

home + housewares inspiration

ISSUE

16.2



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Letter from the Editors

Getting Social, Connected, Smart

Recognizing the importance of social media and all things online, the *International Housewares Association* and *International Home + Housewares Show* have, like many of you, adjusted our communication and marketing practices to account for new and emerging technology and platforms.

This is most apparent with the creation of the housewares industry's own consumer portal, *The Inspired Home*. Launched just over two years ago, through the *TheInspiredHome.com* website and related sites on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter, we have been able to reach millions of consumers directly, inspiring them to make their houses into homes, lead balanced and healthy lifestyles and to create moments to celebrate and connect with family and friends, ultimately driving housewares sales.

The Internet of Things is rapidly becoming a reality for housewares products, which brings new possibilities – and new challenges with much to learn. At the 2017 Show, the new *IHA Smart Home Pavilion* will feature exhibitors with

connected and smart products for different areas of the home, supported by expert consulting opportunities and various educational presentations.

This issue of *Home + Housewares Inspiration* was inspired by technology – the smart, social, connected opportunities for the housewares industry. We learn about the latest developments in the smart home and from social media influencers. And, providing insight on technology in stores, the *gia* Expert Jurors share with us their experiences and thoughts on the latest, innovative retail developments and what can be expected in the future.

We hope you enjoy this technology issue of *Home + Housewares Inspiration* – and welcome you to join us in learning more about the smart developments for the home and housewares industry at the 2017 International Home + Housewares Show in March! ■



Derek Miller
Vice President, Global Marketing
International Housewares Association



Piritta Törrö
International Marketing
International Housewares Association



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Contributing Editor



Michelle Hesper has 20 years experience in the publishing industry, having worked as a journalist, foreign correspondent, travel writer and editor in Australia, the US, Europe and Asia. She has a solid grounding in news/journalism, has written a book on industrial design, and has a passion for creating moving content across all media platforms. She is a regular travel presenter on Sky TV and is working on her first novel.

Michelle Hesper



RECYCLING & DISPLAY PROPS

by Martin M Pegler

Props, I would imagine, is short for “properties” and “properties” can be anything that adds something to a scene, a setting, a display. If we were to look around us, we would see we are standing in the center of a field of props: from the furniture in the room, the plants, the unused rolls of wallpaper, the tableware, the collection of pots and pans, the crushed lampshade to the broken venetian blinds on the windows. Faded is

not a reason to toss and discard. There is dyeing and painting. Props only become props when they are removed from where they are usually placed and set into a new—and better still—unexpected surrounding.

This is where the recycling or re-using or re-purposing comes in. Before destroying a thing, consider its intrinsic value as a prop.

Can you repaint an old kitchen chair, and will its new pink color

enhance the presentation of the pink home fashion accessories like throw pillows, napkins, vases, tea cups, etc. set out on it? It will bring the small products up closer to eye-level, and the incongruous “pink” of the utilitarian chair will catch the viewer’s eye.



How much more effective is that old, rusty metal shopping cart—now painted a clear, clean and bright white to get attention as well as carry some of the white products available inside the store. That old bentwood hat rack that is no longer being used can not only add a touch of nostalgia to a contemporary retail scene, but it can actually hold new variations of merchandise where once fashions-of-the-past appeared.

Manual typewriters? Not quite antiques and certainly not terribly useful today, but they are curiosities. They are nostalgic—they are memory pieces—they are quaint and old-fashioned and can compliment the newer than new. An old-fashioned and now no longer functioning sewing machine will get the viewer's attention and also recall "the good old days," whenever they were. Don't dump them. Treasure them and use them as come-on props—attention-getters to bring shoppers closer to the product presentation.

The display team should know the worth of these odd, "worthless" and strange (by today's standards) objects and use them effectively in clever and unexpected ways. The visual merchandising people in the shops illustrated here—both previous IHA Global Innovation Awards (*gia*) winners—certainly do. We hope they will inspire some of you to look more kindly at worn and underused objects—look more carefully at what is being discarded—adventure into second hand shops, flea markets and garage sales, and the whole world of trash. There is display "gold" in them. Enjoy and "Go Green"! ■



CUT Above

by Michelle Hespe

Michelle Hespe catches up with Shelley Young, owner of Chicago-based cooking school and gourmet retail store, The Chopping Block. It's a business on a mission to get the U.S. cooking.

The Chopping Block is Chicago's largest recreational cooking school and gourmet retail store, and yet so much more to so many people. From cooking demonstrations for newbies flexing their cooking wings to hands-on cooking classes where good home cooks can advance from their comfort zone, The Chopping Block is out to get everyone cooking confidently.

And for those who love their food with wine, The Chopping Block offers wine classes so that customers can learn about different varietals and how to properly pair food. The company also plays host to corporate team building events and organizes private cooking parties. No one is left out. Whether it's learning about the basics in cooking, knowing how to cook for kids, mastering the art of healthy living or enrolling in an intensive Boot Camp of cooking, The Chopping Block is as flexible and inspiring as it is innovative and forward-thinking.

"Our mission is to 'Get this Country Cooking,'" says owner and





founder of The Chopping Block, Shelley Young. “We are not a store that teaches cooking classes to improve retail sales. We are a school that sells products that support our customers achieving optimum results in the kitchen as efficiently as possible.”

Celebrity chefs and TV shows revolving around cooking have exploded around the globe over the past decade, and the phenomenon continues to gain momentum. In its wake, it has inspired millions of people around the world into having a go in the kitchen and turned others into enthusiastic home cooks. As more people embrace cooking and become more serious about the ingredients and what they eat, cooking becomes more of a

We are a school that sells products that support our customers achieving optimum results in the kitchen as efficiently as possible.

competitive industry by the day. So Shelley knows that she has to keep on her toes to keep The Chopping Block at the forefront of the scene.

“We do a lot of research to keep ahead of the pack,” she says. “We are always looking for new products no matter where we are, including when we travel. The Internet is also a great resource. We don’t do a lot of specific travel for buying, but rather incorporate our research into our personal travel.”



CUT Above

continued

Shelley also makes the point that her business does not have a focus on celebrity chefs as she is more interested in providing her customers with great cooks who know how to pass on their knowledge.

The worldwide boom in cooking, and the subsequent focus on produce and where it comes from, has also led to more products and produce being available to the average person because there is more demand for it. "We don't need to carry as many exotic ingredients as we once did because they are more readily available to the public now," explains Shelley. "For instance, you can get Mirin at a nice supermarket these days. And people prefer more hands-on

classes now, rather than watching demonstrations."

Shelley also differentiates The Chopping Block from the rest of her potential competitors by not being another store with a focus on new gadgets. "We don't carry gadgets," she says with passion. "We carry tools and products that our customers need and truly make a difference in the kitchen. We carry things that are beautiful as well as functional."

It's not just about keeping people cooking that will keep The Chopping Block growing, but about also keeping them inspired and informed, and knowing that they can rely on The Chopping Block to keep them on-trend in a time when there are so many offerings saturating the Internet. "Our cooking classes, private events and retail product mix provide a plethora of new ideas and stories to tell," she says.

"Whether it's a new ingredient, class or cooking trend that is happening or that we want to happen, we certainly like the idea of starting our own trends in Chicago."

Being a trendsetter is something that will keep customers coming back to The Chopping Block, but Shelley is also very aware that she and her staff need to stay focused on their mission statement, as it is easy to incorporate many ideas into a business and then the core becomes diluted.

"Being in a company like ours where there are a million new classes to offer, new products to carry, new culinary trends to explore and business ideas to chase, it is very easy to get sidetracked from what your core business is," she says. "Everybody has ideas for what you should be doing, but the challenge is to keep laser-focused on your core





business. There have been many times over the years when I have gotten sidetracked chasing a new idea, and I have learned to be very careful as you can lose valuable time and money chasing cool ideas that haven't been well thought out."

In fact, that is the advice that Shelley gives to anyone who is considering starting a business. "If I ever start another business, I would never do it without creating a Mission Statement - a vision for the company - and then spend the time and put in the effort to identify the core values of the company. If I had done that in the beginning, it would have saved me tons of time and money!"

Another crucial facet that continues to help the growth of

The Chopping Block is social media, because let's face it, you only need to look at Facebook, Instagram and blogs these days to see that people like to post photos of the meals they've cooked, the cakes they've baked or the food they're eating. "Social media is a wonderful way to engage in meaningful communication with our customers and to learn what they are interested in," says Shelley.

And although many businesses find negative social media commentary disheartening, Shelley loves it. "I actually love the negative feedback," she says. "Most of the time you don't get to hear what your customers are not happy about, and they tend to feel more free when it comes to feedback online. No matter how

crazy some of it is, there is usually a thread of truth in it if you are open enough to hear it. If you actually do something about it, it is a golden opportunity. It allows you the chance to offer a response, which helps you to articulate who your target customer is and weed out others who are not."

The Chopping Block is not just a business - it's the foundation of a community that has a healthy approach to living as its people are continually learning about good food and where it comes from. "I think the cultural element of the work we are doing is the most rewarding," says Shelley. "It is also the most misunderstood and perhaps least appreciated. We have been focused on building a healthy organization for years now, instead of focusing on growth and revenue. We think that meaningful, rewarding and lucrative growth can only happen on top of a solid foundation, and the biggest part of that is a healthy organization."

To learn more about The Chopping Block, visit www.thechoppingblock.com. ■



And The Melody

by Martin M Pegler

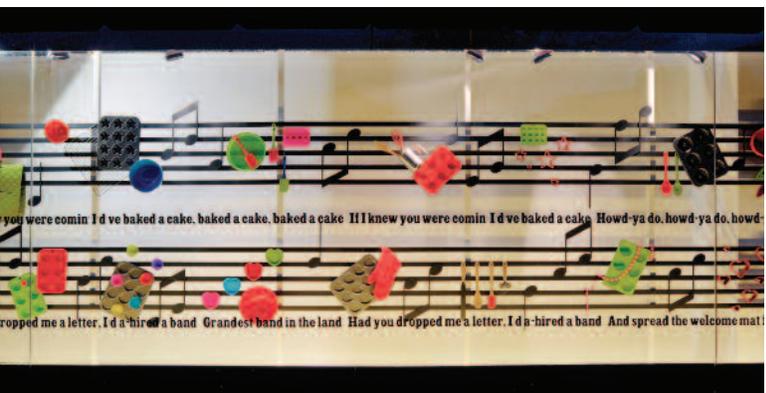
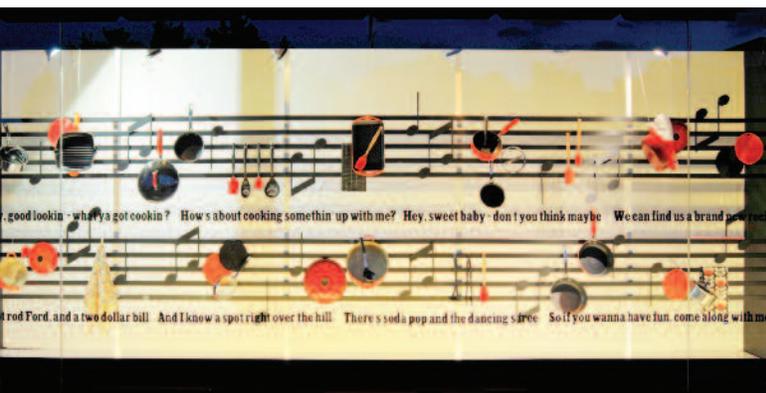
Imagine it is almost Christmas and the store is filled with happy holiday shoppers. Do I hear music playing? YES!! And probably the music is music of the season—like “White Christmas”—or “I’ll be Home For Christmas” or maybe even some

Christmas carols. Why the music and why these familiar melodies? Because music “soothes the soul,” is “the language of love” and “tames the savage beast.” But, most of all—it is familiar, friendly, welcoming and just so pleasant on the ears and the mind.

