



A day in the life of a

Joanna Burns is Louvolite's fabric designer and a key member of the team involved in shaping Louvolite's fabric offerings in addition to other issues relating to design and display.

Jo maps out her busy schedule for the day and we are off and running.

First to a fabric planning meeting to discuss a variety of topics with colleagues involved in fabric development. Andy Walters, David Robinson and Steve Birtles join for the regular meeting, designed to maintain the momentum required to ensure the next Louvolite programme ticks all the boxes in terms of design and function. In addition the collection must be brought in on time with stocks in place and fabric updates dispatched to all Louvolite book holders in advance of launch. Frankly this in itself appears to be a mammoth task with the best part of 10 million individual pieces of fabric to be cut labeled and shipped.

"It is great to be involved not just at the design stage of the fabric side but to also have real input into the layout of the books and the physical images used to support the programmes" states Joanna, who is also actively involved in designing

the room settings used to support images of the fabrics.

Andy Walters advises that the performance tests he had initiated on specific yarn types with various weave combinations have been successfully concluded and the final colour options to a new jacquard design are presented to the meeting. Joanna explains her preferred selection based on analysis of historical sales and also colour trend predictions for 2009-11. Discussion takes place to refine the choice and when the selection is made attention turns to a new print design that she wants to introduce to the collection.

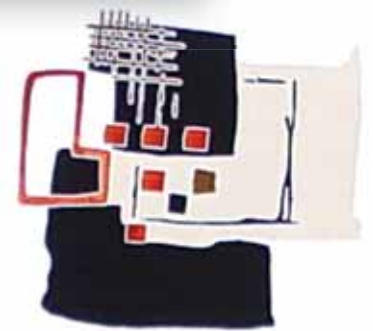
Andy Walters' team has established that the base fabric selected satisfies the technical criteria for performance both from a production standpoint and of course when made into a window shade. "Typically Louvolite fabrics combine the correct blend of performance and design, it is imperative that they also meet the

fabrics



colours

calculations



fabric designer

commercial criteria that our customers demand” says Andy.

Joanna has created a number of designs which meet the criteria agreed from the previous fabric meeting and presents them. One of the designs requires remodeling to remove an element that would create a repeat issue across the width of the fabric.

Returning to her office she opens up the CAD file that supports her design work and starts to remodel the design exhibiting the repeat. The CAD system allows the design to be reworked on one screen whilst showing the remodeled design as it would appear on a parallel screen. Simply select a colour combination and the design is magically reproduced in the selected colours – this is eons away from the traditional pen and paper methods but does not lose any of the flexibility. “This is really an essential tool for me these days – modern technology has really revolutionised

how I can rework one of my designs in seconds.”

Once Joanna is satisfied that the work done has resolved the design repeat issue she advises the screen manufacturer that the modified design will be emailed over.

The next meeting is with Jamie Marsden Louvolite’s Marketing Manager. Amongst other things Jamie is working on Louvolite’s Stuttgart stand and wants to walk through a number of ideas with Joanna regarding the general layout and flow of the stand and the colour banks of fabrics that will be used. Stuttgart may be way off for many companies – for Louvolite it is right here and now.

After agreeing layout proposal refinements Joanna moves to the swatch room to review a fabric book created for a specific customer for which Louvolite has designed a unique binder with the company’s own corporate logo.

Last but definitely not least is a meeting in the customer hospitality room

with David Robinson. David ensures the showroom is revamped regularly to best reflect the company’s latest product offerings and best suit the needs of Louvolite customers. “Over the last 5 months we have received over 600 customers at the company – many for training on the Louvolite Accreditation programme .

After the discussions David leaves Joanna to consider the new brief and create a revised layout that will make better use of the significant space available.

If the initial image of a fabric designer was someone sat at a desk with pen and inks, then a day with Joanna Burns has totally changed that concept. At Louvolite at least it would appear that Joanna’s skills are used wherever they feel the customer will benefit.