

# creative

APRIL 2024

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SMALL BUSINESSES  
TO SUCCESS

# RETAILER®

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ISSUE 176



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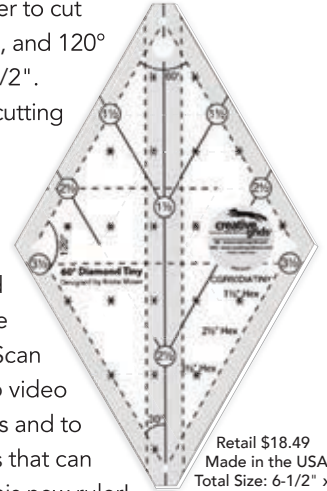
by Krista Moser

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of these features and to see the projects that can be made with this new ruler!  
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Perfect for the summer holidays! Construction is simple, & a great way to learn how to use the 60° Tiny Diamond ruler! From *Cut Loose Press™* by Krista Moser. #CLPKMS008

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# contents

APRIL 2024



Working Together

PAGE 4



Balancing the Load

PAGE 8



Filling a Need

PAGE 16



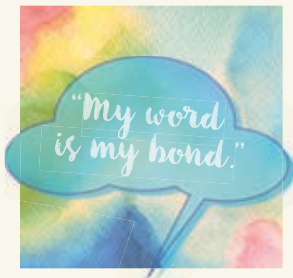
Marketing Refresh

PAGE 22



Check Out Your Cash Wrap

PAGE 26



5 Ways to Be More Accountable

PAGE 36



Don't Get Sloppy

PAGE 40



Insights from a Tennessee Shop Owner

PAGE 44



The 3 Fs of Financial Services

PAGE 48



Take a Positive Path to Business Success

PAGE 54



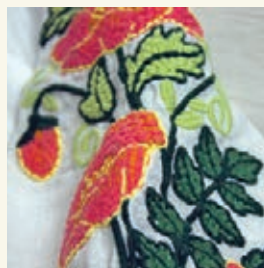
Unlock the Power of Delegation

PAGE 58



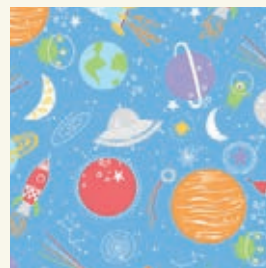
I Won!

PAGE 64



Hot Picks

PAGE 70



Materials Matter

PAGE 80

**ON THE COVER** Clockwise from top left: Sunday Brunch by BasicGrey, Moda Fabrics; 3D Coneflowers Hand Embroidery Kit, M Creative J; Tiny Wonders by KG Art Studio, P&B Textiles; Modern Botanical Wedding Sampler, Counting Puddles



For as long as I can remember in every business I've been involved with, we've dug deep into who our customers are and what they want. This is such an important step in running your business. We're all creative people who could come up with an endless list of products to sell, but if we don't have customers to buy them, then what is the point of creating them?

The magic lies somewhere in the middle. I have this great product to sell. I have this amazing customer who I know and understand. How do I tweak or improve the product to make it so irresistible that every customer must have it?

As part of this product development process, I've also been brainstorming what stops customers from purchasing the product and how I can remove any hesitation about making the purchase.

Here's an example that crossed my mind about selling fabrics and kits.

Your customer says: "I've got too much fabric! I don't need to buy any more." Your solution: Provide a quilt kit that includes only a background fabric and a pattern for using scraps. Then customers can feel good about grabbing fabrics out of their stash to complete the quilt.

As you talk with your customers today, really listen to what is stopping them from buying that kit or another piece of fabric. Make a list, then brainstorm how you could solve that problem for them. What you hear and how you could provide the solution might surprise you.

*Heidi Kaisand*

“  
DON'T FIND  
CUSTOMERS FOR  
YOUR PRODUCTS.  
FIND PRODUCTS  
FOR YOUR  
CUSTOMERS.

—SETH GODIN, AUTHOR  
AND ENTREPRENEUR

”

# creative RETAILER®

APRIL 2024

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## CREATIVE RETAILER®

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The next issue of *Creative Retailer*® will mail to subscribers approximately June 8, 2024.



FAT QUARTER Friendly



The charming and fat quarter friendly Prairie Patchwork quilt by Modern Prairie is available to purchase as a standalone quilt pattern, and as a kit in a beautiful keepsake box.



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# Working Together

Shop owners and designers  
can collaborate for mutual success.

by KATE  
COLLERAN  
AND  
KRISTINE  
POOR

Designers create patterns and sell them to shops. Shops buy patterns to sell, to inspire the customer, to sell fabric or yarn and tools, and to provide their customers with a road map for their next project. Shops may have a big pattern wall with products from many companies, or they might choose to focus on a few specific patterns for classes, kitting, demonstrations and promotion.

To tell customers of these opportunities, a shop needs content for its marketing. Designers create pattern and class descriptions, they take pictures, and they use those to create posts to promote their patterns. They already have content ready to collaborate with shops.

Imagine your shop is planning to promote a specific pattern for a quilt-along. You might need an interesting photo, fun copy, and maybe an Instagram or Facebook post image. You could ask if the pattern designer has things to share.

Because your copy should reflect your shop's voice and style, you can change the designer's verbiage to make it your own. Use the information the designer provided as inspiration.

For example, co-author Kristine Poor has provided this copy to shops for her Americana Stars pattern:

**Gather your summery scraps and make up a few Americana Stars! Simple summer sewing!**  
**Hang them on your porch and add some pretty lights!**  
**Finished sizes: Small–5", Medium–8", Large–10"**  
*#americanastars #poorhousequilts #poorhousequiltdesigns #summersewing #summerstitching*

A shop might customize this message to promote kits:

**These easy Americana Stars will add some summer fun to your porch! Add a string of lights for even more sparkle! We've got kits that include the pattern and our favorite summer fabrics! Stop by to grab one!**  
*#quiltshopname #americanastars #summersewing #summerstitching #localquiltshop*

If you are planning a post for social media, let the designer know when it will go live and ask if you can tag the designer, who might share the post or comment on your post to keep the conversation going.

If you are planning a class, you could ask if the designer has a class description and other pertinent information. Sometimes designers will already have that information, but if they don't, they might be able to give you tips or keywords you can use.

If you are going to set up a demonstration for a specific pattern, template or technique, the designer may be able to give you suggestions.

For example, co-author Kate Collaren's wholesale page has a downloadable handout on how to do a braid template demo. Other designers might have notes they are willing to share on how to create your store demo with steps. Kris has a list that she shares on the pieces required to demo the Americana Star.

If you let designers know you are planning to kit a project, they can let their followers know where to get the kits. Kate is an Island Batik fabric designer as well as a pattern designer, but she doesn't carry her fabric for sale on her website. Kris uses fabric from many companies in her samples but doesn't kit the projects. They both get questions about where to buy the fabric or the kits, so as a designer, it would be great to be able to share where to get a kit.

Some designers have links to YouTube videos and reels, which is great information for you to share with your customers. If the designer has created a QR code that links to a video, you could post it in your shop to give customers additional information on that pattern or tool.

Not every designer has the same content. Ask for what you need, and while designers may not have exactly what you want, most will try to accommodate you. They are thrilled you are carrying their pattern and will want you to succeed.

Pattern designers should be in the habit of developing marketing assets along the way so they are ready when needed to use for promotion and to share with a shop.



**ABOVE AND LEFT** Designers often have graphics they are using on their website or have created for other purposes and they are glad to share them with shop owners to promote a class, event or project you're working on. Reach out to the designer and ask them for what you need.

“

ASK DESIGNERS FOR WHAT YOU NEED ... MOST WILL TRY TO ACCOMMODATE YOU. THEY ARE THRILLED YOU ARE CARRYING THEIR PATTERN AND WILL WANT YOU TO SUCCEED.

”

Creating marketing materials should be a priority. Promotional content for a pattern release should be easily accessed and include the following:

**Copy**

- » General information about the pattern with sizes
- » Hashtags
- » Technique
- » Companion items (with SKUs)
- » Part of a series?
- » Good for a class?

**Images**

- » Flat shot
- » Glamour shot
- » Pattern cover as jpeg
- » Instagram post
- » Facebook post/image
- » Pinterest image
- » Companion item photos
- » In-process photos

**Class/Demo Information**

- » Description
- » Handouts
- » Teaching points

**Videos**

- » YouTube
- » Reels
- » Links
- » QR codes with links to the videos

Writing good descriptive copy can be challenging. Creating a standard description template saves time and ensures you hit all the needed points. Here's a description template and examples created by following it.

**Standard Description Template: Pattern or Product Name + Keywords + Brand Name + What problem it solves + Relevant details.**

Examples of keywords could address complexity (easy, quick), style (modern, traditional), precut friendly (FQ friendly, designed for 2.5" strips), yarn weight or suggested yarn.

Explain what problem it solves: Is it a stash buster, skill builder, quick gift or utility? Is it good for classes or demos, or is it quick to make? Does it introduce a tool, technique or material?

Then add relevant details such as technique, tools, size(s) or skill level.

Below are two description examples of current patterns:

- » Log Roll is a modern log cabin quilt pattern from Kate Colleran Designs. With simple piecing and bold design, the quilt is great to show off a fabric line or to teach piecing skills in a beginner class. The pattern includes 2 sizes: a generous lap quilt and a bed quilt.
- » The Americana Star pattern is a quick project from Poorhouse Quilt Designs. Get ready to bust your stash with this beginner-friendly pattern. Hang it anywhere! In 3 sizes that range from 5" to 10" across.

All designers and all shops are different in the marketing content they create and how they plan to use it, but they share the same promotional goal. If shops and designers communicate with each other and share ideas and content, everyone benefits.



Kate Colleran of Kate Colleran Designs (fabric and pattern designer) and Kris Poor of Poorhouse Quilt Designs (pattern designer) have collaborated with other creative businesses to foster beneficial cross-promotions and joint projects. They have found that the key to success is clear communication.





# Shannon

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# Balancing the Load

by JACOB  
CURTIS, CPA,  
CFPP

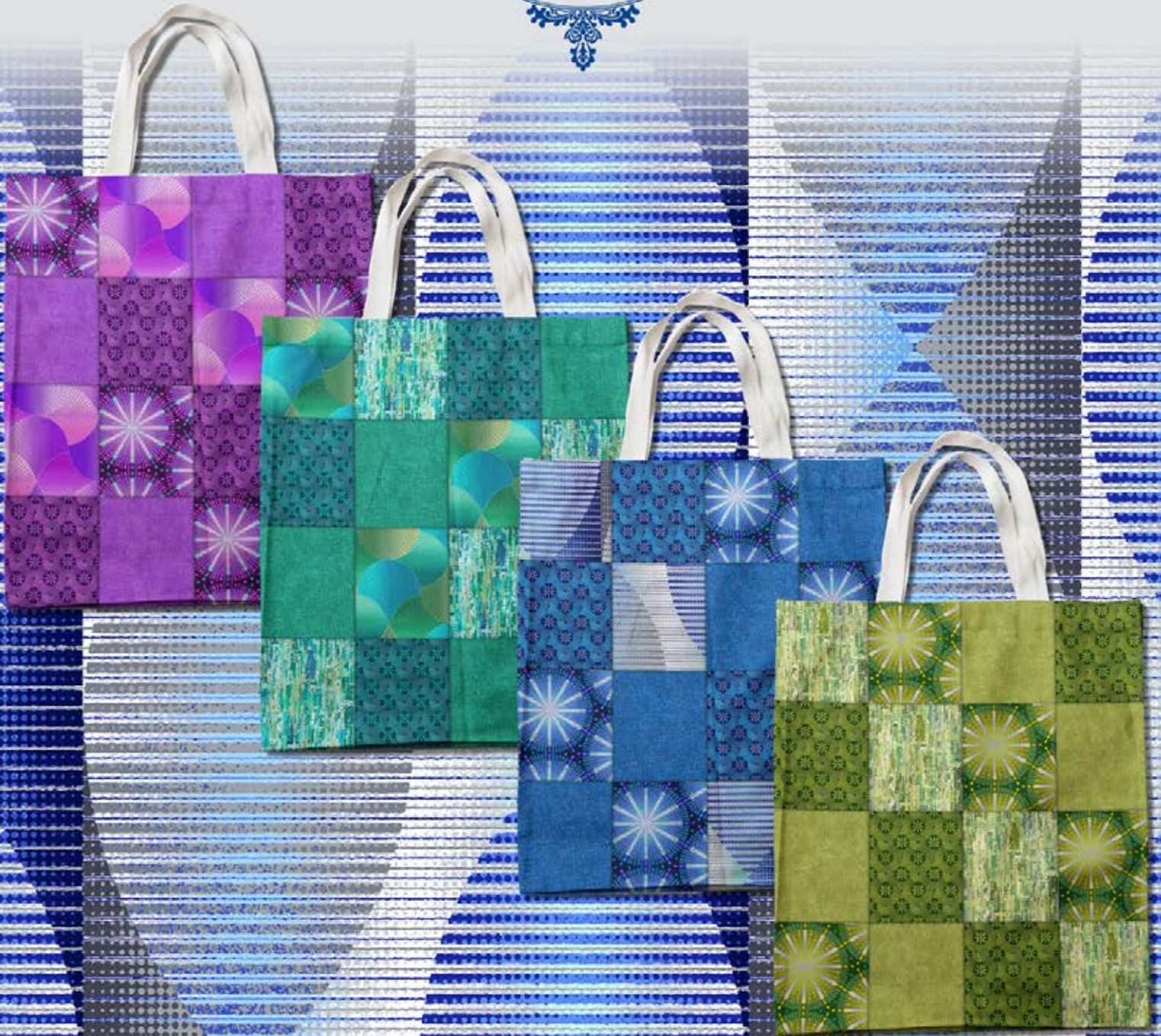
Collaborate with your staff to deliver the company's promise to customers.

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos is a perfect example of starting with almost nothing and scaling a business to one of the largest in the world. Can you imagine what Amazon would be like today if he still did everything himself or with just a small team? Bezos had the foresight to give up the grunt work and let his team handle the day-to-day operations.

Here are five principles that will help you motivate your team and build a successful business.

# Geo Pop Pearl

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## PRINCIPLE #1: BIG PROMISE

According to Mike Michalowicz, author of *Clockwork: Revised and Expanded*, your “big promise” is a pledge or commitment you make to your customers about what they can expect from your business. It’s the cornerstone of your brand—the thing that sets you apart and keeps customers coming back for more.

If you owned a bakery, your big promise might be: “We guarantee fresh, delicious pastries made with the finest ingredients every single day.” This promise tells customers what they can expect when they walk through your door—quality, freshness and flavor.

Your big promise isn’t just a slogan or tagline; it’s a reflection of your values and standards. It’s what makes your business unique and memorable in the minds of your customers.

## PRINCIPLE #2: THE QUEEN BEE ROLE

Depending on the species, bees live only a few days to a few weeks—making the production of eggs by the queen bee paramount to the hive’s survival. Just like a queen bee is crucial to the survival of a beehive because she produces the eggs, the “queen bee role,” or QBR as defined by Michalowicz, is essential to the success of your business. It’s the task or activity that directly fulfills your big promise.

Think of your business as a machine with many moving parts. Each part plays a role in keeping the machine running smoothly and efficiently. But among all these parts, one core function is the most important—the one that keeps everything else in check and ensures the machine (your business) is fulfilling your big promise. This core function is the QBR.

Identifying your QBR is like finding the heart of your business. It keeps everything else pumping and moving forward. The QBR might be providing excellent customer service, delivering high-quality products or maintaining efficient operations. Whatever it is, if done well, it will have the biggest impact on your success.

The QBR is not one person and should not rely on just one person. Rather, everyone in your business should be working together to ensure this core function is performed at the highest level. Just like the bees in a hive work together to support their queen, even to the point of replacing her when she no longer produces enough eggs to sustain the hive, your team members must collaborate and coordinate their efforts to fulfill the QBR.

Here’s an example to help identify the QBR for your business.

If your package absolutely, positively must arrive tomorrow, which delivery company will you use? USPS? UPS? DHL? You would choose FedEx, of course. Why? Because FedEx stakes its reputation on delivering on time, every time—the company’s big promise. But how does FedEx ensure that promise is met? It’s all about the QBR.

The key is not customer service but logistics—the management of package movement. When the company’s logistics are running smoothly, the big promise is consistently delivered day in and day out. Logistics is the QBR for FedEx.

Imagine if the focus shifted to customer service and logistics took a back seat. Headlines might read: “FedEx can’t find a single package, but they are being really nice about it.” It would be a sad tale about a once-successful company going out of business.

“  
JUST LIKE A QUEEN BEE IS  
CRUCIAL TO THE SURVIVAL  
OF A BEEHIVE, ... THE “QUEEN  
BEE ROLE,” OR QBR AS DEFINED  
BY MICHALOWIZC, IS ESSENTIAL  
TO THE SUCCESS OF YOUR  
BUSINESS. IT’S THE TASK OR  
ACTIVITY THAT DIRECTLY  
FULFILLS YOUR BIG PROMISE.  
”



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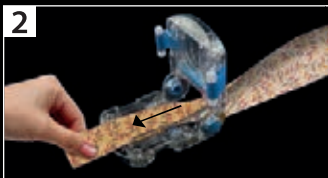
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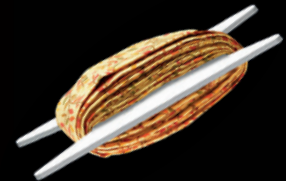


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But if the company cranked up its logistics even more and let customer service take a hit, the headlines would read, “No one answers phones at FedEx, but every package is delivered on time.” Negative press would follow, but ultimately, the FedEx QBR would remain strong and the company would keep delivering on its big promise.

Here is a quick test to make sure your big promise and QBR are in sync. Combine your QBR and big promise into a single sentence using the word “to.” If the sentence makes sense, then you got it. If it seems off or doesn’t make sense, go back to the drawing board. Don’t get discouraged if you must go through this exercise multiple times.

For example, my company’s QBR is to teach the Profit First principles and system, and my big promise is to help shops achieve financial freedom. Combining these into a single sentence, we get: We teach Profit First principles and system to help shops achieve financial freedom.

Another example is author Michalowicz: I write books (QBR) to simplify entrepreneurship (big promise).

