

Hopes and Expectations, Black Holes and Revelations

Seeing as this is a landmark issue for us and it is 'that time of year', we asked a few industry friends to muse (those who get the headline will also get the pun here!) over the year just past and the 12 months ahead. Here are their insightful, honest and occasionally funny thoughts.



Lee Penson - PENSON

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

I learned masses in 2014 as per usual. I bought a farm, as fresh air keeps you healthy and health is key. I also proposed – and she said YES! In business I finally realised that by doing less myself, we achieved so much more. I underlined, even more this year, that having good etiquette and solid values in business always wins in the long run, over those who play the politics and games, to succeed. Etiquette is key!

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

The loss of our close chum Chris Bracey. He was a genius with lighting and art combined. We collaborated on many projects and no one could ever do what he did with his hands, ie. a proper craftsman. A proper, proper chap!

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

PENSON was 10 years old in 2014. It started from a bedroom in Tooting with a dodgy carpet, but now has a beautiful busy studio on the Thames at Tower Bridge. Despite most of our business life being in recession we have grown through hard work. My only wish is that 2015 continues to be as enjoyable as it has always been whilst we grow. I always want business to be solid but fun.

David Fox - David Fox Design

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

2014 was a fantastic year, with new collaborations in Turkey, Czech Republic and the Netherlands, and was accredited the Good Design Turkey Award – and then the icing on the cake was being crowned Mixology North Designer of the Year.

From a UK design and manufacturing perspective, products are still growing in numbers, older products still holding their own – but above all, none of this matters, as long as your enjoying it, and, hand on heart, I am.

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

Anyone large/small/singular/plural, who tried their hardest, played fair and succeeded though hard work and determination. Watch out for the eastern European manufacturing and design culture – they are coming hard in the upcoming years.

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

To keep enjoying it! But I would like to launch some new projects with British manufacturers, and also work on some different product areas – lighting, surfaces, bathroom products etc. I enjoy projects where I assist through design to grow the brand in terms of sales, and customer perception.



Elliot Brook - Deadgood

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

2014 has been Deadgood! The crowning glory was our recent success at Mixology North, winning the ceremony-closing 'Company of the Year' award. We're delighted to have been recognised for the hard work of our team over recent years and are overwhelmed by the response from the industry to our win. It's amazing to think that a small company like ours can take on the big dogs and succeed! We are now celebrating 10 years since the idea for our brand came about, in the corner of a smoky North East pub and out of the minds of two graduates with no formal business training.

What has developed (and really started to take off in the last 12 months) is a company that is building a reputation for designing, developing and distributing an exclusive Collection of modern British furniture and lighting to some of the most creative and forward thinking companies in the world,

In 2014 we have delighted in supplying a high profile selection of end user clients that includes KPMG, NEWS, Ernst & Young, BMW and BBC Worldwide.

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

The hard work and commitment of our team. Over the years our family has grown to feature a host of exceptionally talented people, and we have developed a decorated creative team with awards and accolades flying left, right and centre. If you believe the hype then you'll know that the designers we work with are at the vanguard of the design scene in the UK. Our dedicated team also includes a highly skilled network of British craftspeople who consistently produce a high quality collection of products. The beating heart of our company ethos is the word 'collaboration', in a creative,

operational and strategic sense, and if it wasn't for the strength of our relationships with every one of our partners, then Deadgood would be nothing more than a bright idea on the back of a beer mat.

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

With more hard work we believe that Deadgood can become one of the world's great furniture brands and that our company can become recognised for creating a cutting edge collection of 21st century design classics alongside delivering modern British design to style conscious consumers and cutting edge commercial projects worldwide. I'm certain that 2015 will see many more challenges and rewards as we continue on this incredible journey.



Andy Black - The Interiors Group

How was 2014 for you and your business?

Fascinating, challenging, inspirational and refreshing.

What were your notable achievements last year?

Discovering so many amazing forward thinking clients embracing great design and a real team ethos to see their projects through.

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

A talent, a project, an individual? No, it was our four incredible teams that took part in the endurance challenge Race for The Sun. After months of training and grueling conditions they selflessly raised a fantastic amount for our charity of the year Action Medical Research. Sometimes that stand-out uniqueness, going above and beyond doesn't involve commerce or profit or a need for recognition.

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

With a very positive order book and high

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profile projects already secured, we are looking forward to enjoying the upturn in the market and partnering with our client base to produce another portfolio of unique projects both large and small. Maybe adding another award or two in the UK, Ireland and the UAE!

Mino Vernaschi - Managing Director, Orangebox

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

Best year ever, with a 22% increase on 2014, and over £50m orders received.

