

DRAPERY & DESIGN PROFESSIONAL

Volume 2010, Issue 4



Serving the Custom Home Furnishings Industry since 1993

DRAPERY & DESIGN PROFESSIONAL

a publication of the
CUSTOM HOME FURNISHINGS ACADEMY

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DRAPERY & DESIGN PROFESSIONAL is a bimonthly trade publication specifically for those who sell, design or create custom window treatments, upholstery, slipcovers and related services. Contributions from readers are welcomed. We look for articles that teach new techniques, inspire readers to tackle new projects and inform readers of current trends in fabrication and design.

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From the Editor-in-Chief



Doesn't everyone know that already?

This is a response I hear often when students shows me really cool shortcuts and I tell them they should write an article about it. They always look at me puzzled and ask, "Doesn't everyone know that?" My answer is always "No."

Sharing tips and techniques is the key to this magazine. Sometimes the simplest things become great articles. I completely understand the thoughts of someone who can't believe they know things that industry veterans never learned. I know, because several years back I was one of those people. I thought that because I was "in training" to be a professional workroom that everyone else with experience knew all the secrets.

There was a time when I wouldn't open my mouth for fear that I would look stupid. I mean, really, what would I have to offer that everyone else didn't already know? That fear went away when I sat in my first training class with Cheryl Strickland, and I mentioned a trick where I put a pencil into the end of a utility rod and used that to stretch my arm across the workroom table. She looked at me and said, "Wow, I never tried that before." I couldn't believe I taught Cheryl something new.

I encourage all of you to step out and share your knowledge. Our magazine isn't filled with people who write articles for a living. It's filled with articles by people like you who work in this industry and bring unique tips, techniques and experiences from your past. From the way your grandmother threaded her hand sewing needle to the way your children use social media, your brain is filled with so many wonderful aha moments for others to learn from. I challenge you to share your knowledge with all of us so you, too, can sit back and say, "Wow, I can't believe no one knew that."

Margie Nance



We'd like to put you on our map!
Submit your article ideas to Michele@chfschool.com.

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Collaborate With Clients and Designers Online

By Debbie Green
Hendersonville, TN

Today, I'm sure we can all agree that every business owner relies on the Internet to some extent. Within the next five years, businesses that aren't embracing the Internet will probably be out of business or close to it. That's why it's imperative for all of us to constantly be on the lookout for opportunities to improve our online presence, as well as utilize available online resources that will reduce the cost of doing business. New technology is moving as fast as a freight train and that can be a challenge for many people. I would like to introduce you to an online resource we at Minutes Matter have been successfully using for several months. This resource can save your company money and time, impress clients, plus it can help you keep projects organized. This discussion will consist of two parts. In this issue, I'll explain the benefits and how to get started. In the next issue I'll discuss how to use some of the many applications available.

If you haven't guessed, I'm talking about *Cloud Computing*. What exactly is Cloud Computing? The "Cloud" is a platform, specifically the Internet. Traditionally, we would buy hardware (like a desktop PC or laptop, for example) and install some software on it. With Cloud Computing, however, the software runs on the Internet, so we can say that any software or hardware running on the Internet is Cloud Computing. Instead of using software installed on your own personal computer to carry out your work, you use the software on machines located "in the cloud." This is what we mean when we talk about Cloud Computing.

Most of you are probably already using Cloud Computing without ever realizing it. For example, instead of installing an e-mail software program on your local machine, you might be using a service like Gmail or Hotmail. The cloud is like one huge collective computer (the Internet) and everyone connects to it in order to get the work done.

The resource I'm recommending to do this is Google Apps. Google Apps gives you the ability to produce documents, spreadsheets and even presentations online. What's the advantage? You can access these documents anywhere, anytime and from any computer. And there's more good news: The most you will pay is only \$50 per year for each user. You can sign up for a Premium Google App account, which is the \$50 per user per year, or you can sign up for the Standard Google Apps account that is totally free. When you pay the \$50 per user per year, you receive a higher level of tech support plus 25GB of storage for e-mail. Type the following link into your Internet browser for a full comparison between the two versions <http://www.google.com/apps/intl/en/group/index.html>.

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-  **Full administrative controls** IT admins can customize Google Apps to company needs.
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-  **24/7 customer support** Phone and email support are available for critical issues.