Another example: As a longarm quilter, your big promise is to have a two-week turnaround time, and your QBR is never letting the longarm machines stop. Your “to” test would be, “I never let the longarm machines stop to have a two-week turnaround time.”

What’s your big promise and QBR? Plug them in to make sure they fit together.

### PRINCIPLE #3: PROTECT AND SERVE THE QBR

Now that your big promise and QBR are aligned, it’s time to rally the troops and work together to protect and serve that QBR. Every team member has a vital role to play.

Take our longarm quilting team, for example; their job is to make sure those machines never stop churning out beautiful quilts, directly serving the QBR and fulfilling the big promise. The rest of the team members are protecting it by doing their primary jobs, whether that means providing top-notch customer service, answering the phone, restocking inventory or keeping the store



clean. But they also step up to the plate when the longarm quilting team needs a hand. As a team, they will ensure that the QBR is served and protected.

The QBR is the most important activity to fulfill your company's big promise, but it should be more than one person's job. Multiple people and systems should serve the QBR. It's about the role, not the person. Even the bees have designated queen-slayers if the queen does not perform well enough, proving it's not about a single individual.

#### PRINCIPLE #4: PRIMARY JOB AND KEY RESULT AREAS

Determining everyone's primary job is easiest done using a key result area (KRA).

In a KRA, each team member's primary job and other responsibilities are defined. A KRA clearly states what winning looks like, and it helps you and team members get on the same page so their role and responsibilities are clear.

A clear and effective KRA serves as a communication guide and reminder to team members (and yourself) about what is necessary to succeed in their roles. Failure to adhere to the KRA means not achieving success and requires making adjustments.

When writing KRAs, follow these simple rules:

1. Don't make it complicated. KRAs should be clear and only outline a team member's responsibilities and results. Avoid adding growth paths or company missions to it.
2. Keep it short. Limit the KRA to one page. Remember, it's meant to outline key responsibilities, not every task the team member does.
3. Be realistic. Team members have other commitments and rhythms, such as staff meetings. Creating a KRA might reveal that a role requires more than one person.
4. Remember that KRAs change. This document sets the pace for what winning looks like now, but it will change as the role or person in the role changes. Be flexible.

The best way to learn how to create a KRA is to start with your own. Put your name and title at the top of a sheet of paper.

Next, summarize your primary job. This should be a basic overview of what you're responsible for. Finish this sentence: My primary job is \_\_\_\_\_. Try to keep it to one sentence. For example, a quilt shop owner with one or two employees might write, "My primary job is ensuring our QBR is being served and managing the business."

Next, add three to five key responsibilities, explaining these responsibilities in a few words. For example, "share the company mission and annual goals," "keep the longarms sewing," "maintain a clean and tidy store" or "train team members." Leave enough space between each for the next piece—what winning looks like.

Figure out what winning looks like in this role for each responsibility. How will you know if you're succeeding? How will you hold yourself accountable? Define specific activities you must engage in to succeed. These should be simple and action-oriented. For example, "explain to team members the mission at the weekly team meetings," "track the running time of the longarm machine" or "walk through the store each hour."

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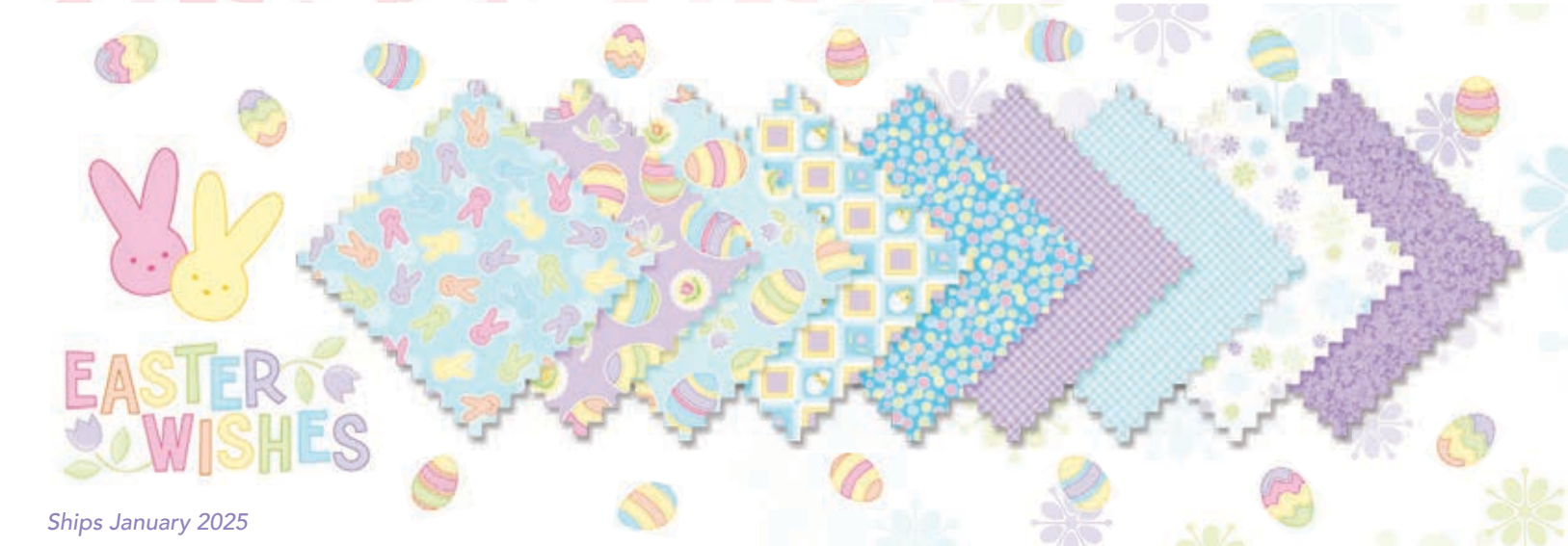


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YOUR “BIG PROMISE” IS A PLEDGE OR COMMITMENT YOU MAKE TO YOUR CUSTOMERS ABOUT WHAT THEY CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR BUSINESS. IT’S THE CORNERSTONE OF YOUR BRAND—THE THING THAT SETS YOU APART AND KEEPS CUSTOMERS COMING BACK FOR MORE.

”

Last, sign and date your KRA. A KRA is a formal acknowledgment that says I understand and take ownership of my responsibilities. For each team member’s KRA, both of you should sign and date it.

Remember to keep all this information on one page. Anything longer is too much. Keep it to one page. Download the free template.

#### PRINCIPLE #5: GET YOUR TEAM INVOLVED

You may think you need to be the one to build all your team members’ KRAs, but that doesn’t work very well, and it can be time-consuming and overwhelming if you have more than just a few employees.

A more effective way to get team members aligned and integrated is to share your KRA as a guide so your team can see how to make one and that you have one as well.

Give your direct reports an editable template and ask them to fill out what they think the KRA for their role would look like.

Regroup and compare notes in your next one-on-one meeting with each direct report. Remember, this is a conversation. The key to getting buy-in is allowing team members to speak about their KRA and then refine it together. They might surprise you and reveal something they do in their role you didn’t even know about.

Create the final draft and sign it together as an acknowledgment that both of you are clear on the expectations for the role.

Build KRAs into your rhythms. Occasionally, use them as a checkpoint in ongoing one-on-one meetings to see if team members are on track or if adjustments need to be made.

#### SUMMARY

Your big promise is your No. 1 commitment to your customers. It’s what they most value you for.

The queen bee role is the highest priority activity that ensures you keep your big promise, and it should be served by multiple team members and systems when possible. Everyone in the company knows what the company’s QBR is and knows what to do if the QBR is not being served.

The primary job for any individual is the most important function they serve within the scope of their responsibilities. For some team members, their primary job serves the QBR directly. For other team members, their primary job protects the QBR.

Using the key result area method, create a KRA for yourself and each team member, making sure to define their primary job.

You can learn more about these ideas and concepts from their original sources: *Clockwork: Revised and Expanded* by Mike Michalowicz and *Delegation* by Dave Ramsey.



Jacob Curtis is a CPA, a Certified Profit First Professional and a business coach. He started Curtis Accounting Solutions to remove the stress of doing the bookkeeping, payroll and taxes for shop owners and to provide practical business advice to help quilt shops

and others piece together financial freedom. Go to [www.curtisaccountingsolutions.com](http://www.curtisaccountingsolutions.com) to learn more.



# ROMANCE

*a digitally printed collection by Catriona Crehan*



*Shipping October 2024*

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# Filling a Need

M Creative J offers modern embroidery patterns that become art.

**M**elissa Galbraith, the creative spirit behind M Creative J, which provides hand embroidery kits and patterns inspired by nature. Here she answers our questions about her interest in fiber art and her business.

## WHAT DOES MODERN EMBROIDERY MEAN TO YOU?

### HOW DID YOU GET YOUR START?

I was lucky enough to grow up in a household that valued crafting and making things by hand. My mom, my sisters and I played around with many different mediums. From bobbin lace to papier-mâché and quilting to designing my own dresses for school dances, we did it all. Growing up, my mom helped me feel like I could try anything I set my mind to.

One of the crafts I tried as a young kid was hand embroidery. Even at that age, the patterns felt dated and not all that exciting. I wanted a design I could relate to. While I didn't stick with embroidery as a child—I was much more into coloring at that age—I found myself gravitating toward it again as an adult. For me, embroidery is like coloring with thread.



**FAR LEFT** A selection of M Creative J nature-inspired embroidery kits and Peel Stick and Stitch patterns.

**LEFT** Melissa wearing one of her many hand-embroidered sweatshirts.



by Clothworks

# Audrey

November 2024

Featured quilt: Sea Salt by Tamarinis

[clothworks.com](http://clothworks.com)



[@clothworkswa](https://www.instagram.com/clothworkswa)



**ABOVE** A variety of nature-inspired embroidery applications—traditional hoop embroidery, embellished shoes and clothing, and small framed brooches.

When I picked embroidery back up, I found that patterns at big-box stores hadn't changed much since I was a kid. I couldn't relate to them and didn't really want to stitch them. Thanks to my mom, I felt like I could create my own designs and go from there.

For me, modern embroidery is something that inspires you, that you can relate to and that you'd want to proudly hang up and show off. Modern embroidery is stitched art.

### **WHAT ARE SOME WAYS YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO INFLUENCE SALES? DO YOU HAVE TIPS ON HOW SHOPS CAN FOLLOW YOUR LEAD?**

Social media is an ever-changing beast. I often feel like I've finally figured things out, only to have it change again. Even with the constant changes, the things I have found to be the most important are to be yourself and to be consistent. People buy from people. Buyers don't want to feel sold to; they want an experience. Consistently post about who you are, what you do and why you love it.

Additionally, owning your own audience is key. If Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, etc. went away, you would lose that audience and all you've built up. Along with social media, I have a website with a blog and a newsletter. By having subscribers sign up for my newsletter, I have a direct connection with them. I'm not having to wade through an algorithm. Instead, I'm directly in their inbox. With my newsletter, I can talk with my interested audience and include photos, videos, links and sales that are exclusive for them.

Social media is a free promotional tool, but the numbers are more about vanity. If I could go back and do it all again, I would have started my newsletter list earlier and focused on it sooner.

### **IF A STORE IS JUST BEGINNING TO OFFER EMBROIDERY, HOW SHOULD IT ENGAGE CUSTOMERS WITH THIS NEW OFFERING? WHAT KITS WOULD YOU SUGGEST FOR BEGINNERS?**

I love when shops want to start or expand their embroidery offerings! When adding new products, I try to think like a buyer. I'd want to see a handful of kit options displayed together so that they're easy to find. If possible, it'd be helpful to include a finished design or work-in-progress sample.

As a wholesaler, I have a case minimum of three per kit. This helps a display look more robust and helps stores have a better idea of what designs sell best with their audience. At shows I have all the items for a kit laid out in a shadow box. Even though each kit states what is included in the box, having a visual helps buyers get a better idea of the materials.



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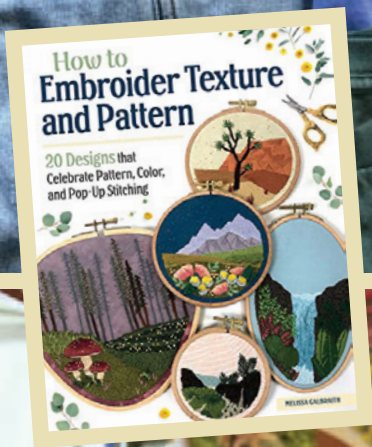
Released 2000



Released 2012



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**ABOVE FROM TOP** Melissa has a Domestika course on creating 'stained glass'-inspired embroidery projects, leads hand-embroidery workshops, has authored two embroidery books, and hosts an artist booth at many craft events.

I also love displaying finished and in-progress projects. While each kit has a photo of the project on the box, it's always better to see the real thing in person. Sometimes shops will buy an extra kit to create their own display boxes or stitch the project to use as an in-house sample.

I have a range of skill levels with my embroidery kits that start at beginner kits and work up to advanced kit options. I rate my kits based on design, number of stitches, types of materials and size. Some of my most popular beginner kits are Cyanotype Botanicals, Flower Trio and Embroidered Earrings.

#### HOW DO YOU WORK WITH STORES THAT SELL YOUR KITS?

I love sharing when shops place an order or restock their M Creative J selection. Whenever possible, I try to share about it on my social media channels. Additionally, I have a section on my website that highlights all the shops that carry my work. The list is alphabetical by state and then country. I'm happy to direct buyers to a shop in their area so they can purchase my products locally.

In addition to selling kits, I teach a lot of workshops. When I reach out to a shop about collaborating on classes, I clearly lay out what I can provide and what I also need to make the class a success. This includes needs like space, compensation, marketing, etc. Stating these needs upfront and laying out what I can provide helps set expectations for the partnership and success of the event.

You'll probably notice that my social media has quite a few posts about upcoming workshops. I also share these details on my website and in my weekly newsletter. To make sharing about classes easier for both my workshop partners and me, I have a Google Drive folder with photos for each class that I teach. I share this with my workshop partners so they can easily promote the workshop as well.

#### SCAN THIS!



Designer Melissa Galbraith had so much

information to share, we wanted you to see it all. Scan this QR code to read even more great tips and learn about her modern embroidery designs.

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For 50 years, Moda has been a leader and trusted name in the quilting industry – producing quality quilting fabrics with sought-after, talented designers; developing and distributing innovative products that improve the quilting experience; supporting quilt retailers of all sizes across the country and even the world; and inspiring and educating quilters to continue this vibrant and history-rich traditional craft.

We're celebrating and commemorating 50 Years of Moda with a one-of-a-kind, retrospective fabric collection and quilt contest!

Use the “Celebrating 50 Years of Moda” collection to create a quilt in one of three categories:

**PIECED QUILT** - Use traditional piecing methods in an original design

**ART QUILT** - Your original design can feature traditional and/or modern techniques, including 3D accents, applique, foundation paper piecing, etc.

**NEXT GENERATION QUILTER** - Youth category; maker must be 17 years old or younger.

All quilts must be at least 60” square and no larger than 85” x 90”. At least 75% of the quilt top must be made with the Celebrating 50 Years of Moda collection. One hundred percent of the quilt top, backing, and binding must be made with Moda fabrics.

**Prize Awards for each category:**

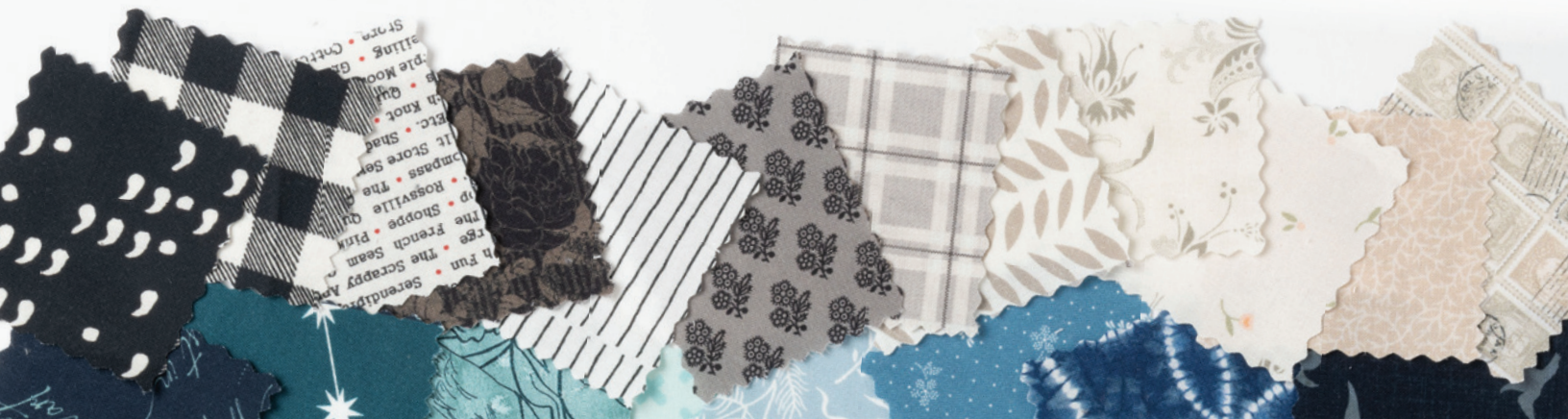
\***First Place** – \$2,500

\***Second Place** – \$1,000

\***Third Place** – One Moda fat quarter bundle a month for a year

All entries must be received by March 1, 2025.

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DATE WITH  
MORE CONTEST  
INFORMATION  
FOUND HERE



# Marketing Refresh

Position your store to gain young crafters as loyal customers.

by  
STITCHCRAFT  
MARKETING



Across the craft industry, business owners are eyeing millennials with a hopeful smile. There's huge room for growth among those 28 to 43 years old, and retailers who can grab their attention and turn them into loyal fans will be positioned for long-term success.

Retailers' interest in this age group was evident in the results of the 2023 Craft Retail Research Study by Stitchcraft Marketing (downloadable at [creativeretailer.com/2023-craft-retailer-research-results](https://creativeretailer.com/2023-craft-retailer-research-results)). The survey, sponsored in part by *Creative Retailer* magazine, garnered a huge response: More than 900 business owners shared the successes, frustrations and anxieties related to their business.

