

Industry Profile, Jessica Schaefer, April 2013



Jessica Schaefer
theBird+theBeard
Pittsburgh, Pa.

1. When and how did you start working in this business?

I studied graphic design at Edinboro University and fell in love with typography and printmaking. I did a little bit of freelance work after graduation, but I ended up working retail and then went back to school for an Ultrasound degree. After I got engaged in 2011, I designed the invitations and paper products for my own wedding, reawakening my desire to create. With encouragement from my husband, I started our own online paper goods shop, theBird+theBeard.

2. What are your top three vendors?

Currently, the majority of our paper comes from Paper Source, another Etsy seller, StraightHome, and local craft shops in Pittsburgh.

3. With so many new product developments, how do you recognize quality and what will work best for your needs?

I like experimenting with new products. I often purchase new types of paper and supplies both as a way to test the quality of new products and as a way to brainstorm new ideas.

4. What trends have you noticed or do you predict for the coming months?

My husband and I had a library-themed wedding, which is very big right now, so most of our initial products were library- or book-themed. We are starting to expand the “studious, nerdy, geeky” library stereotype into other “nerdy” themes like science, as in our Sentimental Elements line of cards that spell out greetings using the Periodic Table of the Elements. The “Geek Chic” trend, which is not new, still has quite a draw and seems to be increasing in popularity.

5. What are your top three tips for success?

1. Design something you would want to buy.
2. Get the word out about your business/products with social media: Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, blogging, etc.
3. Have faith in yourself.



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