



Cultivating Successful Brand Partnerships



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Let's Talk.

How brand collaborations can shape your design career, expand your influence, and amplify your creative voice.

- 01 MY PATH TO PARTNERSHIPS
- 02 WHAT BRANDS REALLY WANT
- 03 HOW TO PITCH WITH PURPOSE
- 04 BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THAT LAST

My design story started with a yellow kitchen and a lot of imagination.

- Growing up in California, my mom and dad gave me the freedom to design my own room
- That early creative freedom shaped my love for storytelling through a space
- First design job: Visual merchandising at The Gap at 14

From Visual Merchandiser to Brand Collaborator, every chapter shaped my story and refined my voice.

But you can only design so many living rooms...

1990

STUDIED DESIGN AT CAL POLY

Learning, absorbing, and experiencing.

1994

BUYER FOR RALPH LAUREN HOME

Where I learned the power of storytelling.

1995

STARTED ALL AMERICAN DESIGN & FURNISHINGS

Recognizing opportunity for added revenue streams

1999

VP OF DESIGN & VISUALS FOR DEL WEBB

Designing model homes across the country.

2002

EARNED MBA TO APPLY BUSINESS TO DESIGN

Understanding the business behind design.

2009

AUTHORED BOOK W/ SUNSET PUBLISHING

Led to authoring a textbook with the Art Institute.

2011

DIRECTOR OF INTERIOR DESIGN - ART INSTITUTE

Educating & inspiring the next generation of designers.