In the study findings, 40% of owners reported one of their top three challenges is attracting younger customers. This desire makes sense; millennials don't yet constitute a significant portion of the customer base for most craft retailers. However, once you draw them into your shop and welcome them into your communities, you're likely to have their support and business for the long run. If you're among those owners looking to draw in younger customers, consider these tactics to attract millennials and cultivate lasting relationships.

“  
ATTRACTING YOUNGER  
CUSTOMERS TO YOUR BUSINESS  
IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF  
LONG-RANGE PLANNING FOR  
MANY CRAFT RETAILERS.

”



## Boho Blooms

BATIKS

by Laura Heine

33 BATIK PRINTS  
 FABRIC SHIPS: JANUARY 2025

I have always wanted to design a batik collection. These prints are spin-offs of some of my favorite designs.

Flowers, word collages, and bees are just a few of the fun prints that can be used in so many ways! With beautiful and bright colors, there is sure to be something for everyone!

~ Laura Heine



QUILT: Dragonfly - 24" x 24"

PATTERN AVAILABLE JANUARY 2025

Designed by Laura Heine • FIBERWORKS-HEINE.COM



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“  
YOUNGER  
CONSUMERS ARE  
LIKELY TO SHOP  
ON THEIR  
SMARTPHONES,  
SO A FAST, CLEAN  
WEBSITE DESIGN  
IS ESSENTIAL FOR  
CAPTURING THEIR  
ATTENTION AND  
KEEPING THEM  
ENGAGED.”  
”



#### EMBRACE DIGITAL CHANNELS

Establishing a strong online presence is critical. Create engaging content that helps people find and get to know you. Most of your posts should be entertaining or informative (also known as “give” content). That means posting plenty of reels and videos. Viewers want quick, fun tips offered by real people, so don’t worry about professional production. Just turn on your phone and record as you unbox your latest shipment or announce a new promotion.

Focus on Instagram, TikTok and Pinterest, where audiences skew younger. In your posts, share behind-the-scenes glimpses of your business, customer projects and tutorials to connect with younger audiences who value authenticity and creativity. Resist the temptation to post promotional, sales-type content, which will fall flat with this demographic. Create content using your smartphone and a simple tripod.

#### OPTIMIZE FOR MOBILE

Ensure that your website is mobile-friendly and optimized for browsing and purchasing experiences. Younger consumers are likely to shop on their smartphones, so a fast, clean website design is essential for capturing their attention and keeping them engaged. Simplify the checkout process and offer multiple payment options such as Venmo to cater to their preferences.

#### CONNECT WITH INFLUENCERS

Find online creators who publish content that matches your retail category and your brand values. If you’re on Instagram or TikTok, you may already follow some millennials who are creating fun videos while they stitch or craft. Partner with these influencers to create sponsored content featuring your products. If they’re local, invite them to host an event at your store. Influencer endorsements can increase brand visibility and strengthen credibility among younger demographics.

#### CREATE IN-STORE EXPERIENCES

For brick-and-mortar stores, the ability to host people in your space sets you apart from online-only shops. Offer classes taught by your favorite knowledgeable customers—you know who has the craft skills and the demeanor for teaching. Host product demonstrations to engage young customers and build community around your shop. Encourage them to share their creations on social media and tag you to extend your visibility. Host a class or open crafting time in your shop.

#### PRIORITIZE SUSTAINABILITY AND ETHICAL PRACTICES

Younger consumers are increasingly drawn to purpose-driven brands that are conscious of environmental and ethical issues, so emphasize your commitment to sustainability and ethical practices. Use eco-friendly

packaging, source materials from local suppliers and support fair trade initiatives whenever possible.

Do you work with charitable causes? Consider supporting a charity that aligns with your brand story and make the relationship visible to your customers. Host craft drives to foster contributions to the charity and show your customers you care about your community.

#### FOSTER ONLINE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Create opportunities for young customers to engage with your brand beyond each transaction. Encourage customers to post photos and videos (also known as UGC or user-generated content) of their projects by running contests or challenges. Follow up and interact with posts and comments. By fostering a sense of community and belonging, you can turn customers into loyal advocates who will talk up your business to their friends and coworkers. Create posts that readers will share in person and online.

Attracting younger customers to your business is an important part of long-range planning for many craft retailers. Successfully drawing in millennials requires a multifaceted approach that combines digital marketing strategies, immersive experiences, sustainability initiatives and authentic storytelling. By understanding the preferences and values of younger demographics, you can implement a strategic plan that will appeal to younger customers and ultimately position your business for long-term success.



Meagan Rodgers is an account manager at Stitchcraft Marketing, a full-service marketing firm dedicated to creating opportunities for customers to know, like and trust your craft retail or wholesale brand.

Learn more about Stitchcraft Marketing's Craft Retail Research Results at [creativeretailer.com/2023-craft-retailer-research-results](https://creativeretailer.com/2023-craft-retailer-research-results).

textiles

## DECO THE HALLS

By JENNIFER ELLORY

Quilt by Stacey Day

## Snowfall

By GEETANJALI BEHERA  
FULL COLLECTION  
22 SKUS

## Sparkle

By JENNIFER ELLORY  
FULL COLLECTION  
18 SKUS

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# Check Out Your Cash Wrap

by  
GEORGANNE  
BENDER  
and  
RICH KIZER

The location, style and function of your counter affect customer experiences and purchasing.



**ABOVE** The cash wrap at House of Charlemagne, an eclectic and modern home decor store in St. Charles, Illinois, is elegant in its simplicity. It sits at almost the exact center of the sales floor where it is surrounded by irresistible product that turns as often as the sales floor changes. This cash wrap is a table at a comfortable counter height; a fabric skirt hides necessary supplies. We love the sign too.

While “Will that be cash or charge?” may be disappearing from the retail lexicon, you now have far more options for the design and function of your cash wrap counter.

In retail, customers’ perception is everything, and your cash wrap counter can be more than simply a place for shoppers to pay for purchases. What happens here often determines whether the customer returns to shop with you again. It’s a place where experiences are created, whether it’s an efficient exit for those with a single purchase or armfuls of merchandise or a chance to gather a bit of advice or one more item for a project.

Location is as important on the sales floor as it is in your store’s address. The front right-hand side of your store is not the ideal place for your cash wrap counter. That’s lakefront property, a prime location with the potential to sell more than other areas of the floor. Also, you don’t want visitors to think about spending money as soon as they enter and before they have had a chance to peruse the sales floor.

For those reasons, the ideal location for your cash wrap is either at the center of the sales floor, 15 to 20’ inside the front door, or at the left-hand front of your sales floor, at the natural end of the shopping experience. In this location, the cash wrap is the last stop in the shopper’s experience.

Cash wrap counters are as unique as the stores where they reside. Make yours a pleasant space that serves both form and function.

Here’s a look at what’s out there today and what each option has to offer.



**THIS PHOTO**

Herschel Supply SoHo is the brand's new flagship store selling clothing, accessories and travel gear. The décor features "vintage pieces, artist features and items from journeys all over the world," according to its website. The store is narrow, making the right-hand side lakefront property nonexistent. Instead of displays, that side of the sales floor is lined with floor-to-ceiling mirrors that visually double the look of the space. The cash wrap is a work of art that includes a mix of textures and a place to have a conversation about whatever you came in to buy. The majority of the counter is 48" tall, but the dip in the center is 36", meeting ADA requirements and making it easier for persons with disabilities to shop comfortably.

## Match Your Style



“  
LOCATION IS AS IMPORTANT  
THE SALES FLOOR AS IT IS  
IN YOUR STORE’S ADDRESS. ...  
YOU DON’T WANT VISITORS  
TO THINK ABOUT SPENDING  
MONEY AS SOON AS THEY  
ENTER AND BEFORE THEY  
HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO  
PERUSE THE SALES FLOOR.

”

**LEFT** Mia Vesper, owned by the fashion designer of the same name, sells extraordinary clothing made in New York City from new, vintage and artisan-made material. The cash wrap stands out in its simplicity. Bonus: It’s on wheels so it can be moved as the sales floor changes.








 Always in  
Season   
American Jane

The beautiful and rolie polie friendly **Easy Garden** quilt by American Jane is available for purchase as a standalone quilt pattern, and as a quilt kit in a beautiful keepsake box.

Don't miss the special display offer – when you purchase the fabrics or kits for this quilt, you'll be eligible to purchase one digitally printed quilt top to finish and hang in your store.

American Jane began in 2003 by Sandy Klop and since then the American Jane name has appeared on the selvedge of 40 fabric collections, in multiple magazines and on the cover of some. American Jane have produced over 450 patterns, three books and appeared in several others. American Jane fabrics and patterns have made people of all ages feel young and happy. **Always in Season** with its bright and cheerful palette and beautiful designs is no exception!

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RileyBlake  
DESIGNS.

## Match Your Style



**ABOVE** New York City's The Modern Chemist classifies itself as a boutique pharmacy retail experience, and it is. We found all sorts of things not commonly found in similar stores. The cash wrap here is heavily merchandised with impulse products, while still leaving space on two sides for shoppers to place product and their handbags, totes or backpacks. This cash wrap is product-heavy while the back wall houses only a sign and a clock. This open space gives the eye a break from everything else that is going on in the store. That being said, it's smart to merchandise the wall behind the cash wrap with the same care as any other product display. The purpose is to keep the shopper continually thinking about what you sell and to encourage impulse purchases.





**LEFT** The progressive boutique Extra Butter New York is an independently owned lifestyle brand that combines a passion for film, fashion and culture. The sales floor is pure theater with red velvet curtains, cinema seating to try on sneakers and a cash wrap that resembles a concession stand. The cash wrap is flexible, allowing the glass display counters and back wall to feature hats and accessories or showcase various product lines. It might be the place to pay, but the setup makes it impossible not to keep shopping.

**BELOW** Chazio's Boutique Salon in Algonquin, Illinois, is another example of strong merchandising behind the cash wrap. In a creative store, this area might be used to hold frequently forgotten items or to highlight new arrivals or specific categories. In your store, a quilt or samples might replace the clock as a focal point.

**“**  
 THE IDEAL  
 LOCATION FOR  
 YOUR CASH WRAP  
 IS EITHER AT THE  
 CENTER OF THE  
 SALES FLOOR,  
 15 TO 20' INSIDE  
 THE FRONT DOOR,  
 OR AT THE LEFT-  
 HAND FRONT  
 OF YOUR SALES  
 FLOOR, AT THE  
 NATURAL END OF  
 THE SHOPPING  
 EXPERIENCE.  
**”**



## Match Your Style



“  
IN RETAIL, CUSTOMERS’  
PERCEPTION IS EVERYTHING,  
AND YOUR CASH WRAP  
COUNTER CAN BE MORE  
THAN SIMPLY A PLACE  
FOR SHOPPERS TO PAY  
FOR PURCHASES.  
”

**ABOVE** P&T Knitwear is an independent bookstore, podcast studio, event space and café on NYC’s Lower East Side. Wondering why a bookstore is called P&T Knitwear? Google it. P&T Knitwear proves that a visually busy cash wrap can be effective. This one boldly announces the name of the store, carefully displays impulse items and lists upcoming in-store events on the letterboard behind the counter.

# STONEHENGE **EAGLE PASS**

by Linda Ludovico

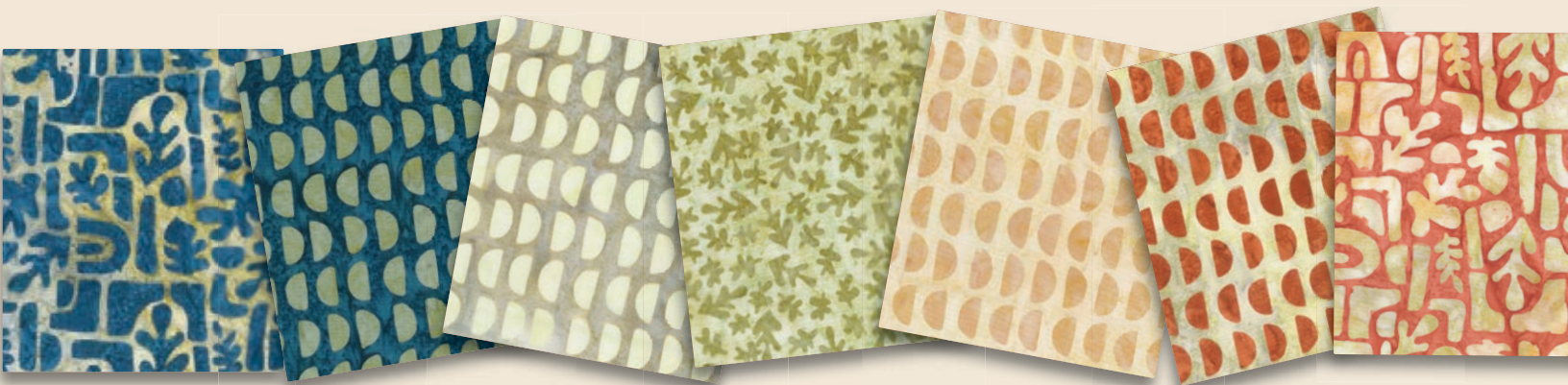


Let your imagination take flight with Eagle Pass, featuring signature Stonehenge textures by Linda Ludovico. Experience the beauty of eagles in flight, set against the backdrop of majestic mountains in an exquisitely detailed panel. Stunning ombre and an array of nature-inspired prints seamlessly blend together, evoking the serene beauty of the outdoors to any project. Together with a wide backing that provides the perfect finishing touch, Eagle Pass is sure to take your breath away.

Order online at [www.Northcott.com](http://www.Northcott.com) or contact your local representative to place an order today. Shipping from February 2025.

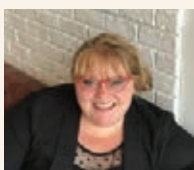


## **ORGANICS**



Inspired by the works of early 20th Century French Artist, Henri Matisse, Organics gives a modern take on simplistic shapes such as half moons and fern leaves in two distinct colorways that intermingle beautifully to create masterfully artistic quilts and home décor projects.

Organics ships to stores from January 2025. Order online at [www.BanyanBatiks.com](http://www.BanyanBatiks.com) or contact your local Sales Representative to place an order today!



### **MEET BANYAN'S NEW DESIGN DIRECTOR!**

Introducing Megan Cook, the dynamic creative force behind Banyan Batiks. Armed with a strong background in Fine Arts, brand and packaging design, education, and a heart full of passion, our newest addition is a force to be reckoned with. Megan returns to her roots in the quilting industry fostered by her mother, Jayme Crow of Bella Nonna Design Studio. With a deep-seated love of fabrics and craft, Megan brings a bright future to batik design.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JUMBO

## Back to the Future

**ABOVE** There was a time when conversation was expected at the cash wrap. You still find it in many stores, but in others, busy lives trump small talk. To some customers those interactions are a lifeline. Enter Jumbo, a Dutch grocer that's still in the relationship business. Kletskassa translates to "chat checkout" in English. It's a place where shoppers can spend time chatting with the cashier while buying their groceries. Jumbo introduced it to help battle loneliness among people who live alone. Chat checkouts can be found in 200 Jumbo stores, and some have added chat corners where shoppers can connect over a cup of coffee.

“  
THE CASH WRAP  
IS A PLACE WHERE  
EXPERIENCES  
ARE CREATED,  
WHETHER IT'S  
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PURCHASE OR  
ARMFULS OF  
MERCHANDISE  
OR A CHANCE TO  
GATHER A BIT OF  
ADVICE OR ONE  
MORE ITEM FOR  
A PROJECT.  
”



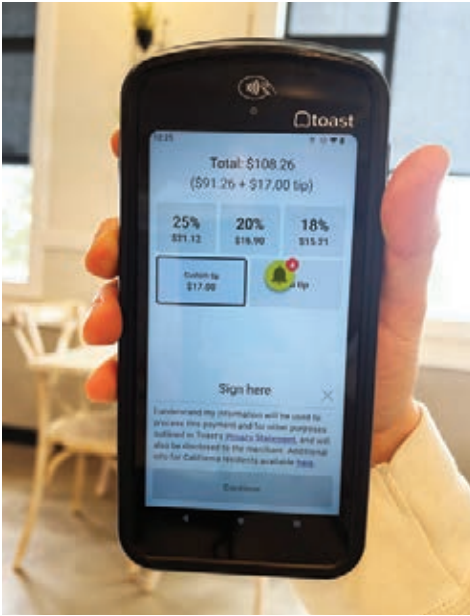
## Line? What Line?

**LEFT** We took one look at the checkout lines at the World of Disney store at Walt Disney World and said, “We’re outta here.” The lines were worse than rides at the Magic Kingdom. But as we turned to leave we saw the mobile checkout sign. It was easy: Move to a dedicated mobile checkout area, open the Disney Experience app, scan the item, choose a method of payment, bag it and show your QR confirmation code to a Disney cast member before exiting the store. Disney even emails you a receipt. Our entire transaction took about five minutes, with minimal wait time. Knowing we could quickly check out, we bought more.



## Do-It-Yourself

**ABOVE** Self-checkouts are evolving. This latest version of the self-checkout at a Zara store is also in use at Uniqlo and H&M. You dump all you plan to purchase in the bin and the device goes to work, scanning each item using radio-frequency identification technology. The screen displays items and price for the shopper to confirm before proceeding to payment. The shopper removes security tags and bags the items. It's less of a workout than traditional self-checkout and kind of fun.



## Moving Targets

**LEFT** Who doesn't love shopping at Apple where every associate carries an iPhone to quickly check you out and send you on your way? Associates toting handheld registers make it easier for customers to pay for goods and services. This isn't fancy technology; it's available right now. Options include card swipers, barcode scanners and even printers for shoppers who prefer a paper receipt. Square and Shopify offer mobile options, as do most point-of-sale system companies. These mobile devices give your associates the ability to go where customers are on the sales floor, so answering inventory questions no longer requires a trip to the register. A Home Depot associate was able to tell us where an item was located in the store, how many were in stock, pricing and more. This helps provide customer service that is quick and convenient.



Rich Kizer and Georganne Bender are consumer anthropologists, speakers, authors

and consultants. A team since 1990, Kizer & Bender ([kizerandbender.com](http://kizerandbender.com)) have helped thousands of companies in the service, travel, hospitality, funeral, restaurant, and retail industries grow their business. Kizer & Bender are experts on generational diversity, store design, visual merchandising, marketing and promotion, and everything retail.



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of Starting Your Quilt Shop.**



# 5 Ways to Be More Accountable

These strategies will help you follow through instead of dropping the ball with your team.

by KARMAN  
HOTCHKISS

“My word is my bond.”

