PATTERN INDUSTRY SURVEY 2013

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY PATTERN OBSERVER

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INTRODUCTION

In June of 2013 my team and I launched the first ever Pattern Observer Industry Survey. We promoted the survey through blog posts, interviews, giveaways and other promotional tools and over 700 pattern designers, buyers and agents participated.

The goal of this survey was to gather data on what designers and business owners are earning, charging, and doing to grow their business. **By sharing these findings we hope to empower pattern designers, agents and buyers to make smart, well informed decisions.**

As you read through these findings please remember that you are in charge of your career and should do what feels right for you. I strongly feel that designers need to become more empowered, engaged and proactive in their careers. What works for your friend or competitor may not be right for your personality or artistic style. **Take control of your career and do what works best for your business.**

Your pattern design mentor,
Michelle Fifis

My Story

Over the past ten years I have worked as a full time textile designer for companies such as Perry Ellis International, Jantzen Swimwear and Columbia Sportswear. I began freelancing in 2006 and officially launched my freelance business in 2010. I have freelanced with clients such as Lucy, P&B Textiles, RYU and more, creating original patterns, developing collection concepts, pattern merchandising, trend presentations, repeats, indexing, and preparing files for production.

Columbia Sportswear
Nike
Pendleton
Floppy Products Inc.
Jantzen Swimwear
RYU
Original Penguin
Lucy Activewear
Moving Comfort
P&B Textiles
Pottery Barn Kids

Michelle Fifis

Textile Design Consultant

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Portfolio

Women's Activewear

From running to yoga, these patterns accentuate and flatter the most functional of womenswear products. This customer likes to feel feminine and powerful while living her healthy lifestyle and these nature-inspired patterns are a constant reminder of the beauty that is around her everyday. Clients include: Lucy Activewear.

Outdoor Activewear

These patterns are made for the top of the mountain and are inspired by textures found in nature and city streets. Snowboarding and skiing

In 2010 I started Pattern Observer and in 2011 I began teaching online classes to designers, helping them not only improve their marketing and sales, but also improving the quality of their artwork. This is really where my passion lies, in helping designers develop more professional artwork and achieving their dreams.

PATTERN OBSERVER is a daily blog which aims to inspire, support and promote those in the textile design community.

PATTERN OBSERVER

My team and I provide inspiration and training to textile designers and buyers from around world through trend forecasts, shopping reports, designer features and interviews.

We currently offer three e-courses: Building Your Textile Design Business, The Sellable Sketch and the Ultimate Guide to Repeats and run a premium membership site and forum.