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

Agile working/collaborative workspaces.

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

The Orangebox retro launch of Polytrop

Gary Wingrove - Projects and Construction Director, BT Facilities Services

How was 2014 for you and your business?

Business was good and got busier as the year went on.

What were your notable achievements last year?

Delivering several key projects in double quick time (BT Sport expansion being one) despite challenging market conditions in terms of supply chain availability.

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

ISG, who have bounced back after a few challenging years

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

To keep enjoying what I do and that the market settles back to a sensible level of activity.

Craig Jones/Phidias Leonida, Jones & Partners

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

2014 was a year of change for us. As a studio we had a complete rebrand. This process pushed us forward as a design team. It was a good year to change.

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

2014 was a year when we noticed renewed confidence in the market for our clients and friends in the industry.

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

We started a lot of new projects in 2014 and in 2015 we hope to see some of these launched onto the market. Product launch is always an exciting time for us, and our hope is for market acceptance and success for our clients.

Mark Rolls - Sales Director, AMH Workspace

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

2014 was a great year for us at amh workspace. We celebrated our 30th anniversary and posted record financial results too! Stand out in 2014 was the launch of the Steelcase Gesture chair and the identification of nine new postures we adopt by using mobile technology

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

We hope to continue the success of 2014 into 2015. Our customer feedback programme will help us strive to improve our levels of service from our office-based staff, fit-out teams and customer aftercare.

Jonathan Hindle - KI

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

The buoyant contract furniture market of 2014 coincided with the culmination of years of local R&D, product development and manufacturing for KI in the UK – resulting in one of our best years on record. In many ways, it has been a coming of age for us with an expanded portfolio of products, record sales, new clients, and, of course, our growing team.

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

There has been a shift away from the 'austerity' pervading office planning of recent years, in favour of a more humanist approach. Smart companies are creating workplaces that nurture healthy employees and a healthy company culture. From introducing sit/stand desks to creating diverse activity zones, these companies are beginning to treat their real

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estate as a source of competitive advantage rather than just a hefty expense.

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

Following on from the successful launch of new products in 2014, we expect our commitment to product development and local manufacturing will continue to bear fruit in the year ahead.

Our ongoing partnership with Gallery Argentum will see new exhibitions within our showroom throughout the year, looking at how artwork can be used in the workplace to improve productivity and wellbeing. Our ongoing KICKSTART initiative will continue to recognise, sponsor and encourage new and emerging design talent in the UK.

Mike Everson - former TTSP Knowledge Guru and inaugural recipient of the Henry Pugh Lifetime Achievement Award at Mixology 14.

My aspirations for 2015 are predictably for more knowledge sharing and greater Knowledge Management from practices, product manufacturers and suppliers. In most tomes written on the subject of Knowledge Management there is a renowned quote made many years ago by Lew Platt, former Chief Executive of Hewlett Packard: 'If only HP knew what HP knows, we would be three-times more productive' (during his seven years as CEO, revenues increased 187% to \$47.1 billion).

I am convinced this adage still applies to a number of practices and certainly many manufacturers. Sharing the knowledge that resides within an organisation will undoubtedly benefit staff at all levels and a relevant Knowledge Management System will capitalise on valuable experience and legacy data extant. Similarly, mentoring of younger staff also frees tacit and explicit knowledge and is an investment for the future of the company

and the industry as a whole. The same applies to Continuing Professional Development and a structured, focused CPD Programme can only benefit all concerned.

Pernille Stafford - Resonate Interiors

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

2014 was amaaaazing for Resonate. We went from strength to strength, both creatively and as a business. The team has grown collaboratively and worked on projects that I am really proud of. Notable achievements include working on Salamanca Merchant Bank and finishing Boodle Hatfield law firm to the quality and look we had envisaged.

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

Stand out moments include opening our second office in April, having outgrown the first one. A big one for us was winning Ipsos Mori, 75,000 sq ft of creative loveliness and a comment from one of our clients: 'This is the best commercial office I have ever seen.'



What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

Continued great friendships and support to and from the industry. To work on a European hotel project, to create award-winning interiors and memorable spaces. For myself and my family, health and happiness and to be the best we can be.

Brian Murray - Managing Director, Boss Design Group

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

The best yet (I lost 5 kilos).

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

The increased energy in the trade.

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

Even higher trading and profit levels.

Alex Jones - Managing Director, Interstuhl UK

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

Record year in the UK (40% ahead of plan) and Germany. Steady business from key accounts rather than reliance on project wins.

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

Nothing in particular – been too busy firefighting...