"Our doctors don't have the time, budget or experience to manage technology. We let Google do what it does best so we can do what we do best: help our patients."

Andrew Johnson,
CIO, SF Bay Pediatrics

Why you'll want to seriously consider Google Apps for your business

- It's low cost or even *free*!
- You'll never have to purchase or upgrade Microsoft Office again. This is a huge cost-saving benefit! (Office 2010 \$279 vs. Google Apps \$50)
- You won't need to reinstall Microsoft Office (or any other software) when you purchase a new computer or have a hard drive crash.
- If you've never purchased Microsoft Office due to the cost, now you'll have access to all those programs.
- You will always have access to the latest version of the software.
- You'll have the ability to access your data anywhere, anytime and from any computer.
- All your information is backed up automatically.
- Applications open up very quickly.
- E-mails, documents, spreadsheets and presentations are auto-saved as soon as you make a change.
- You can e-mail live forms to clients for them to fill out, and the form auto-populates your preset spreadsheet.
- You can share any document with clients, family, friends or co-workers.
- Finding documents is easy! Simply type in a word you remember and the results will be displayed below the search text box.
- There will be no documents to attach – it's online and live all the time. (Consider the time required when someone sends you an Excel spreadsheet or a Word document. First you download the document, then you wait for the program to open. If you make edits then you'll have to save it and send it back to the sender with an attachment. There are times when sending attachments back and forth that you aren't sure who has the current version.)
- Like the iPhone and Android cell phones, Google Apps allows third-party companies to integrate with their software. Google's Marketplace App Store opened up at the beginning of this year. Hundreds of new vendors are signing up daily.
- Google's servers power the software, therefore it's not necessary for you to have a supercomputer.



What's the downside to using Google Apps?

- Google Apps requires an Internet connection; no Internet means no access to Google Apps.
- Online applications have to make some concessions in regards to features and functions. For example, you'll have a limited selection of colors and fonts, and several other features are not available. All the basic functionality most companies use is available, however.

Is your data secure?

If you think about it, your personal information is already all over the Internet (i.e., your bank, your credit cards, tax documents, government agencies – just to name a few). Millions of businesses have entrusted their information to Google Apps, and Google has the money, the resources, the technology and the manpower to keep your data totally secure.

Other Apps-vantages

Our office has been using Google Apps for months, and we have found that almost every feature and function we need or want is available with Google Apps. For users who do complex formulas in Excel, Google Apps might come up a little short, but for the majority of our industry, Google Apps will have everything you need.

One feature I love, which both versions offer, is the ability to use my own domain name, debbie@minutesmatter.com, instead of debbie.green@gmail.com. Visit YouTube to watch this short video for an overview on getting started with Google Apps (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJT3pagjd8s>). You can customize your Google domain with your colors and logo. If you decide to use your domain, which I highly recommend if you have a domain, Google requires verification that you own that domain. More than likely, you will need to ask your web-

master or the company that hosts your website to help you accomplish this task. There are complete instructions and it takes less than five minutes for a person that can get into the back end of your domain. If you don't have a domain, you can register one with Google as you sign up for your Google Apps account.

All of your e-mail, contacts and calendar events from Outlook, Yahoo, Hotmail, AOL or other POP3 accounts can be imported into Google Apps. Google also has a tool that can import information from Outlook. (Visit http://mail.google.com/mail/help/email_uploader.html to download the Google Email Uploader.)

The Future Looks Bright

Some of you are probably feeling as if your head might explode any minute now with all this new information, but just take a breath. The benefits of this new platform far outweigh the time and effort required for setup, especially when you think about the future of your business. Cloud Computing is where all businesses will be in the very near future, so why not start packing and join us in the Clouds?

By the way, all my articles are written using Google Docs! Once I'm finished, I share the document with the CHF staff and they have instant access without me attaching a document for them to download. In the next issue, I'll cover how to create a spreadsheet that a workroom and designer could simultaneously use online. I'll also discuss how to create a live presentation for a client. ✕

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Meet the Writers



Jenna Abbott is the sole proprietor of Sew Elegant by Jenna, a to-the-trade workroom founded in 2001 and located in Sacramento, CA. She is a founding member of the Northern California Chapter of the WCAA, the Executive Director of the National WCAA, and a proud alumna of the Custom Home Furnishings Academy in Charlotte, NC.