Since its launch in 2010, PATTERN OBSERVER has been featured on Stylesight.com, Elle Decor, Nordstrom, Printsource and Print & Pattern.
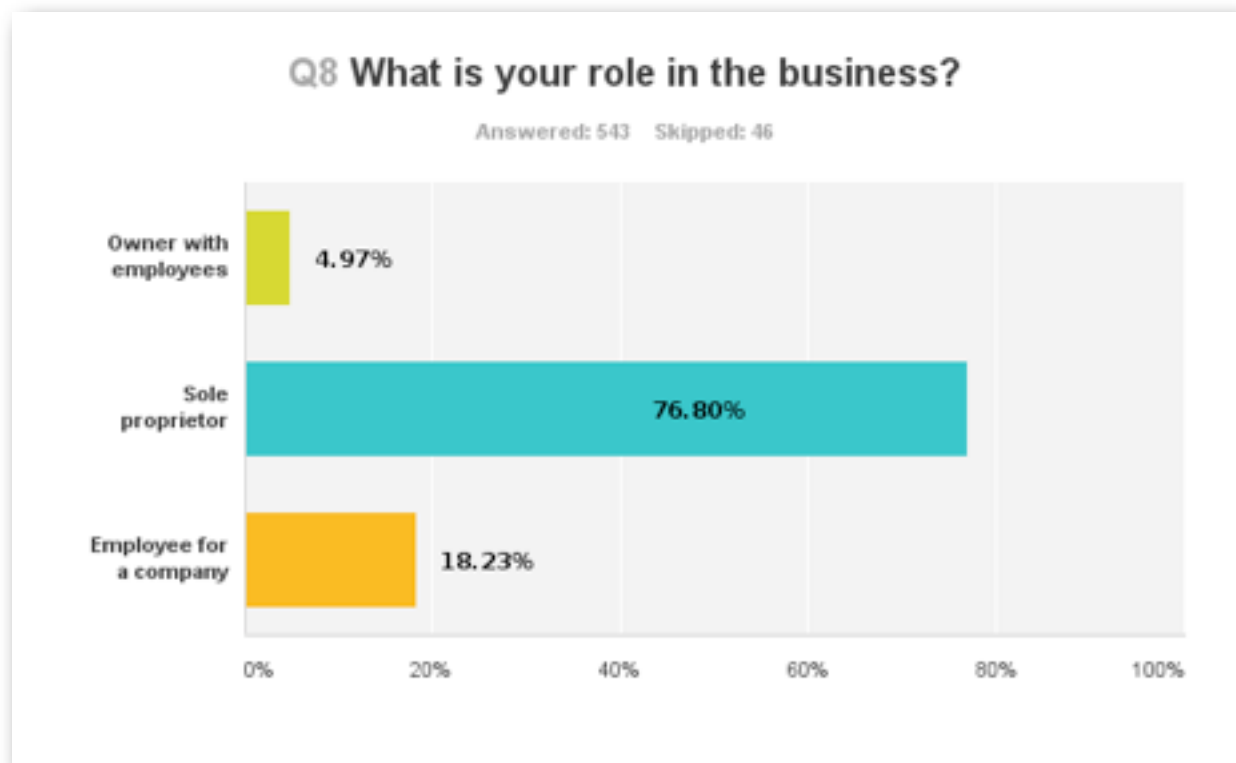
Join this thriving online community today. Visit http://patternobserver.com

The Survey Participants: Designers

Now let's take a closer look at the designers who participated in the survey.

76% of those designers who participated own a business without other employees, 18% are employees for a company and almost 5% are business owners with employees.

Q8 What is your role in the business?

Answered: 543   Skipped: 46

Owner with employees — 4.97%

Sole proprietor — 76.80%

Employee for a company — 18.23%

Most designers are working in the apparel and home decor markets, 49% and 48% respectively.

Q1 In which industry do you work? (select all that apply)

