAPERY & DESIGN PROFESSIONAL

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Serving the Custom Home Furnishings Industry since 1993

DRAPERY & DESIGN PROFESSIONAL

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DRAPERY & DESIGN PROFESSIONAL is a bimonthly trade publication specifically for those who sell, design or create custom window treatments, upholstery, slipcovers and related services. Contributions from readers are welcomed. We look for articles that teach new techniques, inspire readers to tackle new projects and inform readers of current trends in fabrication and design.

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From the Editor-in-Chief

When I began my drapery workroom in the early '90s, I thought as long as I knew how to sew pattern pieces together, I would be able to build a successful business. It didn't take long to discover how wrong that thinking was.

I learned very quickly that a successful workroom owner is a seamstress, bookkeeper, marketer, salesman, project manager, consultant, business manager and more. With each area of focus, the workroom owner needs to put on a new and different hat that matches the task of the moment. Whether it's meeting a client for the first time (consultant), or creating an invoice for the final job (bookkeeper), each area requires a different hat.

I point this out not because I want to overwhelm you with all the things you need to know to be successful, but to show you why we at DRAPERY & DESIGN PROFESSIONAL bring you such a vast variety of articles each month on many different subjects. It's always exciting to learn how to make something new, but it's essential to read topics that relate to all the other hats you must wear.

In this issue we learn how to use circle shape patterns, visit a show house in Atlanta, understand more about Google Docs, meet Susan Kostecky, see designs from Laura Lodini and Sue Sifakis, and so much more. As you read each article, think about how the information could help you build your business and which hat you might wear while reading it. The more reading you do in all areas of your career, the more successful you will become.



Margie Nance



We'd like to put you on our map!
Submit your article ideas to Michele@chfschool.com.

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Correction - In the article 'Uplifting Custom Shades' in Volume 10, Issue 4, Finestra® and EZ-Rig™ were incorrectly noted.

About the Cover - Chateau in Loire Valley, France

Global Influences on Our Industry

By Judi Turner
Dover, NH



There's a theory that the world is "flat" based on the principle that financial markets are more and more interconnected, goods and services are spread through multinational firms, and currency exchange for goods is becoming easier with common currencies as are electronic transfers of funds between countries. Walking through a trade show — especially at an international venue — you can't help but be aware of the global influences other countries and their economies have on our industry. Previously I've written about the emerging Romanian market that's now able to do business within the European Union; it's only a matter of time before we see these countries also distributing in the United States.

Here's a look at the products that are a major part of our industry, as well as my opinion of where our industry is now in terms of global influences. Keep in mind that as you source your products, you always have the patriotic option of buying only "Made in the USA," but that becomes a choice that's also ultimately made by your client in terms of possibly spending more for the domestic product. Your job is to make sure you offer the best possible product for your custom project because that's why your clients have chosen to go with a window coverings expert in the first place.

Fabric

Asia, India, Turkey and Pakistan will continue to flood the market with low-cost products. Know your sources, as many unethical manufacturing processes may be in place in other countries to ensure that prices are kept low. Sustainability is a global issue. Many chemical processes are put onto fabrics to give them the properties and feel of more expensive goods. The Federal Trade Commission mandates that all imported fabrics be labeled with the fiber content (in percentages) and its *true* country of origin.



Drapery Hardware

In my opinion, European countries remain on top for ingenuity and function of designed hardware. Their components are sleek (even the utilitarian stuff), easy to use and highly functional. Get to know this style and the variety of options you have for mounting window treatments. You are not limited to the standard white rods when it comes to hardware.

