

# Product Vendors:



Don't worry if your town doesn't have a huge selection of furniture and designer accessories, that's not what you're looking for. **You need quality over quantity**, and they must consider **customer service as their first priority**.

You can work with retail furniture stores, **but expect to pay full retail and then plan your pricing structure to reflect that strategy**.

If you'd like to open a direct account you can look on any of their direct websites, there should be a link at the bottom to register as a designer. Some companies don't want to hassle with small designer orders and that situation can change from month to month.

Look for anything that says "contact your sales representative" or "have a sales rep contact you". Dealer log-in links will usually have a disclaimer "if you are not currently a dealer and would like to be contacted". I would try all of these.

I have used every one of these vendors and I am confident in recommending them. I haven't listed any high-end companies just yet, and I know that these companies are "designer friendly".

# Some of my personal favorites:

## **Upholstery**

Miles Talbot

Lee Industries

Norwalk Furniture

Curations Limited

American Leather

## **Accessories and Lighting:**

Uttermost

Creswell Lighting

Global Views

Arteriors

## **Rugs:**

Jaunty Inc. Rugs / My Rep is Larry Haines #949-689-0961 (you can mention me)

Feizy

Surya

## **Casegoods:**

Century Furniture

Hooker Furniture

## **Inexpensive Go-to's:**

Steinworld

Uttermost upholstery

Two's Company (you need to buy in quantity so great for stagers)

Imax

My best recommendation for those with limited local resources is to shop for products online. It's a little risky because you don't get to see and feel the actual piece, but once you get used to identifying quality and construction from the product details and the customer reviews, it can be a very lucrative and simple way to shop.

**Just make sure to read the customer reviews carefully!**

Some other great resources that I currently use in my business are probably in your home right now. Once you have your resale number and your business card, you can open "to the trade" accounts with huge mail order companies such as **Pottery Barn**, **Restoration Hardware** (I love, love, love their dining room chairs in performance fabric for under \$200!) and **Home Decorators Collection**. They all will give you at least 10% off based on how much you order from them.

Home Decorators Collection (my personal favorite, once you get the identifying quality skill down) now offers me 30% off their retail, and even more if they're offering an additional sale to the general public. I once used them to design an entire room that was on very a tight budget, and it was beautiful.



Above: The before pic wasn't too bad. They needed a little more drama, to update the furniture and get a larger rug that would pull everything together. We ordered a new sofa from Home Decorators (it was gorgeous!), two new chairs, some accessories, and painted the walls.



Left: In this room, the dining chairs were from Home Decorators, the table was from a design showroom, and the chairs were from Restoration Hardware. We made a little profit on each item and saved countless hours of driving, parking, and shopping by ordering online. They sent fabric samples within a week, and if anything was wrong, they would pay to have it returned, no questions asked. Now that's simple!

## Fabric Showrooms:

Now that you have your tax number, you can set up accounts with fabric showrooms in your area and purchase fabric at wholesale price. You'll want to see the fabrics in person and check out small samples, called memos to show to your clients.

I don't recommend setting up accounts with vendors that require you to purchase sample books. They will consume your space and it's unnecessary. Most towns have an area or neighborhood that houses multiple showrooms, or a design center.

My favorite way to work with special order fabric is to find a furniture store in town that will let you use their books and samples. You simply order your fabrics directly through them, and they give you a commission or discount. In the short term, this will yield slightly less money for you, but the ease and time savings are a huge benefit.

The store is in charge of all the paperwork, tracking, and receiving. Best of all, you don't spend all day driving around to showrooms searching for samples. I try to find one stop shopping as often as I can.

# A few of my favorite fabric vendors

- The best way to work with these companies at first is to find a trade only showroom that you can check out fabric samples and order yardage through.
- The next is to sign-up online so you can order memos that way.
- Large chain stores such as Joann's and Calico Corner have a wonderful selection of designer fabrics. You can usually buy these at such a discount that marking them up is still possible.



Make sure you don't abuse your working relationships by using their samples and purchasing it on your own. It comes down to ethics and your reputation.

There's nothing worse than designers that take advantage of retail stores trying to make a living themselves.

Fabric accounts to look into:

[Fabriccut.com](http://Fabriccut.com)

[Kravet.com](http://Kravet.com)

[Robertallendesign.com](http://Robertallendesign.com)

[Duralee.com](http://Duralee.com)

There are so many more, but this is a great selection to start with. These are all mid-range in price, and easy to work with.

To me, time is money, and this is a great way to leverage your time. If you save time and headache by working with a retail store that offers a designer discount, you have more time to spend on yourself. And that's what my systems are all about.