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**Julie Lasky:**

Thank you AIGA for bringing me onto this stage, inviting me onto this stage, which is a tremendous honor, and thank you Dana Arnett for giving me a strip show to follow. I am not taking it off to reveal a DWR t-shirt.

Back in 1980 -- 1998 when I was editing Interiors Magazine someone introduced me to a man named Rob Forbes who was starting a business out of San Francisco. Rob's idea was to allow consumers to buy classic pieces of modern design without the fuss of ordering the products through a decorator and without the frustration of waiting months for them to arrive. That company was Design Within Reach and it has since gone into a business with 448 employees and untold numbers of happy customers.

Now, providing Eames, Jacobsen, and Saarinen into a culture of instant gratification junkies is one accomplishment, but DWR offered something more, a retail model for the 21st century. The company started as an online business but it understood that shoppers needed a physical experience, especially when they were dealing with classy European furniture.

DWR opened studios around the country, about 70 to date that let consumers check out actual pieces, direct-mail catalogues designed by Kit Hinrichs of Pentagram gave visual clarity and expression to the products including information about their creators, which was all but a novelty in the merchandising world.

In 2005 the company made another smart decision, it hired Jennifer Morla as its creative director, otherwise known as the scourge of bay area graphic design. Taking charge of the entire visual communication platform, Jennifer, who has since been named DWR's chief creative officer, revamped and coordinated the designs of the website, retail environments, and printed materials. About the last she recently told I.D. her goal was to redefine the concept of catalogue from disposable retail mail to vehicle infused with authorship and history. "I felt there was a need to create a resource that would be kept throughout the year as a source of inspiration, as well as a selling tool," Jennifer said.

Starting in January of this year DWR reintroduced its catalogues in a smaller format with recycled paper. The little books also began to pose questions designed to make consumers pause and scratch their heads rather than run immediately to the recycling bin. Questions such as, "What is Green," and "what is modern?"

Recently too, Design Within Reach has made its products easier to reach than ever, just last night DWR previewed its Tools for Living shop in SoHo, an emporium of ingenious household products that not only cost a lot less than an Eames lounge chair but often can be tucked into your bag and carried home, after you've paid for them of course. Tools for Living, which has a companion shop opening in Santa Monica, features such items as the world's most beautiful water purifying pitcher and I can vouch for that, electric lights that look like candlesticks that come with matches that have LED's on them and you can turn them on and off with them, and a collection of ceramic and wood containers with the wonderful name Things for Bread, now that's poetry.

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It's my privilege and delight to present the AIGA Corporate Leadership Award to Ray Brunner, chief executive officer and Jennifer Morla, chief creative officer of Design Within Reach.

[Applause]

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**Jennifer Morla:**

Design relevance, design provenance, design integrity, design history, and design accessibility, all of these are Design Within Reach the company that Rob Forbes started in '98 when he tried to furnish his apartment with mid-century classics he'd come to appreciate while living in London. What he discovered was acquiring the clean, simple work of designers like Saarinen, Eames, Bertoia was neither clean nor simple, seems as if you need to know some bizarre pricing structure, have a special pass, and then know the secret handshake to have entry into a world that was the very antithesis of Charles and Ray Eames.

There had to be a better way, so in '99 DWR bought 20 containers of product, mailed out a catalogue, and waited for the phone to ring, which it didn't for 24 hours until someone realized that the answering machine was on.

As Gwen Horton our copy director so simply stated, "Authenticity is something we're proud to offer, elitism, however, is not." A little history, 1999 San Francisco Pentagram's Kit Hinrichs works as a business partner with Rob and creates the first DWR catalogue. Where are you Kit?

[Applause]

Yay! A short time later the first DWR studio opens for business in San Francisco, 2004, the year DWR went public, allowing them to expand their retail presence to 69 studios to date, 7 alone in New York and others as far-reaching as Toronto and Hawaii, 2008 with the opening of DWR Tools for Living stores in SoHo and Santa Monica, and 2009 will mark DWR's 10th anniversary, it will also be the 10th year that both myself and CEO Ray Brunner have had a design working relationship with DWR.

As CEO since 2006, Ray has pursued both the business of design and the design of the business, but bottom line, Ray is a strong design advocate who has embraced the concept of communicating DWR's products and point of view in a more meaningful, useful, and less wasteful way. He has allowed me to instill a conceptual intent and language that speaks meaningfully and smartly to an audience hungry for design product, and most importantly, every aspect of design is done in-house at Design Within Reach. Myself and our extremely talented creative team have redesigned the concept of catalogue from disposable retail mail to a vehicle infused with authorship, history, and design dialogue, and that authorship, history and design dialogue are further reinforced online, in design notes, in advertising, events, and in the new Tools for Living stores.

Many of you know of how rare it is to be able to create a corporate design language that is carried through in every detail through every channel. That is what our talented creative team does every day, four of which are with us this evening, please stand up Michael, Gwen, Tina, and Martha.

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[Applause]

Many thanks to all of you for your vision, talent, and constant calm in stormy situations, and to Ray Brunner who has so eloquently said, "DWR products embody the much belabored but inescapably right notion that form follows function. The inherent simplicity and harmony found when an object truthfully expresses that fact and the great joy felt when an object does efficiently, smoothly, and completely the exact thing it was designed to do." Many thanks Ray for being a true design junky.

[Applause]

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**Ray Brunner:**

And I'm doing what I do best, carry Jennifer's luggage, which I have the great privilege to do. It's been one of life's great gifts to me to have the good fortune to lead such a remarkable brand, the great privilege to work with Jennifer Morla and her remarkable team, Martha who finds all the sites that are so beautifully depicted in the catalogues, Michael who makes the pictures real, Tina who color corrects everything and makes it work, and Gwendolyn who's wonderful words never cease to cause me to tingle. And it's been a pleasure accepting this wonderful recognition. On behalf of all the people of Design Within Reach, I thank you.

[Applause]