Answered: 589 Skipped: 0

Industry	Percentage
Apparel	49.24%
Home décor	48.05%
Stationery	26.15%
Quilting	16.64%
Other Industry (please...	28.86%
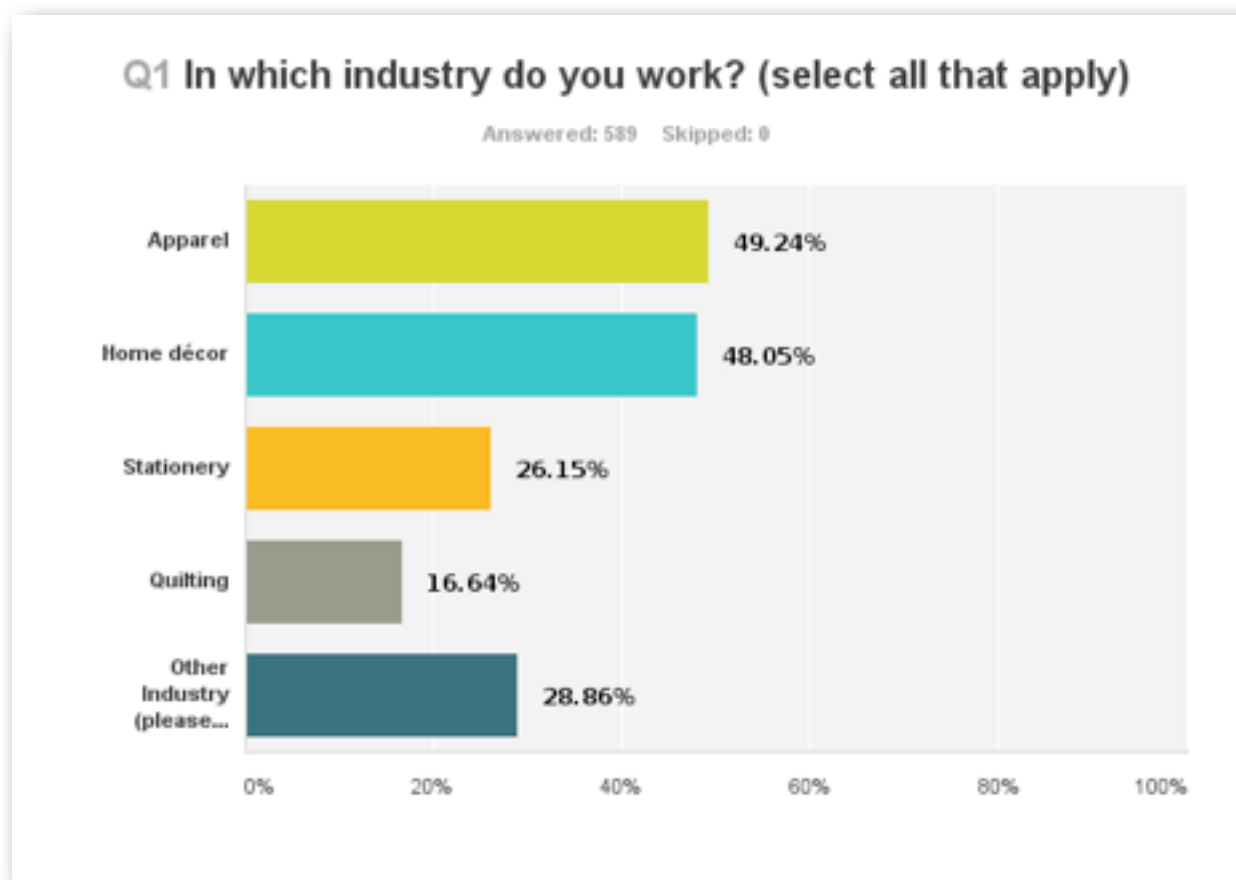
59% of the designers surveyed are earning less than $25,000/year...

