

# ACCESSORIES RESOURCE TEAM BULLETIN

## PROMOTE, PROMOTE, PROMOTE

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This past spring, our interior design team was chosen to take part in a Designer Showcase to benefit our local historical society. Participants were chosen on the basis of experience, professionalism, reputation, and involvement in the business community.

Honored by the invitation, we immediately began planning, which proved to be very beneficial for us. The historical society granted us a large formal room called the North Parlor, located just off the front entrance of the mansion. This grand room was adjacent to a sweeping foyer. This room provided great public visibility and generated a lot of traffic during the Designer Showcase. Our decorated room was the first and last room visitors saw as they entered and exited the estate. Afterwards, we learned that our room had positive impact and that its effectiveness was due to careful evaluation and planning.

Our design team conducted an initial study of the room before implementing any design work. They researched the history, character, and functions of this room to gain insight for an overall plan.

Once they had evaluated all of the information they had gathered, the members of our design team created a master plan for everyone involved, including drawings complete with design boards and fabric. They opted to decorate in a style that would be in character with the historical nature of the North Parlor - this meant that everything would reflect an elaborate Victorian theme. Customized rugs, florals, and formal draperies were decided upon, giving our young designers a chance to spotlight their innovations.

Given the extent of this project, a timeline was employed for all employees in order to increase efficiency. Product orders were placed early on and

warehouse personnel were made aware of the delivery schedule ahead of time.

Because the design team had planned ahead, our firm was able to deliver, install curtains, and decorate all in the same day. We started early in the day and did a turn-key job, whereas some firms involved in the Designer Showcase spent days and countless employee hours on repeat trips. We can't emphasize enough how important careful planning was to our success.

Fortunately for us, the Designer Showcase event was staged during a huge citywide annual festival. The Azalea Festival brings thousands of tourists to Wilmington each year to view Azalea gardens, historical homes, and cultural events. With all the added tourists visiting, this maximized our firm's exposure. We gained new customers from outside of the state, which we would never have encountered otherwise.

Given the timing of an area festival with a high-visibility factor, we planned a room with a lot of punch! Our final project was a grandiose parlor evoking historical character while simultaneously looking inviting. The chandelier-lit room was colorful, being dressed with exquisite oil paintings, accessories, furniture, and lush fabrics. Custom florals made by our designers graced the fireplace mantel while several table lamps provided ambiance.

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This Designer Showcase proved beneficial for our firm. We were pleased at the outcome of the room and the comments that were made by visitors. In addition, it provided our designers with the opportunity to show their originality in design. Our firm gained instant exposure from a broad scope of national tourists. Business was generated by the design participants as well as the local historical society. The networking support and exchange of ideas with other designers involved in the project was valuable as well. Everyone gained a positive and rewarding experience from this event and we highly recommend this type of venue for any design firm. Just remember to research, devise a plan early on, and stick to a timeline and you all will enjoy the final outcome.

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