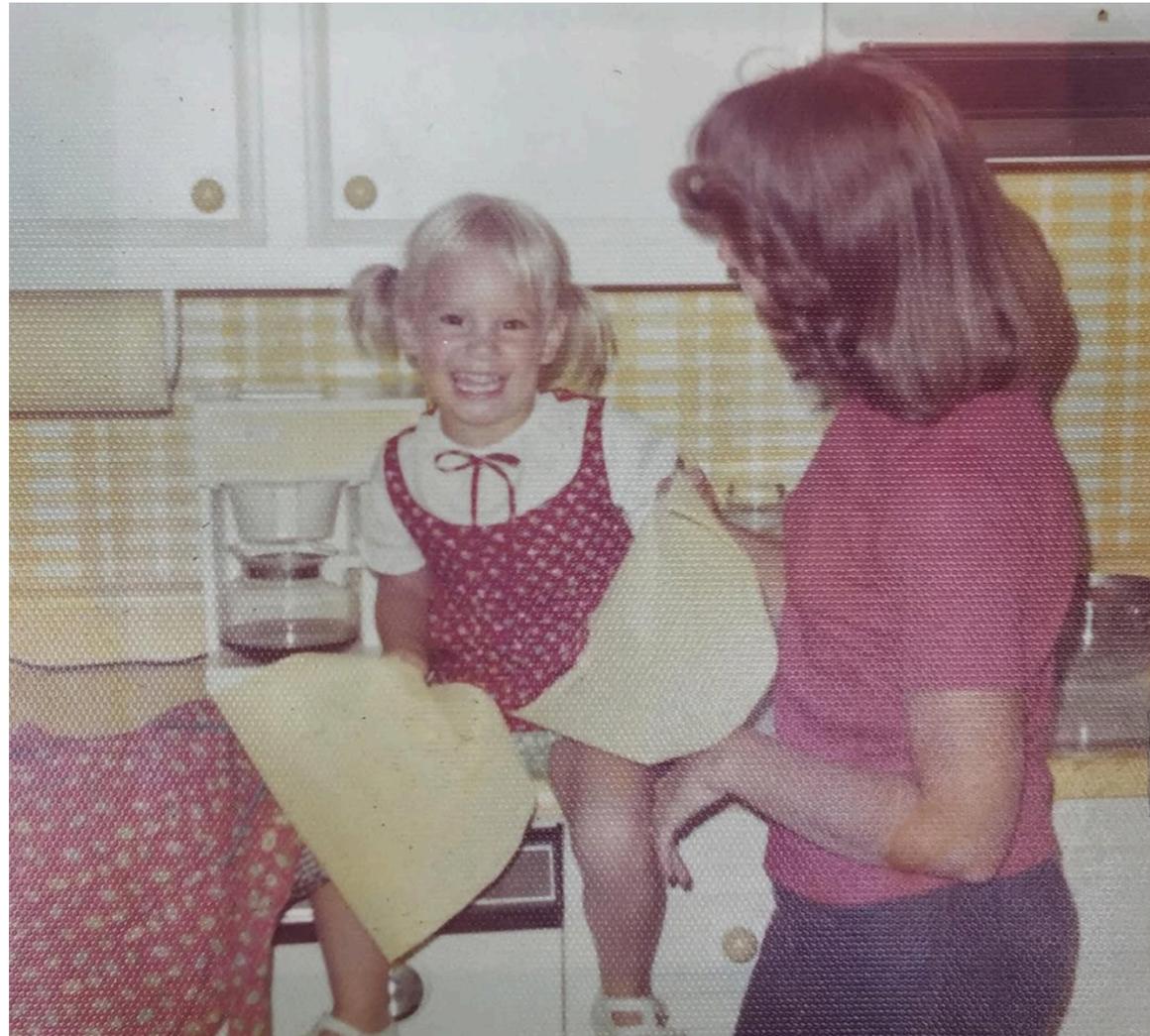
2012

FIRST-TIME COLLABORATIONS

Cosentino, Brizo, Sherwin Williams



[ENTER LYNN KELLY, AKA MOM]



“You can never have too many friends.”

So I leaned into *brand work and industry collaboration*. Recognized the need to *help brands “speak designer”*. And got to work to *make it happen*.

THE LAST 10 YEARS

Rebrand: Kerrie Kelly Design Lab

30 years of residential design while working with brands.

Continued Industry Service

Serving both the ASID & NKBA at the local & national level.

Design-Driven Brand Storytelling

Leaning into the joy of design with the brands I know and love.

Bridging the Gap Between Design & Brands

Through collaboration, product development, and experiential design.

As Designers, Why Should Brand Work Matter?

Collaborating with brands isn't just about visibility—it's about creating new value.

- Design is about storytelling—brands rely on storytelling
- Creating more impact beyond a single install
- New revenue streams for Designers
- Long-term alignment with brands you love
- Brands and Publishers have a need only Designers can fulfill



BUT BEFORE YOU PARTNER WITH ANYONE ELSE, *YOU NEED TO KNOW YOU.*
IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE PRODUCT—IT'S ABOUT THE STORY YOU TELL WITH IT.



Know Your Value *Before* You Pitch It

BRANDING IS CLARITY, CONSISTENCY, AND CONNECTION.

- Define your visual identity. (colors, fonts, mood)
- Clarify your values and tone of voice.
- Show up consistently across digital platforms.
- Document your projects: both visually and in writing.
- Be able to answer: *What do I want to be known for?*

Pro tip: If your brand feels vague, so will your pitch.



Start Where You Shop

You already specify great brands—now make those relationships meaningful. Turn those specifications into strategic opportunities.

Document Everything

Professional photography, blogs, and social media

Audit Your Last Five Projects

What brands are on repeat?

Show Appreciation Publicly

Tag, share, mention, link

Reach Out Intentionally

DM, Email, or reach out via Rep or Trade Portal

Pitch when you have a vision

Not just when you're hoping for something in return

Tip: Identify the brands you love, use, and believe in. Every project is an opportunity to show brands how you embrace their values through design.

Pitching with Purpose

WHAT BRANDS ACTUALLY WANT TO SEE
Spoiler: it's not just pretty pictures.

Collaborating with brands isn't just about visibility —it's about creating new value.

Show how your work can elevate their product and platform.

- Clear project scope or content idea
- Audience stats (social, newsletter, press reach)
- Creative vision + how you'll bring the product to life
- Your unique value: lifestyle, storytelling, influence, and POV.

What's on a Brand's Checklist? Beyond Aesthetics—think value.

- Alignment with brand values and style
- A history of using the brand authentically
- Ability to create shareable content
- Audience engagement and media potential
- Professionalism + creative execution

The Art of the Ask?

Make your pitch about their win, not your need.

IT'S MORE THAN PRODUCT PLACEMENT—IT'S BRAND STORYTELLING IN REAL-TIME.

As Designers, we're not just tastemakers—we're translators.

- Write down three Brand your specify often.
- Quickly note how you would pitch one of those brands.
- Find a Designer or Brand Partner in the room to test your pitch

[20-MINUTE BRAND BREAKOUT]



The Next Chapter is Yours to Write

Collaborating with brands allows designers to stay at the forefront of the industry—leading trends, setting standards, and staying connected to the products that help us do our best work.

It's how we keep design relevant, inspired, and impactful.

Be authentic: Partner with brands you truly love

Build before you pitch: Use first, share, then approach

Make it mutual: Ask what success looks like for them

Keep storytelling at the center of it all



Thank You!

SAVE THIS PRESENTATION



For more insight, inspiration, or collaboration opportunities:

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