

Get Creative!

Interest in interior design has never been stronger and creative and unusual framing designs that fit the homes and offices of today are a must.

As framing professionals, you need to be keeping up with all the changing fashions and trends so that you can present your customers with framing that's the best it can be. Not only will this add value to the finished piece and shows your customer the creative talents, but it should also separate you from the competition, and help drive your creative side.

Here are a couple of ideas to get your creative juices flowing:

Thoughts on stacking

Stacking profiles to create one impressive frame gives you the opportunity to show your design abilities using a large assortment of readily available mouldings.

The key to stacked design is in selecting the correct combination of mouldings to achieve a certain style, design and finish that is appropriate and complements the artwork. The stacking technique also allows you to create a variety of depth that really draws the eye into the framed art.

From a technical perspective combining mouldings to create a wider frame enables you to use a larger number of narrower mouldings. The resulting frame generally has much more impact.



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Stacked moulding designs can be an alternative when you want to use a wide frame but can't find just the right profile. This technique creates a custom product and gives you a competitive edge with larger frame design alternatives.

Slip in a winner

Mountslips add a further dimension to creative frame design. Whereas a mountslip may not look much on its own, when used in the correct context it can be a huge asset. The mountslip can help in a number of ways, from adding a subtle hint of colour, to helping lead the eye to the artwork. Plus, as with mouldings, they are available in a range of styles, finishes and colours.

The mountslip can be used inside the moulding, in which case it needs a complimentary finish if you want a wider look or a contrasting design if you want to add a hint of colour. They look stunning between multiple mounts and because they are more three-dimensional can give a real focus for the eye.

Mountslips can of course also be used in stacked designs in conjunction with the techniques described for mouldings above.



Perfect proportions

Mountboard colours will be determined by the art and the surroundings in which it will hang, but the dimensions are up to you and your customer.

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How often do we use a small mount simply because ‘that’s what we have always done’? Often, customers want to use a narrower border because they think it is less expensive and don’t understand how important proportions are. A wider mount will give the subject breathing space and helps to balance and direct attention to the artwork. By using variable widths of mountboard a hugely different effect can be achieved.

To help your customers visualise wider or varying mountboard proportions, the best approach is to have framed examples on display. When the customer sees the difference it’s a sure bet they will appreciate the value that a more imaginative design will offer.

When it comes to choosing the right mountboard remember that its purpose is to help create balanced and proper proportions in the design to enhance the overall appearance of the artwork. The moulding should always be a different width than the mount, and the two together should create a sense of balance, complementing the subject matter rather than competing with it.

The practice of creating depth in framing designs – through techniques using foamboard, spacers, mountsrips and bevel accents are very popular today. This kind of design element adds dimension that gives your framed artwork a customised enhancement while keeping the overall look clean and uncluttered.

Irregular design challenge

Irregular edges can pose an interesting conundrum for the professional framer. How does one create a well-balanced look when the artwork is not a regular shape?

Your primary task is to produce a frame design where the elements at your disposal enhance and complement the subject matter. Consider the character of the item being framed, its colour, the materials used to create it, any strong features etc.

Two techniques can help to offset the unevenness of the artwork. Firstly try float mounting the artwork instead of placing a mount on top of the image. Secondly experiment with the way you use lines around the piece to help give the illusion of uniformity. Normally you might draw a straight

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line, however if it is uneven try using a freehand line. You'll find that the effect is to soften the unevenness of the artwork as the eye moves out past the float frame and the line towards the straight edged moulding.

So whether it's stacked frames, slips, imaginative use of mountboard or simply the use of a non straight pencil line, try and push your comfort levels towards more imaginative design. Too often we think the customer will not go along with a more stylised look that may end up costing more. But when you underestimate what you can sell, you can end up not giving customers what they really want – a unique creative display that will fit in their home. If you do it right, the customer will be more satisfied in the end which ultimately means bigger profits for you.