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Spotlight on Elliot Laniado

Debi Pinelli • A & J Interiors

“Truly a “Treat”

Window Treats motto is “turning your house into your home” and I must say on my recent visit, I felt quite at home in their lovely showroom in Red Bank, NJ. While there, I had the pleasure of interviewing Elliot Laniado. You couldn’t tell by his current luxurious surroundings, but Elliot started in the business selling low end ready-mades working from a discount house with locations in Manhattan and Jersey City. He opened “Linen and Bath” in East Brunswick 18 years ago selling higher end ready-made draperies. He also picked up the Hunter Douglas line of shades, blinds and shutters. One day, Elliot was installing shades for a commercial client and they inquired about draperies. Ready-made wouldn’t work in the commercial setting but Elliot tapped into his WCAA resources and got

the job done, launching him into the custom



window treatment business. A friend suggested a name change to better reflect the business and “Window Treats” was born. Elliot enjoys the resources that the WCAA provides. He feels his Window Treatment Consultant Certification gives him the knowledge he needs to successfully sell soft treatments. He also likes the educational aspect of our meetings in addition to the great relationships he’s developed over the years.

Although they do commercial work, Window Treats focuses mostly on residential clientele working with the designers and architects that helped him build his business. They are a Hunter Douglas Gallery dealer and the show room is quite impressive. With its sleek contemporary décor, beautiful wood floors and elegant displays, customers really are “treated” to some great ideas when in the store. There are full size samples of window treatments, upholstered headboards, and a motorization display. Of course, Window Treats also offers in-home consultations. Elliot and his staff excel in customer service and meeting or exceeding the clients’ expectations. When I visited the showroom, I was impressed by the helpful staff. I placed an order while I was there and the process was quick and easy. Window Treats employees 8 full and part time employees, two of whom are full-time designers / sales representatives. His son

(Continued on page 3)

Message From the President

Ellen Salkin • NJ Chapter President

By now, the hottest days of summer are coming to an end and fall weather is around the corner. Many of us - especially those with children still going to school - and the rest of us who remember school like it was yesterday, feel new beginnings this time of year. After all, doesn't the year REALLY start on the first day of school!

Just as a child understands the new school year brings new beginnings for them, many of us also feel the same way about our businesses. The following quote by Mark Victor Hansen (an inspirational and motivational speaker & trainer and author of the series, "Chicken Soup for the Soul") is one of my favorites and says so much: "By recording your dreams and goals on paper, you set in motion the process of becoming the person you most want to be. Put your future in good hands - your own." We can all see our own business dreams and it is up to us, with hard work, motivation and inspiration, to make the most of our own opportunities.



That being said, we on the board are working hard and feverishly to get our 2014 schedule of events set up for the New Year. We have dreams and goals for the WCAA Central NJ Chapter. As you can imagine, this is a difficult task, as we try to organize the many different speakers and programs that will be interesting to all. But, we are doing it, we are motivated, we are inspired by all of you...and we will have a great, stimulating, motivational line-up.

Good business to all.

It Takes A Village....

Rosemarie Garner • NJ Chapter Vice President

.....To Make a Window Treatment

I have said it before and I will say it again and again, our chapter is just jammed with talent. That being said, most of us work by ourselves sequestered in our offices or workrooms spinning the wheels of our creativity. Most of the time that's enough to get the work done. However, sometimes it "takes a village" to make a window treatment. And I don't mean just the collaboration between designers, workrooms and installers, although that is a village unto its own. What I mean is when we are working on something and for some reason just, cannot "get" it. Our mind closes up and we need a little help. It happens to us all. That is when the real village comes into play. To be able to pick up the phone and seek some guidance from one of our members is, to me, the greatest advantage of our chapter. Or, even better, to get to go to another's workroom and see firsthand how to do something. I know I have done it and I will continue to do it. It is what gets us through a tough spot. And it is such a privilege to me when I get a call from a member asking me for advice; I am happy to repay all the times when I have gotten help. The ebb and flow of knowledge and the give and take of wisdom is a bright spot on a day when you just need a bit of help to get that job done, bagged and out the door.



I encourage all our members to become part of the village and share your knowledge. I also encourage you to reach out if you are having some trouble. You won't be disappointed, and you never know who you will inspire and how much you can help.

WCAA National News

Linda Principe • National Board President

How many of you are aware that WCAA National offers discounted shipping rates through FedEx? Well, if you're not, then let me recommend that you seriously think about taking advantage of this little-known benefit.

First, you must contact Siriani, who will set you up with your FedEx account.