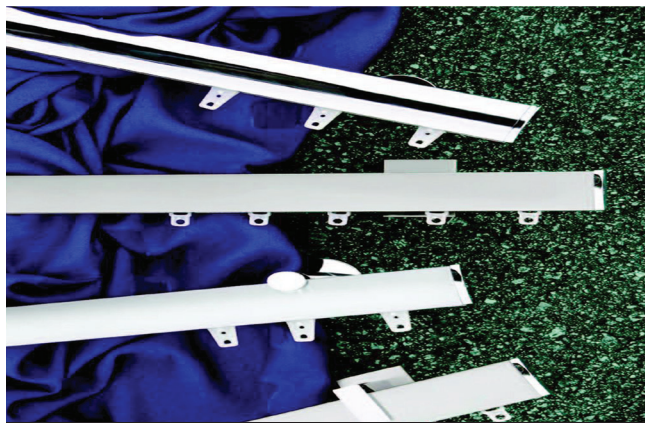
The Eastern European countries (Czech Republic and Russia) are emerging as competitors in this market as the European Union has made currency exchange and intercountry business possible.

Watch out for products manufactured and outsourced to other countries where ethics and global issues are not valued. This is an ever-changing list as political and economic conditions are changing rapidly for emerging markets worldwide. A glance at the financial papers every now and then will give you some insight into these issues as other industries deal with the same concerns. You can keep an eye on what the fashion industry has to say about outsourcing as we are most closely related to each other.

Decorative Hardware

Again, I would say that the Germans have sleek, easy-to-use, innovative hardware options, but they tend to be very modern and contemporary for our more traditional U.S. market. The Italian designs are what you would expect, highly stylish with a mix of Old World luxury and contemporary style. I suggest you find a source to offer this line of hardware to your clients because the appeal should be broad with the U.S. market. Our own country offers a solid source for style, price and quality. Of course, supporting hardware companies that produce in the United States is a valid business practice, and one that should be made known to your client. Again, if outsourcing is part of the product, check that the sources for all components are made, assembled and distributed in the United States. This becomes an issue when touting the "greenness" of one product over another. Sometimes multiple countries may be involved in the production of one product. You can influence the global ethics of our industry by voting with your U.S. dollars.

As each country raises its standard of living (e.g., China, India, Russia), consumer goods will become more expensive to produce and export. This is where the world "flattens" out. There's a trend in the United States to buy local for many reasons — to protect the environment, to be ethical and to support our neighbors — but we still depend on the more cheaply made products to keep the bottom-line cost lower for our clients. As a business owner, it's part of your job to be informed and to inform your client about the reasons you choose among your sourcing options. ✂



Vesta Geolux. Photo courtesy of www.curtainhardware.com



Vesta Geolux. Photo courtesy of www.curtainhardware.com

A Closer Look at Russia

When you look at the global marketplace, you can see that India and China are becoming big players in how our economies work and are linked together. China is still a communist regime, but it has moved toward capitalism to strengthen its worldwide political power. Russia is also still very much communist and also moving toward capitalism for the same reasons. It will be interesting to see whether Russia remains insular in the global marketplace. Here's a brief history and some observations of where they are now.

During the communist era, Russia used the same model of production for 20 years, thereby falling behind the rest of the world with regard to technological advances in manufacturing and design. They are now trying to join the World Trade Organization, which would lower taxes on goods exchanged between countries. The biggest economic partner for Russia is the European Union. Russia has changed dramatically over the past 20 years, but it still relies on raw products being brought in from other countries because it still lacks the manufacturing infrastructure needed to produce higher quality products that its large population is demanding.

As a whole, Russia has seen a 15 percent increase in the growth of the home textiles market based on the purchasing power of the country. People are now able to afford to purchase housing. Decorating is the next logical step in upwardly mobile lifestyle changes. Because factories are still outdated and in remote areas, owners are more eager to establish "business-to-business" relationships. Neighboring China would eagerly like to get into the Russian market because of the similar communist politics, but relations remained strained as Russia has most recently closed its market to Chinese imports. The spending power of Russia remains great just based on the sheer size of the population. Recent history shows a dramatic swing in lifestyle choices. With the knowledge that they may encounter a crisis every 10 years or so, Russians' attitudes are that they will enjoy today and they will spend today for their happiness because they don't know what tomorrow will look like in terms of personal purchasing power.