Now—let’s play a game. What songs do you think of when I say “spring,” “summer” or “fall”? How about “Easter,” “Mother’s Day,” “Father’s Day,” patriotic events? No matter where your store is located—what country, what culture—you will have a song or a tune for most any occasion or promotion you are planning to boost your brand and your product lines. And that is what this is all about!!!

Music may be “the speech of angels” and “the universal language,” but it may also be a great source of attention-getting window displays as you are about to see. We turn to Tommy Aitchison, regional visual merchandising manager of Bentalls in the UK to explain. It seems he has had the idea gestating for a while—how to use songs or the lyrics of popular tunes to create promotional displays. People may not know all the lyrics but will recognize the song and remember it. Aitchison wanted a device where he could show a variety of products in dimension on a flat or two-dimensional surface. The music sheet concept was also the perfect solution with the small products applied as “notes” over the printed words of the song.

The images shown here were photographed by Charlie Macdonald, and the music cues are as follows: “If I knew you were coming, I’d have baked a cake” for bakeware and “Hey good lookin’—what’s cookin’” for cooking needs. In addition, there was “Heart of glass” for glassware, “China in my hand” for tableware, “I’ll sit right down and write myself a letter” as a way to feature stationary and “Candle in the wind” for assorted candles and air fresheners.



Lingers On

No matter where your store is located—what country, what culture—you will have a song or a tune for most any occasion.

This song was brought to you by LSA...



...hitting the right note on the Lower Ground Floor

This song was brought to you by Paddywax...



...hitting the right note on the Lower Ground Floor

The black on white music sheet was carried through from window to window and made the whole promotion that much more effective. I don't know if they did or not, but playing recordings of these old timers inside the store would have added a great nostalgic touch to the whole scheme. Would it have been too much if the music was piped out into the street, like some stores do at Christmas time, for added emphasis? The promotion was very effective and successful. You couldn't wish for more than happy and smiling customers who are humming golden oldies—and buying!

Think music as a source for sales; "Falling Leaves" for falling prices. Think of "The Last Time I Saw Paris" for French imports, any one or more of Italianate songs for an Italian festival and so many other songs with foreign or exotic settings for special import events. Even if your shoppers don't recognize the words or even the tunes, they will respond to the pleasurable sounds and visual delights you have prepared for them. After all, as Shakespeare wrote, "If music be the food of love—play on," therefore nourish your customers with good products, well presented and with music to remember. ■

Tech Savvy: What's in Store

by Michelle Hespe

The one thing that the two *gia* expert jurors will tell anyone, is that service never goes out of style, and yes, the customer is still always right. They also both agree that no matter what platform you are playing on, or what you are doing in your brick and mortar store, a combination of innovation, strategy and a savvy application of technology is now a key driver to success in retail. There is no getting around it—you need to keep adapting to current trends in technology, or you risk being left behind.

"There are so many trends in technology, and new ones emerging every day, but for a retailer these trends are incredibly relevant, and they call for action in the daily running of a store," says Henrik. "Because when

technology changes, so too does a customer's behavior and expectations. And that affects your sales."

For instance, he explains, when an average customer today sees something online that they like, they expect to be able to buy that item right away. "If my wife sees a photo of a bag on Pinterest or Instagram, she expects to be able to click and buy the item and not have to spend time walking around looking for it in a store. And my kids? Well, they believe that if a product is not available online - then it doesn't exist!" he laughs.

Henrik explains that this shift in consumer behavior means that stores need to be present where the customer discovers the product, and not wait until they have decided to buy it, and visit a

Two of the expert jurors on the IHA Global Innovation Awards—Wolfgang Gruschwitz and Henrik Peter Reisby Nielsen—speak to Michelle Hespe about technology in retail. What's happening now, what to look out for, and how to adapt and succeed. Also, we learn from Michelle Grant, the Head of Retailing at Euromonitor International, about practical examples on how some leading global home and housewares retailers are using innovative technical solutions in their stores to improve the customer experience.

store. "The traditional in-store visual merchandising is now digital merchandising as well," he says. "That is a defining trend regarding technology in retail spaces. Retailers need to be present on many channels and platforms in order to keep up with competitors and their customers. It is a challenge but also a great opportunity."

Wolfgang agrees, adding that retailers now have to live with 360° marketing, get digital and to look deeply into a client's behavior, analyze what they have bought, what they like and what they do. "Don't ask them what they want,"





When an average customer today sees something online that they like, they expect to be able to buy that item right away.

he says. "Instead, look at their habits, as they are key. Create your habits from these, and offer help and support with technical equipment so that their experience is as good as it can be. All the while, love what you are doing. That will never change—do everything that you do with passion and enthusiasm and the people will come to you."

Wolfgang explains some easy first steps towards getting to know your customer. "Retailers need to collect all information that they can in a CRM system and look carefully into the patterns and kinds of demands that come from their customers, then they can give them problem-solving tools and goods," he says. "Henrik's CleverBinder (an app that helps

consumers keep track of documents by snapping a picture of the product and the receipt, naming it and placing it in a virtual binder) for instance, is an important tool to learn about the clients demands and what they have bought."

Another innovative and affordable tech option is using beacons. "Major retail chains are now installing beacons in their stores, and the great thing is, they are cheap (about USD\$2) and easy to use," Wolfgang says. "One of my smartphone developers programmed a beacon and placed it in the coffee shop where he buys his coffee each morning on his way to the office. When he enters the store he automatically receives a push notification so the store's loyalty app opens and is ready to be scanned at the point of sale."

One of Wolfgang's latest projects takes the application of the latest technology to another level. He worked on a project for Sport Ochsner, a company that has 30 percent of the sporting market



Houzz Sketch

share in Switzerland. "For them, we planned an interactive soccer arena, where you could shoot against 3m x 2.5m touchscreen, and play soccer with virtual goal keepers," he says. We also combined the analogue work out with digital tools, such as counting the times/scores and the calories burned when combining the workout with a health app. The company uses foot scanners for measuring feet, and ways to individualize sports clothing—such as lasering a name on shoes or printing emoticons on shirts or shorts. These kinds of things are now becoming normal things to do in-store."

Both men discuss the fact that some disruptive forces are coming from robotics, artificial intelligence and virtual reality. "To many

Tech Savvy: What's in Store

continued

retailers, this might be too crazy and too far away to actually make sense today," says Wolfgang. "Admittedly these things are still too technology driven to be widely applied in retail now. They need to be further developed to become useful to customers, and they are only useful if they make life easier and remove the friction around shopping."

Henrik believes that some of the things we might see emerging from this latest wave of disruptive technology could be virtual store catalogues or in-store robots. "The customer will tell the robot what they are looking for and the robot will go and find it," he says. "The robot may even provide information about the product, and the customer could be recognized by their voice and be able to pay using biometrics."

"I see more examples of collaborative retailing, where one small store has more than one function," says Wolfgang. "People in a community can use a store

for events for instance, and they can pick up parcels from their online shopping hub and then maybe even take a meal home with them, offered by an in-store restaurant. The store is marketed almost like a community house, which is a noticeable trend."

What does all this mean to retailers in the home and housewares industry? Michelle Grant shares some inspiring examples from her research team, studying the developments in retailing worldwide. "Home improvement and home furnishings retailers have been the first to embrace augmented reality and virtual reality as both technologies allow for people to envision purchases, especially expensive ones, in their homes before making a commitment," she says.

"Houzz has its new product, Sketch, which allows people to visualize how home furnishings

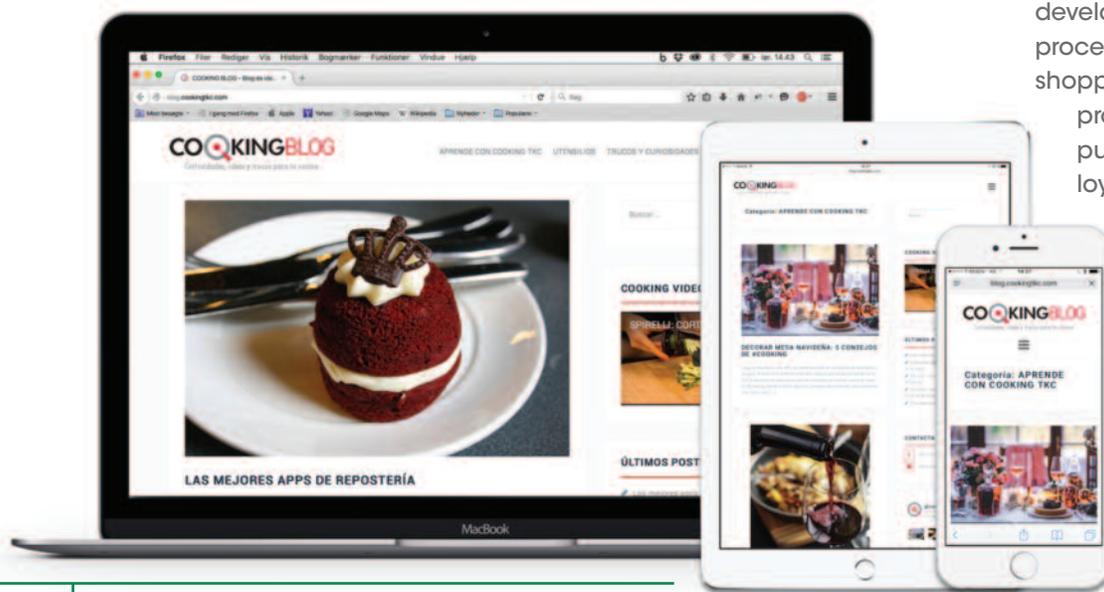


Wayfair View



will look in their homes. WayFair launched an app called WayFair View that works on Google's Tango AR platform that allows people to visualize products in their homes and add those items to a shopping cart to complete a purchase. IKEA also has an app that uses augmented reality to preview products in your home," Michelle lists. "Also, for virtual reality, Lowe's has The Holoroom. A designer oversees the Oculus headset to help consumers design their own home."

Home and housewares retailers can also learn from Sephora, a retailer that is successfully leveraging shoppers' mobile habits. The retailer noticed its shoppers were utilizing their mobile devices for various purposes while shopping in-store—price comparisons, product information, product reviews—and developed an app to facilitate this process. Using the mobile app, shoppers can scan products for product reviews, view their purchase history, redeem loyalty points and more. As a result, Sephora's mobile orders increased nearly 170 percent, and the retailer also saw an increase in frequency of purchase by customers that are a part of its loyalty program. ■



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Profit from High Profile Exhibitors and World Class Design

The International Home + Housewares Show in Chicago is the leading global marketplace to see the latest market-driven homegoods products, designs and trends. It is a must-attend event for retailers and distributors who want to improve their business by differentiating their product offering and concepts.

With a strong focus on high-quality, high-design global brands, the Show features the entire product lines of the leading U.S. housewares brands, product suppliers and designers — not just the products pre-selected for export markets displayed at non-U.S. shows. Buyers have a chance to find innovative new products and product lines that are not yet available in other markets.

Featuring 2,200 exhibitors from more than 45 countries, the Show is organized into five expos:

- Dine + Décor
- Discover Design
- International Sourcing Expo
- Clean + Contain
- Wired + Well – the world's leading household electrics exhibition!

