

# BUSINESS OF HOME

TRADE TALES | Dec 27, 2019 |

## How does your firm kick off the New Year?



By Haley Chouinard

Whether it's eating black-eyed peas or writing down resolutions, the start of a new year is often marked with special rituals. We asked six designers—**Tim Campbell, Shelby Ames Steed, Darla Bankston May, Allison Babcock, Jonathan Bigham** and **Megan Winters**—how their firms ring in the New Year.



*Tim Campbell*

Courtesy of Tim Campbell

### CHAT ROOM

“We have a tradition where I sit down with my team the first week of the New Year and assess what went wrong and what went right in the past year as it pertains to clients, projects, prospects and the office in general. Everyone is invited to offer their thoughts, insights and advice. It's an important time to reevaluate our company values, talk honestly about client relationships and assess how we performed as a team and as individuals. We are a small office, so I've found it's important to keep open lines of communication with my core players. Everyone is heard, goals are established and course corrections made if needed.”

—Tim Campbell, *Studio Tim Campbell, New York and Los Angeles*

### GET IT TOGETHER

“We kick off the New Year by getting organized the first day back. It helps to ease back into working mode after being gone. We also sit down to discuss what we learned from projects the past year, what we can improve on and how we can use that for upcoming projects in the New Year.”

—*Darla Bankston May, Bankston May Associates, Houston*



*Darla Bankston May*

Courtesy of Darla Bankston May

### YEAR IN REVIEW

“In January, we perform an active client review. This entails making client to-do lists, reviewing all open orders and going over the project timeline. Though we are constantly reviewing open orders and deliveries, we like to hyper-focus on these in January, so that we have ample time to troubleshoot before project deadlines and installations. We much prefer to have an item waiting to be installed than to have the client waiting for an item after installation. With a system in place and a client who makes timely decisions, we are setting ourselves up for successful installations and happy clients.”

—*Allison Babcock, Allison Babcock Design, Sag Harbor, NY*



*Allison Babcock*

Courtesy of Allison Babcock

### TAKE ACTION

“I take time over the holiday to plan and evaluate my goals for the New Year and reflect on decisions that have been made (both profitable and not) throughout the year. I come up with two action words that set the tone for the year. For example, one of my action words for 2019 was ‘pursuit.’ I set a goal to pursue additional business opportunities within the creative industry.”

—*Shelby Ames Steed, Shelby Ames Interiors, San Antonio*



*Shelby Ames Steed*

Courtesy of Shelby Ames Steed



## PICTURE THAT

“My first order of business is to create my design inspiration boards! I collect spectacular images all year long, from equestrian magazines, fashion publications (there’s always a lot of Chanel), lifestyle shots and photos of my travels. Every year, I like to start off by surrounding myself with all my favorite images; it puts me in such a fresh, happy place!”

—*Megan Winters, Chicago*

*Megan Winters*

Courtesy of Megan Winters

## GET STRATEGIC

“We begin each year by identifying a few key strategic initiatives that we believe will drive growth in the coming year. We assign one or two senior employees to each initiative, who work with our executive team to drive the [project] forward during the year. These initiatives are communicated across our company so everyone understands our goals for the year and who is leading up each. During our executive team meetings, we receive regular progress reports on each initiative and adjust our plan throughout the year. Obviously, company-wide communication is critical to making this work.”

—*Jonathan Bigham, Pembroke & Ives, New York*



*Jonathan Bigham*

Courtesy of Jonathan Bigham

Homepage photo: A project by Shelby Ames Interiors | courtesy of Shelby Ames Interiors

Jonathan Bigham  
Courtesy of Jonathan Bigham

#### Get strategic

“We begin each year by identifying a few key strategic initiatives that we believe will drive growth in the coming year. We assign one or two senior employees to each initiative, who work with our executive team to drive the [project] forward during the year. These initiatives are communicated across our company so everyone understands our goals for the year and who is leading up each. During our executive team meetings, we receive regular progress reports on each initiative and adjust our plan throughout the year. Obviously, company-wide communication is critical to making this work.” — *Jonathan Bigham, [Pembroke & Ives](#), New York*

Homepage photo: A project by Shelby Ames Interiors | courtesy of Shelby Ames Interiors