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Interview with Kristin Mika – Hampton Paper Designs



A few months ago, I wrote a post on how to pitch your products and make press happen by being your own PR agent. One of the comments I received was from Kristin Mika of Hampton Paper Designs. Kristin, purchased one of the books I had recommended and after following some of their advise on approaching magazine and blog editors, she landed two very BIG placements. One of them being the Today show!

I asked Kristin to share her experience with us and offer a few tips of her own on how to get featured. I hope you enjoy this interview with her and get to know a bit more about her lovely business.



Hampton Paper Designs simply unexpected

1. What was the main inspiration in starting Hampton Paper Designs?

Hampton Paper Designs was created in an effort to fill a void in the market I noticed while shopping for calling cards and birth announcements for my son Jackson. I wanted something fresh and whimsical yet classic and simple. When I couldn't find what I was looking for I called upon a close family friend and watercolor artist, Lucy Borge. I was familiar with Lucy's work as she had painted a number of images for my son Thomas for holidays and special occasions. I asked Lucy to paint a some images and then approached her with a few prototypes including correspondence cards and notepads and the idea of painting images for my new business. Lucy embraced the idea and on Memorial Day Weekend, 2007, Hampton Paper Designs was launched.

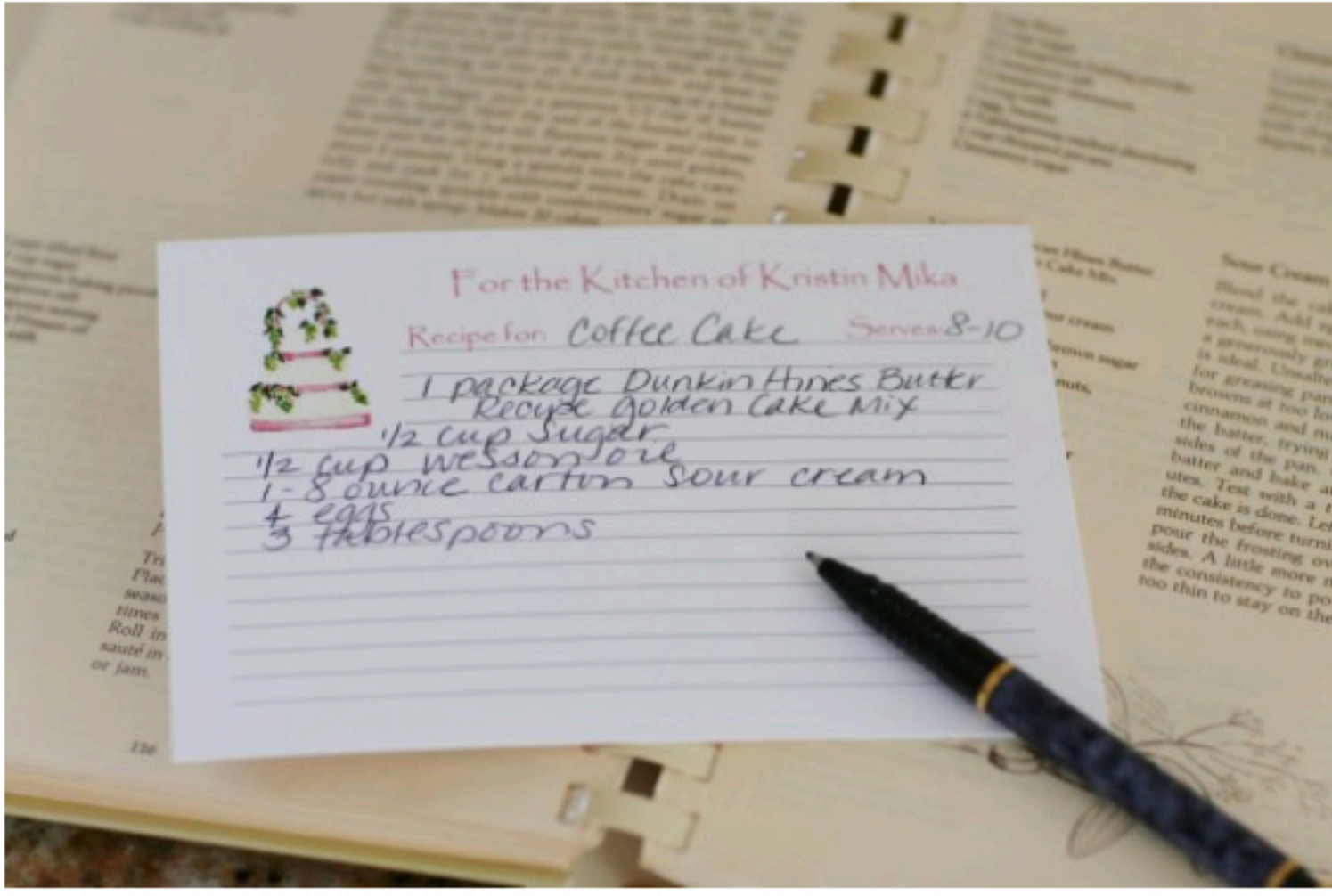


2. Is there a story behind what you do?

Many of the items in the line are inspired by products that I have always wanted but wasn't able to find. For example, I wanted to send photo cards for holidays other than just Christmas so I would create my own for Halloween, Easter and Valentine's Day. The photo card collection offered in Hampton Paper enabled me to send a card for all holidays. I love to plan birthday parties and wanted to be able to coordinate the theme throughout the party and include it on the invitations, thank you notes & stickers for the goodie bags. This desire is what prompted us to offer any image on any product in the stationery portfolio.

3. Being a mother, you must constantly juggle between creative work and family. What's your secret in achieving a balance?

I must admit, I am not sure I achieve balance! Hampton Paper is like my third child. On the days where I feel like Hampton Paper is getting all the attention, I remind myself that I am a role model for my children and I hope the exposure to running a business will inspire them and perhaps keep them open to the possibilities of creating and running their own business one day.



4. You recently received some amazing press? Can you tell us how it came about?

I have been following blogs like yours that have recommendations on growing a small business. I invested in "Miss Modish" and "Recipe for Press" per your recommendation. I was able to fine tune my pitches and it really made a huge difference. The great thing about getting a little press and recognition is that it has a domino effect!

