

The Art of Framing Interiors

Written by Valsala Menon
Monday, 07 June 2010 05:30



Seated in her compact and beautifully decorated shop 'Framework', on Taylor's road, Kilpauk, in Chennai, Jayashree Rajendran, a successful entrepreneur who has made it big without any prior business background, shares her success story with Small Enterprises India.

Unlike most women, who are only too willing to take up teaching, Jayashree thought differently. She wanted to strike out on her own and be her own boss. With the support and guidance of her husband, she ventured into the business of framing artwork.

Initially, Jayashree was assisting her husband in creating and planning beautiful interiors for their family friends. As an off shoot of that, she realised that there was a vast and hitherto untapped potential in advising clients as to how to decorate their walls with beautifully framed art work.

Jayashree capitalised on this idea and thus was the inception of her exclusive shop for framing artwork, aptly named "Frame work". The initial investment was minimal, and this was in the year 2000. From day one, it was a success. Initially Frame work concentrated only on framing of pictures. Gradually, they ventured into lamination, and framing, commissioning and selling of Tanjore paintings. She has a panel of artists of her own, based in Chennai, to implement their orders in Tanjore paintings, oil paintings etc, depending on the subject and requirement of the clientele.

Jayashree does compiling and framing of pictures, depending on the aesthetic sense and themes chosen by her clients. She does not venture into any advertising to promote her enterprise. She quips that, the quality of her work speaks volumes for itself.

She went on to elaborate that, though initially she did not have many problems in executing her work, now, shortage of skilled and committed labor is a source of constant and nagging worry. "A lot of effort is involved, because I concentrate on giving customized and personalised service which requires dedication, attention and commitment. That is my success formula", she says.

In the year 200, when they initially ventured into the market, they used Indian machines where the frames had to be nailed and joined. Now, they have imported machinery from Denmark, Italy and the USA, which assist greatly in mount cutting and joining of frames. In effect, work has

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become a lot easier and efficient. Frame work has an exclusive workshop set up in close proximity to the shop, fully equipped with imported machinery. At any point of time, they have a minimum of four workers working away diligently at executing orders.

The months between August and February of any year ,is their peak period with regard to orders and sales, for the simple reason that this is the period of festivities and celebration all over the country, namely, Diwali, Navarathri and Christmas, when people resort to investing in decorating and redoing their homes. At this time, more skilled workers are brought in to complete orders. After February, there is a brief lull, till end of July, due to the advent of summer holidays and onset of monsoons.

Apart from a dearth of skilled labor and trained workers, another hurdle they face is a lack of general awareness among the customers. Jayashree asserts that there are still a lot of people who are conservative in their outlook and tastes, who prefer wooden frames which do not match the picture always and affect the quality of the framed portrait or painting. This is an arena where Jayashree scores, she has adopted the European type of framing and is insistent on advising her clients on its superior benefits.

A lot of careful planning is involved in this venture. Planning inventory is of prime importance and must be done carefully after studying the market trends and demand otherwise, a lot of capital is held up in retained stock if not liquidated easily. Jayashree says.”

Her excellent communication skills and the manner she extends her service to her clients, offering them personalised advice, is what has made her a highly successful entrepreneur. She further opines that this is definitely an excellent field for more aspiring women entrepreneurs to venture into.

A creative bend of mind, knowledge about frames and art, willingness to learn, commitment and of course a gift of the gab, are all that is needed to make it big in the industry. Jayashree plans to expand further and open an art gallery of her own, show casing paintings and art work of different artists. She plans to incorporate stained glass painting and sale of exclusive stained glass lampshades. A particular section of the gallery will also be devoted to sale of handicrafts from all over India.

Jayashree attributes her success solely to divine grace and the unstinting support of her husband.

Jayashree Rajendran was born and brought up in Bangalore. With twin degrees in Commerce and Education, Jayashree decided to settle in Chennai after marriage and has been residing here with family for the past twenty two years. Her husband Mr. Rajendran is a much sought after interior decorator in Chennai.