

# DESIGNER'S GOOD BUSINESS GUIDE

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DESIGN IDEAS AT WORK • DECEMBER 2007

SPECIAL ISSUE

*Business*

**Advice On Starting a Firm  
From Designers Who've Done It**

**Stylish Desk Accessories  
You'll Love** page 96

**Best Creativity Books  
For Designers**

**6 Career Pitfalls  
and How to Avoid Them!**



WORKSPACE

## DEUCES WILD

A Houston firm creates a charming and refined office by masterfully mixing styles.

Forget appeals to poker-playing gunslingers and the Old West; Deuce Creative in Houston is all about grown-up sophistication and charm, which can be seen nowhere better than within their office walls.

Deuce Creative sits in an old Coca-Cola bottling factory that dates from the 1920s. Founders Kristin Moses and Aimee Smith transformed what started as a seemingly stark canvas into a warm and welcoming workspace, bringing to life the phrase that serves as the firm's tagline: "Art of Strategy."

"We're a branding agency and it shows," says Aimee Smith, co-founder and marketing principal at Deuce. "There pretty much is a rule that if it isn't blue, brown or peach, it doesn't belong in the office. We're pretty passionate about brand standards!"

Industrial on the inside, the space is tall and open with exposed bricks and ceiling beams throughout the building's three floors and upstairs loft. With its chandeliers and pretty fixtures, the space is admittedly feminine (fitting because until recently, Deuce was an all-gal establishment). But a fabricated "Wall of Horns" in the entrance of the building toughens the space up and adds a spirited Texan flair. The final touch is the gender-neutral color palette that marries these two sugar-and-spice, snips-and-snails aesthetics together in perfect harmony.

And this mirrors the work the firm does on paper: Deuce's identity features a rustic, playing-card spade paired with curly lettering. Plus, for business cards and collateral, all employees have an individualized pattern of the logo that reflects their personalities.

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**DEUCE CREATIVE HOUSTON** [www.deucecreative.com](http://www.deucecreative.com)





### 1 THE RECEPTION DESK

A friend of Deuce Creative's co-founders Kristin Moses and Aimee Smith built this reception desk out of metal and wood. He used a pattern of the firm's spade logo as a stencil and laser-cut the metal, which he then fixed to the front of the desk. All seven employees have their own variation of this pattern to reflect the different personalities. "It's personal branding," Smith says. "Every person on our team is totally unique in their individual talents and personality, so our identity speaks to that notion."



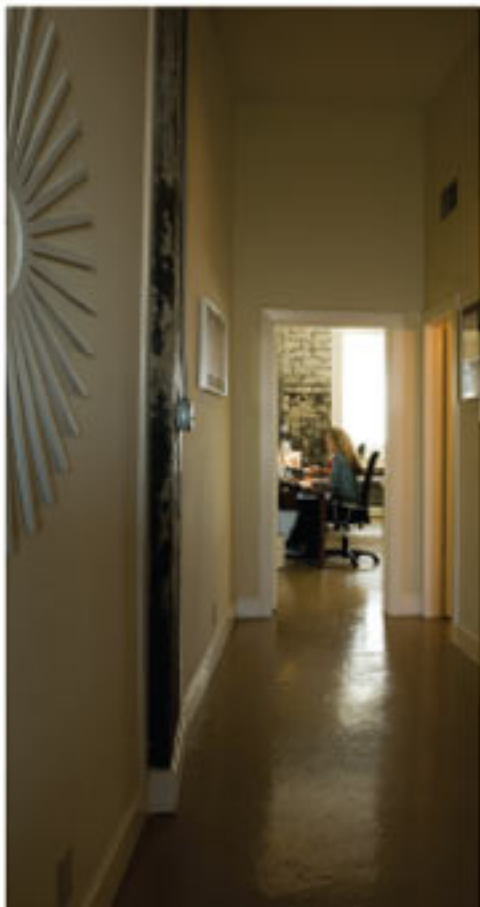
### 2 THE KITCHEN

Smith notes the kitchen's utmost importance at Deuce. "We rarely get out for lunch!" They needed the space to feel comfortable for employees and clients. "Ice-cold boardrooms aren't really the style here," she says. It also has to be appealing so that employees want to be there.



### 3 THE BRAINSTORM LOUNGE

Internal meetings and creative brainstorm sessions are held in this seating area. A deck extends off the room and the steps lead to the upstairs loft, where Deuce's library of samples is stocked. The firm creates print, website and identity design for financial institutions, real estate and fashion-oriented clients.



**4 THE WORKSPACES**  
 Deuce Creative occupies three floors in a downtown Houston building. The arrangement of departments (with art being located a floor below strategy) mimics Deuce's business model: "We strongly feel that beautiful design can and should be backed by thoughtful strategy. Our tagline is 'Art of Strategy' for a reason." The partners sit alongside the rest of the team, and designers share common areas for collaborating.

**5 THE SEATING AREA**  
 Benni has been the office dog at Deuce since he was eight weeks old when Smith first got him. Across from his favorite couch is a wet-bar-turned-coffee-bar, which Smith notes is essential. Behind is one of Smith's favorite aspects of the building: its large windows that brighten up the workspace.

**6 THE NEIGHBORHOOD**  
 Deuce Creative is located on the edge of downtown Houston, which gives the staff a great view of the skyline from the deck. Whereas the area surrounding the firm used to be "pretty gritty" when they first moved in, Smith remembers, now it's being spruced up, as new restaurants, bars, galleries, coffee shops and other businesses line the streets.

