

Designers Discuss Competitions And Award-winning Projects

Kitchen & Bath Design News recently posed the question to dealers and designers in the kitchen and bath industry. "Do you submit projects to competitions? What is the key to an award-winning project?"

"We submit when we can. This helps to show the quality of our work. The keys to an award-winning project are staying within clients' expectations in budget, appearance, time frame and coordination with other professionals involved in the project. Incorporating the latest trends and offering alternatives to expensive details help as well."

Christine FitzPatrick, designer/owner
Fitzpatrick Design, Inc.
Larchmont, NY

"It is always fun and challenging to see how our ideas stack up against friends and colleagues in the business. We get great feedback from the experience as well as exposure for our company. Using materials and cabinetry in new ways can make you nervous, but it is so rewarding when others see the 'cool factor' when it is all done!"

Stephanie Reese
Kitchen/bath specialist, e-designer
Artisan Design
Tampa, FL

"We always submit worthy projects to many local and national competitions. Once we have done the work for one competition, it's no trouble to submit for others. Additionally, the same package can be submitted to magazines that may wish to publish the work, even if you don't win the contest."

Lance Stratton, owner
Studio Stratton Inc.
La Jolla, CA

"I do not frequently enter design competitions. Too often, winning designs are the result of bottomless

pockets, which our clients do not have. It would be nice to see competitions that take budgets into account."

Stephanie Bullwinkel, business mgr.
Imperial Kitchens and Baths, Inc.
Brookfield, IL

"I submit projects for competition [when they are really great in one aspect or another...it could be a problem solving issue, integration of unique materials, or an overall beautiful complete job. Award-winning projects suit a community solution or trend, not necessarily a single project that no other homeowners could relate to or benefit from. Winning awards lets consumers know the value you bring to a project, and it gives me a means to see where my body of work falls within the professional design community."

Julie Cavanaugh
proprietor/senior principal designer
Design Matters of Los Gatos
Los Gatos, CA

"Publicity received from winning a competition builds credibility and brings in new clients. I design to meet my clients' unique needs. These creative solutions often lead to designs that win competitions, but I do not create designs with competitions in mind."

Leslie Ann Cohen, CKD, CID, ASID
Leslie Cohen Design
Cardiff by the Sea, CA/Raleigh, NC

"I have often thought about submitting a project well after the fact, but our first goal is providing what customers want. We never go into a project thinking of awards. Sometimes we do not have before photos or sometimes

the contest dates are not compatible with a potential entry."

James A. Tipton (Jim), president
Avora Ridge Ltd. Design & Woodworks
Fairbury, IL

"Our firm recently began entering design competitions, and we try to enter as many as we can for the excitement of our clients and ourselves as well as for the potential exposure winning can bring. One of our first entries two years ago brought us a national award. It continues to give us extra credibility and respect. It is hard to identify the keys to designing an award winning project since judging varies tremendously. Elements that set our projects apart, such as custom metal work and hand planed, furniture-style cabinetry done by local artisans, get recognized most."

J. I. S. Jarrett
Jarrett Design, LLC
Emmaus, PA

"When time allows, we do enter design competitions. We have submitted projects on Houzz, and have won. Customers feel a sense of validation if their projects have been published or awarded. We feel that listening to clients is the first key to designing a winner."

Carly Winslow, owner/creative dir.
Splash
LaGrange, GA

"I haven't [entered a competition] for a while, but am considering it again because of the client's positive reaction. I haven't because the contest winners seemed to be opposite of the designs I have been doing. Also, they seem so far over the top and my clients are more middle of the road. I can't compete with that. The photography fee, entry fee and time it takes to enter has made me less than receptive to contests."

Erica Kalkofen, CEO
ek kitchens&design
Winter Park, CO

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