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# Think Outside the Box

*Build your brand and make some money—try putting a different spin on older products or processes by creating a “new” platform for incremental sales.*

by Kathy Wall

As someone who travels to a lot of home-related trade shows and attends some of the premier designer show houses in the country, I am always inspired by the newest design trends. This inspiration drives my creativity and how I serve our clients. Call it “thinking outside the box,” or, better yet, “how does this dazzling experience translate into making more money for our clients.”

## Inspiration Everywhere

A great marketing agency is always seeking ways to help its clients grow their business. That sometimes means putting a different spin on older products or processes by creating a “new” platform for incremental sales. At the Canadian Outdoor Living Conference trade show in 2016, exhibitors and educational presentations offered interior designers tools needed to expand their services to include products and marketing outside of the dwelling. The aisles were full of weatherproof furniture (a no-brainer), but also outdoor kitchen cabinetry, appliances, landscape lighting, and in-ground heating systems for patios.

Because of their short warm-weather season, Canadians are putting record-breaking amounts of money into elements

that allow them to extend use of their outdoor spaces well beyond the summer. The challenge for attending designers was to think beyond the interiors and claim a bigger piece of the homeowners’ budgets. Secondly, seminars shared how to rebrand themselves so their clients eagerly engage them to create, source, and install every living space they use, including outdoor spaces.

## Make an Advantage of the Great Outdoors

For the window coverings industry, this booming outdoor business is ripe for the picking in all areas of the country (if Canadians are spending big bucks on their porches and patios, why not clients in your market?). We would urge our window covering clients to consider this as a means of significant incremental business from discerning designers and consumers with an appetite for the latest in stylish offerings.

All-weather draperies and shades are a perfect add-on to your indoor window coverings business. We’re seeing gorgeous indoor-worthy treatments in all the big-name showhomes from Napa to Dallas to New Orleans to the Hamptons. They are being introduced to consumers reading top home, shelter, and lifestyle magazines and online sites.



Lisa Mende's three-season porch in the recent Hamptons Designer Showhome was a huge success with visitors and on social media. She created a fully designed indoor/outdoor room, complete with a dining setup that anyone would envy. And those gingham weighted draperies are the perfect accent, right?

This creates immense consumer demand for “new” products that provide light filtering, shade, color, and softness while completing the overall look just like that created by top-tier designers. One of our recent favorites was the much-touted porch by North Carolina-based design professional Lisa Mende in the celebrated Hamptons Designer Showhome in New York. The liberal use of **Perennials®** fabrics made Lisa's standout space a media darling, garnering local and national attention. The house was sponsored by *Traditional Home* magazine, which will feature it in their summer 2018 issue. While weighted custom draperies certainly add panache to new or renovated porches, remember to also offer oversize accent pillows, protective but pretty slipcovers, outdoor lampshade covers,