

# Babies and Business

## DESIGNER MOMS DISCUSS SHARING THE MIX ON SOCIAL MEDIA

**Kiyonda Powell** (bottom right) has featured her 10-month-old son Journey on both personal and professional Instagram accounts, and even started a private account for him. She is optimistic that posting could attract new followers and potentially new clients that feel a kinship. Powell, who received national press on her nursery as well as local TV coverage, has gotten leads, and is at a point where she is rethinking her brand strategy. "I enjoy sharing photos of my son and his milestones and I want to figure out how to weave it all together to represent my brand, projects and interests," she says.

Honeycomb Home Design's **Ariana Lovato** (right) told her clients she was expecting before she posted the news on social, proactively dispelling concern that projects could get left behind. Lovato believes tactfully posting her pregnancy has had positive impact. She says, "It shows that I am growing my business and my team, and I can also live my life. I try not to post too much personal stuff on our business page, but I felt that sharing a big life moment with our followers was important and makes the brand personable and relatable."

When **Cat French** (inset, top left) was pregnant with her second child, she sensed client unease, despite having a solid team in place. "There was some client hesitancy directly related to my pregnancy and anticipated maternity leave, and it had to be managed constantly," she explains, choosing not to emphasize her pregnancy on Instagram. As her business has grown so has her desire to keep personal life out of the public-facing part of the business. Whether you do or don't share motherhood publicly, French advises, "Building a solid support system and network is the key to sanity."



## Market Watch: Upholstery

Looking for new upholstery vendors? **Richelle Plett**, of Kansas-based RLP Interiors and founder at Upholstery Uncovered, a live online course for the trade, shares guidelines for choosing them, urging designers to answer these questions to avoid being sold empty promises.

**Brand compatibility:** Does the vendor suit you stylistically, price-wise, and does their marketing align with your business philosophy?

**The Rep:** Do you like the rep and will he/she have your back?

**Communication:** How soon are orders acknowledged, when does money leave your bank, and what happens if an order cannot be fulfilled in a timely fashion?

**Damages:** How are they handled - is a piece entirely replaced, who handles the return, and will they cover on-site repairs?

The goal, Plett says, is to find four partners: a non-custom quick ship budget brand; a mid-priced company with a vast selection of styles, fabrics and options like Norwalk; a company that is a fabric vendor and furniture manufacturer, like Kravet or Thibaut; and boutique vendors, like Barnes and Bruce Andrews, with impeccable quality, where you can forge a personal relationship with the owner.