Be Inspired by Innovative Retail and Insightful Expert Presentations

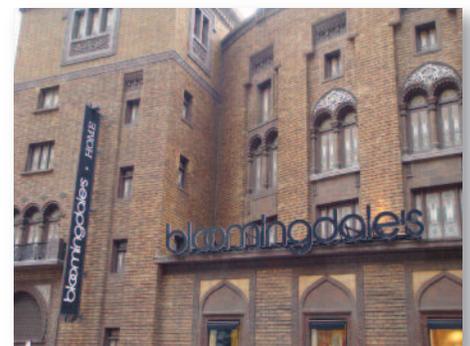
Retailers from around the world visit Chicago to find inspiration from unique stores and retail concepts. Leading home and housewares retailers such as Williams Sonoma, Crate and Barrel, Sur La Table, Bloomingdales Home and The Container Store all have Chicago flagship stores where you'll be able to discover innovative merchandising and store branding, superior customer service and unique ideas.

In addition to the inspiration and ideas found visiting the great Chicago retailers, the International Home + Housewares Show offers first-class educational and networking opportunities for both specialty retailers and corporate buyers – special exhibitions and displays and a full lineup of seminars on trends & design, visual merchandising and branding, retail success factors and consumer preferences. Note especially the Pantone Color Watch display and seminars for the 2017/2018 color and material trends!

Save Travel Time and Money

You can easily make Chicago your “one-stop” sourcing fair. In contrast to other trade events, most Show services are free, including admission to both the exhibit halls and the vast seminar program with pre-registration, Show catalogue and efficient shuttle service to the nearby fairgrounds from downtown Chicago hotels.

Show information and FREE online pre-registration:
www.housewares.org



Introducing Anne Kong: *gia*'s New Expert Juror

by Michelle Hespe

The IHA Global Innovation Awards (*gia*) program is guided by a wealth of housewares industry and retail expertise: the national *gia* sponsors are the leading professional housewares trade publications in their own countries and adding credibility to the program, the four expert jurors are internationally recognized experts in visual merchandising, store design and marketing. The *gia* year 2016-2017 brings with it a change to the composition of the *gia* expert jury.



For the past decade, there have been three expert jurors (Martin M. Pegler, Wolfgang Gruschwitz and Scott Kohno) and in 2010, a fourth juror, Henrik Peter Reisby Nielsen joined the panel. After the 2016 *gia* events in Chicago in March, Martin—who has more than 60 years in the industry and is the author and editor for 80 books—retired from his position as an expert juror, which he'd held since the inception of *gia* in 2000.

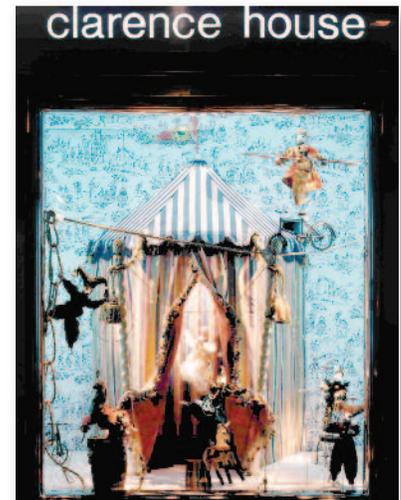
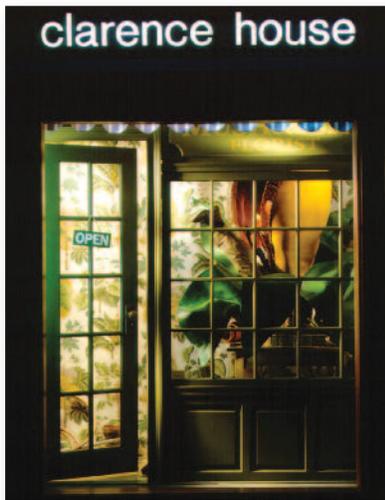
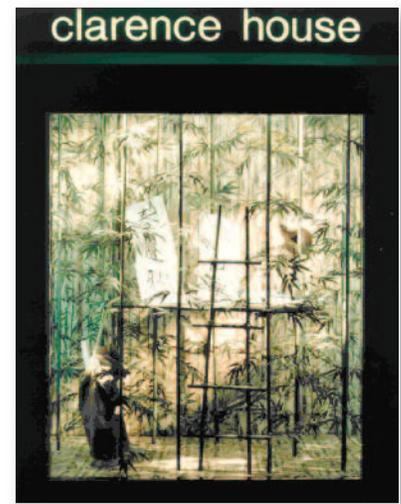
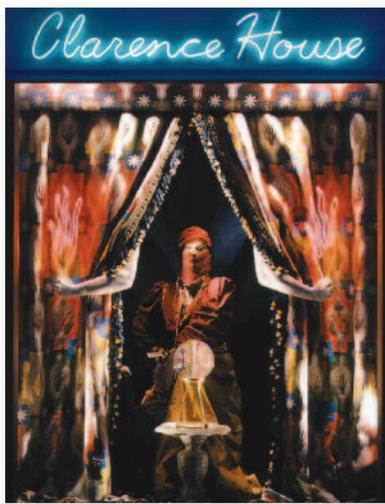
Although this left some big shoes to fill, Martin recommended Anne Kong, who has stepped up to accept the position. Anne is a renowned educator and designer specializing in visual merchandising, exhibitions and special



events. She has worked alongside Martin for many years and is co-authoring the 7th edition of his textbook, *Visual Merchandising and Display*.

The International Housewares Association, as the global sponsor and organizer of the *gia* program, is pleased to welcome Anne, who is the Associate Professor and former Chairperson of the Visual Presentation and Exhibition Design Department at Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York. She has over 20 years of experience in her field, and designs solutions for retail, brands and promotional events.

Anne is renowned for innovating professional collaborations between retailers and brands to enhance the classroom experience. "Every day presents new challenges, and I see these as opportunities for me to influence how FIT grows," she says. "The result of this fantastic partnership has enabled me to inspire hundreds of students each



year, develop new projects, advance the curriculum, narrow the gap between the industry and the classroom and become an industry leader.”

Anne has many experiences under her belt that will no doubt provide her with endless inspiration that she can apply to her work as a *gia* expert juror. For example, she has implemented many things during her tenure at FIT that have changed the way that students—future designers—think and work.

“In 2001, I witnessed the changing face of retail and visual merchandising: large format graphics became an integral part of the

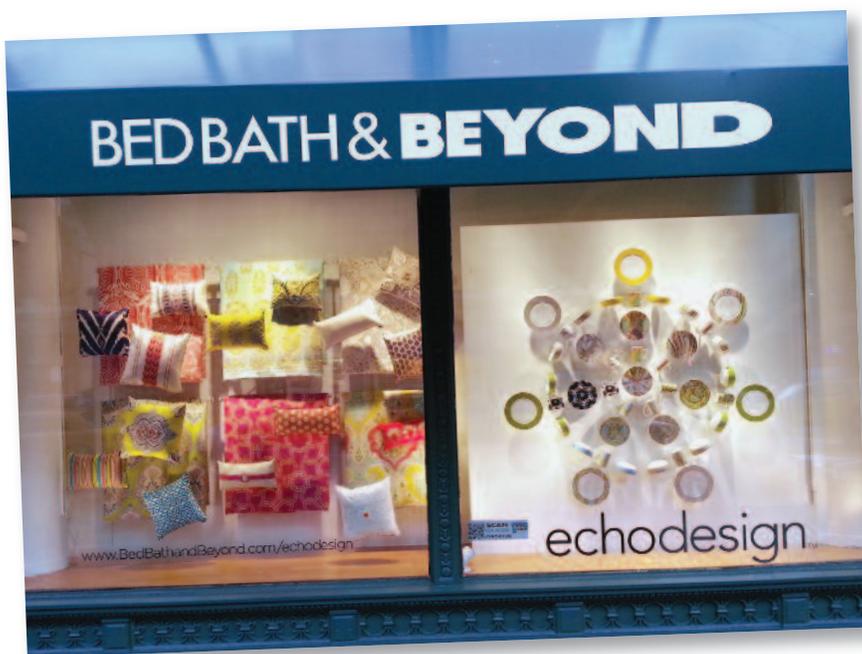
VM formula, and I knew we needed this technology in our classrooms,” Anne says. “So I reached out to FIT faculty retiree Martin M. Pegler and the Society of Visual Merchandisers for a grant of US\$15,000 to start up a department lab and purchase a 42” large format plotter for our studio courses. This equipment enabled students to output ceiling to floor graphic panels and brand messaging to accompany their mannequin displays. This effort also inspired the VPED lab we have today—a facility equipped with over 20 Mac computers, specialized software, vinyl printing and cutting technologies equivalent to those used in retail

store VM departments, museums and event companies. The lab is utilized by any student taking VPED courses and has inspired the Packaging Design program to utilize similar technologies.”

It is Anne’s belief that the method in which one learns has everything to do with what one learns. For example, “Developing and exercising sustainability in design is an action, not a trend, and the impact of our design choices (as designers) is key to modelling our students as global citizens,” she says. “As designers, we are collaborators who have tremendous power to educate, inform and influence the public.”

Introducing Anne Kong: *gia*'s New Expert Juror

continued



The impact of our design choices (as designers) is key to modelling our students as global citizens.

when a student has access to multiple professional opinions, beyond the faculty of the course, while molding a project rather than simply as a final critique. These mentors offer alternative views on design, perception and provide guidance on progress, production, materials and color."

Part of the role of a *gia* expert juror is to mentor retailers, so Anne will be available to the national *gia* winners at the International Home + Housewares Show in Chicago, if they would like to seek her advice and guidance.

Mentoring is something that Anne excels at, and every year gains great insight into the industry from the international student gallery at the PAVE (Planning & Visual Education Partnership) Gala that she helps to organize in New York. The event attracts more than 1,000 industry professionals, with students from all over the world showcasing their work and networking at the prestigious gathering.

"I seize the opportunity to utilize industry professionals

and alumni as mentors in course projects," Anne explains. "I regularly have three to five industry professionals join our class to mentor students individually during a design project. I believe this is exponentially more valuable

Anne is rightfully very proud to have been part of the collaborative interdisciplinary team that worked on the development of the Communication Design Foundation program, through which she wrote the first course





responsible for the BFA transition DE216 (Foundation in Display and Exhibit Design). "This immersive course for Communication Design AAS students allows them to experience a full scope of the various industries connected to VPED: retail, museum, event and trade, and allows them to experiment in both design and fabrication techniques," she says.

Along with teaching within the Associate Degree and the newly launched Bachelors programs, Anne teaches design for retail and visual presentation to students in the Fashion Merchandising Management,

As designers, we are collaborators who have tremendous power to educate, inform and influence the public.

Cosmetic and Fragrance Marketing BFA program, and the Packaging Design BFA program. "Often these courses are the first experience a student has to learn about the exciting business of retail design," she explains. "I strive to bring a new awareness to the challenges and opportunities to successfully impact the retail environment."

