

WTF: Window Treatment Business Models, Part 2

Which Business Model is Right for You?

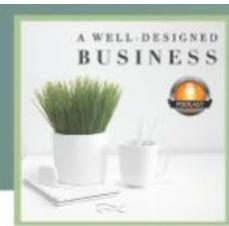
Episode #471

There are two main Business Models as it relates to running the Window Treatment component of your design services.

1. **DIY – Do It Yourself Model.** Here are some of its characteristics:
 - You take full responsibility and accountability for the whole process
 - You own your wins and losses
 - There is minimal hand-holding
2. **DFU – Done for You Model** (may also be referred to as concierge-level services or project management services)
 - You work in tight collaboration with a Window Treatment Specialist (aka WTS) or your workroom. The process of specifying the style and fabrics is a balanced toggle between your design vision and your workroom's technical expertise

DIY Business Model – Designer's responsibilities:

1. Come up with the design aesthetic vision. It must be a combination of project goals, client requirements, your aesthetic, and general understanding that it can be achieved
2. Take measurements (or schedule your installer)
3. Make selections:
 - Fabric – make sure it's appropriate for the treatment
 - Trim
 - Hardware
4. Calculate yardages and quantities
5. Place orders with vendors, go through confirmations, check off receipts against your PO's
6. Create a Work Order (may also be referred to as Production Order). Here are points to specify for a drapery panel:
 - Face width measurement



- Return measurement
 - Overlap measurement
 - Length measurement (be sure to take bracket deduction and floor deduction into account)
 - # of panels and # of pairs
 - Header type (use workroom's terminology)
 - Pleat type (use workroom's terminology)
 - Fullness
 - # of widths or yardage to be used
 - Type of lining and interlining
 - Type of hems
 - Weights
 - Embellishments placement
 - Pin setting
7. Keep in touch with client and workroom (never assume the workroom received everything you placed) regarding the progress of their project
 8. Schedule installation
 9. Deal with any issues that might have come up during the installation

DFU Model – Responsibilities

1. Devise the strategy
 - Best done if it's a product of collaboration of aesthetic, function, and customer preferences. That's why it's best that all three parties are present in this meeting: designer, workroom, and client.
2. Design
 - Designer is responsible for general design vision (style, fabrics, trim, finish on hardware)
 - Window Treatment Specialist (or you workroom) is responsible for providing product-specific knowledge (samples of goods, information on how fabric would behave, technical expertise on hardware, fabrication, and hard goods)
3. Place orders
 - Designer or WTS can do this. It can be a combination of designer ordering fabrics/trims and WTS order everything else. The complexities of placing, checking, confirming, and receiving PO's should not be overlooked.

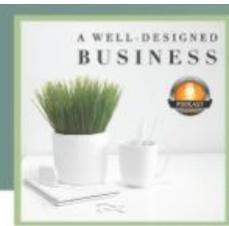


4. Window Treatment Specialist goes to work

- Takes measurements (and is responsible for them)
- Brings attention to any obstructions or circumstances worth considering
- Puts together a detailed estimate, detailing yardage and ALL specifics of the treatment
- Goes through iterations of the estimate (can be a long and cumbersome process)
- Takes care of fabrication
- Keeps the designer and/or client in the loop with regular communications
- Schedules installation. This is another step that sounds simple, but in reality can get pretty complex and time-consuming
- Takes care of installation
- Takes care of ANY issues that come up
- Overall, takes responsibility for final product as it was specified
- Makes the designer look like hero

PROs & CONs of Both Models:

	'Do It Yourself' Model	'Done For You' Model
Pros	<p>You recognize full profit on custom window treatments</p> <p>You possess the knowledge and can position yourself as an expert</p> <p>You are in full control of the whole process</p>	<p>Allows you to free your mental bandwidth to work in your sphere of genius</p> <p>Less physical strain</p> <p>Less mental stress</p> <p>You have a partner and don't feel alone</p> <p>It, arguably, produces a better result for your client</p> <p>There is just not enough hours in the day to do it ALL</p> <p>To your client, you look more professional, as you surround yourself with your team of experts</p>
Cons	<p>High stress</p> <p>Time-consuming process</p> <p>Must gain education and experience</p>	<p>You rely on someone else and go on faith that this partner will honor their commitments</p> <p>Split the profits</p> <p>There may be mis-communications, arguments, and disagreements, as in any relationship</p>



Financial Implications

It is not possible to give a definitive answer on which business model is more profitable.

- At first glance, it may seem that the DIY model would be it. But that may only be the case until your first mistake that not only wipes out your profits, but takes a bite out of savings.
- Consider opportunity cost, defined here as 'what can be done with your time, if it wasn't spent on managing the window treatment process'. Can it be more design work, which is the main source of income and joy for you?
- Fabrication pricing varies greatly between workrooms and geographical areas.
- Best way to ascertain your financial implications is to get project-specific pricing from your WTS/workroom and run your own analysis.

Two main types of workrooms (please know this is a generalization, as some variations exist)

1. Large scale track workroom
 - Large staff
 - Robust, but rigid processes
 - Possible CRM system designer can access
2. Smaller, boutique-style workroom
 - Small staff (1-5 people)
 - More personal approach
 - Flexible systems and flowing processes

How to find a workroom that's right for you:

- Check out your local chapter of WCAA (<https://www.wcaa.org/>)
- Just reach out to possible workrooms
- Get to know their culture and personality
- Look for clues that align with your business model and value system
- Just ask for help and be honest that you might be new
- Share your intentions of becoming more knowledgeable and that their time investment will be worth it, as you gain more experience

Criteria by which to choose business model that's right for you:



- How much time are you willing to invest in learning?
- How much money are you willing to invest in mistakes?
- How much stress are you willing to endure?

What will you do next?

- Decide which model is right for you
- Decide if you need to get more education and possibly a certification – here are your resources:
 - <https://www.wcaa.org/>
 - <https://www.wf-vision.com/>
 - <https://www.iwce-vision.com/>
 - <http://excitingwindows.com/>
- Learn how to measure
- Reach out to a workroom
- How will you decide today to be excellent?