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Leap of Faith Launches  
Nikole Starr Interiors

Houston, Texas



# Leap of Faith Launches Nikole Starr Interiors

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

For most people, having a second child is enough of a challenge, but Nikole Starr took on an additional challenge by starting her design business, Nikole Starr Interiors, at the same time.

Graduating from Texas State University during the economic downturn with a bachelor's degree in interior design in 2009, she said it was impossible to find a professional design position, so she worked in a commission sales position at Noel Furniture before working as a designer at Design Source.

As the birth of her second child loomed four years ago, Nikole was considering becoming a stay-at-home mom. Instead, at the encouragement of her husband Mark, she decided to take a leap of faith and launch her own firm when the parents of a friend asked her to redesign their kitchen.

Now, part of Nikole's own home is dedicated to her design business. The guest bedroom, home office and a large closet are filled with fabric and tile samples. She even

squeezed in a design assistant, Crystal Ryder, in the past few months to meet the demands of her growing business.

An award-winning member of the American Society of Interior Designers, Nikole said her specialty is transitional style, or traditional with "an edge."

"Referrals have been really great for me," Starr stated. "I get referrals from neighborhood Facebook groups, I've put some ads on Instagram and Facebook in the past for just the Houston area, and I stay active on my social media."

Quality photographs that showcase her work have been a plus for her business. She said hiring a professional photographer, Colleen Scott, to shoot portfolio photos of her work three years ago was "a great investment." Although the added expense was a jolt at first, the investment quickly paid off.

Her market area now spreads from Cypress to Katy to Sienna Plantation, Starr said, with a majority of her projects coming from suburban areas of Houston, although the inner

loop is also a frequent area for her to work. Many of her clients are business owners and entrepreneurs.

Clients hire Nikole Starr Interiors for a range of services, including full-service design, eDesign, one-day makeovers, kitchen and bath remodels, new construction, purchasing and project management, styling and accessorizing, color consultations, window coverings and fine art advisories.

“We work with busy professionals who desire beautiful homes but don’t have the energy or know-how to achieve it alone. A lot of clients will say ‘we got this far, but now we’re stuck.’ We can provide the finishing touches to make their houses feel homey, such as artwork and window coverings.”

For her full-service clients, Nikole offers a multi-step process. The first step is an in-home consultation when she may offer tips and advice. The second step is a Trades Day when she meets with the contractor(s) at the house. (Her trusted contractor is Renaissance Design Construction, but she will work with the clients’ choice.) The third step is working in her own studio, which includes sourcing and gathering materials. The fourth step is the presentation of her full design plan and the receipt of a client’s deposit. The final step is the installation and client reveal.

“I take the stress out of my client’s lives by selecting everything from floor to ceiling, so that, instead of spending time making expensive mistakes, they can spend more time with their families in a beautiful home they deserve.”

For her eDesign clients, Starr provides a shopping list for the clients to gather their own materials. She will arrange for installations if requested.

Thanks to HGTV and Pinterest, “design is more accessible to everyone. A lot more clients have DIY (do it yourself) ambitions.” But the media may present an unrealistic picture of interior design. “It’s not as easy as it looks at times. They don’t show what’s behind the scenes, dealing with trade vendors and damaged goods. A lot goes into that pretty picture,” she admitted. “You’ve got to have a passion for design.”

She added, “I get my greatest satisfaction when my clients can sit back, take a deep breath and not have to worry about anything else.”



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