

Sales Strategies



by Jared Davis

Using Design Tools to Enhance Sales

What is the difference between an ordinary frame and a masterpiece? Is it the moulding, the materials, or the craftsmanship? All of these, though important, are nothing without one vital element, “inspiration!” Every frame you have ever made would be just a plain black moulding—or

something like it—if it weren't for the imagination, creativity, and desire to put something of yourself into all that you do. Even “basic black” still appeals to some customers, probably more times than you would like.

When it comes to making decisions about what to spend their

money on, today's consumers are extremely spoiled in their choices. They are constantly bombarded with attractive, visually stimulating, well-presented products, all vying for attention. So when it comes to selling high-value, luxury, custom framing, why are framers still largely relying on a bunch of small, joined pieces of timber and corner-shaped pieces of colored cardboard?

These two basic tools have been a mainstay in the industry for many decades and have been largely unchanged in concept for years. But in this day and age, more than a decade into the twenty-first century, are these two design tools enough for you to create a full consumer experience? Or should you be offering your customers something more?

The first rule of selling to consumers is, if they can't see it, they won't buy it! Unless you're the next Anthony Robbins, inspiration and desire is always best created visually, not verbally. If you want to sell beautiful custom framing, you need to show beautiful custom framing. Second, creativity does not always come naturally! You may need more than a few corner samples to inspire your customers with memorable masterpieces.

What follows is an inspiring collection of new and effective design tool concepts to help you find more ways to add value and create more beautiful custom framed art for your customers.

- **Wall Displays** – The first place for any framer to start is to have only beautifully framed examples

To maximize the design potential of your consulting process, you need creative tools that present framing ideas imaginatively



A wall with beautifully framed design samples is a great way to sell creative designs and to give customers new framing ideas.

on the shop walls. These inspire and stimulate creativity during custom framing consultations. Let your walls do the talking, and make sure they reflect only the best of what you offer. Keep in



Framing Matters of Canberra has a design corner showing customers different options and colors for the same prints.

mind that it only takes one badly framed artwork to ruin the whole collection. If it's not worthy of hanging on your own walls at home, dispose of it, because it's costing you your best inspiration and first impression.

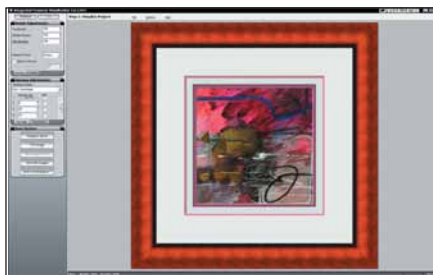
- **LCD Display Screen** – Many shop owners have collections of photos of previous inspirational framing jobs they've done. Organize yours on your computer and have them displayed on your front counter so you can easily use them as reference ideas and customer inspiration for future framing jobs. For example, Fast Frame in Melbourne, Australia, has a computer with a huge, touch-screen LCD monitor (which is framed, of course) on the consulting table. This is also a great way to compensate for limited wall



Fast Frame in Melbourne uses a large LCD monitor to display notable designs done by the shop.

display space.

- **Visualization Software** – This is by far the most effective tool for helping customers visualize what their finished masterpieces will look like. It also enables you to offer your customers comparisons between different options in frame style and size. There are a number of software packages to choose from. Make sure you choose one that allows you to instantly display a representation of a completely framed artwork. Also make sure it offers a full range of high-level value-add options, such as stacked frames, fillets, multi-layered mats, V-grooves, and multiple openings while also being quick and versatile. Willoughby Framing in Sydney, Australia, for example, uses



Wizard Integrated Framer visualization software shows customers what a completed design will look like much better than just using frame and mat corners.

Wizard Integrated Framer visualization software to help customers see what the finished results will look like and have found it also helps save time and avoid customer indecision. Visualization software brings your concepts and service into the twenty-first century.

- **Glazing Display Tools** – Almost every frame needs glazing, and that makes it one of the strongest opportunities for value-added sales. In order for you to sell more specialty glazing options, customers need to see the difference. Tru Vue offers a useful range of specialty glazing, point-of-sale display samples that

you can refer to during your consultations. These show the benefits of UV protection and different visual effects of products such as Museum Glass®. Both are highly desirable benefits to most custom framing consumers—as long as they are aware of and understand them. If you really want to show the benefits of specialty UV glazing, however, nothing beats showing them on your customers' own artwork.

Frames & Finishes in Adelaide, Australia, has made a very simple but effective glazing sampler that can be positioned over the top of artwork. The staff simply asks customers, "Which type of glass do you prefer out of these two options?" This is the shop's number-one way of selling Museum Glass®, even without the eye-catching point-of-sale display. All it takes are a few spare minutes and a few material off-cuts, and you've created a great value-add selling tool.



Frames & Finishes in Adelaide, Australia, made a very simple but effective glazing sampler to be positioned over artwork to show the look of different glazing types.

- **Good-Better-Best Display** – Framers all know and understand that there is more than one way to frame a picture. But to an uninformed consumer, it can be challenging to picture the details of this when faced with a wall of countless samples. There are many directions you could take in choosing the right frame design for a piece of art, but one of the best ways to demonstrate



B-Framed in Ballina, Australia, installed a “good, better, best” framing display to show customers the differences available in design options.

this fact is to create a display showing a single artwork framed in several ways. B-Framed in Ballina, Australia, frequently refer customers to their “Good-Better-Best” display above the sample wall. Such a display helps a customer realize just what a difference a frame design can make and that there really is more than one option. Framing Matters in Canberra, Australia, also uses this concept and has created a permanent display that shows the difference between different color styles and design styles, all of which work effectively depending on a customer's personal taste.

- **Cross-Section Frame Display** – When faced with a customer who



A layered cross section of a frame job mounted on the wall with explanations at the side helps educate customers.

undervalues the quality and effort that goes into making a custom frame, it's a common wish that customers “only knew what went into it.” So why not show them by creating a cross-section display piece that shows what's involved in crafting a

professional custom frame? Label the relevant components and cross-reference them to an accompanying legend that explains the details and options of each component. This will provide customers with more in-depth understanding of what goes into a custom frame.

- **Mini Merchandiser Display**

Brackets – Your sample wall is prime display real estate because it is usually in full view to your cus-



Mini merchandiser brackets can be mounted amid corners to show small samples of frame designs.

tomers during the entire consulting process. That makes it the perfect place to have framed display examples. But there's always a sacrifice to make in replacing corner samples to free up wall space. NielsenBainbridge has released a new and innovative mini merchandiser support bracket that can solve this problem. It comes in a kit with mini framed examples as part of a special merchandising program for Nurre Caxton Timber and Bainbridge mat-board customers. These brackets help display removable mini framed examples that appear to be floating just in front of corner samples without taking up any extra wall space. They also help break up the visual monotony of the corner display, too.

- **Upright Consulting** – Framed artwork is usually viewed on a wall, so



Framing Matters' vertical consulting board helps customers visualize frame designs in a vertical format.

it is unnatural for consumers to have to visualize their frame designs horizontally during a consultation. Framing Matters in Canberra has overcome this by using a vertically mounted metallic consulting board using strong rare earth magnets. Designed to offer a design consultation in a vertical format, this board makes it easier for customers and the sales staff to view different design options in a more natural orientation.

To paraphrase an old cliché, “Framers cannot live by corner samples alone!” To compete with modern day retailing, inspire your customers by incorporating these creative sales tools into your shop. Focus on adding more ideas to your arsenal so you can maximize the potential of the next sale that walks through the door. ■

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