Annie Davis of Elkhorn, NE, is the owner of Artisan Designs. This year she celebrates her tenth year as a workroom owner, and is also a member of WFCP and WAA. You can find Annie on the D&D PRO Forum under the screen name of "anniedavis".



Anita Boetsma has been active in the window treatment industry for 24 years. Anita taught at the Custom Home Furnishings Conferences, and has written for *Custom Home Furnishings Magazine*, *Draperies & Window Coverings* and *Upholstery Journal*. In 2005, Anita joined Helser Brothers Inc. as Director of Client Relations, specializing in education.



Jeanelle Dech shares more than twenty years of entrepreneurial business experience and passion for education in her role as the Director/CEO of the CHF Academy. She is a dynamic speaker at industry events, known for her 'Fit-Like-A-Glove' slipcover fabrication and business plan training. She is the co-founder of Adaptive Textiles™ and serves on the WCAA National Board of Directors.



Joanna Braxton is the owner of Braxton Drapery Design in Westerville, OH. She's a graduate of the Sheffield School of Interior Design and has been in the window coverings industry for the last 26 years. She's a member of WFCP and WAA, and a board member of the Industry Guidelines panel with WCAA. Her website is www.braxton-draperydesign.com



Sarah Devaney-O'Neil is the owner of Storibook Designs Inc., a custom home furnishings and design business providing design and advice for both residential and commercial clients. She has 20+ years of leadership experience, including sales training and upper management positions for two large home furnishings retailers.



Tracie Bresnahan, owner of Custom Creations since 2003, has built a business specializing in difficult-to-engineer projects. Her husband, Brian, specializes in constructing cornices, awnings and ottomans. His degree in architectural engineering and 18-plus years of expertise in construction engineering has been a huge asset in building custom projects.



Debbie Green is the owner of Dandelion Interiors and founder of Minutes Matter. Her philosophy is "Systematize your business by doing the same thing the same way." She's conducted seminars at D&WC conferences and International Window Covering EXPOs. She is also a Certified QuickBooks Pro Advisor.



Donna Cash operates a workroom in Flowery Branch, GA. She's a 20-year veteran of the window coverings industry and has an associates degree from the Art Institute of Atlanta. She's a WFCP Associate, member of WCAA, Drapery Pro and the Designers Workroom Council in Georgia. Donna is also a certified yoga instructor.



Kristine Gregory is principal of Bedeckers Interior Effects Inc. Kristine is an Allied Member of American Society of Interior Designers, past president of the Richmond Chapter of WCAA and a WFCP - Specialist Level. She is the only designer in the Richmond area who is an expert in both the psychology of color and personal organization. Visit her website at www.bedeckers.com

DRAPERY & DESIGN PROFESSIONAL

network



at two am



Stacie Just is Vice President of Marketing at Rowley Company, where she leads the marketing and branding efforts for Rowley and Finestra Decorative Hardware. She has over 15 years of marketing experience working on brands such as Lowe's, UPS and Hamilton Beach. Stacey is most proud of Rowley Company's recognition at IWCE 2009 for the Best Advertising Campaign.



Susan W. Schurz has owned Tavern Hill, a professional custom drapery workroom working primarily to the trade, since 1988. She's an instructor for the CHF Academy and the Brand Experience Manager for Rowley Company. Susan is a popular industry speaker and has been featured in many books and magazines. She's a member of the WCAA and a WFCP Expert.



Sydney Schwartz-Hardiman is the owner of The Silken Scissor, a retail and wholesale workroom, based in Pittsburgh, PA. Sydney is the winner of PA's Best 50 Women in Business and Pittsburgh's Top 40 Under 40. She is also the founder of the Western PA Window Treatment Association. She can be reached at 412-734-1364 or visit her website at www.TheSilkenScissor.com.



Sue Sifakis is the sole proprietress of SUE-SEWN, a custom drapery and soft furnishings workroom serving retail and wholesale clients, since 1996. Based in Ayer, MA, Sue is the Secretary for the Northeast New England WCAA Chapter. She is also a member of WFCP, Drapery Pro and WAOA, and is a CHFA Career Professional in Advanced Window Treatments and a 2010 CHF Alumni Showcase Winner.

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