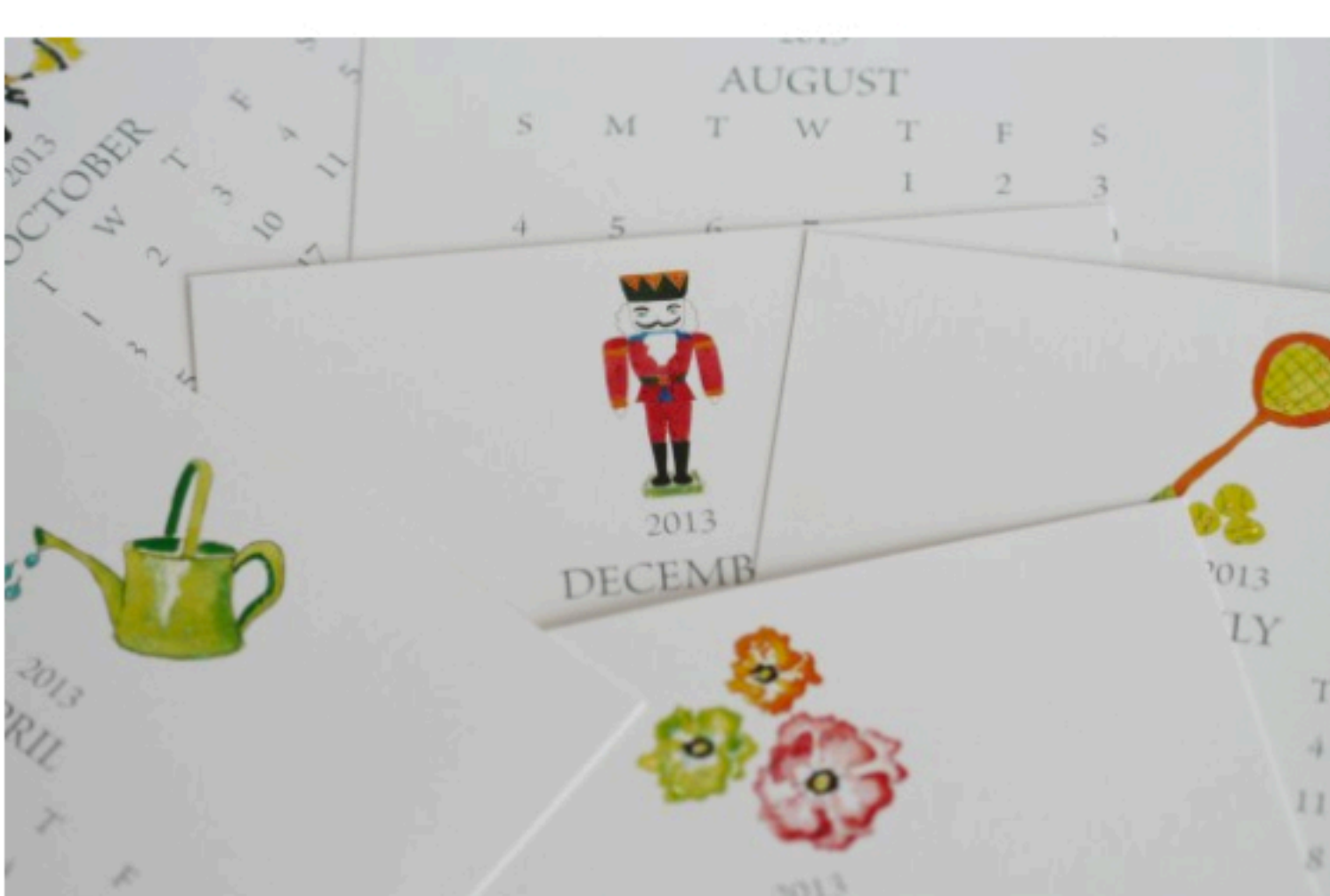
5. What's your advice for a small business wanting to get some exposure? What worked for you?

Make a list of magazines and blogs you wish to target and write up a few pitches. (the more you write, the easier it gets). I literally have a piece of paper taped to the wall in my studio with the magazine and blog names and my goals for 2012. Nothing fancy. Getting your list and goals written down on paper gets you 90% there! Take the time to find the right person to pitch too. Be sure to introduce yourself and your company and include what is special about your product and try to link it to a particular segment or feature in the magazine or blog. Including basic information about the product is a must – item name and description, size, quantity, price etc. Don't get discouraged if you don't hear back, just keep trying to get your product and company out there. It will happen.

I had also read a lot about having quality photos. When I started I didn't have even a basic understanding of photography so I couldn't appreciate a good photo vs a bad one. I had no idea how to take a photo that wasn't dark without a flash. I read my manual and gained an understanding of the basics and then for \$200.00 I hired a professional photographer for a lesson. As it turns out, achieving professional type photos has a lot to do with the right camera settings and the lenses. It was a great investment. This has given me the power to create great photos myself anytime I want to capture a new product or feature something on my blog, web site or Pinterest. As a funny side note, I have actually had a couple of customers ask if I could share the name of the photographer that took the cover photo on my web site. I did so it's a huge compliment!

6. What's next for HPD?

We are adding new images weekly and now boast a portfolio of over 350. We just rolled out a number of new products including, Fill In Thank You Notes for Kids, Lunch Box Notes and the highly anticipated make your own Desk Calendar for 2013. We ave a few more paper products on the way including Wrapping Paper. We have just created some prototypes of fabric and we are looking to launch a fabric line for nurseries and outdoor furniture and would love to branch out into wall paper too!



Make Your Own Desk Calendar – \$64



Personalized Lunchbox Notes 150 4 inch by 4 inch sheets in acrylic for \$26.00

Thank you so much Kristin for offering your advise on how to get your products featured. Wishing you much success in growing your business and doing what you love!



Hello!
I am Vana Chupp, a wife, mother of two sweet boys and the heart and soul behind Le Papier Studio. This blog chronicles my thoughts on running a small business and capturing life's special moments.
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