I had heard from a few of the members that they had begun shipping through this program and that they were seeing savings in their shipping bills. So, as the National President, I knew I had to set up an account so that I could recommend this benefit to our members.



You first contact Siriani, who will set up the account with FedEx. You will be contacted by FedEx with your new account number, and then you can set up your online access account.

I immediately started contacting my fabric companies and requested that they use my FedEx account to ship my products and put me on third-party billing. So when I order fabrics, it ships to my workrooms, and then I receive a bill from FedEx. Once I received a few bills, I was able to do a rough comparison on pricing. I believe I am saving at least \$5-8 per package.

Recently, my daughter moved and needed to ship her belongings to the West Coast, so I used my FedEx account. After I entered the information online, the shipment was calculated and two prices were shown—standard FedEx rate and my preferred rate. The difference ranged from \$10-20 per box, depending on weight. Needless to say, I was ecstatic. I saved overall about \$125 for the entire shipment.

So I feel I can say confidently that the money I have saved has covered my National dues.

Give Siriani a call and start saving money on your shipping bills. They can be reached at 1-800-554-0005, or email at solutions@siriani.com. Don't forget to mention you are a WCAA member.

Happy shipping!

Spotlight on Elliot Laniado (continued)

Meyer works part time on the marketing, branding and SEO for Window Treats while attending graduate school where he is studying to be a rabbi.

Elliot and his wife Nadene also have two daughters, Barbara and Esther. And when Elliot spoke about his one year old granddaughter, Cheryl, his eyes lit up. When asked about his favorite cuisine he smartly replied “whatever my wife makes for dinner”. As for travel, he and Nadene recently traveled to France where he enjoyed his trip to Monet’s home and very much liked the water lily garden. He also found Normandy to be very moving and he put it, “quite impactful”. Elliot enjoys reading business management and self-improvement books like those written by Zig Ziegler or Steven Covey. He also likes historical novels.

Straight from the Heart

Lin's Linens

Lizbeth Balogh • Lin's Linens.

You are gifted and talented, my friends. Sometimes it is hard to remember that when we are wrapped up in the day to day activities of this business we chose. Sometimes it takes an "a-ha moment" to make us realize that our gift of creativity lets us see what is and imagine what is possible. Then we use our talent and drive to turn possibility into reality. Every day we work to create beautiful spaces for our clients. Every day as designers we see firsthand how environment influences us and how good design can actually help to improve the quality of our lives. But there is no where that our gifts and talents are more priceless than when we give of ourselves, straight from our hearts. So many of you have done just that for our Program Sisters at Lin's Linens, Inc and I thank you... straight from my heart.

When we formed Lin's Linens about four years ago, it was just an idea that came from the reluctant journey that my sister, Lin, has been traveling for the past fifteen years. As she dealt with recurring cancer, I felt powerless to help her. Because I am an Interior Designer and the owner of Chrysaliz Design, LLC, I did what I knew best and surprised her with a makeover of her bedroom. When I created that first Healing Sanctuary for Lin, I knew from her very positive response that this was a movement that needed to be sparked. But as we all know, a spark

without the proper fuel to sustain it quickly just burns out. When the WCAA spoke to me about our mission at Lin's Linens and invited me to speak at a meeting, I knew that I was in the right place and the flames have been fanned ever since. With the help of our WCAA members Lin's Linens has been able to reach out to more women, involve more vendors and create more Healing Sanctuaries for women going through treatment for malignant cancer. You have given the priceless gift of your time and talents and created highly personalized spaces, designed straight from the heart, for very deserving women. Through your efforts and continued support, my goal is to continue our mission until the day that the cure is found for this heart breaking disease and we become obsolete. And then we can all truly celebrate... straight from the heart!

Editor's Note: Liz is a new member of the WCAA NJ Chapter. In addition to being the founder of Lin's Linens, she is the owner of Chrysaliz Design. For more information about Lin's Linens and how you can become involved and help, visit the website at www.LinsLinens or email Liz directly at liz@chrysalizdesign.com WCAA members have partnered with Liz and Lin's Linens to create the Healing Sanctuaries on the following pages.