Jesse said it in “Breaking Bad.” Shakespeare wrote it in “The Merchant of Venice.” Even Ice-T used that phrase in his rap lyrics. No matter the context, the meaning is the same: “I follow through on what I say I’ll do.” The quote strikes at the heart of integrity, honor and reliability.

How would you rate yourself on how often you fulfill what you promise? What would your employees say about your follow-through? How about your business partners? Your family? Would the people who rely on you say that your word is truly your bond?

How often you follow through on what you pledge to do is called the “say-to-do ratio” by authors Scott Burgmeyer and Tammy Rogers. Their observation is that leaders who consistently live up to their promises—who say they’ll do something and then do it—are more likely to gain the respect and trust of their teams. Leaders who drop the ball on little things (“I’ll check on that after lunch”) or on big things (“I promise we’ll have a new scanner by July”) undermine their own authority. And they’re likely to have employees who drop the ball too.

Holding yourself accountable—doing what you say you’ll do—is critical for building trusting relationships. It’s also a key element of moving your business forward. Setting goals and fulfilling them keeps you focused on your store’s growth and opportunities.

## TAKE INVENTORY OF YOUR SAY-TO-DO RATIO

One way to get a handle on your own accountability is to start by listing all the goals you made for yourself and your business this year. Where are you on each of those objectives? Have you met any of them already? Started them? How many are repeat goals that you didn’t get to last year? Be honest with yourself about where you are—or aren’t.

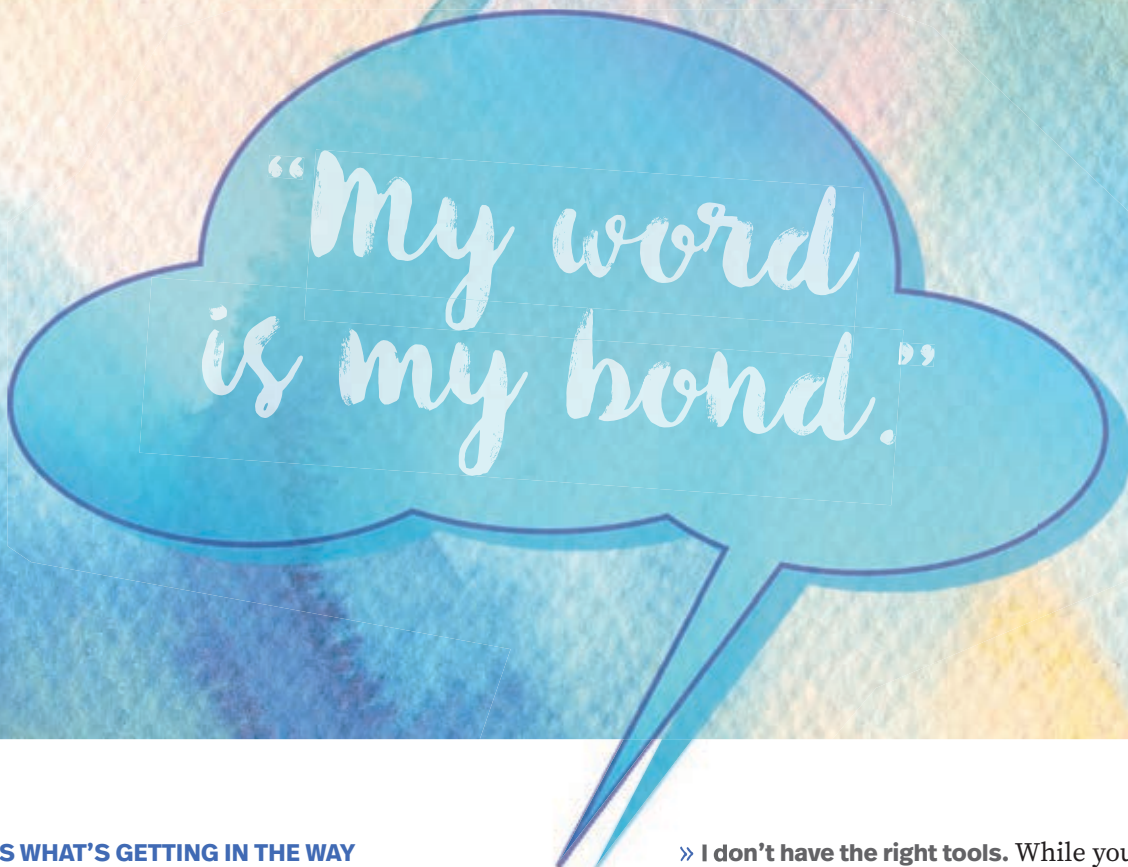
Perform the same kind of inventory with your to-do list. What did you intend to do last week? Last month? What did you tell your team you were going to fix/find/focus on? How’s that going? If your say-to-do ratio could use improvement, it’s time to figure out how to do better.

## WHAT’S GOING WELL? WHAT’S NOT?

As you look at your lists and analyze what you’ve done and haven’t done, look for themes. What’s gone well? What kinds of projects have moved forward? Which things do you feel confident about? Where do you feel energized?

Conversely, what could be better? Where are you getting stuck? What types of things turn out to be more difficult than you anticipated? Which items on your list make you feel anxious or unprepared?

Ultimately, you want to look at what your two lists suggest about your accountability. How can you be more accountable? How can you do more of what you say you’ll do?



“My word  
is my bond.”

#### ADDRESS WHAT'S GETTING IN THE WAY

It's easy to make excuses about why certain things don't get done. Try to look at the stumbling blocks as opportunities to learn something about yourself and to generate solutions. Here are some common barriers and ways to reframe them.

» **I don't have enough time.** Alas, there are only 24 hours in a day, so we have to be intentional about how we use them. Are you, as author Eduardo Briceño would say, getting trapped in low-level goals? Take a hard look at how you spend your work hours. Are you so caught up in little daily tasks (“Well, somebody has to straighten the shelves”) that you're not leaving time for important commitments you've made? Are you overextending yourself so you can use lack of time as an excuse? Identify two things you want to stop doing to make room for something more important you've committed to.

» **I don't have the right tools.** While you're examining how you use your time, you're probably going to find some tasks that you suspect could be easier—if only you had the right tool or system. There are great, easy-to-use programs that can help you with scheduling, documentation, task assignments, sales contacts, inventory and so on. Identify your sore spot and investigate what's out there to solve it. This is a great question to ask other business owners in your network.

» **I'm not good at that kind of thing.** Time to build your skills. Do you put off difficult conversations with staff? A management seminar could help you. Do you delay bookkeeping tasks? Perhaps a short night class in the basics would give you the confidence to dig in. Focus on building the skills that will support your to-do list.

“  
HOLDING YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE—  
DOING WHAT YOU SAY YOU'LL DO—IS CRITICAL  
FOR BUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS.  
”



“  
 TRY TO LOOK AT THE  
 STUMBLING BLOCKS AS  
 OPPORTUNITIES TO  
 LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT  
 YOURSELF AND TO  
 GENERATE SOLUTIONS.  
 ”

**FOCUS ON THE WHY**

When I attended Weight Watchers (now known as WW), one of the frequent workshop topics challenged members to concentrate on the reason they wanted to lose weight. When sticking to the plan got difficult, remembering the ultimate goal (I want to climb stairs without getting winded; I want to fit into my skinny jeans) made it easier to focus.

The same is true with your goal to follow through on what you say you'll do. When you're tempted to cut corners, go back to why you want to be more accountable. You want to be considered trustworthy. You want to keep your business moving forward. You want your employees to fulfill their commitments. Whatever your "why" is keep it top of mind.

**BREAK IT INTO MILESTONES**

Early in my career I was a project manager for an in-house ad agency. Deadline enforcement was part of my job. I quickly discovered that too many people had their eye on the big, final deadline—and yet they missed it. As a team, we had much more success when we broke projects into phases with progressive deadlines. Doing the first step on time generally predicted that the overall project would stay on track.

You can help your own accountability if you break tasks into smaller steps with specific milestone deadlines. Say one of your objectives for the year is to replace your checkout system. You're more likely to meet that goal if

you divide it into tasks like "By May 1, I will ask my *Creative Retailer* network for recommendations. By June 10, I'll have invited three vendors to do demos. By August 1, I will make a decision." By breaking it down, you'll keep the progress manageable.

**REWARD YOURSELF**

I have a coaching client who admits she's "gold star" motivated and devised a system for giving herself stickers when she accomplishes certain tasks. She's a little sheepish about the program, but it works for her. What's a reward system that will help you stay accountable? Schedule a massage when you finish that thing you promised. Or indulge in a walk around the block after you finally have that difficult conversation with a vendor.

**FIND AN ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER**

The buddy system works. Years ago, I dragged myself out of bed at 5 a.m. to go to the gym because I knew my friend Mary Beth would be waiting for me. It kept me motivated. These days, in my work as a career coach, I'm often the one keeping people accountable. Together we decide what they want to accomplish and by when. Then it's my job to follow up, to keep the objective at the forefront, and to suggest solutions when there's a challenge. Who's keeping you accountable?

As business owners, our reputation for being trustworthy affects our relationships, our staff and our credibility. Nobody wants to be known as that flake who never follows through. Being aware of our say-to-do ratio—and taking the steps to improve it—will help us grow our businesses and ourselves.



Karman Hotchkiss is a leadership and career coach who draws on more than 25 years as a corporate manager to help others build their professional skills. She lives, coaches and hoards craft supplies in Des Moines, Iowa. Learn more about her at [LevelUpWithKarman.com](http://LevelUpWithKarman.com).



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# Don't Get Sloppy

Pay attention to expenses even when sales are hot.

by TOM  
SHAY

When business is hot, you should be hot in all aspects of store management. And if you are not, you are going to pay for it when you look at the bottom line.

In early March 2020, life was good, and so was business. Then everything changed with the pandemic. Business dropped to near zero for dry cleaners, restaurants and more, while others found themselves experiencing a tremendous sudden growth in business as everyone's work, social and private lives shifted to focus on people staying in their homes.

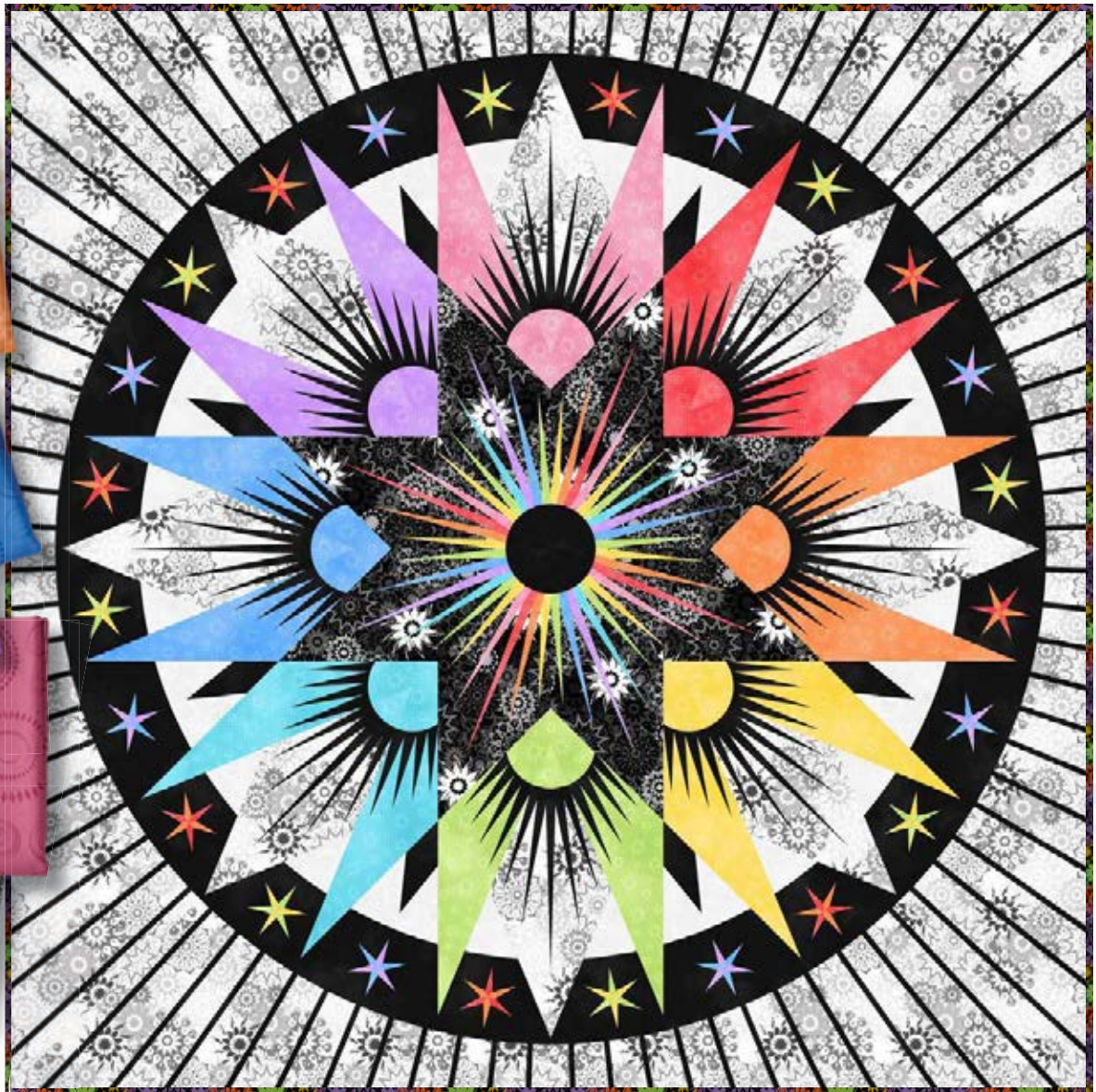
Bicycle shops sold more because people would not take public transportation. Kitchen supplies sold because every meal was eaten at home. Liquor stores sold a lot more.

Many business owners in a hot category became sloppy. With sales booming and all that extra cash in the drawer, owners spent money on additional staff and inventory. Operating expenses grew simply because all the focus was on the additional sales, and expenses were unmonitored.

Instead of looking only at the top line (sales) and the bottom line (net profit), you need to be aware of your gross margin and expenses as they are stated as a percentage of sales. Our online calculator will allow you to compare your sales to date for this year and compare it to the year-end total for each of the past three years.

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“

*IF YOUR BUSINESS HAS TOO MUCH INVENTORY RIGHT NOW, IT DOES NOT MATTER WHAT YOU DID OR DID NOT DO TO CAUSE THE SITUATION. BUT IT DOES MATTER HOW YOU ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF EXCESS INVENTORY.*

”



When you utilize the calculator, compare your gross margin for each of the four years. If there is a variance in the four gross margins, do you know why that happened? If you think a diminished gross margin is because of a price increase in the cost of the inventory, why aren't the retail prices increased to compensate?

This calculator arranges expenses in a unique manner. All expenses dealing with advertising and marketing are grouped together. All expenses that are a part of payroll (payroll, taxes, workers' compensation insurance, health or life insurance, incentives and bonuses) are in one group. The same is true with all the expenses related to your business occupying the building. And the last group includes all the remaining expenses that do not fit into one of the three previous. Beneath these four groupings is a line that shows the total operating expenses for each of the three previous years and the year to date.



**SCAN THIS!**

» Use the free online calculator found at [creativeretailer.com/product-category/free-resources](https://creativeretailer.com/product-category/free-resources) to compare your sales to

date for this year and compare it to the year-end total for each of the past three years.

Examine each of the four areas, and the total operating expenses as a percentage of sales. Is the percentage number consistent? This is the true comparison in a business. If one year your payroll is 17% of sales and 24% of sales in another year, it will be easy to see that payroll was not carefully monitored.

Whether in the midst of a pandemic, endemic, recession or a period without any description, your gross margin, advertising, payroll, occupancy, other expenses and total expenses should have a degree of consistency. You should be trying to improve each, but these percentages should not be bouncing up and down because of a lack of attention.

Inventory also requires your attention. We spoke with a retailer recently who, during the pandemic, adopted a policy of ordering 50% more of everything with the expectation of sizable shortages.

Such a buying strategy works if there are sales to support that strategy or if vendors are short of products so the business does not receive too much inventory.

If your business has too much inventory right now, it does not matter what you did or did not do to cause the situation. But it does matter how you address the issue of excess inventory.

If you have found yourself having to borrow money or paying for inventory with a credit card that charges 18% in interest, this is the issue that requires your immediate attention.

Most likely your issue is not dead inventory sitting on a shelf because it was not the right selection. Instead, you may be experiencing a situation of just too much inventory. There is a difference.

I remember my dad telling me the advantage of being a retailer over other types of work. “When you make a mistake in retail, you can usually get your money back and buy something else,” he said. It can be good advice today.

A good deal is good only if the retailer can sell all that was purchased. Consider the experience of a retailer who found a “good deal” at a trade show. This retailer bought as if the manufacturer was going out of business.

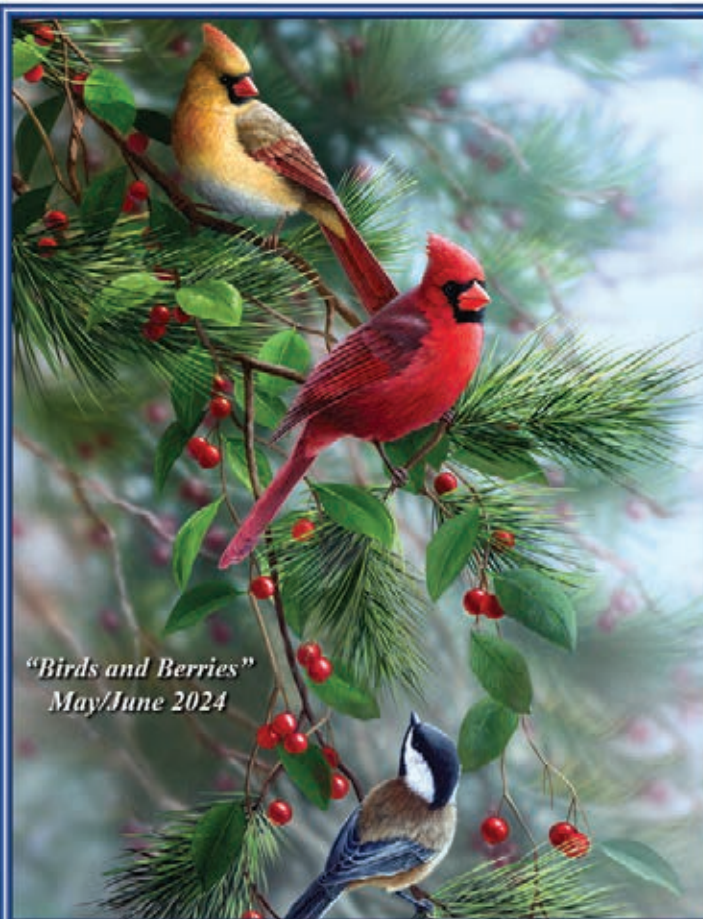
With a bit of calculation, the retailer could see that a few months from that ill-fated purchase, the store would suffer a sizable cash shortage. The answer did not come as a complete solution. Instead, the answer moved the shortfall from unmanageable to manageable.

