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Congratulations!

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For most of you, you are half way through the school year, which means you are preparing your resume and portfolios for job and internship interviews. This issue of *Custom* will explore an often overlooked career in interior design--sales.

Custom turns the spotlight on **Becky Brown, Associate IIDA**, and how she discovered a career path as an account executive for [Creative Business Interiors](#). As you try to discover the next steps in your career path, don't forget about IIDA's Career Center. You can find it online or by [clicking here](#). You can post your resume and search for job and internship opportunities.

We are also excited to announce that we are now accepting applications for our [7th Annual Student Sustainable Design Competition](#).

Finally, we are already busy gearing up for [NeoCon 2009 in Chicago](#), and I am pleased to share with you several exciting opportunities we are extending to our student membership.

Good luck on the remainder of your school year!

Sincerely,  
*Christa Koskosky*

IIDA Student Marketing Coordinator  
E: [Ckoskosky@iida.org](mailto:Ckoskosky@iida.org)  
P: 312.467.1950



IIDA is now accepting applications for the 7th Annual Student Sustainable Design Competition. Students are welcome to apply individually or in teams.

Design will be judged for innovative character of the overall design, evocative and responsible use of materials, practical application, visual comfort and sustainable material application. Applications and projects must be received by **April 6th**. [Click here for entry details and for an application.](#)

Prizes this year include: \$1,200 for Best of Competition, \$600, Award of Excellence and \$300 Honorable Mention. The Best of Competition winner will also speak at NeoCon 2009 in Chicago as part of our Forum Advisors presentation on The Future of Design. Flight and hotel accommodations will be provided by IIDA.

#### **IIDA Seeking Flickr Friends**

IIDA is now on Flickr! We recently joined and linked Flickr to our [student blog](#). We have uploaded some images from our new, LEED Gold office, as well as NeoCon East. The only problem? We have no friends!

Join the group **IIDA Student Members** and upload pictures of your project boards, resume, portfolios and inspiring images. We will choose a winning picture and send you the book *Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs*, IIDA student bag and *Color Pulse 2010* color forecast from Benjamin Moore.

## Q&A: Life of a Saleswoman

A career path in sales is constantly changing. No longer do we think of someone going door to door peddling household goods. Instead, today's young professionals are being offered greater flexibility and unique challenges.



**Becky Brown, Associate IIDA**, currently works as an account executive for [Creative Business Interiors](#) in Wisconsin. In this Q&A she shares valuable advice and sheds new light on what it means to be in sales.

### Was being an account executive something you pursued, or did you fall into it unexpectedly?

My specific career path was unexpected for me. It really started when I was a student at Mount Mary College. Stephanie Anderson, Executive Vice President of Creative Business Interiors (CBI) and other Interior Designers in Milwaukee, formed a mentorship program with the students of Mount Mary. It was through the program that I met my mentor, Suzanne Koch, Director of Interior Design at CBI. After college I joined Americorps and moved to Georgia to volunteer through New Horizons Habitat for Humanity Affiliate. Following my time with AmeriCorps I moved to Madison to attend graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. When I arrived back in Madison, I was searching for a job and was able to foster my old relationship with my mentor. **I originally interviewed for a project management position with CBI, however after interviewing, CBI knew that with my outgoing personality, strong communication skills and work ethic that I was fit to handle sales.**

**I had no idea what I was getting into, but I now have much appreciation for CBI seeing a match for my specific skills, pointing me in a fitting career path and giving me a chance.**

### What is a typical day like for you?

Days are often long in sales, especially in the beginning of your career, because you have to build your base of business. You are often compensated in sales by the volume of work you produce it is especially important to have a good base.

- I usually start my day at 7:30 a.m. and work until 5:30 or 6:30 p.m., with at least one longer day a week. In any given day I spend time meeting with my internal team.
- At CBI specifically, we have our own dedicated Project Managers that work on a project with the idea that two minds are better than one. I orchestrate which experts within our company need to be involved in a project given its specific requirements.
- I filter communications from the clients to the team and help organize a plan for a solution. I will attend client meetings to gather or share information. There is usually a lot of trouble-shooting I have to do for projects so we can avoid potential problems.
- Over lunch I will either meet with clients to give lunch-and-learns or to entertain a client.
- I will spend time making calls to new clients and checking-in with existing ones--I am always on the phone!

Typically I have a couple dozen projects open at a time, so there are many balls to juggle depending on which stage each of these projects may be in. Outside of regular work hours, there are many times I will entertain clients by taking them to Badger games, hosting a social, seeing a show or attending a networking event.