Q17 **What is your annual salary**

Answered: 473   Skipped: 116

Salary	Percentage
Below $25,000	59.83%
$25,000-$45,000	18.39%
$45,000-$65,000	10.99%
$65,000-$75,000	4.44%
$75,000+	6.34%
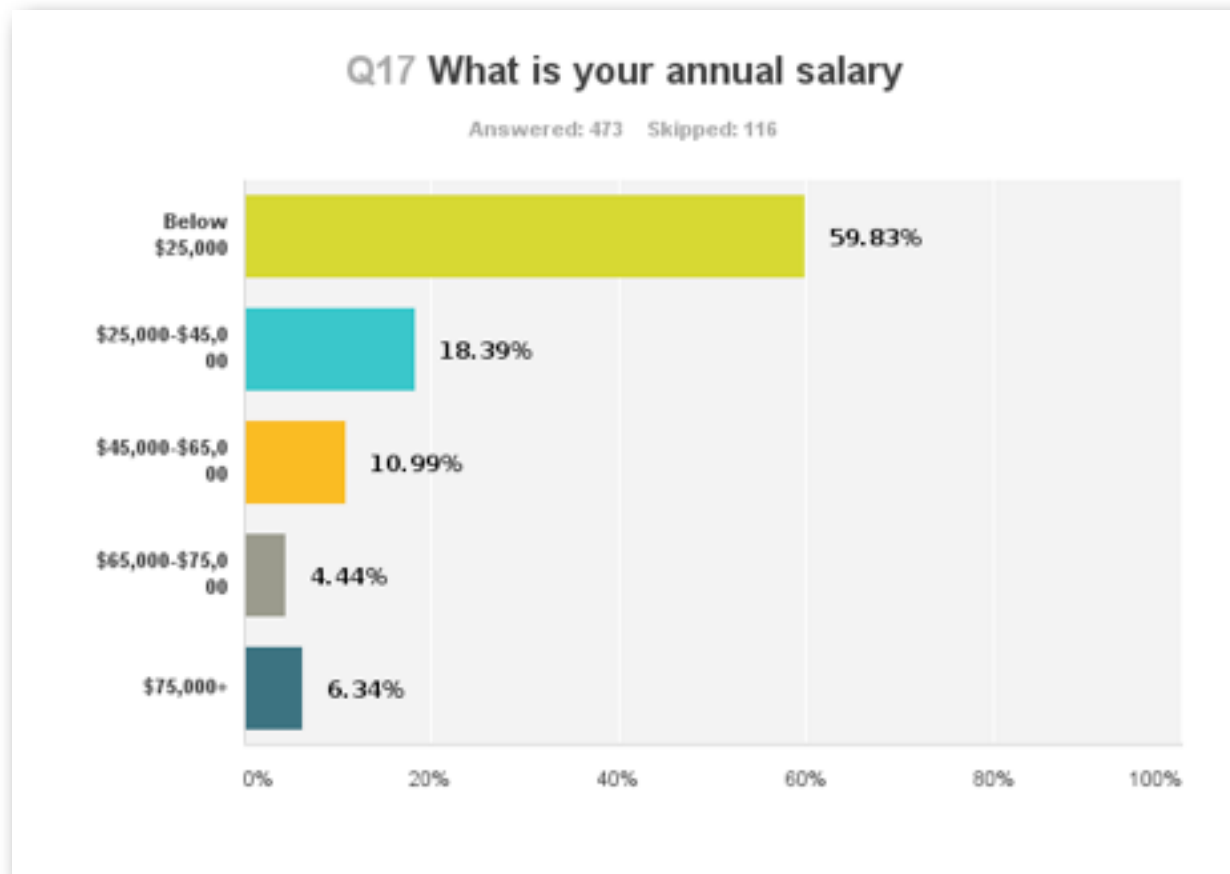
Throughout this report we are going to be comparing self-employed pattern designers who are selling more than $50,000 in pattern each year to those who are selling less than this, between $0-$50,000 a year. To us $50,000 is a solid, livable income in a range of locations and is where we decided to draw the line and compare the two income brackets.

Almost 70% of the designers surveyed sell patterns on their own, without the help of an agent or studio.

