



Colorful Creatives: Xced Design Build

February 15, 2019

Happy Friday! This week's feature is a boss babe killing it in the construction industry! I had the pleasure of meeting Chelsey Jackel right after I graduated interior design school. She was a natural mentor and taught me so much about the construction industry. She's incredibly personable, talented, and cares deeply about doing her absolute best everyday. Chelsey and I recently reconnected upon the opening of their new office, Xced Design Build. Their new studio space is absolutely incredible! Fully designed showroom, studio kitchen, collaborative work area, and a design library. This space has it all! Their Logan Square studio was designed to serve as a collaborative work space for their Power Partners; independent Chicagoland Interior Designers who strive to learn, grow, and provide exceptional design service to their clients. I became a Power Partner in January and I love being a part of the community. I benefit tremendously from the relationships, co working space, and learning opportunities. They created exactly the space the independent designer community needed. This partnership also creates a trustworthy relationship with a build team you can depend on.

I hope you enjoy learning more about Chelsey and her process of developing her business and herself. One of my favorites quotes from her:

“I am working all the time on me, my journey, my business, my family, my feelings, my purpose and my overall satisfaction in this thing called life! I want that for everyone.”



Chelsey Jackel | Xced Design Build

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1. How did you get started in the design industry?

I got into interior design through the comfort of my mother's intuition. When I was a young girl I would tell my parents they weren't allowed into one of the rooms in our home until I was finished. I organized, rearranged and decorated. In college, I studied architecture and fell in love with the

concept of building and creating. I soon moved to Chicago, got an extended degree at Harrington and have been shaping my career ever since.

2. Did you always know you wanted to be an entrepreneur?

Yes. I grew up in a small town, with a big city attitude. I imagined running a business at age 9 when my little girlfriends were imagining their white picket house and 3 kids...I've always loved economics and business development. It's so adventurous.

3. When did you know it was the right time to go full time on your business?

I think I was 2 years into my career, when I finally dropped all my other "side gigs" and focused on creating my journey as an interior designer. I sometimes reminisce about serving in the restaurant or comedy clubs that got me by while I was studying in Chicago... and those were learning lessons of how I communicate today, for sure. But today I'm developing more of my passion; nourishing the woman entrepreneur leader that I am becoming in this industry that I love so much.



4. What are some of the biggest challenges you've had to overcome with owning your own business?

I am a partner of my company, Xced Design Build, and fortunately joined into a company where the seed had already been set and roots were planted... I've been nurturing the continual growth. The biggest challenge for me, which scares me to say, has been working on myself and focusing back on the elements in my life and career where I was not fully seen or heard and how I am breaking those trends today. The daily challenge is to continue to stay open, be vulnerable, assume good will, and support the feelings and thoughts that flow in me daily.

5. How did you reach your potential clients when first starting your business? Has anything changed in that process now? What have you learned?

I am proud to say that I was a FANTASTIC server back in the day. Starting out in interior design seemed like a perfect fit for me, because I care so deeply about other people and finding resolutions for them and their needs/wants. I have always been able to connect with people on a level that my mother and father taught me... since then, I am seeing how much of that connection was for them, and how little was for me. I am learning now that in order to become more satisfied with my connections with clients or business colleagues, I have to dedicate my work on who I am becoming in every moment and in every interaction. Challenge myself to lean into the uncomfortable. Trust. Assume good will. And continue to show up each day with my intention!



6. Do you feel you need to educate people on what you do? How do you handle that situation?

This is a tricky world. I am constantly battling myself in the practice of saying too much or not saying enough. Education is necessary, but it can also lead to unnecessary overanalyzing, which I believe has become a tactic of protection that our society uses. I have learned and am still learning to handle this area of the industry by educating myself on who I am speaking to in the moment. Being okay with who I am and finding the best way to connect with the other person. I assisted one of my dearest friends in his dance company years ago, and he taught me lots about how to connect with other people. There are many personality traits, and many “personality tests” out there... for me, I listen to the person and find my elements of understanding them, speak on that, and lead them towards understanding me. It’s a tricky game, but it sure is enjoyable and adventurous.

7. What is your favorite & least favorite “hat” to wear as a business owner?

Oh geez... that’s a tough one. I think every day there is a hat that wish I wasn’t wearing. But each day is different, and the very next day I may love the hat I hated before! HAHAHA. I’m learning to be okay with my messiness.



8. How do you stay motivated?

I surround myself with allies. People and coaches that support me and challenge me. My business partner is my strongest ally. He pushes and pulls me in directions and empowers me above many others. I also have a slew of women professionals from all industries who keep me focused on my path.

