

Case study

DesignLab Miami

HP technology invigorates small business
teaching students creative clothing design



Industry

Fashion design creative studio for all ages

Objective

Add new computing and printing to augment and update the teaching of sewing, increase student access to computer-aided design and allow students to turn their ideas into fashion while in turn growing a small business.

Approach

DesignLab Miami's proposal earned it an HP Tech Makeover of ElitePad X2s and ElitePad tablets, a Sprout, color LaserJet Pro and wide format Officejet printers, cases, accessories, integration and CarePack support to help students design more and wait less.

IT matters

- HP ElitePad 1000 G2 Tablets with charging cart are reliable and ready
- HP Elite x2 1011 G1 Tablets with keyboard docks help administrators prepare and manage students, projects and DesignLab's business
- HP Sprout 3D Bundle runs standard touch-enabled Windows and seamlessly integrates with network
- Networked HP Color LaserJet Pro M252dw printers offer easy, efficient output that doesn't require tracking
- A digital projector, screen and HP ProDisplay P242va LED monitor aid teaching and sharing
- Wireless networking speeds learning and output
- Cases keep tablets safe under heavy use
- CarePack support ensures it all keeps working

Business matters

- Students with ready access to more technology produce fashion more quickly
- Efficient, reliable technology allows DesignLab to serve more students and grow
- High-tech approach draws both new and returning students—including boys
- Elite Tablets and charging cart enable projects at local schools
- Sprout with 3D printer helps students pair hands and eyes with technology to build on accessory designs and output results, enhancing creativity and appeal
- Integration and CarePack support ensure focus on teaching, not on making technology work



“Make your business better. Make your business smarter. Make your business more efficient. The HP technology has been exactly what it was supposed to be: transformative.”

— Bob Cohen, CEO, DesignLab Miami

Accomplished fashion designer Angie Cohen, along with her husband, Bob, built DesignLab Miami, a creative studio in North Miami, Florida specializing in teaching and promoting all aspects of the fashion industry. The instructional team is passionate about teaching sewing and design to all ages, while incorporating new technology in both students' fashions and the way they produce them. Winning an HP Tech Makeover contest helped turn Angie Cohen's vision into reality – and helped boost DesignLab's bottom line.



The only way is up

Nearly all business decisions involve risk. But every now and then, you find an opportunity without a down side. DesignLab Miami took a chance and won a Tech Makeover of HP products and integration. To hear small-business partners Angie and Bob Cohen, their passionate entry really paid off.

Bob, DesignLab's CEO, explains that winning a \$25,000 technology prize that was tailored to their business and included Elite x2s and ElitePad Tablets, a Sprout, LaserJet Pro printers, HP accessories and CarePack support has changed their business.

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—Bob Cohen, CEO of DesignLab Miami

“When Angie was able to literally overnight put her hands on the tools that could move her projects from ‘great idea’ to ‘look what I just did,’ it was pretty amazing,” he explains.

Angie, DesignLab's founder and creative director, says the new tools, software and support have changed nearly everything at DesignLab Miami—except the basic sewing

skills she set out to teach seven years ago. They have allowed her to help more children, and a growing number of adults, discover that they, too, can design fashion and turn their ideas into reality.

“This business really grew organically. We never advertised,” Angie says. She started to teach sewing, design, and other skills the same way she learned during decades in the New York fashion industry in the lab environment.

Students now have easy access to technology that allows them to explore options, say “what if,” and turn those sparks into fashion. It has drawn more students, more parents and more opportunities. The infusion of HP technology also allowed her to take her programs into the classrooms of the Miami-Dade School District. She's helped elementary school students learn about Florida's Everglades, consider ways to save it and design T-shirts based on its native species. The teachers and administrators have never seen such enthusiasm and participation in a project, Angie explains.

“It's opened doors Angie has been kicking on for years,” explains Bob Cohen, himself a website and software designer. “This technology turns heads. The results were so much more than I expected.”

“HP designs products for the user. From the way a product fits in your hand to the way you hold it and access its controls, they seem to be thinking, ‘How can we make using technology easier and more efficient?’”

A creative vision

An award-winning graduate of New York's Fashion Institute of Technology, and a veteran of fashion powerhouses in New York City, Angie wanted to share her knowledge and skills. In Miami, Angie created a teaching lab for school-age children about clothing design and creation. "I started teaching kids what I knew, and it just grew. One parent would tell another," Angie recounts.

From the start, she wanted to combine high-tech ideas and high-touch craftsmanship.

Angie planned design and sewing projects for different age groups, testing to see how long each took to complete. And she listened to feedback, not just from children who didn't want to stop working when their two-hour classes ended but also from parents.

"They would come to me and say, the kids have all this technology in their lives, but they don't really have hands-on experiences," Angie says. "They wanted them to learn the skill of sewing, and also how to create and put things together themselves, not just on a screen."