Q33 **Do you sell through an agent / print studio?**

Answered: 429   Skipped: 160

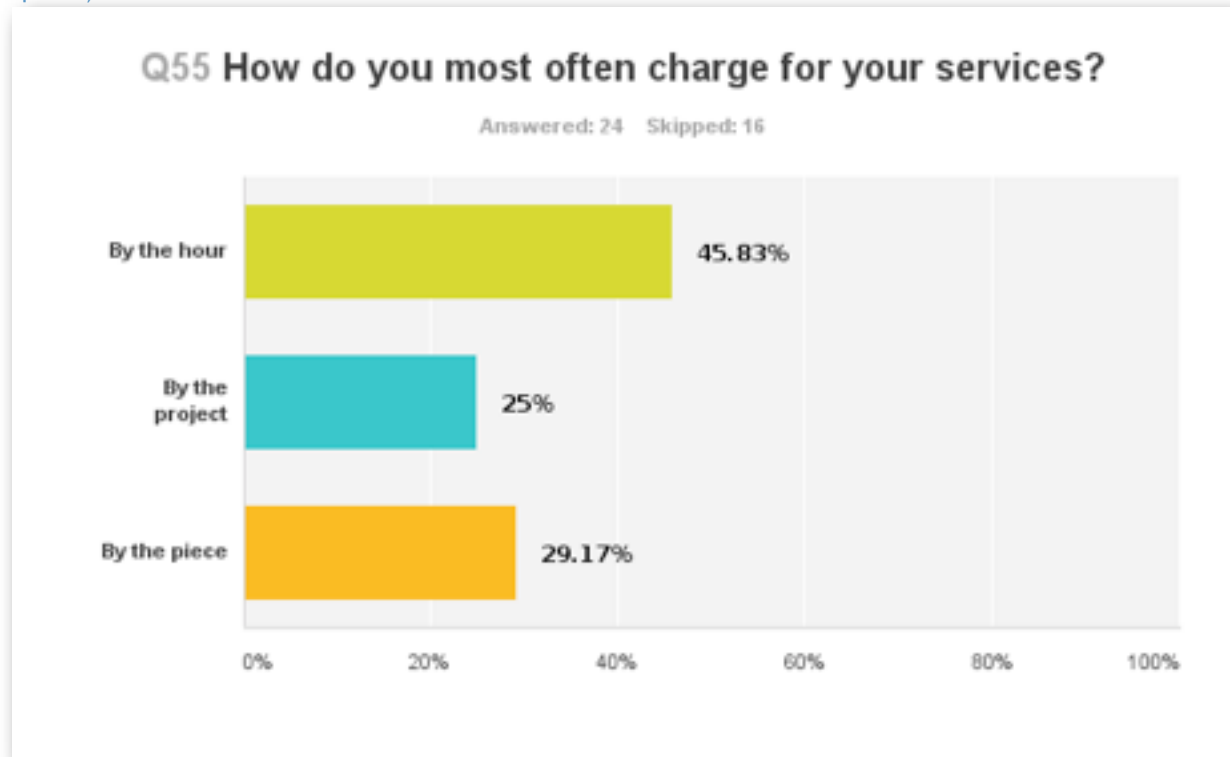|	
Yes	30.77%
No	69.23%
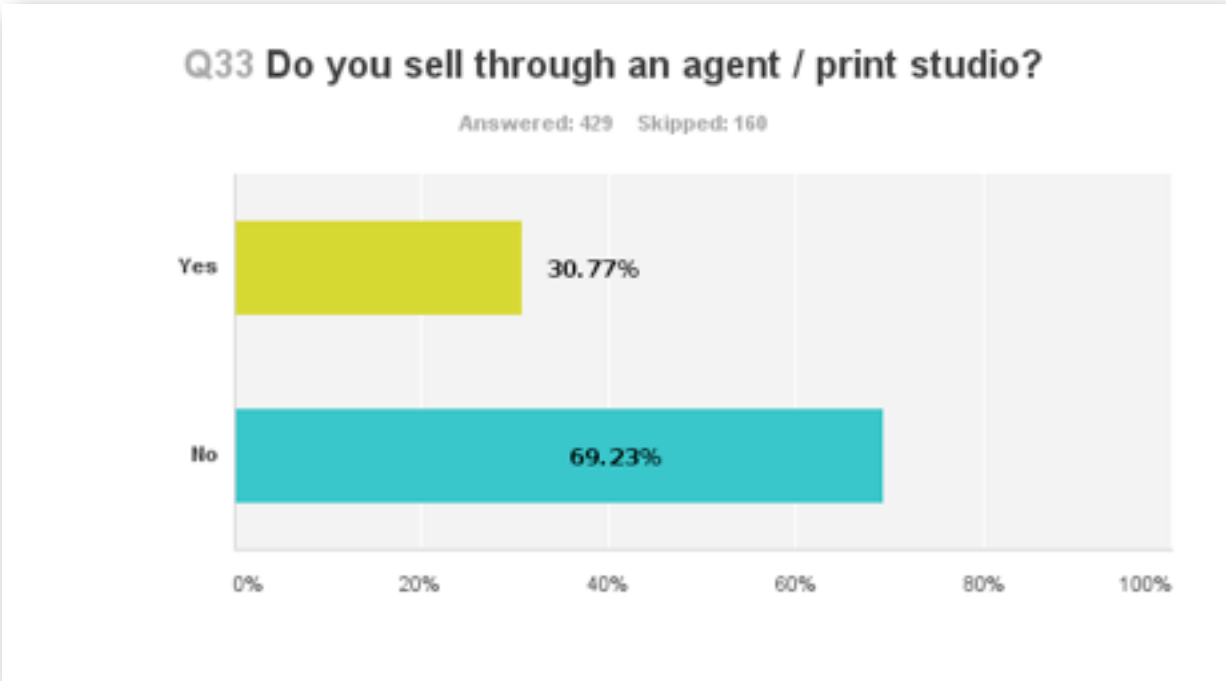
Myth #2: Hourly pay is for suckers

