



Running a Successful Design Business

Student worksheet: Key Stage 4

Galleries 2, 3 and 4

1) Product range

William Morris (1834-96) founded his design firm in 1861 with six artist-friends as partners.

In 1875 he bought out the other partners to become sole director. Morris & Co produced a wide range of high quality products for furnishing Victorian homes.

Look around Galleries 2–4 to find examples of the following product categories. Tick off the boxes when you have found an example of each.

- wallpaper
- woven fabric
- wall tiles
- furniture
- window panes
- embroidery
- glassware
- carpets [add boxes]
- printed fabric

Choose two items from these categories. Make a quick sketch of each and add the information requested.

	What category of object?
	Name of designer? (it might not be Morris himself)
	Materials it is made of?
	How was it made?
	What category of object?
	Name of designer? (it might not be Morris himself)
	Materials it is made of?
	How was it made?

2) High end and low end market range (Gallery 3)

Find Morris's design for a *Workman's Small House*, 1884

Morris & Co's 'unique selling point' was the high quality of their products – designed by artists and usually made carefully by hand with the best natural materials. Morris worried that this made his goods too expensive for ordinary people. In 1884 he designed an interior for a working man's cottage but even this looks more luxurious than most working class people could afford,

Can you recognise the wallpaper design? (Hint: there's a sample in this room)

Morris solved this problem by ensuring there were some cheaper, simple 'off-the-shelf' even 'do-it-yourself' Morris items.

Find two examples of products which you think would have been affordable to lower income customers. Draw them here, noting materials used and how the items were made.

Name of item:	Name of item:
Materials: Manufacture method:	Materials: Manufacture method:

3) Pioneering marketing techniques

Morris shrewdly pioneered marketing techniques which we take for granted today, at a time when many considered self-promotion ungentlemanly!

Look in Galleries 3-5 to find evidence of Morris using some of the following methods. Tick the box if you find the evidence and note down what it is.

- Showcase room settings Evidence?
- Catalogues
- Buy-one-get-one free offers
- Circular letters to friends and acquaintances
- Celebrity pulling power – using well-known artists’ names
- Email marketing
- Use of samples and swatch books loaned out to clients
- Newspaper adverts

Branding and marketing today

Can you think of good examples of marketing and branding for products today?

Write down the names of the products or the brands.

.....

What do you think is particularly effective about the marketing?

.....

4) Private commissions for wealthy clients

Find the section on **Rounton Grange** in Gallery 3.



This grand house was commissioned by Victorian industrialist Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell. He founded a major ironworks on the Tyne. Morris & Co undertook interior decorating schemes for many wealthy clients. Morris supervised this interior decoration personally.

Find out the name of the architect

Look through the flip book on the wall to see pictures of the rooms. Name an example of Morris wallpaper design seen in the rooms Name an example of a Morris fabric design

What sort of impression do you think Lowthian Bell wanted to make on his visitors through his choice of decoration?

.....

Look at the design for a wooden carved fireplace by Morris's later assistant George Jack.

How is the subject of the design connected to the client's identity and his interest in mining and metals?

.....

How much was George Jack paid to design and make this fireplace? (Look for his pay-in slips).....

5) Undertake your own private commission

Imagine that a rich celebrity today was interested in commissioning you to design the interiors of their house – wallpaper, fabrics and furnishings.

Who would you like it to be?

How would you persuade them to choose you as their interior designer? What ideas would you have to make your designs link to their identity and appeal to their taste?

.....
.....

Later create a design proposal as Morris & Co would have done with initial designs for wallpaper and fabrics.