She discovered a growing gap in learning such skills, as schools eliminated hands-on "shop" and "home economics" courses. And she began filling it, in her own special way, with after-school classes. Then came summer camps. Then she found adults wanting the same experiences—and knowledge. As her clientele grew, so did her ideas.

"I did all the prototypes, all the patterns. I addressed all the skills," Angie explains. "Everything was thought out so someone without any knowledge, including an adult, could create a garment after several levels of projects. We started with accessories and worked up from there."

The technology factor

Bob says, "The big differential is Angie's focus on modern trends. She teaches how to enhance a skill rather than replace it," Bob explains. "It simply gives them a different tool—one that allows them to draw the shape of a dress but then in no time at all see it in a hundred different colors."

Angie began teaching modern innovations in design. She and her students incorporated conductive thread, fiber optics and LED lights in clothing. She also read up on advances in

design software and 3D printing, but with limited equipment, students often had to draw on paper or share computers. Even printing out their designs could be a project in itself with aging laptops and printers.

When they learned of the HP Tech Makeover contest for small businesses, the Cohens saw the opportunity to make technology truly work for their students. They submitted a winning proposal, outlining their excitement about the possibilities of new technology advancing Angie's teaching methods—and business.

The DesignLab duo worked closely with HP partner Strictly Tech of Fort Lauderdale to choose, configure and install the students' 10 ElitePad 1000 G2 tablets with charging cart, the administrators' three HP Elite x2 1011 G1 tablets with keyboard docks, two HP Color LaserJet Pro M252dw printers, a digital projector and screen, wireless networking of all devices, cases, accessories, software, printing supplies, a 24-inch HP ProDisplay P242va LED monitor, and the biggest innovation of all: an HP Sprout 3D Makers Bundle.

"My mantra is that anything is possible. Now that I have the HP technology, oh my, yes! I can do anything with this equipment."

— Angie Cohen, creative director and founder of DesignLab Miami

The Cohens credit Strictly Technology in Fort Lauderdale for ensuring that all of the technology works seamlessly and reliably.

"Strictly Tech and its team was a godsend," Bob says. "They were instrumental in the entire process with their focus on, 'How can we get you exactly what you need to make the most of this wonderful prize—and your vision.'"

"Angie could envision how technology could bring new tools to students and to the business at DesignLab Miami," says Frazer Langley of Strictly Tech, the HP channel partner working directly with the Cohens to deliver the most appropriate technology package to this winning business.

"We listened and helped translate their vision into a specific set of HP products and solutions that would help bring Angie's ideas to life," he explains.

Customer at a glance

Application

Small business technology makeover

Hardware

- HP Elite x2 1011 G1 Tablets
- HP Care Pack Next Business Day Hardware Support
- HP Sprout All-in-one
- HP ElitePad 1000 G2 Tablets
- HP ElitePad Rugged Case Notebooks
- HP Color LaserJet Pro M252dw Printers
- HP Officejet 7612 Wide Format e-All-in-One Multifunction printer
- HP 20-Notebook Charging Cart

HP services

- StrictlyTech installation services

Our partners support



Now, students can print their colorful designs and ideas whenever they wish, without tripping over wires or traipsing up and down stairways. The printers with efficient HP JetIntelligence and supplies eliminate any hesitations about printing. And the HP Sprout 3D Makers Bundle allows students to design fashion accessories, such as custom buttons, with no limits on their creativity. The integration is complete and they have HP CarePack support for any future service or support needs. The Cohen's purchased a 3D printer to physically output created items.

Do it better now

Bob says that out of curiosity, he shopped online for comparable options and couldn't find a better package for their business. Without the contest, he says, he might have waited longer to make such an investment. He advises other small businesses not to hesitate.

"Make your business better. Make your business smarter. Make your business more efficient," he says. "This has been exactly what it was supposed to be: transformative."

Angie says: "My mantra is that anything is possible. Now that I have the HP technology, oh my, yes! I can do anything with this equipment. The technology has allowed me to be even more creative."

"Three things it has done for sure: attract more boys, attract more boys, and attract more boys."

— Bob Cohen, CEO of DesignLab Miami

Looking at the bottom line, CEO Bob sees the new access to technology exciting DesignLab customers, with many former students returning for the new tools. The complete set of tablets and affordable, easy printing, also allow Angie to serve more students. That grows the business toward their goal of franchising. And Bob notes that new opportunities for DesignLab include interest not only from local schools and more adults, but also from a category of clients not always drawn to sewing and fashion.

"Three things it has done for sure: attract more boys, attract more boys, and attract more boys," he explains. "You say, 'OK guys, we're going to design a dress today,' and they will all recoil in horror."

"But when you say, 'Boys, we're going to fire up the touchscreen tablet, and then transfer over to the projection 3D modeling computer and plug into the 3D printer...' they go nuts! There are more boys and girls signing up for our programs than we've ever seen."

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This customer won the HP Tech Makeover contest and received a free technology package valued at \$25,000 including hardware, consulting, integration and support.

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