There's no doubt about it—the insights that Anne's experience, courses and her work generates will provide invaluable inspiration for future *gia* winners, and she'll bring a new skillset and outlook to the expert jury. We warmly welcome Anne to the *gia* family! ■

Incorporating Technology Into Your Independent Homewares Retail Mix

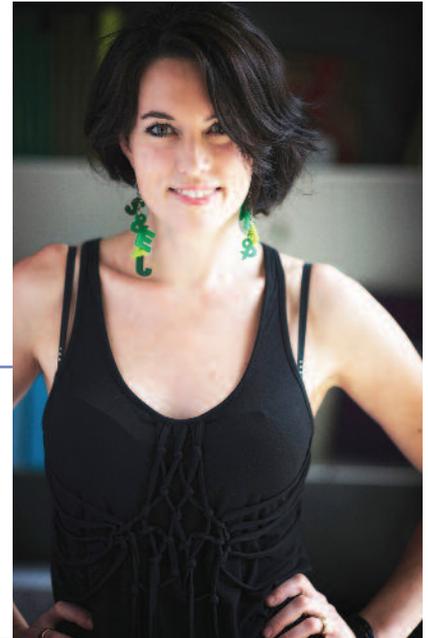
by Terri Winter

Technology is no longer isolated to tech-heads and gadget nerds. There are a large range of products that integrate technology into your décor, going by the category name "fashtronics." These design-focused objects integrate technology for function – not for technology's sake.

Fashtronics is a growing category in home décor. Examples of this trend include digital radios that come in timber finishes as well as a wide variety of colors to work in with your home décor.

Here we explore some areas that might integrate into your current product mix. As a home and housewares retailer you can dabble in this giftable and home focused category.

Terri Winter is the co-owner and founder of retail store top3 by design in Australia.



Headphones

Headphones are fast becoming a required urban accessory. Like sunglasses or a handbag, they are often a statement of style and status. Look at your customer profile carefully to select your preferred range. Once again, avoid brands heavily represented in large chains if you want to maintain a healthy margin.

You can select by color palettes that merchandise with your existing range and provide teen gifting options you might not currently be able to provide to your regulars. They all have sons, daughters, nephews and nieces to buy for! Again, look at the price points to decide where your offering should sit.

Headphones will fall into your urban-under-\$250 collections right up to over \$600, which you may wish to leave to audio specialists unless you are super confident about your demographic and your own capacity to train your staff on the benefits of your selection.





Digital Radios

There are a huge number of brands on the market to suit your target demographics price range and style. At top3 by design, my retail store, we focus on high-quality audio combined with design for our customers to integrate into their contemporary household or office environment.

The wonderful thing about Digital Radio is the simplicity of use and the enormous amount of stations available – including customers’ existing traditional stations streamed on their digital networks. Specialty stations cover hundreds of genres to suit any musical taste.



If you want to avoid the ACTUAL tech but still explore this growing category, consider products that enhance the

Bluetooth Music Devices

Bluetooth has come a long way in sound clarity and is no longer isolated to cheap throwaway devices. This is your easiest foray into “light” digital as part of a homewares mix.

With music libraries now supported through iTunes, Spotify or just stored on a mobile or laptop, Bluetooth gives flexibility and the ability to stream music with the proper sound quality you expect from your music library. Laptop speakers simply don’t give your music the support it deserves.

There is a huge spectrum of Bluetooth audio devices available, and they generally fall into very specific price-points.



Low (under \$50) - Many available at cheap outlets. It may be best to avoid most of them at this price-point in the homewares market. Fun ones could be a good teenage gift option if you are lacking in that area - however, teens are growing more and more savvy, and you may find it won’t be up to what they expect from technology! Generally, if the sound quality is of any note, they won’t be re-chargeable for portable use.

Low-mid (\$50-\$100) - Simple, often portable and good sound quality. There are many design-led options that can set you apart from the audio hi-fi shops and technology department stores. Look for boutique brands that want a design-led and lifestyle retailer. Most will be rechargeable for portable use.

Mid-high (\$100-\$350) - Often combined with other features such as USB battery backup for your mobile, camera or other USB chargeable devices, or LED lights for evening outdoor use.

High (\$350+) - Usually part of a more substantial audio device such as clock radio or digital radio. You get great sound quality. These devices are a décor object rather than just a Bluetooth device, often combined with quality materials and will feature leather details or aluminium or timber casings instead of plastic or silicone detailing.

use of your customers’ tech. Cable organizers, storage boxes for powerboards, iPad holders for use in the kitchen while cooking...

You may even have products in your existing range that you can promote to accessorize with your customers’ technology. For example, breakfast

trays, which can double for laptops, or shelving systems that can disguise or incorporate the necessary cables for modern devices.

To learn more about top3 by design, visit www.top3.com.au.



Generations of Inspiration

by Michelle Hespe

Achieving 100 years in business is something worth talking about. But Bazar La Iberica, a family-run retailer operating in a country with only 3 million inhabitants (half of which live on very low income) has long since passed that milestone. The retailer will soon celebrate its 125th birthday—an incredible feat that has involved resilience, passion, honesty, integrity and ultimately, the application of great business skills and innovation.

It has been 11 years since La Iberica won the *gia* Uruguay award and participated in the IHA Global Innovation Awards celebrations in Chicago. Since then, it has continued to go from strength to strength, adapting to the modern retail world where technology reigns, while also fiercely protecting its rich heritage.

La Iberica is housed in the original building in which it was established by Patricia's grandfather in 1892—a three-story, 19th century building with five-meter-high ceilings, hardwood floors (the original wooden planks from when it was built) and majestic iron columns. It is firmly entrenched in the historic quarter of Uruguay's capital city, Montevideo, and although it has been completely renovated over the past 124 years, its antique charm has been carefully, thoughtfully preserved for all to enjoy.

"It has always been a family company, and I'm very proud of being its Director while maintaining its position as the leading company of our sector in the country," says Patricia.

"Uruguay has always been a conservative country, attached to old tastes and to aesthetics and ideas inspired by the surrounding environment, but this has radically changed over the past decade or so."

She explains that the Internet and social media have had an enormous impact on Uruguay's retail industry, and on La Iberica itself. "They have opened peoples' minds and eyes to an alternative world of design and beauty, allowing them to appreciate forms of beauty from other parts of the world that in the past only very few people, who travelled a lot, have had the chance to appreciate."

This has enabled La Iberica to shift from being a company that could only sell classic pieces of furniture to one offering an enormous variety of decor styles and modern design. "Previously, whenever we had any avant-garde design products, they just wouldn't sell!" Patricia exclaims.

"Today, our customers have embraced design as a way of life, as a form of channeling the expression of their personality. We have really profited from this—we

Michelle Hespe speaks to Patricia Lockhart, owner and director of Uruguay's award-winning retail store, Bazar La Iberica.





love bringing objects of all kinds to our customers so they can create interiors that they can relate to. This has positioned us not only as a company that sells quality products for the home, but also one that brings the latest design objects from across the world to Uruguay. That sets us apart," says Patricia.

As Patricia's daughters are the fourth generation working in the store, there are strong ties to the past. But La Iberica has definitely evolved, and today it has three strong pillars upon which the philosophy and branding of the company is based:

1. Variety of choice: La Iberica has always offered a huge, diverse



range of products for the home (decor, kitchen gadgets, light fittings, etc.) and everything to furnish a home in a variety of styles, whether that be classic, contemporary, 50s-style, modern, Scandinavian, vintage or reclaimed wood furniture.

2. Strong, good work ethics toward customers, employees and suppliers: "We are recognized in the country for our honesty with all the company stakeholders," says Patricia.
3. A dedication to not only keeping up with changes in people's lifestyle—and their needs, wants, expectations—but a focus on anticipating them. "We identify customers' needs before they even know they have them," she explains.

In addition to the three pillars, La Iberica has been firmly focused on incorporating the latest technology to enhance the shopping experience. This is a big step for retailers of any size, as it takes dedication, money and a thorough understanding of not

only what is available in an ever-changing market but what is best suited to a particular business' growth, and ultimately, its strategy.

"Our first big incorporation of technology was the creation of our online shop several years ago," Patricia says. "Our online store is one step ahead of all other online shopping websites in the country, and we continue to enhance it every day. In this sense, the younger generation has given it a huge drive."

La Iberica's online store has also enabled it to boost sales across the entire country, whereas in the past its market was quite restricted to the capital city and the nearby east coast of Uruguay. And even though Patricia believes that the shopping experience in its physical store is incomparable— "People just love being here and walking around admiring the space and everything in it," she says—their online shopping option is a solution for those who live a bit too far or have no time to come over.

Generations^{of} Inspiration *continued*



"That's why we're working nonstop to enhance the purchase experience online and also provide as much information as possible about our products on our website," she says. "We want the experience of navigating our website to be a visual pleasure too, and it's important for us to maintain

a consistency between the aesthetics of our store and our website."

Patricia and her team certainly do roll with the times, keeping up with the furious pace of change. In fact, she believes that change is the only constant thing in doing business. "After 124 years of doing business, we embrace change with enthusiasm. We think intuition

and experience are key to telling fads and real changes in business practices apart."

This willingness to wholeheartedly embrace change and a modern way of retailing, while also holding on tight to its rich heritage and showcasing its cultural roots, is something that the judges and expert jury in the IHA Global Innovation Awards (*gia*) applauded. However, as a fourth generation retailer in a country that she is incredibly proud of, Patricia viewed the award as not only an accolade for La Iberica, but also something positive for her people.

"Gaining recognition from abroad is always an added value in Uruguay, because our people feel any triumph such as this, as their own," she explains. "So winning a *gia* award made us proud of ourselves and also of our customers and our country. We love representing Uruguay positively outside our borders, and showing others that we can create amazing, inspiring things."

For more information on Bazar La Iberica, visit <https://www.laiberica.com.uy>.



Discovering Design :Stelton

by Vicki Matranga

Forming a Design Brand

More than 50 years ago, two friends, Stellan and Carton, merged their first names to form Stelton, which became one of Denmark's best-known design brands. Niels Stellan Høm and Carton Madelaire partnered to start a trading company in 1960. After marketing sports shoes and furniture, they learned about a small factory, Danish Stainless, in Fårevejle, Denmark, that produced stainless steel tableware. In an agreement with the company, they began marketing its products, which were popular in 1960s Denmark. Building on that style trend to sell in the United States, Stelton products represented the best of Danish design to American consumers.

Peter Holmblad joined Stelton as managing director and applied his vision to create a new design brand with fresh catalogues, packaging and graphic design. Facing an environment of many competing companies making similar products, Holmblad was convinced that Stelton could survive only through new product design. As the stepson of Arne Jacobsen, Denmark's great

architect and designer, Holmblad tried to convince Jacobsen to design something new for Stelton.

Decades of Design Classics

Arne Jacobsen created a tea and coffee service, as well as bowls, an ice bucket and pitchers for the dining table and bar - all in stainless steel. Launched three years later as the Cylinda-Line, the products featured simple cylindrical shapes and specially designed plastic handles. Cylinda's brushed steel surfaces were a striking contrast to the highly polished curves of competitors' items.

A 30-year collaboration began when Peter Holmblad's business acumen blended with designer Erik Magnussen's creative power in the Stelton Vacuum Jug. In the 1980s and 1990s, the duo produced many design successes that appealed to generations of gift givers.

New Directions Balance Function and Design

Peter Holmblad sold Stelton in 2004 and the new owner, Michael Ring, reinvigorated the company, trimming the assortment and inviting new designers to furnish innovative product ideas to meet current consumer needs. Stelton added new lines to appeal to a broader range of consumer groups.

Michael says he finds inspiration for new products when taking his sailboat from Vedbaek (Denmark)

Vicki Matranga, Design Programs Coordinator at the International Housewares Association, talks to Stelton's owner, Michael Ring, to learn more about the company's history and approach to design.



Discovering Design :Stelton

continued

around the island Hven, sailing alone with the wind and the ocean. "The perfect harmony allows my mind to wander and new concepts emerge," he explains.