Before

Chapter Members - Francine Hyland, Kelli Chitty and Liz Balogh with volunteers



Chapter Members - Francine Hyland, Kelli Chitty and Darcy Litt

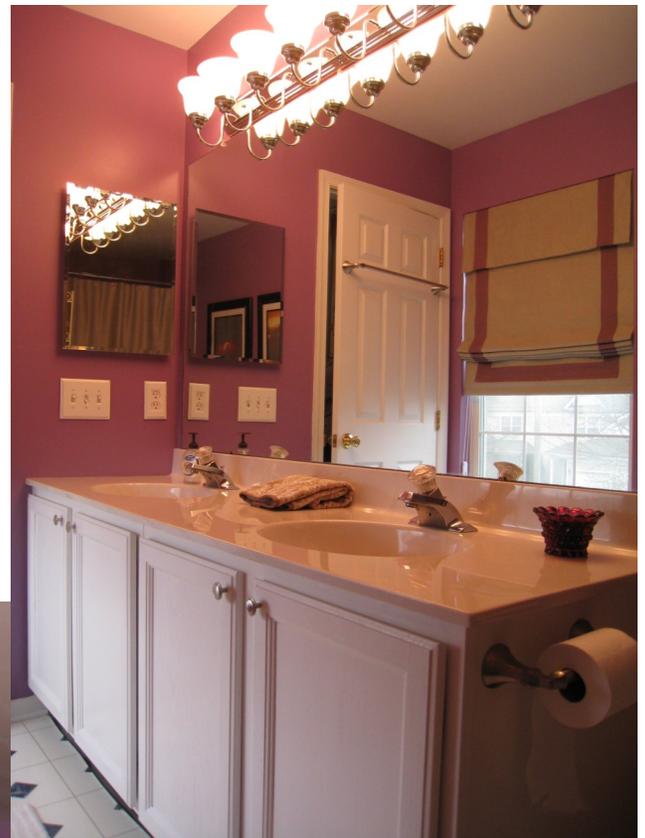
Designer: Liz Balogh
Window Treatments Fabricated by Claire Kong, The Drape Lady
Shades & hardware donated by Designers Resource



After



Before



After
Roman shade donated by
Maureen Skea



Chapter Members Irene Hurley, Debi Pinelli, Kelli Chitty and Robin Matthews .
Shower curtain designed by Kelli Chitty and fabricated by Robin Matthews.



After



Before

Designers: Kelli Chitty & Liz Balogh.

Drapes fabricated by Irene Hurley; headboard fabricated by Viki Lee; dust skirt fabricated by Evelyn LaLicata. Installed by Robin Matthews. Shades and hardware donated by Designer's Resource

Chapter members Diane Guididas, Francine Hyland and Kelli Chitty talk with the painter.

