

# What it's really like to... run an interior-design practice

*How Tara Bernerd built an international business with a reputation for aesthetic excellence*

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**In a nutshell, my job involves...** something different every day – my role is multi-faceted. A lot of my time is spent travelling to see both new and current clients, so in a month I can go from Paris to Tokyo and end up in New York. I am also often on site checking on the status of our projects; however, I always make time to be with the team back in London too.

**When I was a child I wanted to be...** involved in film production – I was very interested in this area and even went to film school for a period. There are many similarities between creating a movie and designing a building – both take a lot of creativity to produce something visually stimulating and commercially sound.

**I got into this industry by...** working in commercial property for a number of years, before taking my first design role at Philippe Starck's YOO studios in the 1990s. To be part of such an iconic studio during the design-crusade years was an incredible way to learn. I set up my own practice, **Tara Bernerd & Partners**, in 2002 and things have grown from there. I always keep in mind that you are only as good as your last job, so I take nothing for granted.

**I love what I do because...** I get to travel to so many new places. Going to visit cities with different cultures and experiencing another way of life constantly inspires and encourages me to have a fresh approach to design. With all of our projects, we strive to create a feeling of authenticity by establishing a distinct DNA that is true to both the location and the people who will make it their home.

**The best part of my day is...** sitting down with my team to discuss the work we have been doing. I think it's important for us all to come together at least once a week, usually on a Monday morning, to talk about how each project is progressing.

**The hardest part of my day is...** trying to find enough hours. I am often in a different time zone from clients and colleagues in London, which can present challenges. That said, I can always rely on my team and they provide a great support network.

**The aspect of my job that always surprises people is...** the fact that design is not trend-led. It is about being indigenous, listening to the demands of the space and responding to the people who will eventually use it. Because of this, there is so much work that goes into a project before we can even begin think about fabrics and finishes. We always start with the layouts: this stage of the process is vital and provides the foundations for the whole project.

**The three skills that help me succeed are...** creativity, communication and an eye for detail.