

By *CJDellatore*

Design

[Leave a Comment](#)

The New Guard: Gideon Mendelson

a metered mix of mid-century lines and contemporary color



.....
.....
“Interior design is an art form and a craft that, at its highest level, takes talent, skill, education and experience.”

-Gideon Mendelson of the Mendelson Group

.....
.....
Over the last few years Gideon Mendelson's name has come up in conversations with my contemporaries, but I'd never had the pleasure of meeting him. Then back in May I heard he'd created a wonderful room at the Designer Showhouse of Westchester and I decided to investigate his work. His decade old firm the [Mendelson Group](#) (coincidentally the cut-off age for a designer's inclusion in The New Guard) is doing very well, and I was curious to hear what he considered some of the secrets of his success.

Join our mailing list for insider tips and exclusive promotions

[Join Us](#)

Search



Recent Posts

- Marketplace News: Mondo Collection
- New & Noteworthy: FRG Objects & Design Gallery
- Design Business Blogging: Part III
- Design Business Blogging: Part II
- Design Business Blogging: Part 1

Popular Posts

- Hearst Designer Visions 7th Annual Show House
- Design Business Blogging: Part 1
- A Celebrity and Her Wardrobe Master
- Design Business Blogging: Part II
- Barry Goralnick At High Point Market

Archives

- November 2013
- October 2013
- September 2013
- August 2013
- July 2013
- June 2013
- May 2013
- April 2013

We met for breakfast this week and talked about his childhood as the son of an interior designer, about his belief that design is a service industry, and what he considers the 4 key skills required to succeed. Here's an excerpt from our chat.

March 2013
February 2013
January 2013
December 2012
November 2012
October 2012
September 2012
August 2012
July 2012
June 2012
May 2012
April 2012
March 2012

Have you always had an interest in design?

Design is in my DNA. My family is made up of artists, architects and entrepreneurs. My mother had a design firm when I was growing up and I remember watching her drawing furniture plans. She was always excited by the problem solving aspect of design and that is what drives me today. She and I would peruse House Beautiful and House and Garden magazines and discuss design quite a bit. I remember thinking her small office was a very exciting place.



Can you tell me a bit about your career trajectory?

I studied architecture and film as an undergrad at Columbia University in NYC. After school, I spent two years in the agent training program at the William Morris Agency. I thought being a talent agent suited my skill set, but realized quickly that the entertainment world wasn't for me. So, I enrolled in The New York school of Interior Design, spent a year working for Steven Gambrel, and landed a big job that I couldn't turn down. The rest is history.



Would you agree with the assessment that interior design is a service industry?

Interior Design is an art form and a craft that, at its highest level, takes talent, skill, education and experience. But, of course part of our job is to manage projects, vendors, client relationships, etc. This is the service element. When both the creative and service elements are balanced and handled skillfully, you get a great project.

What do you see as the skills that make you successful?

I think there are four key elements in becoming a successful interior designer: first, the obvious – vision and the craft. It's essential to be able to create a beautiful and functional spaces that meet client needs and expectations; second, it's crucially important to develop a stable of expert craftsmen and artisans who can execute your vision. What I mean is, we all have creative ideas of what we want to design or a particular piece we want to find, but if we don't know who can make it for us or where to find it, the ideas are useless; third, we have to be able to manage a project from start to finish. This requires acute attention to detail and scheduling and a very capable staff; and finally, it takes an entrepreneurial spirit to market your skills and attract clients.



And on the subject of clients, many young designers are curious about how to generate leads. How do you manage that?

Until a few years ago, all of my clients were referrals from other clients. I wasn't interested in doing any marketing at the time. I wanted to grow my team slowly and comfortably and hone my skills as a designer and project manager. A few years ago, I teamed up with a publicist whose priority is to get my work published. His efforts have been very successful and have brought in a considerable number of new leads from different networks. Participating in showhouses has also yielded nice results for us. To

grow my business to the next level will take a bigger team which is daunting and exciting at the same time. Social Media is high on my priority list for 2014.



What can a potential client expect in engaging your firm, and what do you expect from your clients?

Clients can expect an organized, comprehensive, honest and drama-free design process and installation. I am a down-to-earth guy with a very capable team. I'm interested in doing good work and working with good people. I expect clients to hand over the reins, to trust me to guide them on a design journey.



And on a personal note, I've learned that you were married a few years ago – and now have 3 children including 10 week old twins. I'm wondering what it's like to be a gay couple with a family – and how you manage having a dynamic career at the same time?

My parents taught me that I could create the life I was to lead. They exposed me to many different things and assured me that with passion and hard work and little bit of luck, I could make things happen. I believed them and still do. My children and family mean everything to me. I've chosen interior design as a career and I'm passionate about it. I also happen to be gay. All of these things as a whole define me, not just one piece. I think clients are surprised to hear that I have children and surprised that our lives are really quite parallel. Perhaps this distinguishes me from some of my

peers.

As someone who has always endeavored to understand the importance of good business acumen I'm thrilled to have had the opportunity to meet Gideon, and to learn about his perceptions of how to run a prosperous interior design firm. I might also add that as a gay man who did not grow up in a liberal environment I'm grateful to know, in concrete terms, that times have indeed changed.

You can learn more about The Mendelson Group, and see more of their work by following the link below.



MENDELSON
G R O U P

<http://www.mendelsongroupinc.com/>

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Pinterest](#) [LinkedIn](#)

Written by CJ Dellatore

contemporary interior design Gideon Mendelson Interior Design The New Guard