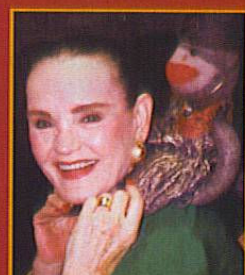


WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRY



Glass Ceiling?

WOMEN HOME FURNISHINGS EXECUTIVES
PROVE THEY'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO
SURVIVE AND THRIVE IN THE CORNER OFFICE



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The road to success in home fashions is circuitous at best, but ultimately rewarding for those who pursue their dreams.

The home furnishings industry, with its emphasis on entrepreneurial spirit and creativity, has rewarded women executives who have set their sights high and remained true to their inner visions.

Some of our leading women executives were born into the business, but few were lucky enough to have textiles in their blood. Many started out in so-called traditional roles—store sales associates, secretaries, or executive assistants. Several originally pursued careers in the field of

apparel before being seduced by the allure of home fashions.

Still, no matter what route they took to the industry, these stellar decision-makers share one thing in common—they all have risen to positions of power and authority, and are shaping the future of the home furnishings business.

In this special report, *LDB Interior Textiles* gives credit where it's due, recognizing the enormous impact these 12 women have had on the business, and revealing the paths they took to get here.

Making it a baker's dozen, *LDB Interior Textiles* has done a bit of forecasting and is spotlighting a rising star—Jennifer Castoldi.



Jennifer Castoldi Is an American Networking Queen in Paris

In an industry sometimes distracted by bottom line concerns, Jennifer Castoldi has made it her aim to inspire. She built the business model for her company, *Trendease*, while studying for her masters at the International School of Management in Paris, not knowing that within a year she would be running the real-world version.

Trendease is an on-line style magazine covering home fashion and design. Launched in May 2004, its digital database currently boasts 10,000 images from 1,500 companies, plus a library of 350 articles.

Castoldi and her team report on trade fairs, retail stores, showrooms, and exhibits throughout Europe with an eye to up-and-coming trends, breakthrough technologies, and undiscovered talent. Castoldi says, "We want to inspire people to create new product and buy new product."

Before leaving for Paris, Castoldi was working as a

design assistant at Revman. She observed that even as the industry was becoming more globally oriented, vendors were losing funding in their budgets to travel to the European shows.

"A lot of what I do is getting information to people as quickly as possible so they can make decisions; the Internet is key to that. I think that five or ten years from now technology is going to play an even greater role in our industry. But personal connections are going to remain just as important.

"One of my strengths as a businesswoman is I know how to network people," she continues. "So once I found the IT team I wanted to work with that was it. Today there are people from 43 countries reading *Trendease*, much more than the US clients I originally envisioned."

There are also 14 full-time *Trendease* employees, as well as a pool of contributors who work on special projects and custom presentations. "People from my MBA program call me the network queen. And not just because I was the only American."

Name:
Jennifer Castoldi
Years in Industry:
8
Present Position:
Founder, President,
Creative Director,
Trendease
Business:
Trend forecasting