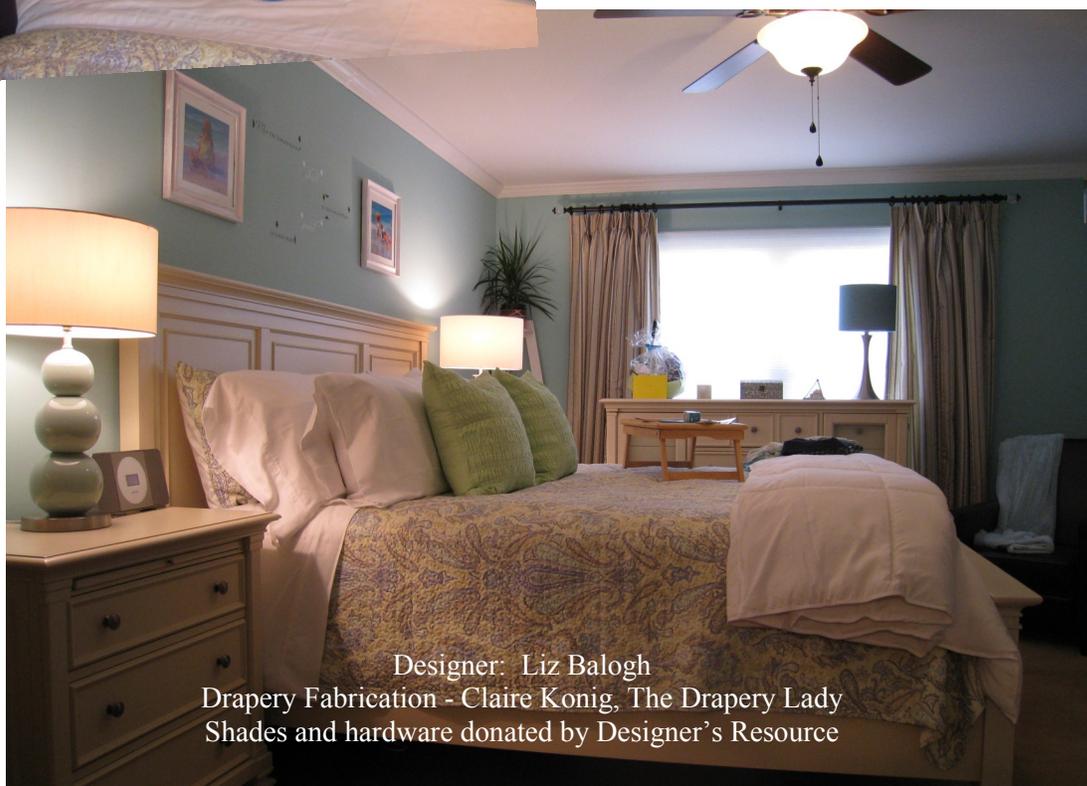


Before



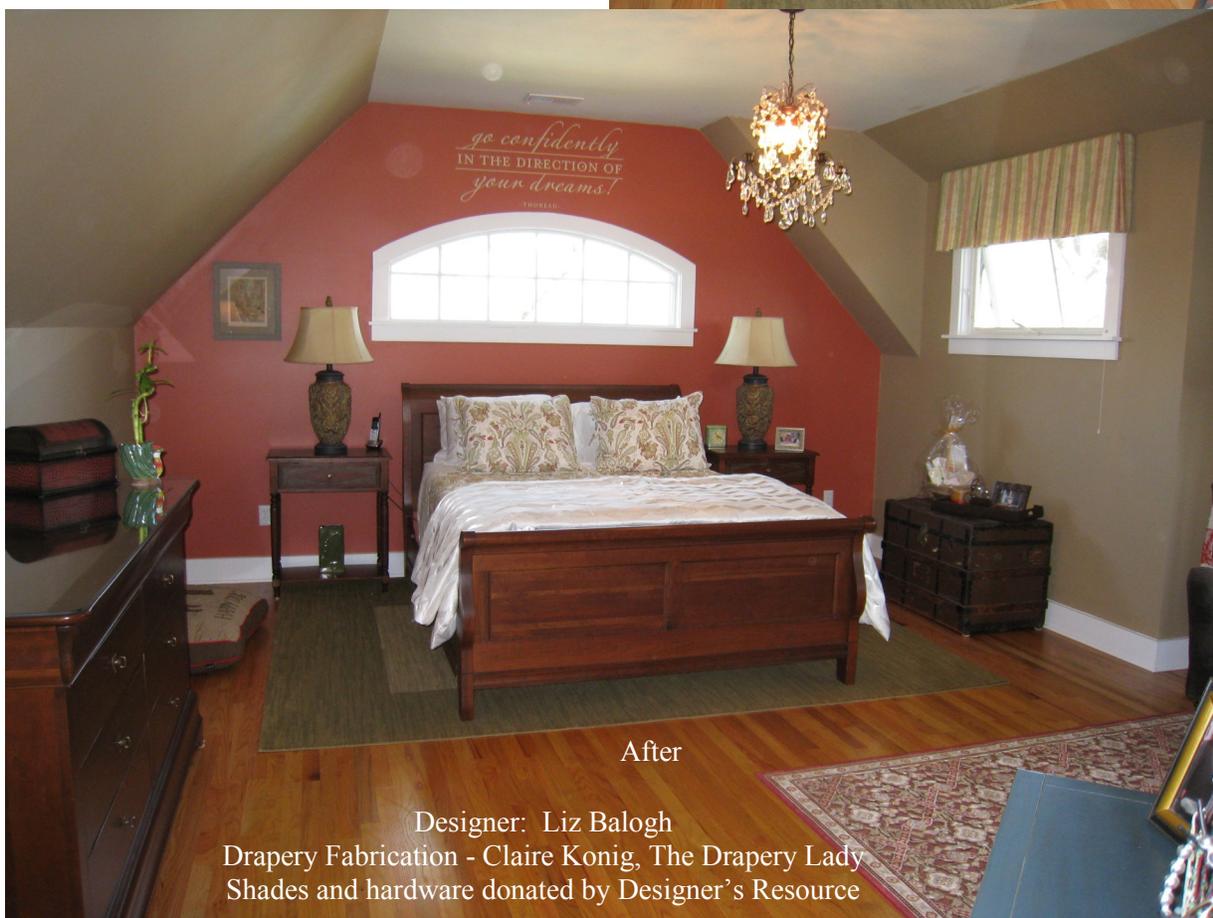
Liz Balogh dedicating the room

After



Designer: Liz Balogh
Drapery Fabrication - Claire Konig, The Drapery Lady
Shades and hardware donated by Designer's Resource

Chapter Member Francine Hyland



Designer: Liz Balogh
Drapery Fabrication - Claire Konig, The Drapery Lady
Shades and hardware donated by Designer's Resource

Nicole's Room - Master Bathroom

This is our most recent project - look for pictures of Nicole's completed room in an upcoming issue of *Design NJ Magazine*.