### What type(s) of personality do you think is/are best suited for an account executive job?

People who would consider themselves leaders and have great communication skills (both presenting and listening), possess the ability to motivate people, are organized, good multi-taskers, have thick skin and are dedicated.

### What do you like least about your job?

That I truly have the ability to create my own destiny--it's a ton of responsibility and it can be scary! Working with clients that aren't willing to collaborate, that sometimes my job feels too much like 'business,' having to break bad news to a client, there is usually a lot of expectations to live up to.

### What do you like best?

That I truly have the ability to create my own destiny--the sky truly can be the limit! Other perks would be that I run my own schedule, set my own meetings, have direct influence on my income, being involved with decision makers on the projects, being a resource, the thrill of giving presentations and the endless opportunities and challenges.

## What advice would you give to someone considering a similar career path?

I would tell them that even though it is a lot of work, it's about people and making connections. You will be rewarded for your hard work in many ways. Stay focused and find a good mentor to guide you through all of your challenges. Remember that nothing in this world would happen if it didn't start with a sale! **Believe in what you are selling, it will make your job much easier.**

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### IIDA NeoCon Student Day: Magazine Editor Panel



Leading industry publications bring to light the industry's latest trends and most forward-thinking projects. Writer and editors must keep their finger on the pulse of the industry as they continue to bring the future of design to their readers in every issue. IIDA is pleased to pair with the industry's top interior design magazines, to present a panel discussion on inspirings projects of the past year and where these editors and writers see the future of design headed.

**Join us Wednesday, June 17th at 11:00 a.m. CST.** The program will take place in our Learning Center, suite 567 on the 5th floor of the Merchandise Mart.

You can find [more NeoCon information here.](#)

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### NeoCon 2009: Student Display, Brand Yourself

IIDA knows you can put together a great portfolio, but can you design a 3.5x2 inch business card, and can you make it memorable? IIDA challenges you to brand yourself!

Send us your resume and business card by **Wednesday, May 20th**, and we will display them for NeoCon 2009 in Chicago. One winner will be chosen to receive a free student membership for the 2009-2010 school year. Submissions can be mailed to:

**Christa Koskosky**  
**222 Merchandise Mart Plaza**  
**Suite 567**  
**Chicago, IL 60654**

Need inspiration or a little direction?

[Click here for an Adobe Illustrator business card tutorial](#)

[Click here for business card examples on Flickr](#)

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### SCAD International Interior Design Student Competition: LINK'D Design

The 2009 International Interior Design Student Competition, presented by the Savannah College of Art and Design, invites students throughout international colleges and universities working in three-student multidisciplinary teams to develop a 4-D visitor experience for a United States National Park Service National Monument that incorporates the historical, ecological, economic and cultural issues surrounding the site.

The winning student team will receive \$4,500, with runners-up teams receiving \$1,500 each. The competition is open to all students who are enrolled full-time at a college or university. The submission deadline is April 10. [Click here for more information.](#)

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### 2009 IIDA New York Student Scholarship



The New York Chapter will offer five \$5,000 scholarships in Interior Design plus ten one-year IIDA student memberships to winners and honorable mention recipients.

In order for students to be eligible for an IIDA NY Interior Design Scholarship, they must be enrolled as a junior, senior or graduate student in an Interior Design program at an accredited New York State college or university. Judging will be based on the student's stated philosophy of design and the quality of their design portfolio.

Please contact Ellen Kushman at [ekushman@kellencopany.com](mailto:ekushman@kellencopany.com) with questions.

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### **Georgia Chapter Best of the Best Awards (b.o.b.)**

The Georgia Chapter invites students to attend their annual forum design awards, Best of the Best (b.o.b.). Tickets are \$65 for IIDA Student Members. b.o.b. will be held Thursday, February 26th, 2009 Fabulous Fox - Egyptian Ballroom & Grand Salon. [Click here to purchase tickets.](#)

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### **NCIDQ: Your Journey to Professionalism**

Want to steer your career in the right direction? No need to travel anywhere to plot your course. All you need is a keyboard and you're ready to navigate! NCIDQ offers an informative presentation called Your Journey to Professionalism that helps to answer all of your questions, supplying you with just the right coordinates to plot your interior design career course. In fact, the presentation has become so popular that we're not only taking it on the road, but we're also bringing it straight to your office or home! [Click here for more information on this offer.](#)

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### **CLC Portfolio Review Winner**

Congratulations to **Veeraya Poramait, Student IIDA**, who was this year's winter Chapter Leadership Council's (CLC) student portfolio review Best of Competition Winner. Veeraya is a graduate of Drexel University where she received her masters in interior architecture and design. Congratulations!

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## **IIDA** THE FUTURE OF DESIGN

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