

New to the industry? Tips on Getting Started

An important question that comes up a lot is just how does a newcomer to the industry climb out of the cycle of...well, newness? You can't get jobs without showing your work, and you can't get work without having jobs! Below are some tips from industry professionals to help you get started.

Build an event - If you are new to the business and haven't booked an event yet there is no better way to build your portfolio than creating designs for your own event. Try choosing a specific theme and design decor for that event. You don't have to have a real venue, just pick an aesthetically pleasing wall in your home or office as a backdrop and place your balloon arch, sculptures or columns in front of it. Dress a dining table with a table cloth, plates, silverware and glasses for a picturesque setting to shoot a few centerpiece designs. Investing as little as \$100 into materials and using backdrops that are readily available can result in a low cost way to build your portfolio with high quality images. Additionally, if you plan your sample decor properly, you can disassemble the components of one design and create a whole new design. Or add a few additional components to create something new. For example, turn your columns into an arch. Use mostly white balloons and then add a few balloons in different colors to create something new. This will allow you to show your clients the variety of looks that are possible. This will also allow you to stretch that \$100 to create as many designs as possible.

Offer your services – Offering to decorate a wedding or party for the cost of the materials will provide you decorating experience and photo opportunities to build your portfolio. It's reasonable that you can't afford to do a lot of these but most veterans in the industry will tell that they did a few "freebies" to get started.

Attend Conventions – Balloon conventions are a great way to get hands-on experience while helping to build large scale decor for events and parties as well as learning new techniques in the classroom. There are many opportunities to attend balloon conventions in the US and all over the world each year. Taking photos of the balloon décor at a convention provides ideas for your idea book and gives your clients a sense of your commitment to your profession. Educational opportunities are offered by many balloon distributors on a regular basis as well. Consult the IBA Events Calendar for upcoming convention dates and the Distributors That Teach page to find a distributor in your area that offers seminars.

Sources:

Steven Mayhew, Education & Art Director, Conwin Inc.

Tammy Corzine, Celebrations, Delphos, OH

Steven Jones, Floattheconvention.com