When the goal is to diminish the loss, it is fairly easy to sell items for \$17 that have an average cost of \$20. Yes, you are losing money, but you have to consider the cost of a loan for that inventory. Also, you will now have money to invest in inventory that does sell at a normal rate.

When you buy that new inventory, remember that when you are hot, you are hot. And when you are not, don't buy so much.



Tom Shay and Profits Plus (profitsplus.org) assist business owners in increasing profits plus building their businesses for the future.



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# Insights from a Tennessee Shop Owner

by MADDIE  
PUJADAS

Her stress-relieving hobby became a career; technology now relieves stress in running her business.

**S**usan Hyder, owner of Hyderhangout in Cleveland, Tennessee, expanded her lifelong love of sewing from a hobby to a business. She offers advice to other shop owners.

“Pick one thing that you want to optimize—something that you really dislike doing, for example—and look into technology that could help you,” she says. “My job is so much more enjoyable because I get to spend my time doing the things I love most—quilting and connecting with my customers!”

## HOW DID YOU GET INTO QUILTING?

My love for sewing and quilting started at a young age. At 6 years old, I started sewing, and by the time I was 10, my Barbie doll had 500 hand-sewn outfits. I loved everything about sewing; it became a passion.

When I turned 12, my step-grandmother from Costa Rica taught me how to make a quilt. As with all quilts, we started by making the top, and the next day we were going to start quilting. But for me, the fabric wasn't perfect and my seams didn't match. I got up in the middle of the night, cut it up into a million pieces and threw it away. In hindsight, I wish I still had my first quilt to show other quilting beginners.

When I was 18, I started a five-year stint doing alterations at Fines Department Store in Savannah, Georgia. I was the youngest of the 18 women in the department and they taught me everything. But my heart was in quilting. I opened my own factory in Florida for a while, which focused on small-quantity garment manufacturing with a screen-print component. Eventually, I went to school to become a nurse and I used quilting as a form of stress relief.

#### **WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO OPEN YOUR OWN QUILTING STORE?**

In 2008, I quit my nursing job—I was burned out—and I had always had a passion for quilting, so why not make my passion my job. I opened my business in my basement with fabric that I had purchased from a store that was closing the year prior and invested in a big lighted sign. However, because the store was in my home, it didn't see the traction of a regular storefront. In October 2009, I found a place in downtown Cleveland, Tennessee. We were at that location for about a year and then I found the place where Hyderhangout is now located. In that move, we were able to expand the store from 600 to 3,000 square feet, and we've been expanding ever since—both in-store and online.

#### **WHAT IS THE MOST FULFILLING PART OF OWNING YOUR STORE?**

I'm passionate about what I do. I love quilting and I love interacting with people who want to quilt. However, I'm a business owner first, a quilter second, so I have to remember that my business decisions are different from what I would make if what I was doing was just a hobby. I focus many of my business decisions around my customers. From spending time helping customers find their fabric to figuring out their measurements to offering classes and clubs, I try to set our store apart from other quilting stores, and I believe that's why we've been successful.

#### **HOW HAS TECHNOLOGY MADE A DIFFERENCE IN HOW YOU OPERATE YOUR STORE?**

When I first started Hyderhangout, I wanted to encourage the "hangout" part—spending time with customers and helping them have the best quilting experiences.

In 2009, I was introduced to Like Sew, which is a point-of-sale system for quilting and sewing retailers. I could choose the features I needed for my store, such as e-commerce, inventory, measurements and sales. I'm still using the platform today.

I emphasize to my employees that they should spend all the time they need to with a customer, and we're able to do this because of technology such as Like Sew. At times, we will spend up to an hour or two helping somebody find fabric and figure out measurements. This helps us make friends rather than just customers. Because of Like Sew, I'm not sitting in an office looking at spreadsheets or spending hours trying to manage inventory, online stores (eBay and Etsy) and employees. It has transformed the way I conduct my business, focusing on quilting and connecting with my customers.

“

*I'M A BUSINESS OWNER FIRST, A QUILTER SECOND, SO I HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT MY BUSINESS DECISIONS ARE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT I WOULD MAKE IF WHAT I WAS DOING WAS JUST A HOBBY. I FOCUS MANY OF MY BUSINESS DECISIONS AROUND MY CUSTOMERS.*

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**ABOVE LEFT** Hyderhangout in Cleveland, Tennessee, provides local quilters the perfect place to hangout with other creative people. **ABOVE RIGHT** Shop owner Susan Hyder, left, and a staff member demonstrate a tool for making holiday bows.

#### **WHAT PARTS OF THE BUSINESS HAVE BENEFITED MOST FROM TECHNOLOGY USAGE?**

Technology has been most beneficial in inventory management, specialty fabric cutting and e-commerce.

Managing inventory is a core part of our store's physical and online operations. Our system tracks everything we sell in-store and online. As we make our way through bolts or products, we know what is selling well, prompting the need to order more, or if we should just let it sell out. We also use technology to understand what types of fabric or supplies are selling better than others and ensure that our stock accurately reflects the desires of our customers.

With regards to fabric cutting, we can manage fractional yards and precuts through Like Sew. For example, if a customer wants a fabric measurement that's not a common fractional, we can cut it and the system is programmed to give an exact price for the material. We don't have to do the math to figure out how much the customer should be charged. It makes a huge difference for us and our customers when we're able to streamline time at the cutting table and know that checkout will go just as smoothly.

“

*I EMPHASIZE TO MY EMPLOYEES THAT THEY SHOULD SPEND ALL THE TIME THEY NEED TO WITH A CUSTOMER, AND WE'RE ABLE TO DO THIS BECAUSE OF TECHNOLOGY SUCH AS LIKE SEW. ... IT HAS TRANSFORMED THE WAY I CONDUCT MY BUSINESS, FOCUSING ON QUILTING AND CONNECTING WITH MY CUSTOMERS.*

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E-commerce has played a huge role in our business, especially over the last few years. In particular, 2020 was an interesting time. There was a lot of doubt everywhere about what would happen to businesses during the pandemic. We had our e-commerce store set up, and Like Sew was super quick to add an in-store pickup feature; it was game changing for us. Within days of the world shutting down, my online sales had skyrocketed. I went from a few orders a day to 20 to 50 a day. We spent hours packing orders—a lot of people wanted kits for quilting and mask making—in an effort to make a really hard time for many a little bit easier and, hopefully, enjoyable.

#### **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ANOTHER STORE OWNER?**

There are so many things you have to think about as a shop owner. You have to be able to multitask and be flexible. On top of that, you have to build the relationships with your vendors, suppliers, employees and customers. There is so much that you can learn from everyone you surround yourself with.

One way to do this is to use technology to help you. Don't waste time trying to do everything yourself. Resources can change how someone approaches their business. I know Like Sew will give me the data and insights I need to make my business decisions. Sales processes are more seamless and I can give better, data-driven recommendations based on our sales history. It gives me the ability to focus on my customers in a way that I could have never done without the support of their system and their team.

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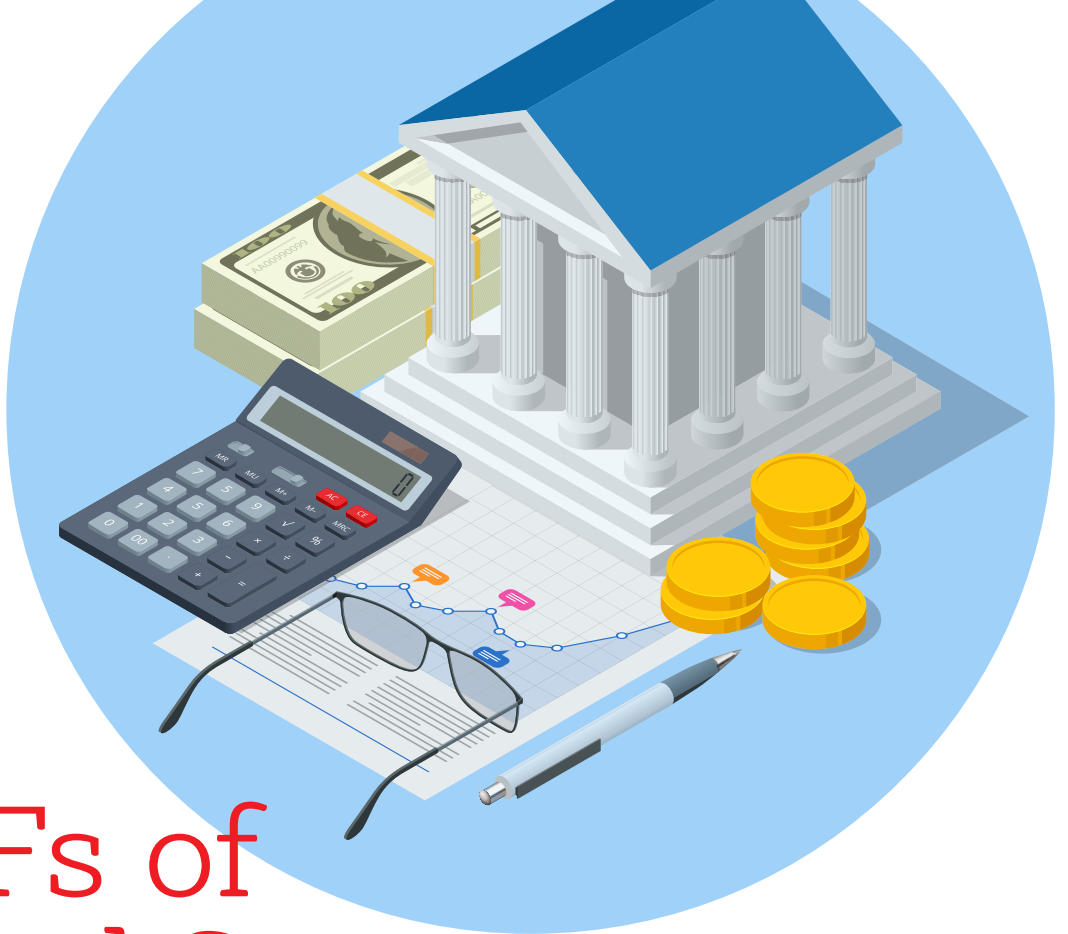
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# The 3 Fs of Financial Services

Annually evaluate your providers to improve business health.

by GWEN  
BORTNER

Managing finances effectively is crucial in retail operations. As a craft retailer, the services you need and the criteria by which you evaluate them have unique qualities.

Retailers typically engage with banks for savings and everyday transactions, loan companies for business expansion or emergency funds, and merchant accounts for handling sales transactions. Each of these services plays a vital role in ensuring smooth financial operations, underpinning everything from inventory purchases to customer sales.

However, as the market evolves, so does your business. The financial systems and services that got you where you are today may not be the ones you need to get you where you want to go next. Annual evaluation of your financial services is recommended.

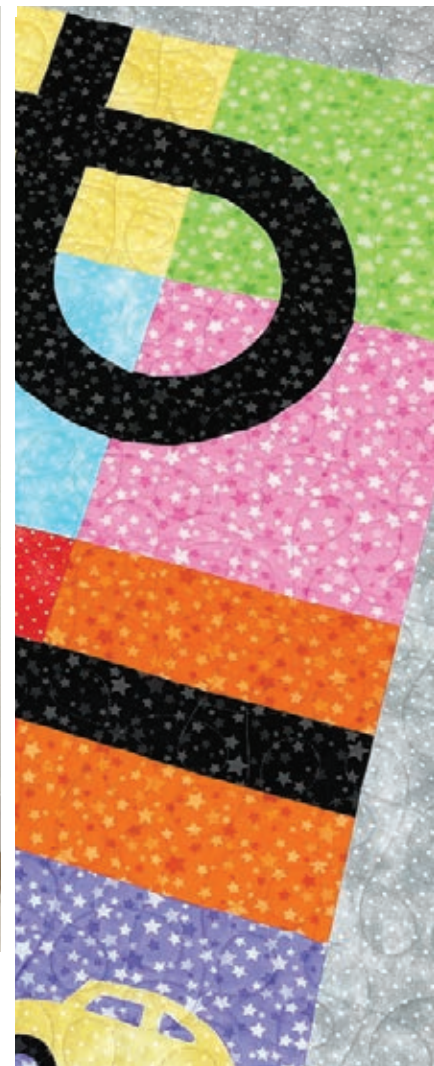
Regular evaluation helps identify if you're receiving the competitive rates, exceptional customer service and financial flexibility necessary for your business to thrive. In general, your evaluation should include the following factors:

- » **Fees:** The cost of services and fees associated with transactions have to be paid in some way, often cutting into your profits.
- » **Friction:** Every point of friction in your operation costs you, either in customer acquisition or retention, or in staff time.
- » **Features:** Your systems and services features should support and enhance your business operations and growth.

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### UNDERSTANDING YOUR CURRENT FINANCIAL SERVICES

In the craft retail industry, the choice of financial services can significantly impact both day-to-day operations and long-term growth.

Every financial service you use should contribute positively to your business operations, whether it's through enhancing customer experience, improving cash flow management or helping you scale your business effectively.

Though looking things over every year is wise, it's critical to reassess your financial services when you notice:

- » Excessive or unexplained fees cutting into your profits.
- » Customer complaints related to payment processing.
- » Difficulty in integrating financial services with your current sales or accounting systems.
- » Lack of adequate customer support.

“

**AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR, TALK WITH YOUR BANKER TO FIND OUT WHETHER YOUR CURRENT CONFIGURATION OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO BE BANKING WITH THAT INSTITUTION.**

”

- » Changes in your business model or size that are not adequately supported by your current services.
- » New financial products or services that could better meet your business needs.

### ASSESSING YOUR BANK RELATIONSHIP

Banks change their fees and rules from time to time. The interest rate goes up a percentage point, minimum balance requirements change by a few hundred dollars or the features you can access might change.

At least once a year, talk with your banker to find out whether your current configuration of products and services is the most effective way to be banking with that institution. You also want to ask about available services you haven't yet explored. The bank might offer packages that could save you money each month without costing you extra time or energy to implement. For example, if you increase your savings account balance, you might get lower checking account fees. Consolidating all your products (merchant account, loans, savings, etc.) might provide an advantage. It also might not.

The reason for this meeting is to help you make decisions based on accurate current information instead of assumption.

Additional questions to help you evaluate your banking relationship include: Are the bank's fees reasonable for the services provided? How responsive and helpful is the customer service department, especially when dealing with urgent issues? And importantly, does the bank understand and support your specific business needs?

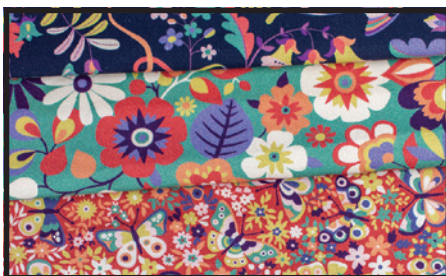
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	Loans/Lines of Credit	Providing funds for capital investments	Vital for financing larger business investments or bridging cash flow gaps	SBA-approved lenders, traditional banks, credit unions, online lenders	Interest rates, repayment terms, speed of funding, hidden fees or penalties
	Merchant Accounts	Facilitating card payments from customers	Crucial for processing customer payments, both in-store and online, expanding payment options	Square, PayPal, Stripe, traditional bank merchant services	Transaction fees, payment processing speed, integration with existing systems, customer support

### LOANS VS. LINES OF CREDIT

Though the best-case scenario for any business is to never go into debt, every business encounters situations where the question of whether to borrow money and how to borrow that money is worth having.

As a business owner, your two main choices for borrowing money are either taking out a loan or opening a line of credit.

Loans are best for long-term capital investments, such as equipment or buying the building where your shop is located. Lines of credit are for ups and downs within the business and should be paid off within a reasonably short time frame.

With a loan, you agree to borrow a fixed amount of money at a fixed interest rate for a specific time period. A line of credit, on the other hand, is open-ended. In many cases, you would use a line of credit instead of a credit card. You can use it at any time and only pay interest when you owe on it. Though the interest rate is variable and depends on prime rates, it's usually a lot lower than on a credit card.

As a retailer, an open line of credit might be useful. You can use it for inventory or small capital purchases such as a point-of-sale (POS) system. The goal, though, is to never max it out and pay it off consistently.

Access to both debt products can make sense, but using loans to cover the ups and downs in your business is usually the sign of a much bigger problem. Debt is always a slippery slope, and the line between use and abuse is a thin one.

### MERCHANT ACCOUNTS AND PAYMENT PROCESSING

When you evaluate your merchant accounts and processing fees, the most important thing to do is check on your current rates.

It's not uncommon for a service that used to be highly competitive in fees to become less so over time. This includes not only the transaction fees per sale but also any monthly or annual service charges. Compare these costs across different providers to ensure you're getting a fair deal.

Understand your transaction norms. Flat-rate transaction fees, even nominal ones, can add up to a lot over time if you're processing hundreds of sales per month.

Alongside fees, consider transaction speed. The time it takes for a transaction to be processed and the funds to be deposited into your account can impact your cash flow and inventory management.

Reliability is another key factor. Opt for services with a strong track record of uptime and minimal outages, as any downtime can result in lost sales. Additionally, consider the compatibility of these services with your existing sales systems. A seamless integration between your POS system and the payment processor is essential for efficient operations.

Security and protection of customer data should be at the forefront of your decision. Look for services that comply with the latest security standards and have robust measures in place to protect sensitive customer information.

