



STAFF PHOTO BY LOREN FISHER

Bruce J. Heyman is president of Fabricland Interiors, a North Plainfield-based fabric, window fashions and home-decorating store.

Business enjoys loyal customers generation after generation

By ERICA LAMBERG
Correspondent

There probably isn't a decorator or seamstress in New Jersey who hasn't heard of Fabricland Interiors. With its 22,000 square feet of decorator fabrics by the yard, sewing machines, thousands of trimmings, hundreds of ready-made window fashions and a full selection of home-decorating accents, Fabricland has been family owned for 70 years.

Company President Bruce J. Heyman attributes the success of the business to a loyal customer base and the firm's evolution throughout its history.

"Our goal is to grow and continue to provide the best products and services," Heyman said. "There are an amazing number of customers who have been shopping here for 30 years or more — they all come back and bring their grown children who are buying their first homes. I call it the mother-daughter demographic."

Four years ago, Heyman purchased a sister business, Nassaus Window Fashions in Paramus, with hopes of duplicating his recipe for success.

Heyman is a graduate of Watchung Hills Regional High School in Warren and earned a bachelor's degree from University of California in San Diego. Before joining Fabricland in 1990, he worked for eight years in the travel business — as a travel agent, manager of a travel agency and owner of a corporate travel business in New York City. He currently is the president of the Window Coverings Association of America, an industry trade organization. In keeping with his entrepreneurial spirit, Heyman is in the process of licensing the

LOCAL BUSINESS

Fabricland Interiors

Address: 855 Route 22 West, North Plainfield

Type of business: Fabric, window fashions and home-decorating store

President: Bruce J. Heyman

How long in business: 70 years

Number of employees: 90

Telephone number: (908) 755-4700

Fabricland Interior and Nassaus Fashions names to qualified designers and people interesting in owning their own window treatment and decorating business. By joining the Fabricland/Nassaus team, affiliates will be trained and marketed under the stores' respective names while maintaining the independence of their own home-based business.

"Our licensed designers will use all of our company resources, and best of all, they have the Fabricland name behind them," Heyman said. "There is definitely plenty of business to go around, and these decorating consultants have a chance at a great business opportunity."

QUESTION: Why did you choose this line of work?

ANSWER: I chose to join my family owned business after working in the fast-paced travel business for eight years and because I wanted to spend more time with my wife and three children. I also take great pride in becoming the third generation family member to run this legendary business — and even though I work about 65-70 hours a week, I still manage to squeeze in some time for the kids' soccer games and school events.

Q: What is the greatest challenge in starting this

licensing business?

A: To increase market share, expand the Fabricland name and bank on its legendary reputation as a means of growth and development.

Q: What is the greatest challenge in operating the business?

A: To grow our licensing business to be large enough to gain a share in today's very competitive home furnishings environment.

Q: Describe the competition and what sets you apart.

A: We work hard to train our employees so that they can serve customers in a very professional manner. There is not enough good customer service in the world today and we consider ourselves to be "old school" — treat our customers the way you would wish to be treated. Customers work hard for their money, and they deserve to be treated with respect when they shop at our stores. They don't have to shop here — there are dozens of choices ups and down the highway — from the big megastores to smaller retail businesses. But if they are treated right by a friendly, knowledgeable associate, they will return generation after generation — and tell their friends.

Q: What are your main business risks?

A: As a small-business owner, I put my personal equity on the line every day. I also risk the jobs of my 90 employees — they depend on me each week for a paycheck and I must deliver on that promise.

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