Before



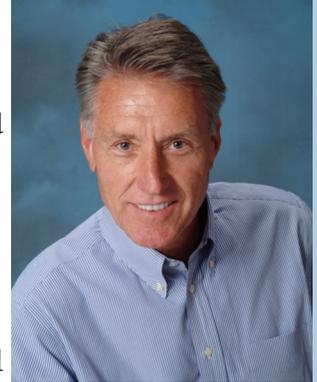
Chapter member Chris Kahler



Lin's Linens volunteers including Chapter members Chris Kahler, Liz Balogh, Kelli Chitty and Dacy Litt

The Vital Signs

Joe Jankoski • National Board Member



You can grow your business by focusing on your “vital signs.”

There are three very important things that you need to capture, measure, evaluate and adjust, to keep your business healthy. They are:

1. Leads: How many consumers call or visit you in a given period?
2. Closure Rate: How many of those leads do you turn into a sale?
3. Transaction Amount: What is the average dollar size of that sale?

Let me demonstrate how powerful this approach can be. Let’s assume that in typical month, you generate 50 leads, your closure rate is 70%, and your average transaction amount is \$800 per sale.

Let’s do the math:

$$50 \text{ Leads} \times 70\% \text{ Closure Rate} = 35 \text{ Sales} \times \$800 \text{ per Sale} = \$28,000$$

Now, your challenge is to improve each individual vital sign by only 5%, which is certainly not a stretch goal. Can you improve your advertising effectiveness to get three more people interested in you? Perhaps it is time to tap into your list of past customers, and activate some powerful word of mouth with a friends and family offer? Can you close 5% more leads? Perhaps you could improve your listening and selling skills to better connect with your customer’s needs and recommend a solution that she really loves. Can you increase your transaction amount by only 5%? Perhaps it is time to start every product with the highest priced option. Perhaps it is time to tack on simple upgrades or enhancements an optional valance or an upgraded operating system on a shade like a Hunter Douglas Ultra Glide. Going from \$800 to \$840 is very doable.

So let’s review the impact of the “5% mini improvements.”

1. 50 Leads is now 53 Leads
2. 70% Closure Rate is now 75%
3. \$800 Average Transaction Amount is now \$840.

Let’s do new the math:

$$53 \text{ Leads} \times 75\% \text{ Closure} = 40 \text{ Sales} \times \$840 \text{ per Sale} = \$33,600$$

Incredibly, a modest 5% increase in each vital sign generated a whopping 20% sales increase. Importantly you did not add any extra cost to your business to accomplish the goal.

If you are not tracking your three vital signs, you cannot implement this simple plan. Managing your vital signs will not only protect your business, it will give you the opportunity to gain valuable market share in a challenging economy, strengthen your business when others struggle!

I urge you to try it – you’ll like it.

Get To Know Your Industry Partners

Wisconsin Drapery Supply (WDS)

Moira Youmans, Decorating by Moira

I don't know about you, but I sometimes find it very overwhelming trying to decide where to purchase my decorative hardware, especially while trying not to spend a fortune on shipping! Since I live in area where there are no wholesale suppliers within driving distance, I was lucky to come across Wisconsin Drapery Supply (WDS) - a distributor of several stock and custom lines, with something available for every price point.

Select Decorative Hardware is a great choice for the Budget conscious client and is an easy sale! For those high-end clients they offer the option of customizing Paris Texas or The Finial Company to any color-way of your choice!

The staff at WDS are all very knowledgeable about the products they sell, including their motorization specialist - every employee has been there at least 10 years and some have been for over 30.

One of benefits of ordering stock products is that there is **ONLY a \$10 shipping fee** for the order! If your order is larger and has to go motor freight and is under a certain amount, there is a separate charge. For instance, they charge \$18 for a bolt of lining. The key is that you know what your freight charge is before shipping.

In addition to drapery hardware and Tableaux, they carry drapery workroom supplies and, in fact, recently relocated in order to beef up this area of business. If you don't see what you are looking for on their website, give them a call - they are very friendly and would be more than happy to listen to your needs. Think how much you'll save in freight!

Of course for all of you paperless designers I did ask if they have any plans to make their product guides accessible via PDF's ... John did say it is something they should look at and they most likely will provide them if needed.

To sum up how WDS operates

- If you need anything just call
- Everyone that answers the phone has at least 10 years or more experience
- Most have been installers, so they have seen it all!

Thanks again to John Graber, President of Wisconsin Drapery Supply, Inc. for taking time to allow me to interview you it was a pleasure!

For more information WDS and the products they carry, visit the website at <http://www.wiscdrapery.com/WDS/WDS.home.ht>