#### STAYING INFORMED AND AHEAD

Small charges that happen frequently—account fees, processing fees, interest on loans, etc.—often add up to thousands of dollars by the end of the year.

Stay informed about your financial services and systems so you keep those fees as low as possible. This proactive approach ensures that your business is not only keeping pace with current standards but is also poised to leverage new opportunities and technologies as they arise.

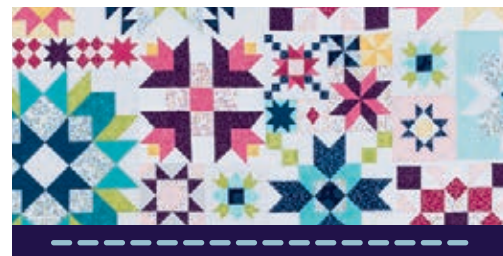
Knowing when to seek professional advice is also important.

If you're facing complex financial decisions, considering a significant change in your business model or simply unsure about the right financial path, consulting with a business adviser or financial expert specializing in retail can be invaluable.

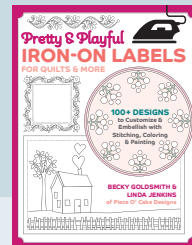
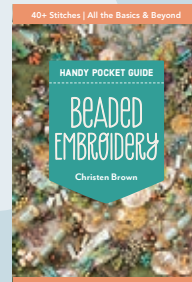
These professionals can offer personalized advice, tailored to the unique needs and challenges of your craft retail business. They can also guide you in future-proofing your financial choices, ensuring the services you use today will continue to support your business's growth and evolution. Remember, the right financial decisions can propel your business forward, so investing in expert advice is often a wise and beneficial choice for the long-term success of your craft retail venture.



Gwen Bortner describes herself as an operational strategist. She works one-on-one with owners to improve business operations and leverage goals effectively to create a business that meets each individual's unique definition of success. Find out more at [everydayeffectiveness.com](http://everydayeffectiveness.com).



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# Take a Positive Path to Business Success

Are you telling yourself you will succeed?

Every success story begins with self-talk. What did you tell yourself today? How does that impact your day? How does it affect your conversations with customers, staff and family? As a business owner in the creative retail space, your mindset affects your business.

Negative self-talk damages your confidence and makes it more likely that those thoughts will come true. Reading this, your negative brain might be thinking, *That is ridiculous! I cannot control whether people buy my products.* True. The only person you can control is yourself.

“

THE BEAUTY OF FOCUSING YOUR MINDSET IN A POSITIVE DIRECTION IS THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL OVER IT.

”

However, developing a positive mindset affects how you feel and creates energy around what you do.

Have you ever walked into a room for a meeting and felt electricity in the air? In some cases, you may have sensed a heaviness that urged you to exit the room immediately. Sometimes the energy emitted lightness or excitement, and you wished you could spend the entire day there. Those are the meetings when everyone loses track of time until someone's alarm emits a reminder to move on to the next meeting.

Focusing on positive results creates an optimistic atmosphere. Rather than putting on the smiling face you pull out when you feel more like frowning, you wear the smiling face because you feel good. You transmit that energy to those who interact with you. Your contacts are more likely to become customers.

by MARY  
BALISTRERI





# SPACE DYE

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FIGO  
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## Tips to Start Journaling

Often the little things keep people from starting a new habit. When it comes to journaling, the logistics of it can create obstacles.

- 1. Choose the right method.** Some people love the physical action of writing by hand. Some people use technology for everything they do. The method does not matter. Grab the one you enjoy the most. It can be a beautiful journal with matching pen, a chart from your business software or an app that allows you to dictate to text.
- 2. Choose the right place.** Do you have a favorite chair in your house? A nook in your garden where you can relax? Find a space where you break free of your everyday life.
- 3. Choose the best time.** What time of your day offers a bit of space when you can concentrate? Quiet time with your journal and your morning coffee? You may prefer to reflect on the day and journal when work is done. Find the time that works for you.
- 4. Choose and begin.** You are on your way!

Even when selling online and no one can see your smile, negative energy can seep into the product descriptions you write. Negativity saps your strength. It takes up space in your mind and prevents you from dreaming and soaring into a successful business.

### STEPS FOR POSITIVE SELF-TALK

Changing the damaging messages in your head takes commitment. Like any new habit, it needs repetition and nurturing to take root and flourish. Ask yourself what your life would be like if you committed to yourself the way you commit to your family, friends and responsibilities. Most people prioritize tasks for others over their commitments to themselves. Follow these steps to achieve positive self-talk.

- 1. Commit to yourself.** Each day, write down something you will do for yourself. It can be anything. “Today I will spend one hour reaching out to new customers.” Or “I will spend 30 minutes writing in my journal.” At the end of the day, check if you did the thing.
- 2. Put yourself on your to-do list.** Most entrepreneurs maintain daily, weekly or monthly lists of tasks to accomplish. Are you on your list? Add the thing you plan to do for yourself to your to-do list every day. When you check off your accomplishments, your item is there as a reminder.
- 3. In a journal, write your thoughts each morning.** Words contain their own power whether they are spoken or written. Individuals assign energy and power to words, sometimes unconsciously. As you write your thoughts each morning, notice how you feel about them. You can call this a “brain dump” or “mind release” or something that means “release” to you. Pour out your thoughts, negative or positive. Just write them down.

“  
WORDS CONTAIN THEIR OWN POWER WHETHER  
THEY ARE SPOKEN OR WRITTEN. ... THE LAST WORDS  
YOU WRITE IN YOUR JOURNAL BECOME YOUR FOCUS  
FOR THE DAY. MAKE IT POSITIVE.  
”

**4. Turn your written thoughts toward positive outcomes.**

After you release your thoughts, worries and fears, turn the thinking in a positive direction. If you wrote, “I am afraid no one will visit my website today,” write down a positive outcome: “I know I am on the right track with my business,” or “People visit my website every day. Today will be a good day.” The sentences belong to you, just as the thoughts are yours. Own them.

**5. Write an intention for the day.** The last words you write in your journal become your focus for the day. Make it positive. It can be, “Today I will focus on my business.” Or “Today will be a great day for me.” Or “Today is the day I meet with that potential buyer. It will be a good meeting.”

**6. Repeat every day.**

You are in control of you! The beauty of focusing your mindset in a positive direction is that you have complete

control over it. You are in charge of when you do it, whether you do it, and how you do it. Practice this skill by taking hold of these suggested steps and making them your own.



Mary Balistreri is the CEO and president of MBT More Business Today LLC. A leadership and business coach for more than a decade, she offers a variety of coaching and professional development services to individuals and organizations.

Contact Mary at [mbtmorebusinesstodayllc@gmail.com](mailto:mbtmorebusinesstodayllc@gmail.com) or visit her at: <https://mbtmorebusinesstodayllc.com/>



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# Unlock the Power of Delegation

Strategic assignment of tasks will boost your business.

by TRACY WALKER

When you lock up your store at the end of the day, do you feel a sense of accomplishment, of moving closer to your big-picture goals? Or do you find yourself wondering if your day's work was just a flurry of activity without real advancement toward your dream of operating the ultimate creative haven?

In the midst of the daily grind, it's easy to get lost in a sea of immediate to-dos, mistaking them for the stepping

stones to business growth. As a dedicated shop owner, you need to pause and reevaluate your priorities. Stop the demands on your attention by remembering you're more than just a reactive force in your business. You're a visionary, a creative force with big plans and dreams. Those dreams need your attention. You can make that happen through delegating.



# VIVID

by Jason Yenter

September 2024

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WHEN YOU DELEGATE EFFECTIVELY, YOU GIVE YOUR BUSINESS A MAJOR UPGRADE. BY TAPPING INTO YOUR TEAM'S STRENGTHS AND BUILDING A FOUNDATION OF TRUST, YOU BOOST PRODUCTIVITY, SPARK CREATIVITY AND ENCOURAGE FRESH IDEAS.

”

### A STRATEGIC APPROACH

Think of delegation not merely as distributing tasks but as a strategy for harnessing your team's full potential. Delegating effectively does more than just lighten your load; it also optimizes the use of everyone's time and skills. This strategic shift allows you to focus on those critical, big-picture tasks that demand your unique expertise and vision, ensuring that no aspect of your business is neglected.

Recognizing tasks that can be delegated is a crucial step in enhancing efficiency and focus. It involves assessing your daily responsibilities and pinpointing those that can be entrusted to others. This process not only helps reduce your workload but also empowers your team members by entrusting them with more responsibilities. Delegating appropriately leads to better productivity and a more engaged, capable team.

### FIRST STEPS

Begin the process by examining day-to-day operations. Notice those tasks that are repetitive, take a lot of time or require a specific skill. These are prime candidates

for delegation and might include areas such as inventory management, customer inquiries, in-store displays and marketing.

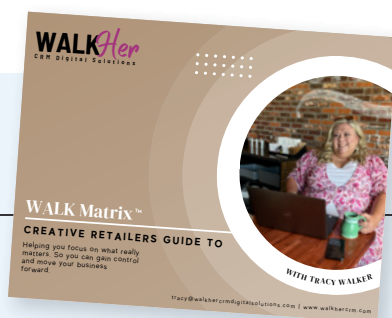
Then dive into the strengths, skills and interests of your team members. Who has a flair for design? Who's a wizard with numbers? Aligning tasks with each person's strengths not only ensures efficiency but also fosters job satisfaction and engagement.

Mastering delegation begins with identifying tasks that are appropriate for delegation, considering their complexity and assessing the abilities of your team members. After determining which team members will handle specific tasks, take the following steps to set your team members up for success.

- » **Communication:** Articulate your expectations clearly. Spell out what needs to be done, the desired outcomes, deadlines and any specific guidelines. Be approachable and open to questions to ensure everyone is aligned and clear on the objectives.
- » **Empowerment:** True delegation involves entrusting your team with both responsibility and authority. Let them take ownership of their tasks and make decisions. This not only builds confidence and accountability but also encourages innovation and problem-solving.
- » **Consistent check-ins:** Maintain open lines of communication. Regularly check in to monitor progress, offer feedback and provide support. This helps promptly address any issues and reinforces your commitment to your team's success.
- » **Educational support:** Ensure your team members are equipped with the necessary skills and tools to handle their responsibilities effectively. Foster a culture of continuous learning and development, and be ready to support them when needed.
- » **Recognition:** Acknowledge the hard work and achievements of your team. A simple "thank you" or recognition of their efforts can significantly boost morale and motivate continued excellence.

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» If you feel overwhelmed chasing urgent tasks instead of focusing on what truly matters, this matrix can help. Consider the WALK Matrix, a valuable tool for retail businesses. It distinguishes urgent tasks (immediate attention) from important ones (aligned with long-term goals). By prioritizing the important, you gain control and progress. Apply it in your retail business to experience positive change. Grab yours for free at [creativeretailer.com](http://creativeretailer.com)!





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“  
*THINK OF DELEGATION NOT  
MERELY AS DISTRIBUTING  
TASKS BUT AS A STRATEGY FOR  
HARNESSING YOUR TEAM'S  
FULL POTENTIAL.*  
”



### Overcoming Obstacles

Problems in delegation aren't a matter of if, but when. Tackling these obstacles is a key part of managing a team like a pro. It requires facing the usual issues head-on: the hesitation to let go of control, worrying about tasks going sideways and picking the right person for each job. Here are three handy tips to get you over those delegation hurdles.

- » **Lose your control fears:** Understand that effective delegation can actually enhance your control over the business by allowing you to concentrate on strategic growth areas.
- » **Invest in education:** Continuously develop your team's skills. A well-trained team is more confident and capable in managing delegated tasks.
- » **Communicate:** Cultivate a work environment where open and constructive communication is the norm. Encourage team members to freely voice concerns and questions.

Surmounting these challenges requires building trust in your team members' capabilities and understanding their strengths and weaknesses.

### POSITIVE RESULTS

Do not underestimate the game-changing power of delegation. It's all about turning your business up a notch. Get that team spirit rolling and watch as creativity and innovation light up the place. Your store will be filled with energy, and your customers will notice and match that same energy. Delegating will impact your business in these three ways.

- » **Productivity:** Delegating tasks wisely will spur a significant uptick in overall productivity and efficiency.
- » **Team development:** Delegation offers valuable opportunities for your team members to grow their skills, enhancing job satisfaction and loyalty.
- » **Business growth:** With more time to focus on strategic planning and innovation, you will be better positioned to drive business growth and stay ahead of the competition in the creative retail market.

When you delegate effectively, you give your business a major upgrade. By tapping into your team's strengths and building a foundation of trust, you boost productivity, spark creativity and encourage fresh ideas. Plus, it frees you to focus on long-term goals. You end up with an adaptable team ready to face challenges head-on.

Delegation is your ticket to driving your business forward and shaping a strong, unified team set up for lasting success.



Tracy Walker is an entrepreneur specializing in organizing and streamlining businesses through the WalkHer CRM, a comprehensive platform for small businesses. With her customer service experience and knowledge of technology

systems, Walker supports small business owners with the tools they need for successful launch and growth. Visit Walker at [www.walkhercrm.com](http://www.walkhercrm.com).



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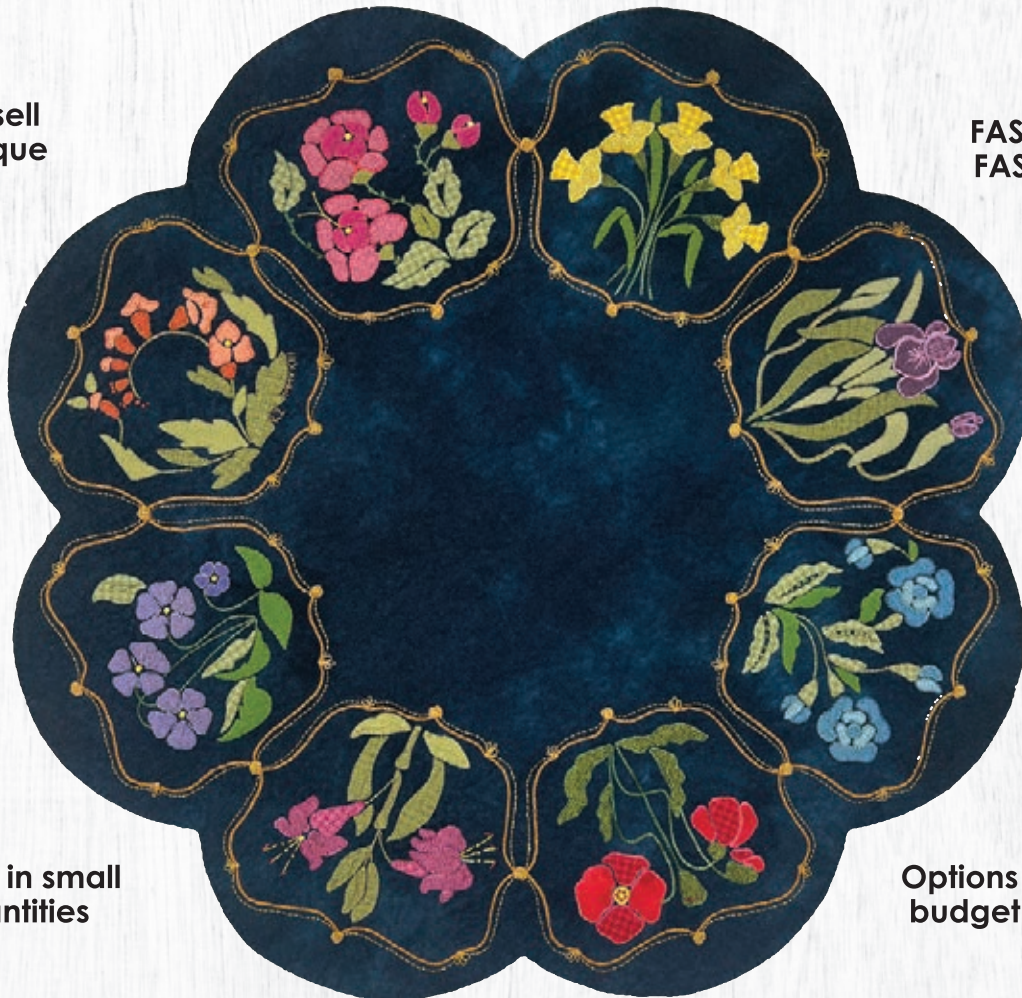
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Whether you win an industry award, local award or a customer-voted award, you want to share your exciting accomplishment. Here's the way to show your gratitude without sounding braggish and turning people off:

- » Acknowledge the win.
- » Give credit where credit is due.
- » Offer your employees and customers a way to celebrate your accomplishment.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGE THE WIN**

Congratulations, your business has been recognized for the good work you do. You're excited for the recognition and should use your existing communication channels to share the good news. Social media is a great way to get your message out quickly, but your regular email/newsletter is a great outlet as well.

# Hummingbird Messenger

a digitally printed collection by Elizabeth Isles



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*ANNOUNCING YOUR BIG WIN IS A GREAT FIRST STEP, BUT CONSIDER CONTINUING THE CELEBRATION BY HOSTING AN APPRECIATION EVENT. ... NOT ONLY DOES THIS CONTINUE THE GOODWILL, BUT IT ALSO BRINGS PEOPLE INTO YOUR STORE FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A PURCHASE.*

”

Add a personal touch to your announcement with photos and/or videos of you and your team finding out the results.

#### **GIVE CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE**

No award is given in a vacuum. There are the institutions and people who are doing the awarding (i.e., the chamber of commerce), the people you work with and your supportive customers.

It's important to thank those people/institutions who helped you earn this award. For example, when actor Meryl Streep wins an award, it may have been for her individual performance, but she makes a point to thank the director, other actors, crew members and her family for their support.

Take a page out of Streep's book and recognize your team and customers when you thank those who handed you the award. Tag everyone in your social media posts, so they feel appreciated and can share in the celebration.

#### **OFFER OTHERS A WAY TO CELEBRATE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENT**

Announcing your big win is a great first step, but consider continuing the celebration by hosting an appreciation event. Maybe it's a food drive, an in-store celebration or something related to the award. Not only does this continue the goodwill, but it also brings people into your store for an opportunity to make a purchase.

You should be very proud of the accomplishment and share your excitement with your team, customers and community.

### Sample social media post



**Shop Name @website · post date**

Thank you to the [institution that sponsored you the award] for recognizing [us for XYZ or the employee name for XYZ]. We are so humbled and proud to be recognized, and we couldn't have gotten here without our team and the support of our community.