Creating products that exemplify Scandinavian design, where "less is more," he is not influenced by Versailles in Paris or other very decorative eras. "I love classic modern architecture of the 1950s to 1970s in Manhattan or what is being built now in Guangzhou, China," Michael says. "Twice a year, we send out design briefs to the designers who have already created products for us. New designers can send in proposals for what they think we are missing. We go through hundreds of design proposals, select what we like best and leave those concepts on the conference table for several weeks. Then we revisit the ideas to determine the final choices."

Modern Products— Designed for All Ages and Uses

"We identify our core audience when we outline a design brief," Michael explains. "We have different product lines, and some aim for a slightly differing demographic."

For example, RIG-TIG and Stelton are two different brands. RIG-TIG, which means "right" in Danish, focuses on the right function, design and resources. Stelton products are items for the table and for home decor; RIG-TIG offers multi-function kitchenware. The company tries to reduce the environmental impact of producing these products wherever possible," Michael says. The most representative RIG-TIG items are the BOX-IT Bread Box, the DISHY 2-in-1 Solution and the EASY Collection.

Stelton's elegant, timeless designs epitomize Danish minimalism, now appropriate for 21st century homes. Aiming to increase global awareness of the brand,



Stelton realigned its international trade show calendar to present its full range of products in its appearance at the 2017 International Home + Housewares Show.

"Too many retailers in our industry do not present consumers with what they should buy tomorrow, but show them what they bought last year," Michael says. In Chicago, Stelton will premier its latest collections of functional, beautiful products - bringing Danish design for tomorrow to new audiences.

For more interviews with interesting designers and housewares innovators, visit the Discovering Design blog.

To learn more about Stelton and its products, see www.stelton.com. See the variety of RIG-TIG offerings at www.rig-tig.com. ■



Rebellious Energy SS18

by Emily Nicholson, Trend Researcher, Trend Bible

Looking ahead to 2018, there are several shifts in consumer mood that are driving trends in design for the home. One major influence is a growing consumer desire to seek out newness and do things differently. This rebellious attitude is influencing a much bolder and futuristic aesthetic within the home, particularly for the Spring Summer season.

Rebellious Energy, as forecast in our Spring Summer 2018 trend book, embraces an experimental approach to design. Inspired by a consumer appetite for unique experiences and exposure to a breadth of visual inspiration online, references across fashion, architecture and interiors merge.

A trend of contrasts, *Rebellious Attitude* is all about breaking and making your own rules. Hard and soft, gritty and gentle sit alongside one another creating a deeply sensorial and textural experience. Tribal marks and brushstrokes are combined with angular, clean shapes. Industrial style materials are paired with soft quilted fabrics like misty cotton prints and stretch jersey to create a statement mismatch. Providing an exclusive preview into this trend, we explore some of the key design elements.

Color

An intentionally low-key color palette of warm neutrals and aqua shades allows for plenty of interesting finishes, especially for the kitchen. Oily iridescent, glitter and mirrored surfaces contrast dramatically with chalky ceramics. Combined with a base of industrial metal shades, flickers of silver inject drama into this commercial palette.



Petrol Iridescent

Iridescent and petrol effects are a key design feature for decorative accessories in glass and ceramics. Colors merge and flow together, changing with the light. As more consumers incorporate darker color schemes into the household, we see this trend emerging in the kitchen as a way to subtly add experimental color.

@Tom Dixon



@Trend Bible archive



Rebellious **Energy** SS18

continued

Shape: Faceted Formations

Filtering through from print and pattern trends, appliances and accessories in the kitchen become more geometric in shape with angular, multi-faceted designs. Art-deco classics provide a sleek silhouette and influence new minimal shapes for kettles, teapots and hardware in the kitchen.



@Cross Tree Store

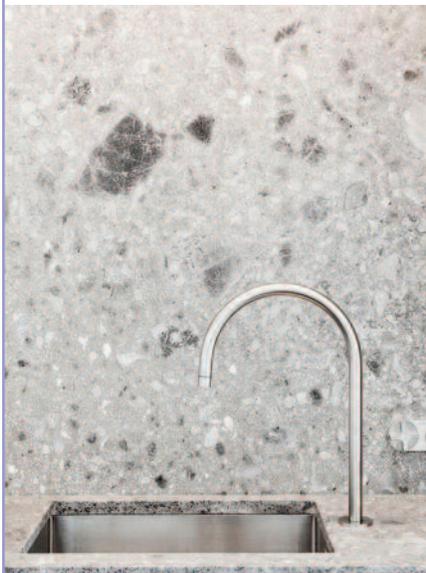
Trend Bible is a home and interiors-dedicated forecasting agency working with leading international brands to help them understand the future of their market. They forecast future trends in the behavior of consumers in a two-to-five year timeframe and analyze how this will impact the home environment.

Polished Silver

Silver looks clean and polished and offers dramatic contrast when paired with concrete, stone and luxury granites. High-shine silver finishes are also continued through onto ceramics and textiles. The inside of bowls adopt a luxury silver shine and kitchen textiles have a foiled finish, appearing almost as if they've been dipped in liquid silver.



@Trend Bible archive



@Obumex



@Vinkanna Nisson



@Victoria Pobgee

Abstract Brush Strokes

Abstract mark making across decorative accessories is textured and hand-rendered. As more consumers seek to be unique, abstract prints where no two products are exactly the same add distinctiveness to commercial ranges.



@Marie Liebhardt



@Sophie Victoria Elliot

Industrial Metal Frames

Metal frames are a key design feature in this trend and are left bare and uncovered. Black metals have a matt finish and are combined with black stained woods to create an industrial finish, as seen on The Uncino chair by Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec. As wooden finishes become more prevalent within appliance design, this combination of materials would work equally well for smaller kitchen items.

@Ronan and Erwan
Bouroullec Design



@Minacciolo S.r.l.



Rebellious Energy forms 1 of 4 trends published in the Trend Bible Spring Summer 2018 Home and Interiors trend book, available to buy from their online shop at www.trendbible.com/shop.

For more information on how trend forecasting can grow your business, get in touch with Trend Bible at enquiries@trendbible.com or sign up to free monthly trend updates via the Trend Bible website.

Trend Bible will be presenting some of the key trends for the home that retailers should be responding to for 2018 at the International Home + Housewares Show next March. ■

Keeping Connected

by Michelle Hespe

Michelle Hespe meets Carley Knobloch (or Carley K, like her blog is called), a digital lifestyle expert, to chat about the Internet of Things and the smart home. As a retailer, you need to embrace this new wave of technology or risk falling behind your competitors.



@Daniel Collopy

A couple of years ago, most people hadn't heard of Internet of Things (IoT) or the smart home. Even 12 months ago if you mentioned IoT to a room filled with people, you still would have had many blank faces looking back at you. And yet IoT has been around for decades, with the ATM (Automatic Teller Machine) launched in 1974. It is one of the most common everyday objects that has network connectivity. Which is essentially what IoT is: things that can collect and transmit data.

IoT and smart home are now here to stay, so you'd better get up close and personal with them, and make them your friend. By

doing so, you will simplify your business and your life.

Carley K talks about all things digital relating to lifestyle on NBC's Today Show, and is a host for the HGTV Smart Home program. She is also a mom with two kids and is proud to own a myriad of devices. Her stance is that "technology should rise up to serve you, not burn you out." She says that "adopting the right technology can be life-changing" and that you can "live beautifully and elegantly with technology without spending a lot of money and time." More importantly, she believes that everyone can do it if they have the right guide or do the right research.

Carley's first advice is to not panic.

Yes, it's not news—technology and the rate at which it's changing and advancing can be overwhelming. But as a retailer, you need to take one step at a time and learn as others around you navigate the new place we are all in. "Retailers should at least have a cursory understanding of what's happening in the market, for example, which systems are popular," Carley says. "Works with Nest, 'Apple Home-Kit' or 'Amazon Alexa-compatible' are some to look out for. And a great place to start is with your customers: look into what are they curious about. What are they asking for?"

It won't always be so overwhelming, and education is key to keeping up with and getting ahead of the others. Carley comments that right now the market is cluttered with options, many espoused by people in companies that won't be around in the future or won't have competitive systems in place. "It's tough to figure out what to invest in and what products are compatible with what systems—that's a problem for both retailers and consumers," she says. "That will definitely change in the coming years. As market leaders become clear, it will be easier to determine what's a worthwhile investment for retailers *and* consumers."

Carley warns retailers that they will fall behind their competitors if they don't keep up with technology, but if you are smart enough to run your own business, then you are also smart enough to get ahead technologically.

"Consumers are having their eyes opened to the convenience and the safety features of connected appliances, so deciding that you aren't going to keep up, or that you can't keep up, is a futile option. I meet so many people who feel that technology is moving too quickly or is too complicated to follow. That's a mindset that sets you up for failure. Pace yourself, stay informed on trends and popularity, and don't feel like you have to know it all. Most importantly, stay in touch with what your customer is asking for.

The Smart Home of the Not-Too-Distant Future

The Internet of Things (IoT) is a movement that is already part of our everyday lives and is growing rapidly. And, the future is exciting for the Smart Home with several trends emerging including:

- **Cooking Technology** - Products are being embedded with smart sensors that control exact time, temperatures and even the humidity needed to properly cook a meal based on precise weights of ingredients from connected scales.
- **Healthy Eating** - Smart Juicing is now available using fresh and creative ingredient combinations; Kitchen Gardens allow you to grow your own vegetables in new ways; Connected apps can provide recipes based on the ingredients you already have in your home.
- **Culinary Arts Coming Home** - Advanced culinary devices and techniques are coming to the home kitchen with SousVide and molecular gastronomy products making their debut.
- **Popularity of Pods** - Coffee pods are now a mainstay but other products in development using pods or cartridge formats that analyze, measure and mix ingredients include alcoholic drinks, specialty spice mixes and flavored tortillas.
- **Safety** - Smart oven and stove controls that monitor heat, temperature and smoke now have the intelligence needed to automatically shut off the gas; Cameras now give you the ability to monitor all aspects of your home; Connected garage doors can alert you when there is unusual activity and give you the ability to open or close the door no matter where you are.
- **Convenience** - Imagine being able to connect to your refrigerator camera to allow you to see inside from the grocery store or never having to place a coffee pod order because your connected appliance knows your pantry's "inventory" based on your consumption.
- **Voice Control** - Amazon Echo, Apple's Siri and Google Home are all starting to deliver on the promise that we'll be able to control our devices through sound rather than touch.

The Internet of Things will be on display at the International Home + Housewares Show in Chicago in March. The **IHA Smart Home pavilion** will feature innovative product suppliers and developers showcasing products that demonstrate fresh ideas and designs. In addition, a strong educational program will further showcase trends and technologies surrounding this movement and exhibitors will highlight their connected products with special booth signage.

Keeping Connected continued

That's a recipe for not falling behind and staying relevant to the people who shop from you."

To help make technology less intimidating, Carley recommends reading blogs such as *TheInspiredHome.com* and her own, *CarleyK.com!* "Trade magazines and technology blogs online will be covering the landscape as it evolves," she explains. "And to make it less daunting, seek out publications that cater to the less tech-savvy crowd. They're a good way to stay informed without making your head spin. And the new ideas out there are exciting!"

As a retailer, you should be excited as well. Yes, you can run a business without embracing technology, but it does mean that you are missing out on opportunities and you are not reaching as many people as you could. Which basically means that you are not making as much money as you could. "To reach

people where they are (on their phones, on the go), and to reach a larger nationwide or worldwide audience, you have to keep up and help your customers make informed purchasing decisions by providing video, reviews and more. Your customer relies on you to help them," Carley says.

