

INDESIGN Magazine – Selecting a Designer Line

There are several reasons that you may be contemplating adding a designer line to your mix.

1. To drive traffic into your store through their marketing and advertising
2. To enter into a new product category
3. To cover a design look and feel that you believe your clients would buy

As this can be a significant financial investment it is wise to understand your needs and goals before deciding if you have a fit with this particular designer or not.

If you have decided to enter into a new product category, such as sterling silver or a higher range of watches, set objectives of how much incremental business can be generated by the line. Determine if the line has the potential to cannibalize another line you are carrying. If this is the case, know that the sales will not be all new business. Another objective could be margin, in which case estimate the gross margin dollars the brand will generate for you.

If driving traffic is your goal, be realistic about how many jewelry brands actually drive consumers into your door. There really are just a handful that drive traffic with any great frequency. Ask to speak for a few retailers who carry the brand to determine the traffic, conversion and sales volume.

Some designers serve as in-house brands – you are exposing your clients to them. Whether clients recognize the brand or not is less important. The high-end look of the product, display and collateral can enhance your store brand.

If your goal is to offer a distinct and unique styling, finding emerging designers can be just as effective as more established ones.

It is very important to understand who is carrying the line in your marketplace. Some designers think somewhat short term and place their lines in incompatible retailers, seeking sales at the cost of their brand. Ultimately that will affect how the consumer views the brand, and your store. Also research on-line to see whether there are on line retailers selling the line, and at what mark up. This also applies to brick and mortar retailers.