9. What are you working on right now?

Me! I have been studying under a foundation that has impacted my interactions for my business and for my life. People who have known me for years are starting to say they see a difference in me, and I am grateful for that affirmation every time. I am learning to take in those words more. Let myself feel and shift my thinking of who I am becoming. Design Build wise... we are working

on so many awesome projects. Each new luxury project is a chance for our team to show up and show off. Commercial or Residential, we've got a team that leads with their best foot forward, and I am so proud of us all.



10. Where do you look for inspiration?

Hmmm... loaded question. I think I get my inspiration from nature. I was at a client's house in the suburbs and we all spent a moment just looking out the back patio doors, soaking in the beauty of the colors that bounce off the snow when the sun hits it. I breathe those moments in and then challenge myself to re-create those moments in design.

11. What is a piece of advice you would tell your past self on the first day you started your business?

I'd tell my young self to Breathe. Take it in and extend it out. Keep breathing and lean in... it's worth it!!

12. Where is your favorite place to work?

Our studio kitchen. Our new collaborative design studio is fun and interactive, especially on Monday-Wednesday-Fridays when other designers stop by the atelier and grab a seat to work on their projects. I love meeting in the kitchen and walking around, discussing visionary moments with my team and making hot tea or coffee for others as we create. The kitchen was the center of my household growing up. It's becoming the center of our work space here at Xced, and I love it.



13. How do you start your Monday?

I head our leadership training and project “kick off” meetings every Monday morning with my business partner. Our inhouse design and build team all come together to learn more about EI and empowerment. We bounce ideas off each other, input thoughts and feelings towards the subject of the day and lean into the week knowing we are all allies for each other. The kick off meeting takes us into the busy movement for each week’s projects at hand.

14. As a busy business owner, how do you avoid burn out?

I took a class on “soft addictions” by Dr. Judith Wright this last fall and am learning that my burn out only really happens when I find myself doing something that’s not really nourishing. It’s easy to get addicted to a tv series or constantly checking my emails... but in the moment, I’m working on what do I need and want out of this moment. Then I orientate towards that.

15. What are some colors you are connecting with right now?

There are 8 inches of snow outside: “I think white is the most wonderful color of all, because within it one can find every color of the rainbow.” - Richard Meier



16. What is something you could not live without?

Eye contact. I am a big hugger and love snuggling up to my friends and all my nieces and nephews... but eye contact leads me to a space of indescribable connection. Its amazing to see what happens after a quick, but totally connected glance at an ally.

17. What are some of your favorite textures/ materials?

I've fallen in love with Schumacher's patterns lately, and the textures within Holland and Sherry's multiple textile lines. These two lines were among the firsts to become part of our collaborative atelier for our power partners at the Xced Design Studio.



18. What's your favorite season and why?

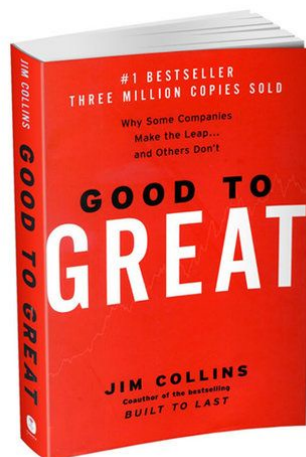
Fall. I love scarves, I love sweaters, I love boots, I love leggings, I love hot cocoa, I love jackets and layers for when the temperature gets just warm enough. I love the colors of the trees, the crisp air and the music in my soul as I open myself up to the love of others; ending the bright sunshine from summer and entering the cuddle-time winter!

19. What's your favorite thing to do in Chicago?

Walk. There is so much to see and feel in 5 minutes into a client's home, or 15 minutes to the neighborhood restaurant. Walking my dog around the city for hours used to be the most alive moments for me... I want more of that!

20. Any inspirational books you recommend?

A few years back I read the book *Good to Great*. A mentor of mine suggested it. I scratched all over my copy like a text book, highlighting and creating and imagining my growth at that time. Things changed in my career and life since then, but I still remember some moments of clarity that really reached me while reading that one.



21. If you could travel anywhere in the world for inspiration, where would it be and why?

Man... you're good Sarah! I love to travel. I pride myself in having a strong passport history but, know that I've only been so far. I think my next journey would be Greece, Netherlands or China. I've been intrigued by these three cultures the last couple years and looking for my next journey to discover more.

22. What are you looking forward to in 2019?

The next adventure. 2018 was very alive for me, and I am seeing 2019 as another step into more of who I want to become. I have girlfriends having babies, a family reunion to finish planning, a community to continue volunteering and supporting,

23. Anything I missed that you want to share?

For me, life and business are one in the same. I don't live to work, or work to live... I am working all the time on me, my journey, my business, my family, my feelings, my purpose and my overall satisfaction in this thing called life! I want that for everyone.