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

That the market remains stable and allows for steady growth and increase in margin.

Karen Warner, Marketing Director for UK and Ireland at Interface

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

Launching our Human Nature range to the global market was a huge achievement for us in 2014. The collection provides designers with a foundation for biophilic design. The importance and benefits of nature-inspired design was something we explored in full through our Human Spaces report, an original piece of research that we commissioned which demonstrates a real connection between productivity and office design, which incorporates natural elements.

We also reached another milestone with our Net-Works programme. The initiative with the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) tackles the growing environmental problem of discarded fishing nets in some of the world's poorest coastal communities, as well as forming a key part of our ambitious mission zero goal by recycling nets to create nylon yarn which is used to produce carpet tile. Due to its success in the Philippines, we are now rolling out the programme to Cameroon in 2015.

A little closer to home, we enjoyed celebrating the Tour de France in Yorkshire,

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entertaining customers and contacts at the race near our UK base in Halifax.

But of course one of our major highlights of 2014 was having our progress in biophilic design recognised at this year's Mixology North ceremony and scooping the Surfaces Product of the Year award for Human Nature.

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

I thought the poppy installation at the Tower of London was a triumph of design as well as manufacturing. Johnson Tiles and Whichford Pottery really stepped up to the mark when they were asked midway through the project to assist the artist, Paul Cummins, to ensure that all 888,246 poppies were produced by Remembrance Day.

A moving and colourful tribute, the installation was a fitting focal point for marking the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

We will be continuing to focus on biophilic design in 2015 and beyond, through our partnership with designer Oliver Heath as well as our involvement in the Human Spaces research project. We hope this will provide a forum for genuine discussion and exploration around the subject of design inspired by nature and the benefits it provides.

Mark Simpson - Design Director, BDP

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

2014 was the year when we at last started, like many other firms, to see growth.

Significant project wins such as those for Astra Zeneca, Cambridge Assessment, a number of regional projects for PwC and many new non-workplace projects meant we have had to grow the team. We have been



lucky to recruit some great new talent over the last 12 months – and that is exciting.

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

Optimism. At last people are smiling and talking about how busy they are instead of how tough life is. Long may it continue!

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

To continue to win great projects, to produce great work and to grow and develop the interior design team here at BDP – and to have some fun while we do it.

Richard Bertram - TSK

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

Opening our London office and delivering over 200,000 sq ft of office fit-out in the capital for WorldPay and Towers Watson and our appointment by Slater & Gordon to design and deliver their new HQ in Manchester – at 105,000 sq ft that is the largest individual corporate letting in the North West for a decade.

We also rebranded last year to reflect our core values – Listen, Inspire, Perform – while we added 19 new talented individuals to our excellent team and achieved our highest ever turnover in a calendar year (in 19 years of trading).

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

There is a clear drive by organisations to leverage cultural change through office relocations/refurbishments. Several clients have stated that our multi-disciplinary approach to delivering projects (ie. all the skills within one organisation) has been crucial in achieving project deadlines and value.

Chris Radcliffe - Maber

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

Interior Design for the company has really begun to pick up at a pace. We've ridden the worst of the recessionary times and have several key schemes in the portfolio, namely the Speedo HQ in Notts, e-on HQ in Notts and the Center Parcs Woburn interior for six very different leisure-oriented spaces.

More recent projects are in the student residence sector – we've completed one in Luton and another is out to tender.

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

Renewed confidence in the bricks and mortar of commerce. Buildings with a revitalised aesthetic brought about by new ways of working in CAD. The experimental phase utilising parametric design tools and BIM is still going on – but architects coming out of the universities globally are now in tune with the new tools and it's really showing. This, combined with a renewed interest in hands-on craft based design, is culminating/integrating into a fabulous foundation for 2015 to build from.

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

I want to work in the hospitality sector. This is where ideas hit the fore and are then disseminated across the design sector. Hotels are the way forward for humanity – why would one want to own their own property?

Barry Grant - ergo/aircharge

How was 2014 for you and your business? What were your notable achievements last year?

Business was fluid with all product ranges showing growth. As a company we increased our staffing levels in all areas to sustain the highest standard of customer service, something our clients insist upon.

Who/what really stood out for you in the industry in 2014?

The continued investment in design and excellence in production across the main players continues to be inspiring, so to pick one would be impossible.

What are your hopes and aspirations for you and your business in 2015?

To maintain our service levels and bring new products to life from the drawing board, showing that UK design is alive and kicking within the components side of the industry

Gary Thomas - Managing Director, Hunters Contracts

Are you having a laugh?? What do I know? Ask me one on Sport!