Join us [date] as we continue to show our appreciation as we host a [food drive] to further give back to the community.



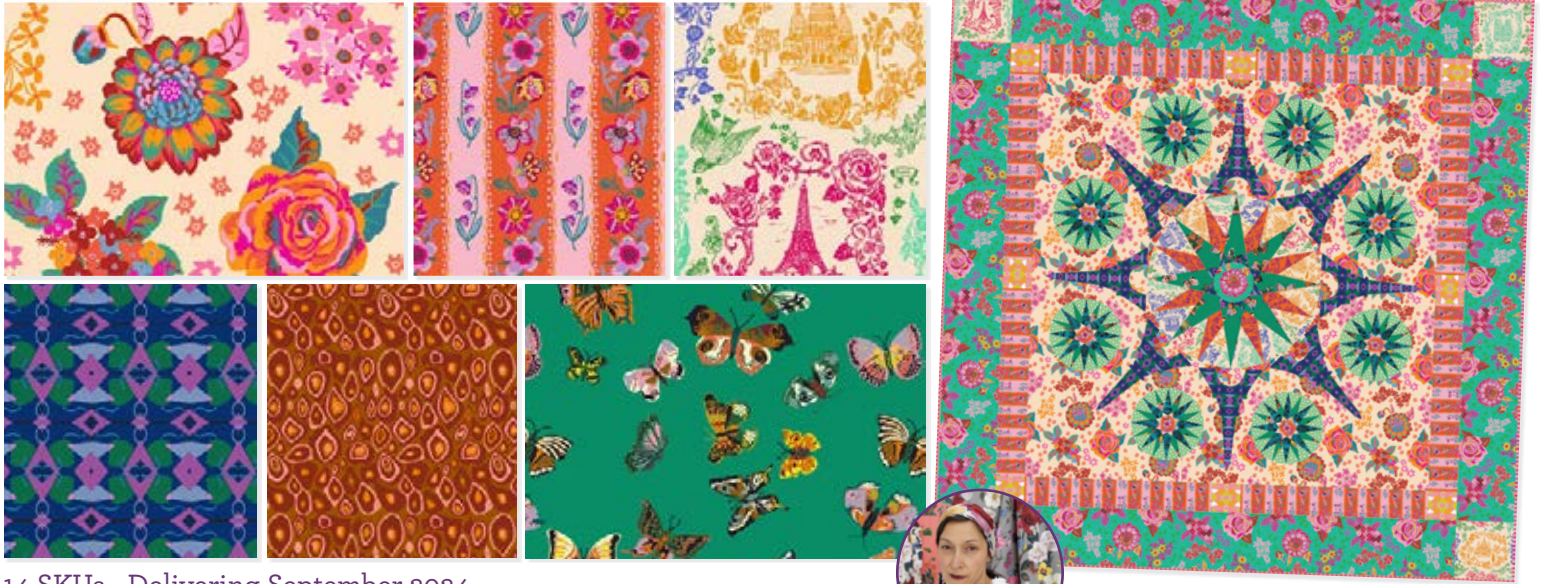
[include a relevant photo or video]



For 15 years, Kellie Crawford strategized and executed national marketing plans for two Fortune 500 companies. Now, as owner of Violet Clover Consulting, Crawford helps businesses create one-on-one connections with customers, leveraging digital marketing

methods to maximize marketing investments. Crawford lives in Iowa with her husband, Nick, and their dog, Violet. [kellie@violetcloverconsulting.com](mailto:kellie@violetcloverconsulting.com)  
Connect with Kellie on LinkedIn @kellie-crawford-ia

## A Spring in Paris by Nathalie Lete for CONSERVATORY craft



14 SKUs - Delivering September 2024

A Spring in Paris invites the romance of a beautiful Parisian day. Inspired by open windows, bird song, vintage décor, and the sound of church bells, this collection captures Nathalie's beloved monuments and memories of spring in Paris.



MY PARISIAN DREAM QUILT

80" x 80" (2.03m x 2.03m)

Designed by Robin Long - Robin Ruth Design  
robinruthdesign.com



GARDEN PATHWAYS QUILT

95 1/4" x 95 1/4" (2.42m x 2.42m)

Designed by Linda McGibbon - Lakeview Quilting  
lakeviewquilting2.com



## MORRIS & Co x



15 SKUs - Delivering October 2024

Emery Walker's House introduces new designs and colorways for autumn/winter. Heritage tones of greens and blues come to the fore, with warm russets accenting the designs. 19th-century designs inspired by archive classics make for a captivating and historic fabric range.



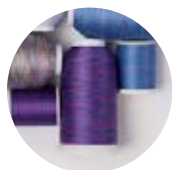


**THIS IMAGE**  
Easter Wishes  
by Silas M. Studio  
from Blank Quilting.  
See the collection  
on page 86.

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## King Tut is:

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- Available in 144 variegated and solid colors.
- Designed for use as a top thread and compatible with MasterPiece or So Fine! bobbin thread.



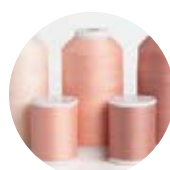
## Superior PIMA is:

- A 50 wt., 2ply U.S.-grown cotton thread.
- A great choice for both piecing and quilting as well as general sewing.
- Available in 50 colors and wound on 1,200-yard spools.
- Suitable for use a top thread and as a bobbin thread.



## OMNI is:

- A 40 wt., 2-ply corespun (poly-wrapped poly-core) thread.
- Built to withstand the rigor of high speeds on home or longarm machines.
- Cleaner, brighter, and stronger than its competitors.
- Available in 172 solid colors.
- Suitable for use a top thread and as a bobbin thread.



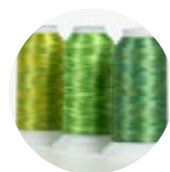
## So Fine! is:

- A 50 wt., 3-ply filament, all-purpose polyester thread.
- A smooth, lint-free, matte-finish blending thread.
- Available in 134 solid colors.
- Intended for use as a top thread and bobbin thread.



## Magnifico is:

- 40 wt., 2-ply trilobal polyester thread.
- An extra-strength, extra-sheen thread built to handle the speeds of home and longarm machines.
- Heat-set during processing, which eliminates shrinkage.
- Available in 200 solid-color blends.
- Suitable for use as a top thread and compatible with Bottom Line or So Fine! bobbin thread.



## Fantastico is:

- 40 wt., 2-ply, variegated trilobal polyester thread.
- The variegated version of—and sister thread to—Magnifico.
- Available in 118 variegated color blends.
- Constructed for use as a top thread and compatible with Bottom Line or So Fine! bobbin thread.

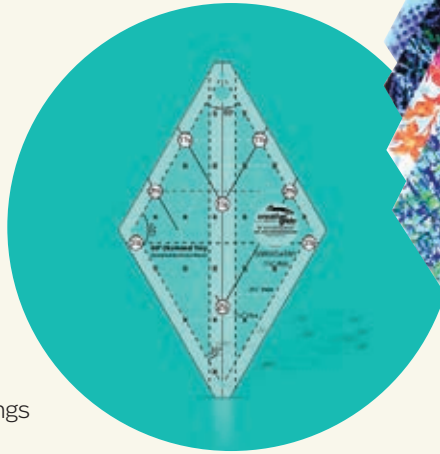
Check out these notions and patterns to find something for the special customers you serve.

### 60 Degree Tiny Diamond Quilt Ruler

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### Little Readers 5 by Dawn Rosengren

**Henry Glass Co., henryglassfabrics.net**

RETAIL PRICE: \$12.50 PER PANEL

Gift a handmade book throughout the year: *You Are Loved* for spring, *Hello Autumn* for fall, *Hello Winter* for the holidays and *Little Ones* for snowy days. 36" panels. Ships in November.

### "Kaleidostar" Quilt Pattern

**Robin Ruth Design, robinruthdesign.com**

RETAIL PRICE: \$12.00

The pattern (78×78") features the Kaleidoscope collection by Annabel Wrigley for Windham. Made using the Fat Robin 16-Point Mariner's Compass Book and Ruler Combo for strip-pieced compass blocks. It also includes a large Dresden band and faced appliqué elements. Available in September.





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# Berry Blossom

10 Designs/13 SKUs



Hello Spring by Pen + Paper Patterns





### Modern Botanical Wedding Sampler

Counting Puddles, [countingpuddles.com](http://countingpuddles.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$18.00

Celebrate two special people with this counted cross-stitch pattern featuring flowers, butterflies, and a full alphabet and number set for customization. Stitch it using cross stitch, back/straight stitch, French knots, St. George's cross stitch and star stitches. Chart only; fabric and floss are sold separately.



### Filaine Sampler 6 Packs

Sulky, [sulky.com](http://sulky.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$10.69

Explore various Sulky Filaine thread combinations for your favorite project. This versatile acrylic thread features a vintage look when embroidered and can be brushed to mimic fur.

### The Tandem DayPack

Studio Kat Designs Inc., [studiokatdesigns.com](http://studiokatdesigns.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$13.99

This bag won't weigh you down while keeping all your essentials close at hand. Featuring two zippered pouches, it's the perfect accessory for any stylish look.



### "I'm with the Band" Baby Quilt

Brooke's Bitchin' Stitches, [brookesbitchinstitches.com](http://brookesbitchinstitches.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$18.95


Get ready to rock out with "I'm with the Band," a crib-size quilt pattern that's bursting with fun and color. This pattern has got it all: one crib-size quilt design, detailed instructions and groovy appliqué templates.



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Cottage Mills, [cottagemills.com](http://cottagemills.com)

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## One Hoop Wonders

Kimberbell, [kimberbell.com](http://kimberbell.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$59.98

Create baby quilts, lap quilts and much more with this collection that includes simple, repeatable patterns. Stitch one design on a single block, then sew blocks together for a variety of projects. Designs can be stitched in a 5×7" or 8×8" hoop.

## "Caboodle Basics Bubbles & Bias" Quilt

The Whole Country Caboodle, [thewholecountrycaboodle.com](http://thewholecountrycaboodle.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$10 (PATTERN), \$175 (KIT)

This beautiful star quilt (63×81") uses Leanne Anderson and Kaytlyn Kuebler's Bubble Dot & Bias Plaid Basics along with several of their Starry & Houndstooth Basics. Create additional blocks to make coordinating pillows. Pattern is considered at the advanced beginner skill level.



## Exclusive Tula Pink M3Pro project iron

Oliso, [oliso.com](http://oliso.com)

RETAIL PRICE:  
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\$220.00 (TG1600 PROPLUS)

The iron features goldfish from Tula Pink's Besties print, Treading Water, capturing her iconic style and whimsical nature. With Tula Pink's creative touch and Oliso's commitment to precision and performance, the result is a stylish and functional iron that promises to elevate your quilting and sewing experience.



## Roxanne Temporary Adhesive Spray

Colonial Needle Co., [colonialneedle.com](http://colonialneedle.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$19.99

A fine mist of this spray for quilting, sewing, appliqué and other fabric crafts is repositionable, will not transfer to other surfaces, and will not stain or otherwise damage or clog needles. The tackiness of the



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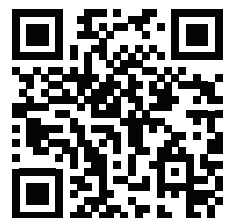
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## OLFA RTY-2CYEL/ST-01 Fabric Cutting Kit, Yellow

Olfa, [olfa.com](http://olfa.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$35.99

This classic Olfa kit has been refreshed with the notable green mat with yellow grid lines as well as the loved 45mm quick-change rotary cutter now in Olfa yellow. The 12×18" rotary mat has been updated with a hole for storage also. The kit is suitable for both beginners and advanced users in the art of crafting, quilting and sewing.

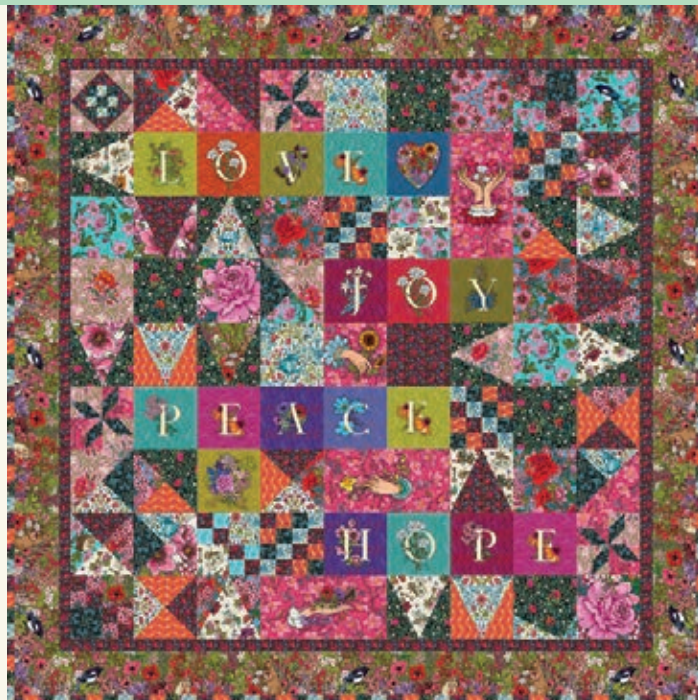


## 3D Coneflowers—Intermediate Hand Embroidery Kit

M Creative J, [mcreativej.com](http://mcreativej.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$44.00

This gorgeous design features vibrant pink flowers with three-dimensional petals atop variegated green stems and leaves. This kit is a great way to learn how to create a 3-D hand-embroidered design and includes everything you need to get stitching.



## “Messenger” Quilt Kit Featuring Language of Flowers by Odile Bailloeu

FreeSpirit Fabrics, [freespiritfabrics.com](http://freespiritfabrics.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$148.00

Inspired by the Victorian era, Language of Flowers was designed for quilts that carry sentiments of love and affection. The “Messenger” quilt project (58½×58½") invites customers to compose messages for those they love through beautiful bouquets of flowers. Order by mid-June, ships in December.



## Brewer Stabilizer

Brewer Quilting & Sewing Supplies, [brewersewing.com](http://brewersewing.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$12.99–\$43.99

A new collection of the most popular stabilizers under the Brewer brand will help your customers elevate a range of different sewing and craft projects. The offering includes iron-on, water soluble, tear-away, wash-away and cut-away stabilizers for stability and durability with every stitch.



# Advance your business with the power of community.

Join the Creative Retailer Roundtable group for the encouragement and support you need to succeed. A dynamic forum where retailers come together, share insights, and explore innovative solutions to common hurdles.



Discussion is guided by Heidi Kaisand, owner of Hen & Chicks Studio and publisher of *Creative Retailer*®.



## Testimonials

"The roundtable is an invaluable group of fellow retailers who share their business knowledge and expertise. I find myself inspired and motivated with these discussions and I am always learning things I can put into practice in my own business. I highly recommend joining!"

— **LORI H., QUILTER'S CORNER**

"I look forward to the topics and collaboration of other shop owners and managers to learn from and discuss issues we're all being faced with. I think we all walk away refreshed, rewarded and ready with new ideas. Highly recommend."

— **SELENA M., CREATIVE PASSIONS QUILT SHOP**

"Now there are the monthly roundtables. "Expressing our wins and frustrations in a safe space with helpful discussion. The monthly topics help to move our businesses forward."

— **JUNE-MARIE E., JUNE BERRY COTTAGE**



Visit [CREATIVERETAILER.COM/TABLE](https://www.creativeretailer.com/table) or scan the code with your phone camera to learn more and join the group.

## Modern Quilting Coloring Book

Blue Star Press, [bluestarpress.com](http://bluestarpress.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$12.99

Relax and dive into the colorful world of quilting with this coloring book from Moda Fabrics designer Stephanie Sliwinski. Featuring an array of unique quilt blocks and modern patterns to inspire your crafting, the perfect gift for any quilter or coloring enthusiast.

## Patty Lyons' Knitting Bag of Tricks

David and Charles, [davidandcharles.com](http://davidandcharles.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$22.99

Patty Lyons is an expert in all things knitting related. She will help you solve all of your knitting problems—from edges that won't behave to adjusting your yarn tension—with the 70+ hacks in *Patty Lyons' Knitting Bag of Tricks*. (ISBN 9781446309117)

## Make It Easy With 3-Yard Quilts by Donna Robertson

Fabric Café, [fabriccafe.com](http://fabriccafe.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$18.99

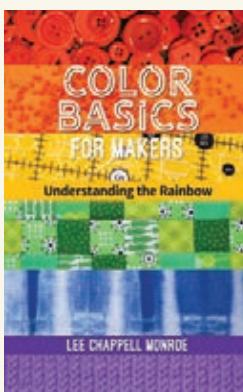
These eight new easy-to-make patterns come with enlargement instructions for twin and queen/king-size quilts. This means no more complicated math when you want to make a larger quilt, giving you more time to quilt.

## Vegan Candles by Delphine Reposeur

Stackpole Books, [rowman.com](http://rowman.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$17.95

Making candles allows you to choose ingredients that are healthy for you and the planet. Even novices will find success by following the instructions in this book, which details the materials and tools needed, how to choose the best natural ingredients, and the steps to make container and molded candles.



## Color Basics for Makers by Lee Chappell Monroe

C&T Publishing, [ctpub.com](http://ctpub.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$19.95

Confidence is key when it comes to color. Lee Chappell Monroe shares the tips and tricks from her most popular art class, useful for every crafter at any skill level. Try the concepts in any medium with hands-on exercises and practical beginner-friendly projects.

## My First Sewing Machine by Coralie Bijasson

Search Press, [searchpressusa.com](http://searchpressusa.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$16.95

Sharing your love of sewing with a young person is easy with this book. Step-by-step guides and 30 fun projects for kids ages 7 and up are included along with great sewing ideas, clear diagrams and simple text.

## Crochet Stitches Step-by-Step by Claire Montgomery

Penguin Random House, [penguinrandomhouseretail.com](http://penguinrandomhouseretail.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$19.99

More than 150 crochet stitches are included in this modern, photographic directory covering techniques such as granny squares, amigurumi and Tunisian crochet.