Many people bemoan automation in business, saying it will result in people losing their jobs, but Carley sees it completely differently. "Having software automate things for you doesn't necessarily reduce the personnel you need. Having things automated in my own business frees up my team to think creatively, solve problems and come up with new ideas instead of having to do the administrative work that a robot can do. Having mundane tasks taken care of means we can think bigger about the business, not to mention spend more time with our families. As technology takes over what

people can do, it's up to us (employers and employees) to adapt, grow and evolve what we do to keep relevant in the market. A challenge to be sure, but not a recipe for unemployment if you stay on your toes!"

If there is one thing that scares Carley about the Internet of Things, it's the effect it can have on our



© Carley Knobloch

privacy. Cyber attacks are real, and it's easier than ever today for hackers to gain access to a person's personal information. Data collection is also rife. "Consumers will get more savvy about it, and they'll put companies on notice: If you aren't transparent about what you're doing with the data you're collecting, and you're not actively protecting information by investing in hacker-proof technology. They will go elsewhere," she warns.

Carley's main advice to retailers on the IoT learning curve is simple and could apply to any era. For example, when people were told they'd be able to get money from a hole in the wall, many were skeptical. Break it down and look at it in the way that Carley does: The IoT is an invention that can enhance and simplify life. "Don't feel afraid, feel empowered," she says. "Educate yourself slowly but diligently, and listen to your customers. Technology doesn't have to be scary—you got this."

You can check out Carley's blog at: carleyk.com ■

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On Trend

by Michelle Hesse

During their presentation at the 2016 International Home + Housewares Show in Chicago, the *gia* Expert jurors offered these top 10 global retail trends.



1. Branding

Branding is obviously not new, but some of the ways in which it is being approached, certainly are. Today, branding is being turned on its head and some big retail companies, to attract attention, are doing the opposite of what is expected of them. Take Amazon for example. In a time when everyone is thinking that the shift is for retailers to go online, Amazon, an online company, is setting up bricks and mortar bookstores because they understand emotive retailing. They understand that in an age when the new wave of consumers largely live their lives online, they want to touch and feel products before buying them. And cleverly, in one of their large bookstores in Seattle, the nucleus of the store is showcasing their electronic

products, most of them made by Amazon. They're set up on tables and stands so that people can play with them, just like you can fiddle with iPads, phones and laptops at Apple stores.

Another trend in branding is the complete flaunting of logos — be that online, on uniforms, on coffee cups, bags or whatever else might carry it well. Storytelling is also one of the latest buzzwords in branding. It's not just about getting your message across, it's about telling a story that people want to be involved in or be a part of. *gia* winner Lords in the UK is a great example of this, as they use their stores and their staff to tell the story of the local area through photographs, artwork and shared knowledge of local things to do.

2. Merchandising

Today, in a world where people have shorter attention spans and a lot more stimuli in their lives, bright, fun colors and a great experience are key when it comes to merchandising. Themes to bring whatever is happening in the world at large are popular, and many stores are taking a gallery-like approach to retailing — merging larger pieces such as a car in the store or a kitchen in the middle of a cooking store. The more fun and emotive the merchandising, the better chance a retailer has of attracting and keeping a customer's

The four *gia* expert jurors — Martin M. Pegler, Wolfgang Gruschwitz, Scott Kohno and Henrik Peter Reisby Nielsen — are from different sectors of retail, including store design and architecture, branding, visual merchandising and displays, marketing and technology. They always need to be at the forefront of trends driving the retail world, so who better to present the latest retail trends?





attention. If they can also be interactive and do something with a product in a store — the use it, trial it approach — then there is even more chance that the customer will become attached to a product and want to take it home.

3. Lighting

Neuro-marketing is all about speaking to the brain and playing on emotions. If someone can touch, feel and relate to something, there is more chance of them wanting to try and keep a particular product. If someone has something in their hands, they are already imagining owning it. So how can this method of selling be further enhanced? Through lighting.

The Limbic Lighting study had target groups responding in different ways to even the smallest changes in lighting, hardly noticeable with the naked eye. Light has an impact on people's mood and emotions in both positive and negative ways. So when it comes to a retail environment, the study uncovered some interesting things, such as a warm and cozy atmosphere tended to create a sense of balance, and sharp contrasts in lighting created an active atmosphere, which in turn creates a more stimulating environment. Contrasting light made the shoppers in the study more aware of details and



materials in products, making them more aware of a product in general. In a colder atmosphere, using more blue lighting, the client became more critical, and the mood was more dominance oriented.

The Limbic Lighting study has proved that the adjustment of lighting scenarios according to target group-specific requirements is worthwhile. If a customer feels more at ease in a store, and experiences positive emotions created by lighting, then they enter a state of consciousness with a higher level of alertness that is more likely to trigger a purchase. The conclusion was that a lighting scenario should be tailored to suit both the brand and the target customer group. Lighting can help customers feel more comfortable and therefore stay longer in a store, which in turn can have a positive influence on sales development.



4. Impactful storefronts

Again, a storefront is nothing new, but the *gia* experts approached the subject from a different point of view. Whether your store is online or a physical store, the storefront (or the home page) is like the eyes and a smile on someone's face. A storefront needs to be open, lovely, inviting, welcoming. They need to make people step forward, and want to come in. And today, when people are so busy and being regularly stimulated by so many things online and in the world at large, storefronts (online or physical) need to be easily accessible. They need flow. Moving facades, such as video walls or online creations, also attract people.

Green walls created from live plants are another way to attract people, especially in cities where there is not much flora or parks.

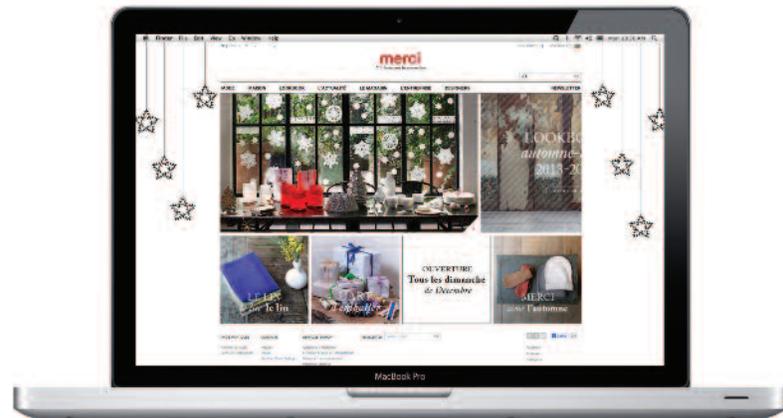
5. Staying relevant with mobile technology

It's interesting that 60 percent of people still prefer to shop on websites rather than on apps, and that people use phones twice as much as iPads for purchasing things online. So, firstly, make sure your website works well on a phone. Twenty-four percent of online buyers buy products with their phones, and if your website is not easy to navigate on a phone, they will quickly give up and go to another company/website to buy a product. So ensure that

you are at the forefront of mobile technology. If you are not savvy yourself, employ someone who is.

6. Customer experiences

People crave human contact, especially now that so much of our lives are lived online. Having an actual person answer on a service provider phone line these days is a rarity, and receiving a handwritten letter comes as almost a shock. So the *gia* experts believe that the store is still king. It's a place where people can engage with others and with products that they are interested in. They can touch, feel and get a better idea of the quality of the products, and often even try them as well. If people do make the effort to come to your store rather than buy something online, remember that you need to create an experience that makes them feel good.



One thing that the judges stressed is that retailers need to remember that their online shop is not just an ordering machine, it also needs to be a great experience. And, you have to ensure that your site is visible with search engines — people use Google when looking for a product, they usually do not start at a particular company's website. You need to lead them there, via a search engine. And also remember that with everyone spending so much time online, reviews matter more than ever. It's astounding to know that 70 percent of people listen to opinions published online — blogs, reviews, discussion forums — so make sure you do everything to get good reviews, and then share them.



70 percent of people listen to opinions published online - blogs, reviews, discussion forums

7. Mobile technology in-store

This is a major trend. 60 percent of consumers expect your staff to be able to look up product information, 59 percent expect your staff to look up inventory and 47 percent expect your staff to provide information about warranties and return policies. Ten years ago, some of this wasn't possible, but now it is and as a retailer, you need to provide your customers with what they are accustomed to — technology at their fingertips.

A good example is something that a 2016 *gia* winner, Lakehouse of Canada, recently implemented: all sales people are equipped with an iPad so that they can walk the floor of the store and be ready for any questions from customers. A 27-inch computer is also available for customers to look up products and information while in the store, and this same computer can be used as a third check out during peak times.

The judges call it the "Uber and Air BnB syndrome," meaning that with new technologies, even the smallest store can offer the biggest selections, with a local, personal approach. And with the use of new technologies, a small retailer can grow big in a short amount of time.

Another related trend is that super brands are joining forces with retail outlets and department stores, taking up the "store within store" concept. Global designer labels joining Target is a perfect example of this.

Then there is what the judges called "enablement through technology," which basically means that

consumers are more informed than they have ever been. And the fact that lack of time is a bigger problem than lack of money for many consumers. Finally, the time of "one-size-fits-all" has gone: customers want customization.

The main lesson to take away from this group of trends, is that your online store is as equally important as your physical store, and to stay on top, retailers need to blend the digital and physical world.

8. Omni-channel retailing

At its core, omni-channel is defined as a sales approach that provides the customer with an integrated shopping experience. The key is in how to best use the many different channels that you can retail through, and how to bring them together for a seamless customer experience.

For instance, someone might be perusing their Facebook feed and see a post featuring a product. They might search for the product on Google and then go to a store's website for some more information before coming into the store to finally make a purchase.

It's worth taking on some tried and tested online retailing techniques, such as setting up a great Facebook and Instagram account, but if you are going to try out a few avenues, make sure you have the time or the resources to do things well. You have to keep your followers engaged so don't make the mistake of taking on too much at the one time if those channels cannot be kept alive and well.



9. The four Es: Exhibition, Education, Entertain, Emotions

It's no secret that people like to be entertained. Cooking demonstrations and classes are on the rise, and many successful retailers also host classes on everything from basket weaving to tie-dyeing fabrics, making children's toys, special paper and creating preserves. From fire-throwing performers in a gift store to sommeliers matching wines to snacks for customers as they peruse a deli-style shop, you need to think outside of the box to stay ahead.

It could be as simple as displaying a row of olive oils, the dishes they are poured in and the decanters they can be stored in and leave some fresh bread out for people to sample the olive oils as they walk by. Be quirky. Lords of London has a light bulb display showing off the different styles and strengths of bulbs that looks like an art installation, and many stores have cute handwritten notes to their customers placed around the store to inspire and delight them.

Always remember that it's all about: exhibiting, educating, entertaining and appealing to people's emotions.

10. Creating personal connections

This trend is about going back to good old-fashioned service in some senses and ensuring that your customers feel welcomed and special. It's a simple trend, but it is also complex — you need to understand your customers before you can begin to create close connections with them. It could be as simple as having something in your store that people want to photograph themselves with — such as a cool sculpture or a stunning artwork. Or it could be hosting special dinners throughout the year where diners use the plates, glasses and products that you sell while getting to know you, your staff and other customers.

Connections can be created by hosting a cookie baking class for children so the parents have some time to shop, or by simply being that person in that shop who has the right advice and knowledge that a customer needs and years.

