



Intellectual
Property
Office



SCARLETT

Rob Scarlett founded his furniture design company “Scarlett” in early 2010.

He has enjoyed success with ranges launched through many well known UK retailers such as Heal’s, Marks & Spencer and John Lewis.

Rob studied ‘Furniture and Related Products’ at Birmingham Central University. Rob is a member of Anti Copying in Design (ACID) and relies on unregistered design rights to protect his work. He uses ACID’s Design Databank, a free benefit of membership, to record the date his designs were created.

“ I sort of fell into furniture design gradually ”

1 You established your company Scarlett in 2010 – when did your interest in design start?

I sort of fell into furniture design gradually. I didn't really have a specific career path in mind. I just chose to keep studying what I was good at and developed my artistic skills in the process.

4 Has one of your designs ever been copied?

No, to the best of my knowledge I've not been copied too closely. The nature of the furniture industry means that lots of new pieces are inspired by very traditional designs that have been around for centuries. Infringement in my industry is very common.

5 What advice would you give to budding designers about maximising their potential?

Be brand savvy – Develop a brand that appeals to your clientele and be prepared to change it. I have changed my brand a few times since 2010 to refresh the look and feel of my company. Your brand should change as your style evolves and you attract a new client base but remember if you change your brand name or style you may need to apply for a new trade mark each time to remain protected.

Date what you create – Whether you decide to register your design with the IPO or rely on unregistered design rights, having a reliable dated copy of your designs is important to prove a design was created by you first.

What are you licensing – Be aware what IP you are signing away when you license your product to another company or wholesaler. Generally, the larger the company, the more complex their contracts tend to be.

Promote yourself – Be sure that your website really shows off what you and your company are about. Utilise social media channels to get your name and brand recognised in the industry. It would be near impossible for large retailers to take on pieces of your work when no one has heard of you.

Get industry experience – my time working for a design company following graduation was invaluable and taught me a lot about setting up on my own. Seek out opportunities to work for successful companies.

Be prepared to sign an NDA – Some companies may make you sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) if you intend to work for them so that they can keep their ways of doing business a secret (also known as trade secrets). Trade secrets can be hugely valuable assets to companies and they use NDA's to protect them.

2 You won young designer of the year award in 2003 – how did that come about?

My lecturer was impressed with my work and entered me into the competition without my knowledge. I was very fortunate to win the award as it provided me with excellent connections, exposure and a job with a design company!

It was at the award exhibition that I was approached by ACID (Anti-Copying In Design) and heard about intellectual property (IP) for the first time. My knowledge of IP has continued to develop through becoming a member of ACID.

3 You rely on unregistered design rights and use ACID's 'Design Databank' to provide third party proof of when your design was created – what do you think of this process?

The Design Databank is straightforward to use. It allows you to upload 2D or 3D depictions of your designs which then act as dated proof as to when your design was created.

I'm aware of cases where designers have been copied so it's important to have reliable, dated proof that the design is yours if you choose not to register your design with the IPO.

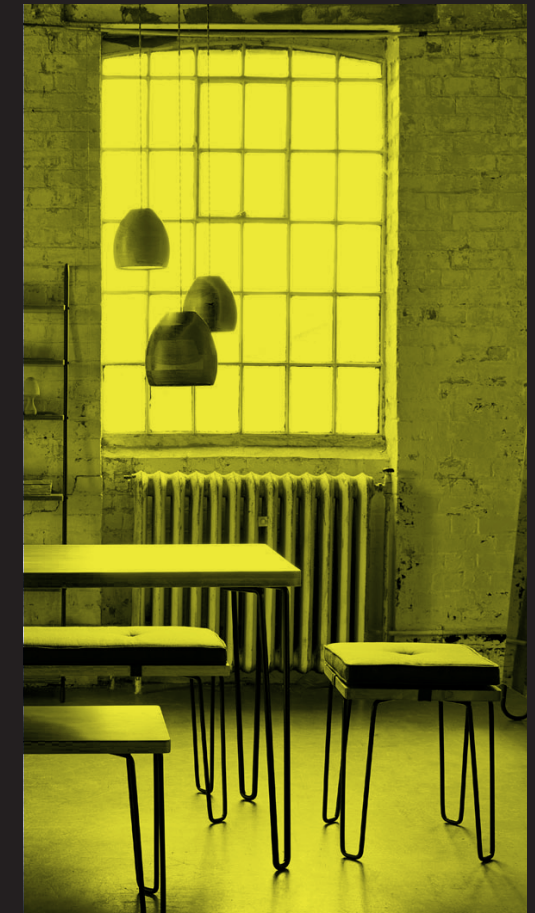


Image
Brunel Dining
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