

Designer Differences

By ERINN LOUCKS

Hot Topic

A look at the similarities and distinctions between emerging talent and more established professionals

According to Nielsen, millennials – the generation born between the early 1980s and early 2000s – make up about one quarter of the U.S. population today. Growing up in a technologically driven age, this group is known to have different methods of learning, working and communicating than the older population. And just like with the generations before them, these differences can be misunderstood. *KBB* listened to designers of each group – established and younger professionals – to find out where lines of communication can improve across the board.

Younger Talent



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

“I get labeled a lot when [clients] first meet me because I look so young. But I think for the most part after the initial meeting and they get to know me, my personality and my design experiences, they realize how I shouldn't be generalized as a 'millennial.' I offer a lot of design knowledge to them based on experience, of course, and I think that helps.”

–Alison Green, Jackson Design and Remodeling, San Diego



APPROACHING CLIENTS

“Every designer has their own style and way of working with clients, depending on what works best for them. To me, it is important to gauge what the client is comfortable with and adjust the approach from there. I personally like a more laid-back meeting that doesn't feel so formal, where everyone is relaxed.”

–Kailee Klevan, R. Henry Construction, Rochester, Minn.



TIPS FOR WORKING WITH ESTABLISHED DESIGNERS

“Working with an older designer is one of the best tools in my opinion, because they have the knowledge and experience that can help you excel within your industry. They also have a way of putting things into perspective that makes you understand the challenges you are facing.”

–David Podwyszynski, Rangepcraft Mfg., Fair Lawn, N.J.



WHAT THE OTHER GENERATION SHOULD KNOW

“I want other designers to know that we are no different. We grew up in a time of technology and self awareness, but we are still creative people by heart. We are still dreamers who have visions that go beyond our skills, and we need senior designers to help us achieve our goals.”

–Tyler Swartzmiller, Kitchen Kraft, Hilliard, Ohio



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

[Millennials] are fantastic – I have had my eyes opened up. They read a lot and really know how to research products thoroughly. They have amazing ideas, and they bring so many new things to the table.”

–Scott Dresner, Dresner Design, Chicago



APPROACHING CLIENTS

“There is no doubt that technology has benefits, but the caveat is that it takes away from the personal connections among designer, industry partners and most importantly, the client. I still prefer a more hands-on approach. Eliminating the human, one-on-one aspect of interior design sidesteps what the job is all about: the opportunity to meet people and help them realize their hopes, dreams and goals for a more beautiful lifestyle. Whether you are a seasoned veteran or an emerging talent, designers should never restrict their demographic or take anything for granted. While clients might gravitate toward designers their own age who they feel they might be able to identify with, ultimately age makes no difference when evaluating a designer's passion, experience and personal sense of style.”

–Lori Carroll, Lori Carroll & Associates, Tucson, Ariz.



TIPS FOR WORKING WITH MILLENNIALS

“Enjoy their new, younger perspective. Find young designers who want to grow and learn. We [established professionals] have a wealth of information to share. I have loved seeing some of the people who have worked for me leave a much better and stronger designer than when they first began working with me.”

–Christie Board, Board by Board Design, Prescott, Ariz.



WHAT THE OTHER GENERATION SHOULD KNOW

“Seasoned designers still have great ideas; we can relate to many clients due to experience. We may approach design solutions a bit differently, but we can still knock your socks off. I remember an assistant being awed that I could sketch a concept so quickly. I was awed that she could computer-generate a plan so quickly. We need both sets of skills to make a great team.”

–Sharon L. Sherman, Thyme & Place Design, Wyckoff, N.J.