If you create personal connections with your customers, when they need or want to buy something you are going to be top of their mind, and that's exactly where you want to be. ■

Inspiring the Industry: Henrik Peter Reisby Nielsen

by Michelle Hespe

Henrik Peter Reisby Nielsen would never use the word “bored” because he is continually entertained by how much inspiration there is around him. He has drawn from this inspiration to carve out a career for himself in retail, where he inspires retailers to be innovative to improve their businesses and stay ahead of the game.

“I can inspire people, making them understand that everybody can do great things,” Henrik says. “And importantly, I do not quit. I fight and do not lose faith even when things do not look good.”

ReisbyConsult is a results-focused consultancy for retailers and organizations, creating functional solutions upon solid theoretical foundations. The company’s expertise spans retailing, consulting, digital design and conceptual frameworks. The bottom line is that Henrik and his team aim to assist retailers when it comes to standing out in a saturated market where technology is increasingly paramount to success.

There are a couple of pivotal moments in Henrik’s life that set him on his current path, where his world revolved around inspiring and helping other businesses to succeed. First, in 2006, the gift and homewares store he then owned, Inspiration H.P. Nielsen (which had been in the family for 100 years), won a *gia* Global Honoree award in Chicago. He was the fourth-generation owner

gia Expert Juror and CEO of ReisbyConsult, Henrik Peter Reisby Nielsen, is inspiring the retail industry. Michelle Hespe finds out how he does it.



of the store and he had made changes to the business that were quite revolutionary at the time, including implementing technology many had not even heard of. After winning the *gia* Global Honoree award, Henrik continued to improve the store and elevate its presence in the market, until selling it in 2008.

The second big moment that affected Henrik’s direction occurred when he was working at Inspiration H.P. Nielsen, behind the POS counter. A man had bought several items that required warranties and the paperwork was enormous. “If you really want to make my life better, you could work out some way of dealing with all of this!” cried the customer, holding up the reams of paper in frustration.

Henrik scribbled that request down in a physical folder he

People hire me when things have gone wrong. I look at their business and look at what they can change. What they can do better.



Inspiring the Industry: Henrik Peter Reisby Nielsen *continued*

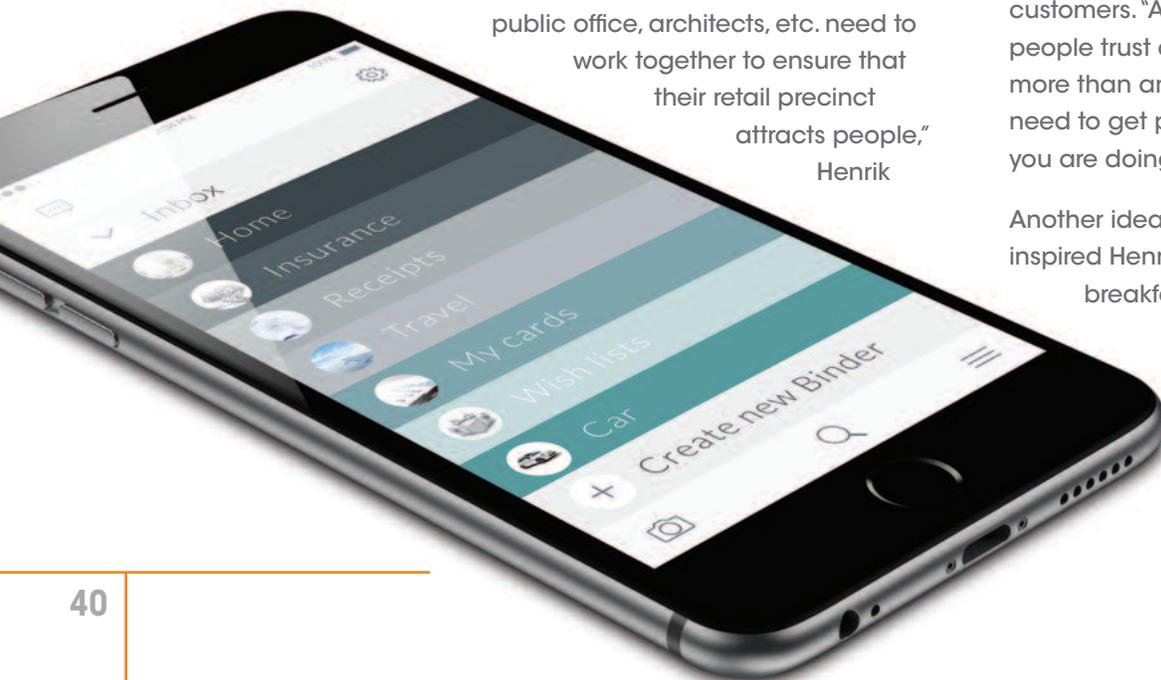
keeps for ideas, which later evolved into CleverBinder, a free utility app to make people's lives easier, basically allowing customers to store, file and keep track of documents. "I hope for it to become a global standard with millions of happy users within a year or two," he says.

Henrik is one of the Expert Jurors for *gia*, which means that during the International Home + Housewares Show in Chicago he mentors the winning retailers from around the world. He also travels the world to speak at business and retailing events, and travels to countries participating in *gia* to congratulate and speak to the national winners.

"When I won a *gia*, our city was in crisis. The economy was bad, and people were not spending money. But we succeeded in a very difficult time because we were innovative, and we thought ahead," he says. "So people hire me when things have gone wrong. I look at their business and look at what they can change. What they can do better." Henrik's focus is complex in terms of processes, and yet so simple in terms of the aim: to sell more products in a store.

A recent presentation by Henrik called The Ultimate Retail Experience covers many facets of successful retailing and how to be innovative in business, but some of the more inspirational points stood out as great lessons for retailers.

"First, retailers, councils, the mayor, people in public office, architects, etc. need to work together to ensure that their retail precinct attracts people,"
Henrik



Innovation is not about a big budget. It's about being smart.

explains. "We all need to work together to make consumers

come to the area, and then you have to stand out as a great retailer and think outside the box. Innovation is not about a big budget. It's about being smart. Recently, for instance, one of the *gia* winners did something very simple: they invited a group of renowned bloggers to their store to try out and sample products, and then they wrote about the products."

It not only put lots of information about the products out there (creating sales), but the clever idea generated press for the store, which in turn attracted more customers. "And remember that today, people trust a stranger's point of view more than an advertisement, so you need to get people to write about what you are doing."

Another idea by a *gia* winner that inspired Henrik was the hosting of breakfasts with the press. "What a great way to get people involved. Again, it's important to get others telling your story."





online and brick & mortar stores anymore—they are one and the same. New technology will allow things to happen for you. Disruption is not just a big city phenomenon—it is everywhere, and it's here to stay."

Yet no matter how much technology evolves, Henrik adamantly believes that being personal will

Despite being a massive advocate for technology, and of course, having an app like CleverBinder, Henrik also advises people to keep a physical folder of ideas. "Great ideas get lost in a computer," he says. "If you keep a folder of your ideas and inspiration, you will go back to it, and one of those thoughts might become a reality."

Henrik also advises people to plan a year in advance if possible. "Adjust everything so that you can plan ahead," he says. "Address possible critical moments ahead of time, and you'll be ahead of the game."

While doing this, however, remember that being truly innovative can be disruptive, and thus stressful for staff and suppliers. "You're going to go down these different roads and head off somewhere that might scare those less innovative," he says. "You are going to lose some people if you don't communicate clearly. So you need to plan ahead and get your communication right. Communication is critical to success."

Technology, technology, technology. You need to learn what's new, and work on it. Own it. "Get ahead with technology," says Henrik. "And all retailers need to understand that they have one store—there are no

never go out of style. "A woman in New Zealand has a store, and it has a sign on the door: 'Call me if it's critical', with her mobile phone number, for anyone who needs something after hours," he says, smiling. "No one has ever used it to call her, but the people love her for it, because they know she cares. A big store wouldn't do that kind of thing."

Henrik sold his first item in his family's store when he was just five years old, and it was a \$3,000 sale. He'll never forget the rush that it gave him, and he has never lost the utter love he has for making a sale. "There are endless possibilities with retail," he says. "That's why it's such an exciting industry. But remember that innovation is not about having the most money—it's about your ability to rethink yourself. When I give lectures about innovation in retail and how to embrace new technology before it becomes critical to your business, I have a hands-on approach with lots of examples of people doing great things. You just need to keep your eyes and ears open—see the inspiration all around you."

To learn more about ReisbyConsult, visit www.reisbyconsult.dk.

To learn about CleverBinder, see www.cleverbinder.com. ■

Understanding Influencers

by Michelle Hespe



Melissa Maker, owner, founder and host of the Clean My Space channel on YouTube, editor-at-large of CleanMySpace.com, and founder of Clean My Space, a well-known Toronto-based cleaning service, shares what retailers need to know about influencers and influencing, and how to make the new movement work for your business.

The tools of the trade for retailers have irrevocably changed. Today, it's not good enough to sell great products and have great staff. Today, social commentary is word of mouth, and influencers can provide a route to gaining more traction in a world where the union of technology and social media is king.

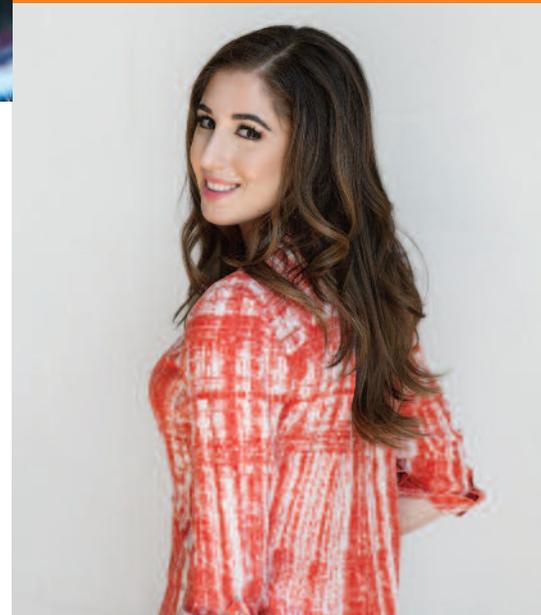
Let's start with the basics and work our way up to a more complex understanding of how influence marketing can work for your business.

Influence marketing is a form of marketing whereby the focus is placed on key individuals chosen

to spread the word of a business or a product, rather than a business attempting to target an entire market.

An influencer is a person who can affect the purchase decisions of the public due to their knowledge, position or relationships with others. Whether it's Kim Kardashian advising her followers to wear a particular fashion designer's clothes via Instagram, or a local, trusted vet recommending their favorite pet shampoo on Facebook or TV, that's all influencing. In some senses, it's nothing new—celebrities have been advocates of products since retailing began—it's essentially good word of mouth from the right people.

Influencers can provide a route to gaining more traction in a world where the union of technology and social media is king.



However, now it has a new look and feel being online, and it's not necessarily celebrities spreading the word. The bottom line is, you need to understand influencing in order to make this powerful new approach work for you, because what other people think and say, especially online, matters more than ever.

Melissa Maker, who is a business owner and an influencer, is an



ideal person to offer some tips regarding this new way improving your businesses' status, and ultimately, the tides of your trade.

"As a retailer, you need to start paying attention to influencers who are speaking about your brand on various social platforms," Melissa says. "And you want to work with someone who already knows and loves your brand, so that they speak about it authentically. If the product is new to market, do some research and find out who is talking about something similar or complimentary, and then put those influencers on a short list to contact."

There are many ways in which to collaborate with influencers, and Melissa explains that it's a matter of working out what is the best approach for your brand.