## Ultimate Binding and Edge-Finishing Guide for Quilting and Sewing by Deonn Stott

Landauer Publishing/Fox Chapel Publishing, [foxchapelpublishing.com](http://foxchapelpublishing.com)

RETAIL PRICE: \$16.99

Ensure your projects are edged perfectly every time with this complete, go-to guide. Find details for more than 16 binding techniques and various ways to finish a project. Easy-to-follow tutorials, coordinating photography and video links further enhance instruction.



# Pattern Designer Pavilion



Visit the Creative Retailer booth (#1213) at h+h americas

this year, where ten pattern designers will be showcasing their products. Explore distinctive designs from each designer, and engage in conversations and demos with them during the show!

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[katecollerandesigns.com](http://katecollerandesigns.com) Fabric shown: Breezy from Island Batik



Quirky Creativity with Swan Amity Studios

[SwanAmity.com](http://SwanAmity.com)



Cherry Blossoms Quilting

[CherryBlossomsQuilting.com](http://CherryBlossomsQuilting.com)



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[www.studiokatdesigns.com](http://www.studiokatdesigns.com)

Shop owners see collections from multiple vendors. In this feature, we showcase a few selections to assist with your purchasing decisions.

### Sunday Brunch by BasicGrey

[modafabrics.com](http://modafabrics.com)

DELIVERS: JANUARY  
PIECES IN COLLECTION: 34

Colors that are as refreshing as a spritzer and as comforting as a warm pastry appear in BasicGrey's signature mix of mod geometrics and colorful, layered florals, peppered with a few blenders, peppery flowers, mandala-inspired prints and new coordinating grunges. "Center Piece" (74x78") by BasicGrey is available to purchase through Moda.



### Farmers Market by Nicole DeCamp

[benartex.com](http://benartex.com)

DELIVERS: AUGUST  
PIECES IN COLLECTION: 13

This collection showcases a bit of everything you may find while at the farmers market including fresh flowers, organic produce, delicious jams or jellies, and honey. Paired with plaid coordinates, the fabrics are ideal for stylish totes as well as kitchen and garden decor. "Market Day" (15x43") by Carol Swift is available as a free download at [benartex.com](http://benartex.com).



### BioGeo Energy by Adrienne Leban

[freespiritfabrics.com](http://freespiritfabrics.com)

DELIVERS: SEPTEMBER  
PIECES IN COLLECTION: 9

BioGeo Energy is the fourth collection of Adrienne Leban's drawings made into fabric. Like BioGeo 1, 2 and 3, this collection celebrates the rhythms of nature made visible through line, shape, pattern and color. The collection enhances the excitement of the BioGeo series by adding straight-line patterns from Leban's hand-drawn "Inner Energy" series.



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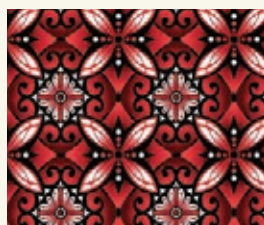
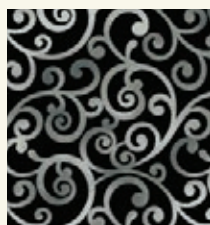
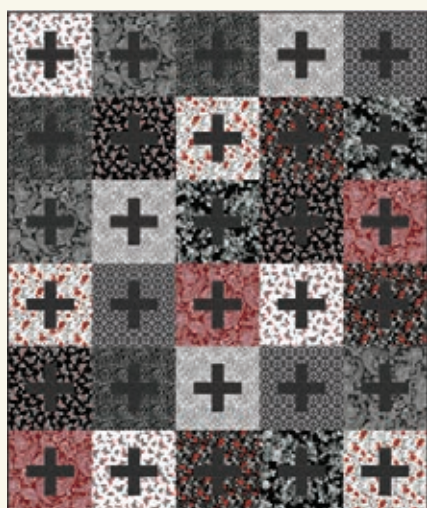
## Bountiful Harvest

[marcusfabrics.com](http://marcusfabrics.com)

DELIVERS: MAY

PIECES IN COLLECTION: 16

This classic group of autumn-theme prints, one of several design collaborations between Marcus Fabrics and the Smithsonian, is accompanied by an easy-to-sew preprinted canvas apron panel design. Quilters will love it for coordinated kitchen and dining room accessories and more. "Bountiful Harvest" (50×50") is available as a free download at [marcusfabrics.com](http://marcusfabrics.com).



## Scarlet Days & Nights by Color Principle

[henryglassfabrics.net](http://henryglassfabrics.net)

DELIVERS: OCTOBER » PIECES IN COLLECTION: 17

Pops of scarlet red against black and gray tones are featured in this sophisticated and modern collection. The geometric tile patterns are reminiscent of kaleidoscopes. Butterflies dance and lush red flowers pop giving projects some dazzle. Use the border stripe to create a striking edge. "Button Box" (68×81") by Villa Rosa Designs is available for purchase at [villarosadesigns.com](http://villarosadesigns.com).

## Grassland by Bernadett Urbanovics

[figofabrics.com](http://figofabrics.com)

DELIVERS: AUGUST » PIECES IN COLLECTION: 12

Discover a delightful range of earthy tones complemented by adorable animals and plants. Find friendly hedgehogs, leaves, checks and versatile textures in 11 partially recycled cotton prints and one rayon—perfect for creating unique woodland quilts, clothing, home décor and more.





## C390 Cuddle®

shannonfabrics.com

DELIVERS: AVAILABLE NOW

PIECES IN COLLECTION: C390: 67, C390 PRECUTS: 25

Classic Solid Cuddle® 3 minky plush fabric is now available in wide yardage and 3-yard precuts. At 88/90" wide, the 100% polyester fabric has a smooth, ultra-soft surface that is as beautiful as it is durable. It features a versatile 3mm pile perfect for longarm quilting and is ideal for quilt backs and fun creative projects such as giant pillows, pet beds and so much more.

## Belagio Vibrant Vinyl Fabric

belagioenterprises.com

DELIVERS: AVAILABLE NOW » PIECES IN COLLECTION: 15

This debut collection of vinyl fabrics is being introduced for use in craft, scrapbooking, mixed media and quilting. The soft pebble-texture fabric is 1.2 mm thick, has a soft hand and is lightweight. It cuts on a die-cut machine beautifully and can be sewn to construct handbags, pillows, table runners, plant container wraps and more.



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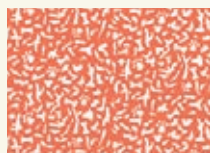


### Teacher's Pet by Krissy Mast

cloud9fabrics.com

DELIVERS: JUNE  
PIECES IN COLLECTION: 8

Back to school has never been so cool. From the classroom to the playground, these A+ pups are working hard and playing even harder. The collection features bold bright colors, organic lines and the perfect hint of nostalgia. "Easy Peasy" (45½×54½") is available as a free download at cloud9fabrics.com.

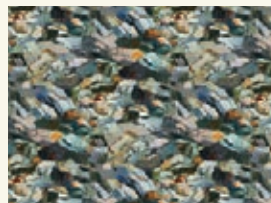
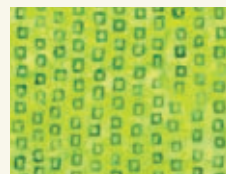
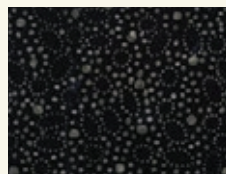
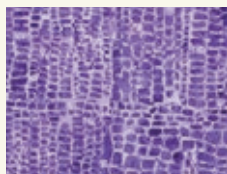
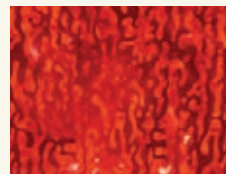


### Halloween Expressions

rileyblakedesigns.com

DELIVERS: APRIL » PIECES IN COLLECTION: 21

All treats and no tricks! This ghoulish collection features a cauldron of reds, oranges, yellows, greens, purples and black. Put a spell on your sewing machine and brew up some eerily cute quilts, home décor and spooky costumes. Riley Blake Designs batiks are ethically sourced with the highest quality fabric. Each hand-dyed print is designed and developed by cultivating relationships with batik artisans in Indonesia.

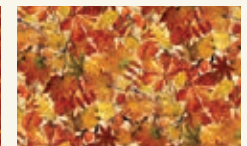


### Silent Lake by Iosif Derecichei

northcott.com

DELIVERS: AUGUST  
PIECES IN COLLECTION: 12

In post-Impressionistic style, Silent Lake features warm shades of red, orange and gold contrasted with the cool tones of blue and green. A scenic panel is complemented by prints including birch trees, evergreens and multicolor textures. "Farmer's Sunshine" (47×62") by Farmer's Daughters Quilts is available for purchase at northcott.com.



### Autumn Celebration by Jason Yenter

inthebeginningfabrics.com

DELIVERS: JUNE » PIECES IN COLLECTION: 15

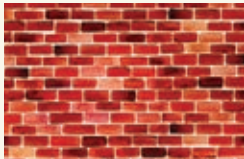
Jason Yenter has created a stunning collection of autumn-inspired fabrics, including a beautiful extra-wide border print. Autumn Wreath Wall Hanging (59½×59½") by Jason Yenter is available at inthebeginningfabrics.com.

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Fabrics

hoffmanfabrics.com

DELIVERS: JUNE »  
PIECES IN  
COLLECTION: 12

Cozy up on Christmas mornings with Santa's furriest deliveries that will instantly bring joy to any space! "Borderline" (42x43") by Villa Rosa Designs is available for purchase at villarosadesigns.com.



Rock n' Roll Fantasy  
by Morris Creative Group

qtfabrics.com

DELIVERS: NOVEMBER » PIECES IN COLLECTION: 15

Vintage records, posters, guitar picks and more bring rhythm to a project. Turn up the volume and reminisce about the days of rock and roll while you quilt to the beat. "Rockstar Quilt" (50x60") by Reed Johnson of Blue Bear Quilts is available at qtfabrics.com.



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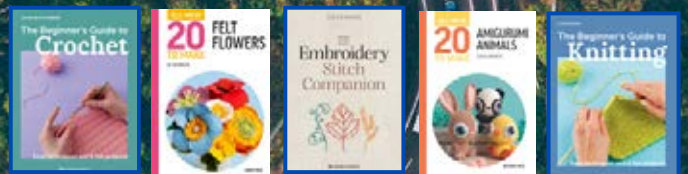
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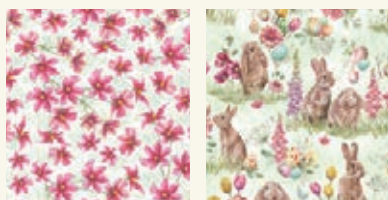
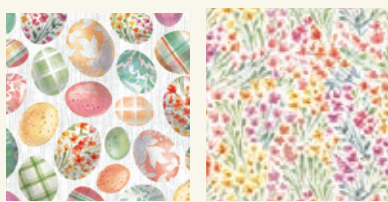
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## Easter Wishes by Silas M. Studio (Digital)

[blankquilting.net](http://blankquilting.net)

DELIVERS: DECEMBER  
PIECES IN COLLECTION: 11

Vibrant flowers bloom to make Easter wishes come true. Elaborately decorated eggs can be seen hidden in the grass, and bunnies, the color of chocolate, hop about. The Chatterbox Apron Pattern by Mary Mulari Designs is available for purchase at [marymulari.com](http://marymulari.com).

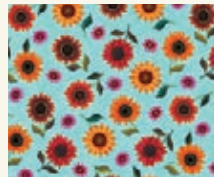


## For the Love of Sunflowers by Peggy Davis

[elizabethsstudio.com](http://elizabethsstudio.com)

DELIVERS: APRIL » PIECES IN COLLECTION: 11

Both bold and beautiful, the collection has an autumnal look with a stain-glass feel and is perfect for bed-size quilts, dresses and home décor. "Sunny Maids" (60×70") designed by Pine Tree Country Quilts is available for purchase at [pinetreecountryquilts.com](http://pinetreecountryquilts.com).

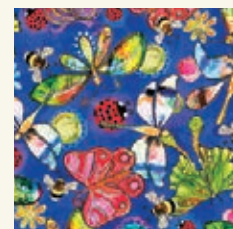
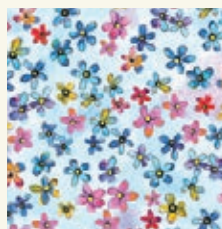
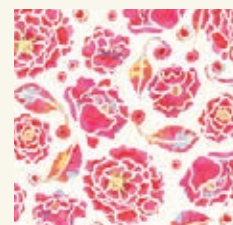
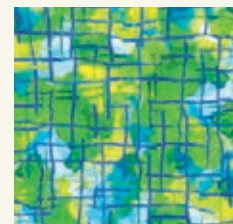
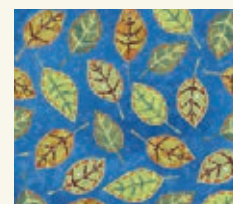
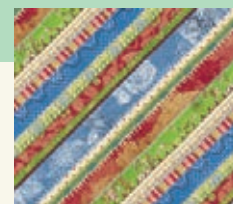


## Bug Bliss by Sue Reeves (Digital)

[studioefabrics.net](http://studioefabrics.net)

DELIVERS: OCTOBER  
PIECES IN COLLECTION: 10

Colorful butterflies, squiggly caterpillars, lovely ladybugs, gorgeous grasshoppers and happy snails wander blissfully around this collection. Create a fun-filled quilt for the little critters in your life. "Garden Dance" (58×58") by Denise Russell of Pieced Brain is available for purchase at [piecedbrain.com](http://piecedbrain.com).



## Tiny Wonders by KG Art Studio

[pbtex.com](http://pbtex.com)

DELIVERS: JULY » PIECES IN COLLECTION: 14

Tiny creatures flit and float around in an explosion of color and texture. The nine-block panel is tons of fun and is supported by prints that speak all things garden. "Pollinators" (56×56") by Stacey Day is available as a free download at [pbtex.com](http://pbtex.com) when collection ships.

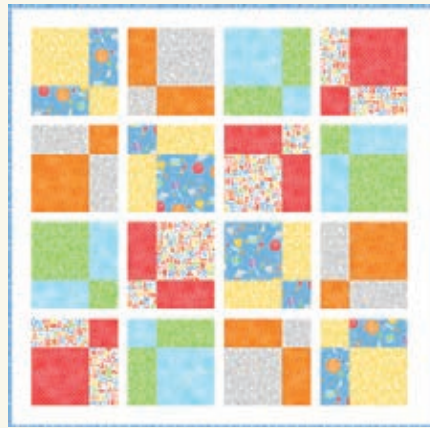
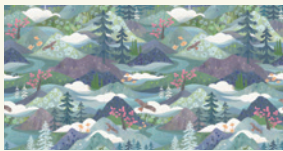


## Serenity by Kendra Binney

clothworks.com

DELIVERS: NOVEMBER  
PIECES IN COLLECTION: 13

Immerse yourself in Kendra Binney's dreamy, soft landscapes. Her fabrics celebrate hidden glimpses of the wild in a palette of deep jewel tones lightened with washes of luscious texture for an approachable look perfectly suited to quilting or home décor. "Rail Run" (55½×78") by Kari Nichols is available for purchase at mountainpeekcreations.com.



## Playtime Flannel by Maywood Studio

maywoodstudio.com

DELIVER: JULY » PIECES IN COLLECTION: 24

Planets, dinosaurs, diggers and rainbows have joined the Playtime Flannel collection. Mix the original geos and small prints with the latest thematic designs for projects that will delight the young and the young at heart. "Two by Two Kit" (43½×43½") is available for purchase at EE Schenck.com.





**May 1-3, 2024 | Chicago, IL**

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May 1-3, 2024  
hh-americas.com

» **Creative Retailer  
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Education Express**

June 10, 12, 14, 2024  
creativeretailer.com/  
jaftex

» **Creative Retailer  
On the GO—Denver**

August 8, 2024  
creativeretailer.com/events

» **Riley Blake Designs - 2024  
Garden of Quilts**

September 11-14  
More information coming soon,  
creativeretailer.com/events

» **International Quilt  
Market Houston**  
October 26-28, 2024  
quilts.com



  
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## ADVERTISER INDEX

Benartex—Inside Back Cover	Northcott—13, 33, 55
Blank Quilting—15	OLFA—19
Bothy Threads—57	P&B Textiles—25
Brewer—39, 51	Poorhouse Quilt Designs—79
C&T Publishing—54	Quiltoni—79
Checker Distributors—Inside Front Cover	Riley Blake Designs—3, 29
Cherry Blossoms Quilting—79	Sarah Maxwell—79
Clothworks—17	Search Press—85
Colonial Needle Company—85	Sew Organized Design—47
Cottage Mills—83	Shannon Fabrics—7
Curtis Financial Solutions—57	Studioe—65
Dandelion Fabrics—71	Studio Kat Designs—79
Granny's Legacy Patterns—63	Superior Threads—69
Elizabeth's Studio—43	Swan Amity Studios—79
Euro Notions—47	Tamarinis—79
FreeSpirit—67	Taylor Seville—11
Gammill—61	The Sewing Loft—79
h+h americas—73	The Whole Country Caboodle—83
Henry Glass—9	Timeless Treasures—41
In The Beginning Fabrics—59	Wichelt Imports—Back Cover
Kate Colleran Designs—7	Windham Fabrics—23
Larkspur Lane Designs—79	
Like Sew—35	
Maywood Studio—49	
Moda—21	

Introducing **PROJECT X** a new Benartex studio

*Expect the unexpected*

**Benartex** **PROJECT X**

**BEE HAVEN BY RACHEL ROSSI**

Sept/Oct Delivery | 27 SKUs



Slaphappy by Rachel Rossi (49" x 65")



**Benartex** **PROJECT X**  
**BLOOMING COLOR I BY WOLFF PAPER**

July/Aug Delivery | 18 SKUs



Spring Blooms by Lisa Swenson Ruble (60" x 60")



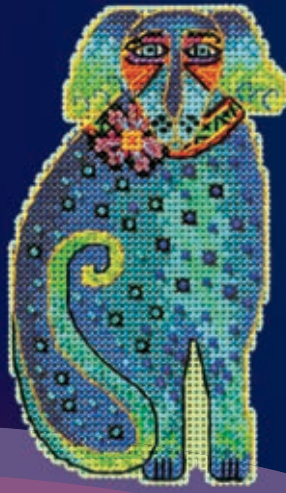
**Benartex the Fabric of Creativity**



LB20-2411



LB20-2412



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LB20-2413



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Frame: GBFRM11 used for all kits

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