Meet The Writers



Terri Booser has 20 years of experience in the window treatment industry. She is owner of An Interior Stitch, a wholesale window treatment workroom in Wattsburg, PA, and is a Career Professional Instructor at the CHF Academy. She is dedicated to helping other workrooms raise their level of efficiency, confidence and professionalism through education.



Ann K. Johnson has owned her home-based wholesale/retail workroom since 1992. She is the author of two books on drawing swag patterns: *The Professional Workroom Handbook of Swags, Volumes 1 & 2*. Ann is a representative for Evan Marsh Designs, creators of dreamDraper and Quick Quote and a specialty instructor at the CHF Academy.



Judy Maslanka has played the role of fabricator, designer, installer, and project manager throughout her many years in the industry. Her company, '63' Keeler, is located in Lisle, IL, and named after her Chicago childhood address. Judy is a guest instructor at a community college and the Charity Coordinator for the WCAA Chicago-land Chapter.



Donna Cash operates a workroom in Flowery Branch, GA. She's a 20-year veteran of the window coverings industry and has an associates degree from the Art Institute of Atlanta. She's a WFCP Associate, member of WCAA, Drapery Pro and the Designers Workroom Council in Georgia. Donna is also a certified yoga instructor.



Debbie Green is the owner of Dandelion Interiors and founder of Minutes Matter. Her philosophy is "Systematize your business by doing the same thing the same way." She conducts seminars at D&WC conferences and International Window Covering Expos. She is also a Certified QuickBooks Pro Advisor.



Annie Davis of Elkhorn, NE, is the owner of Artisan Designs. This year she celebrates her tenth year as a workroom owner, and is also a member of WFCP and WAA. You can find Annie on the D&D PRO Forum under the screen name of "anniedavis."



Kate Kissell is the owner of Picadilly Interiors, a custom soft furnishings workroom that also offers redesign and staging in State College, PA. She has a degree in Art Education and a passion to share all that she has learned. She recently began offering home decorating classes out of her workroom. She is a member of SDP, WCAA and an advisory board member for the D&D PRO magazine.



Jenna Abbott is the sole proprietor of Sew Elegant by Jenna, a to-the-trade workroom founded in 2001 and located in Sacramento California. She is a founding member of the Northern California Chapter of the WCAA, the Executive Director of the National WCAA and a proud alumnus of the Custom Home Furnishings Academy in Charlotte, NC.



Beuancha Jeffries of Snellville, Ga. is the owner of Sew Cozy Interiors, a custom furnishings workroom catering to retail customers and designers. She is a graduate of Devry Institute with a AA Degree in Electronics. She has a passion for hand crafts and is a member of WCAA and the D&D Professional network.



Sarah Devaney-O'Neil is the owner of Storibook Designs Inc., a custom home furnishings and design business providing design and advice for both residential and commercial clients. She has 20+ years of leadership experience, including sales training and upper management positions for two large home furnishings retailers.



Susan W. Schurz is Brand Experience Manager for Rowley Company. Prior to joining Rowley, Susan owned Tavern Hill, a professional drapery workroom founded in 1988. She is an instructor for CHF Academy and a popular industry speaker. Susan has been featured in many books, magazines and CHF Academy workroom videos. She's a member of the WCAA and a WFCP Expert.



Judi Turner started her business while in Germany from 1991-1992. It began with a client base of expatriates who wanted the American style of window treatments for their German homes. Upon relocating stateside, Judi chose to remain in the home décor field and now, 17 years later, works with clients in several states and 3 countries.



Kristine Gregory is principal of Bedeckers Interior Effects Inc. Kristine is an Allied Member of American Society of Interior Designers, past president of the Richmond Chapter of WCAA and a WFCP Specialist. She is the only designer in the Richmond area who is an expert in both the psychology of color and personal organization. Visit her website at www.bedeckers.com.