"Some brands offer affiliate codes; the more traffic driven to their site from an influencer's post, the more that influencer gets paid (i.e. \$2 per sale), and so the influencer is incentivized to do a more compelling piece and share the brand message to rev up their own earnings," she explains. "Brands may also choose to sponsor a post created by an influencer and pay them a flat fee for that work. It's not likely that you would see an influencer on payroll—they're more like a supplier, invoicing the brand for the work that they've done."

Melissa goes on to explain that other companies may decide they want to be the official product (car, shoes, knives, etc.) of the influencer, similar to what Nike would do with a star athlete. "In this case, the brand and influencer would work out an arrangement with a non-compete clause and any other terms they both deem reasonable, generally with legal counsel," she says.

Things move so quickly in our technology-driven world, so how long should a retailer

stick with an influencer to achieve maximum impact? This depends on the objectives of the campaign and the success of the relationship/collaboration formed.

"It may make sense to do a one-time engagement, but if an influencer really likes a brand, they will likely want to remain working with that brand for as long as they can, as it generates revenue for them," Melissa says. "If the brand gets a good ROI on their investment with the influencer, then they'd likely want to continue on that path as well. It's good idea to try things out for a short period—for example one engagement—or for a probationary period, and if all goes well, then both parties can choose to extend the deal."

Melissa recommends mixing things up and testing a variety of influencers, as that will give you different exposure to different influencers' audiences. "You don't want to overwhelm one influencer's audience over and over again with the same message," she warns. That's the equivalent of junk mail.

As a retailer, when you're negotiating a potential collaboration with an influencer, be specific, she advises, and have a list of common objectives. "What does each party want out of the arrangement? How many mentions per campaign or per month or week should there be? What are the aims of the influencer and the retailer? Should the latest products be sent to the influencer every month? Should there be more exposure for each participants' brand?"

All of these things need to be worked out before a contract is signed and a



Understanding Influencers

continued

relationship is forged, and as with any new venture, it's also good to get a grasp on some "do's and don'ts" from someone who is already successful in playing the game.

"Have billing and payment terms arranged well in advance to ensure that both parties are happy," says Melissa. "And definitely involve legal counsel; although no one likes to incur the expense, when everything is spelled out clearly, everyone is so much happier. Also, understand that when a brand gets too involved in the influencer's work, the content loses authenticity and the content sounds too much like an overt advertisement, which upsets the audience, makes the influencer feel like their hands are tied, and the brand doesn't get the ROI they're looking for."

A relatively new way of approaching an influencer /retailer collaboration has been dubbed a "capsule collection" and that's where an influencer pairs up with a brand to collaborate on a product line. A recent example is The Pioneer Woman embarking on a collaboration with Gibson and now that line is sold at large retailers across the country.

"Typically, the influencer will select a limited number of items, prints, colors or whatever is best, and the company develops a line around that, and calls it the 'Melissa Maker' line, or something like that," Melissa explains. "The brand loves it because the influencer already has a built-in audience who loves the influencer, and so they are willing to support them by buying up the collection."

The final piece of advice she has for retailers is to work out which platforms resonate with their brand's demographic. "All platforms have different influencers, and thus they attract different demographics. If you are inexperienced in working with this type of new media, it may be worthwhile investing in a company that specializes in it, or perhaps you should consider hiring someone who understands how to make this type of relation work well to ensure its success. You need to really understand influencing to get the most from it."

For more information on Melissa and Clean My Space, visit <http://cleanmyspace.com>. ■



Orecchiette with Shrimp + Peas

Recipe | March 14, 2014

This Orecchiette Pasta with Shrimp and Peas dish is the perfect meal to celebrate the arrival of Spring. This is a great dish to transition from the heavy winter meals to light and fresh ones for Spring.

It's a warm dish but there are no heavy sauces involved which makes it light and healthy. The peas and basil give it a fresh taste plus the protein from the shrimp rounds out the meal.



This dish is perfect for when you don't have a lot of time to prepare dinner. The key is to multi-task. While the water is heating up and the pasta is cooking, you can prepare all of the other ingredients. Cooking the shallots, garlic & shrimp only takes a few minutes and your dinner will be ready in no time.



Using a pasta pot like this one from [Gibson](#) will save you lots of time as you don't have to dig for a colander to drain your pasta and you'll have less dirty dishes!



Most of the ingredients in this dish are things you keep stocked in your pantry (pasta, olive oil, freezer peas + shrimp) and fridge (garlic, shallots + basil) making it very easy to put a quick dinner together. This gives you extra time to enjoy this fabulous spring weather!



GIBSON
TRENDS COLLECTION
PASTA POT



GIBSON
MONTANA 5-PIECE
WEDGESS SET



LA ROCHE
BERNAIS LARGES
TASTING / WATER GLASS



WEDGES
OLIVE GLASS 3-PIECE
STARTER SET



SHARE

TWEET

PRINT

SHARE

SHARE

SHARE

SHARE

SHARE

SHARE

SHARE

SHARE

SHARE

Chicago – Inspiration at the 2017 Show



honoring housewares
retail excellence

The Show offers first-class educational and networking opportunities for both specialty retailers and corporate buyers, including special exhibitions and creative displays and a full line-up of seminars on trends & design, visual merchandising and branding, retail success factors and consumer preferences.

Be Inspired by Innovative Retailers

Visit the *gia* showcase in the Hall of Global Innovation, in Lakeside Center Lobby, where you'll find unique store design and branding ideas, examples of exquisite visual merchandising and creative displays that will impart inspiration for setting your store apart from the competition.

Also, make sure to attend the presentation by the *gia* Expert jurors!

Top 10 Retail Trends for Customer Engagement

Monday, 20 March, 3:30 pm

Innovation Theater, E350, Lakeside Center Lobby



gia is the world's leading awards program honoring overall excellence, business innovation and creative merchandising in homegoods retailing.

Chicago – Inspiration at the 2017 Show *continued*

2018 Color Trends by Pantone

Leatrice (Lee) Eiseman

IHA's color expert and Executive Director, Pantone Institute
Room S100/Grand Ballroom, Level 1, South Building

Communicating with Color/Design: Inspiring and Defining Essential Trends

Monday, 20 March, 12 Noon

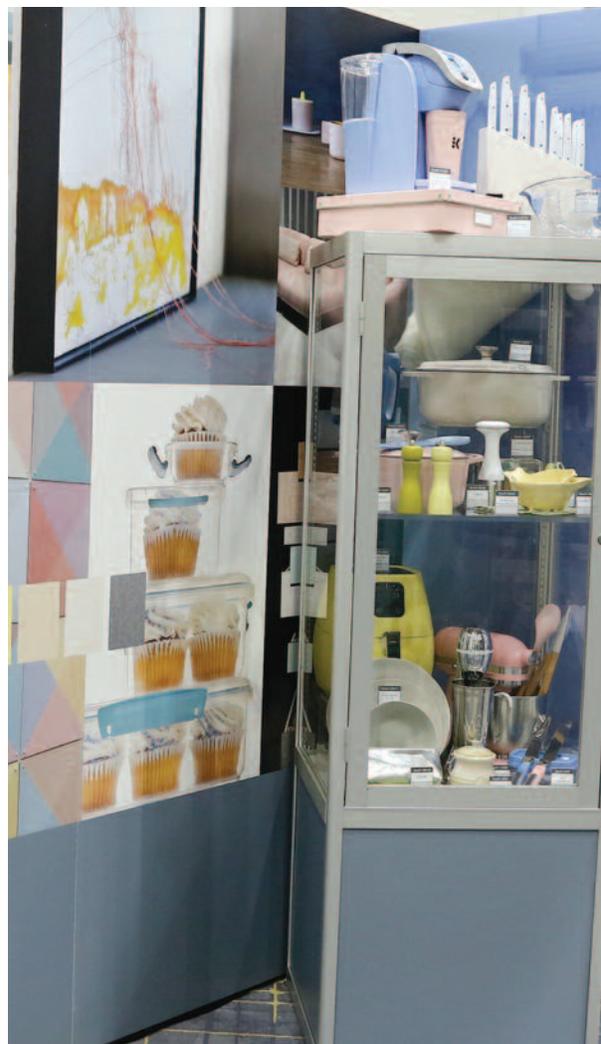
In this digitally-directed, Instagrammed and Pinterested world, color and design trends can be communicated almost instantaneously to consumers or clients who are seeking original and more imaginative approaches to furnishings and to decorating their homes. For that reason, it is vital that designers, manufacturers, retailers and anyone else involved in the production of consumer goods or interior environments, stay well ahead of the curve on the leading forecasts.

The best solution for this challenge is employing the use of revitalized colors or, even more importantly, using hues in novel combinations as they can instantly and effectively express a fresh approach that satisfies the need for newness. There are eight distinctively designed palettes, each with recommended color combinations, that will help to inspire and inform you. At the very least, they will start a colorful conversation with customers and clients so that you can ultimately get your message across persuasively and confidently. Come join Leatrice Eiseman as she informs and inspires you with her on-target trend report.

Consumer Color Preferences: What is Hot and What is Not

Tuesday, 21 March, 12 Noon

Consumers today, based primarily on age, mindset and lifestyle may have a different perspective on colors and color combinations that they consider acceptable in the home. Are trends important to them (or not?) Leatrice Eiseman will share her perspective color families based on color word association studies that she continues to collect and analyze.



Other trend presentations at the Show include

Crucial Insights on a Rapidly Evolving Consumer

Monday, 20 March, 7:30 am

Room S100/Grand Ballroom, Level 1, South Building

Tom Mirabile

Forget everything you think you know about today's consumer: who they are, how they live and what they want. Join Tom Mirabile, IHA's trend expert and senior vice president, Global Trend & Design, Lifetime Brands, and a panel of experts as they reveal and explore the latest findings on American consumers. Whether you're a retailer, manufacturer or importer, you'll leave with a new perspective on today's consumer, what they want and how to engage them.



Home and Interior Trends: Spring Summer 2018

Saturday, 18 March, 1:30 pm

Innovation Theater, E350, Lakeside Center Lobby

Naomi Shedden

Senior trend strategist, Trend Bible

Naomi Shedden's presentation will include an introduction to trend forecasting for the home and interiors market, along with inspiration and future design direction for houseware products and kitchen trends for 2018. In addition, Shedden will reveal two major trends, Rebellious Energy and Iberian Spirit, as published in Trend Bible's Spring Summer 2018 Trend Book.

New at the 2017 Show – IHA Smart Home

IHA Smart Home Pavilion

New at the 2017 Show, the IHA Smart Home Pavilion features new and current exhibitors with smart home/connected products for different areas of the home. Experts in the smart home/connected products arena will be on hand to answer questions at the pavilion.

How the Smart Home is Disrupting Housewares (And What To Do About It)

Sunday, 20 March, 12, noon - 1 pm

Room S100/Grand Ballroom, Level 1, South Building

Keynote panel discussion

Smart Home Presentations at the Innovation Theater

Saturday, 18 March, 2:30 pm

Sunday, 19 March, 3:30 pm

Monday, 20 March, 9:30 am

Innovation Theater, E350,

Lakeside Center Lobby

Experts on smart home and connected products providing insights into Smart Home products and developments

Learn more about the IHA Smart Home pavilion and the Smart Home related events at the 2017 Show at www.housewares.org/show/iha-smart-home.

For a complete list of displays, education sessions and speakers at the 2017 International Home + Housewares Show, visit www.housewares.org/housewaresconnect365 and search for events, displays and seminars. ■



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High-design and intelligent innovation are on display with 2,200 exhibitors from 6 continents. The Show features 5 unique expos representing all housewares categories and world-class education and benchmarking opportunities.

march 18-21, chicago

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