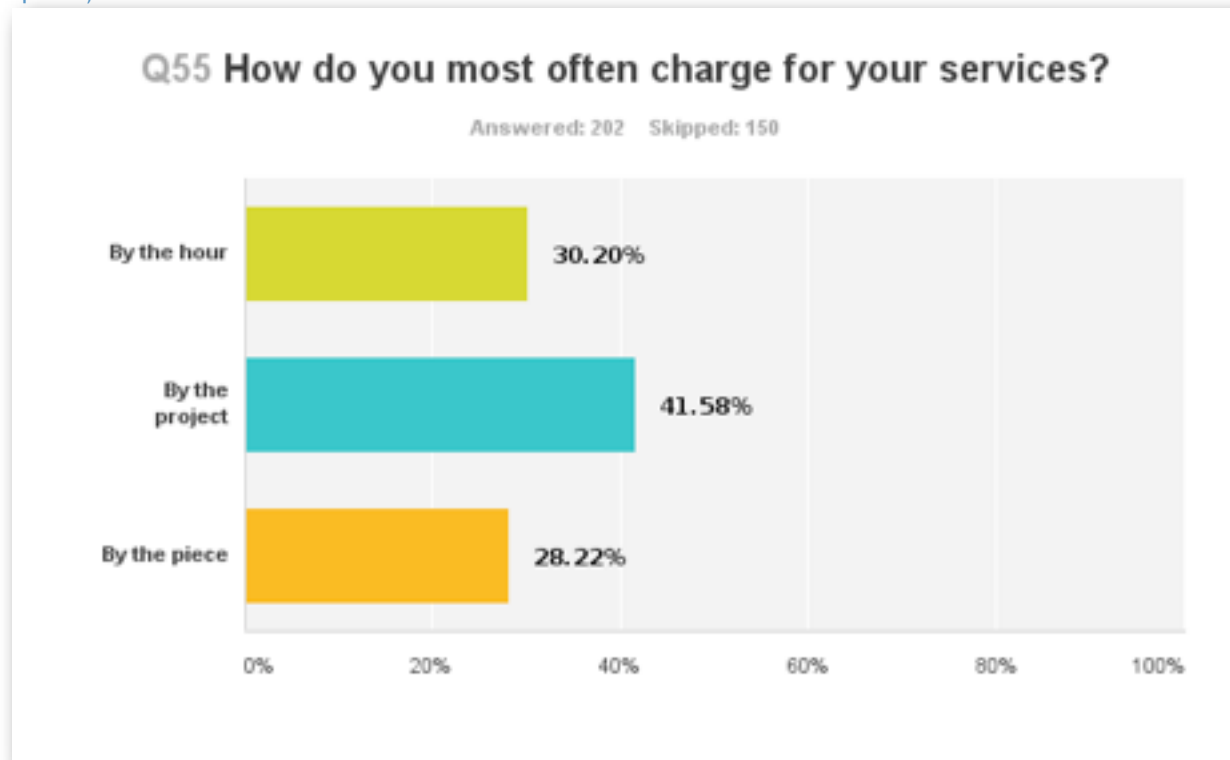I often also hear that charging by the hour is unprofessional or is unfair to designers.

In contrast to this belief, we found that top earners are more likely to charge by the hour than lower earners. 45% of top earners are charging by the hour...

$50,000+

Q55 How do you most often charge for your services?

Answered: 24   Skipped: 16

Category	Percentage
By the hour	45.83%
By the project	25%
By the piece	29.17%

...while only 30% of low earners are charging by the hour.

Q55 How do you most often charge for your services?

Answered: 202   Skipped: 150

A surprising 41% of low earners report charging by the project, which is a much higher percentage than the top earners.

The average high earner, is earning above $4,000 per project, while those earning less than $50,000 are only earning about $800 per project. As an experienced designer, I know how difficult it can be to develop an accurate project estimate. I am concerned that less experienced designers are underestimating how long projects will take, and therefore earning much less than they should.

If you are a lower earner, and do not feel comfortable charging by the hour, consider charging by the pattern or the piece instead of the entire project. Begin to keep detailed time records of each print and project that you complete so that you can begin to create more accurate project estimates and bids.
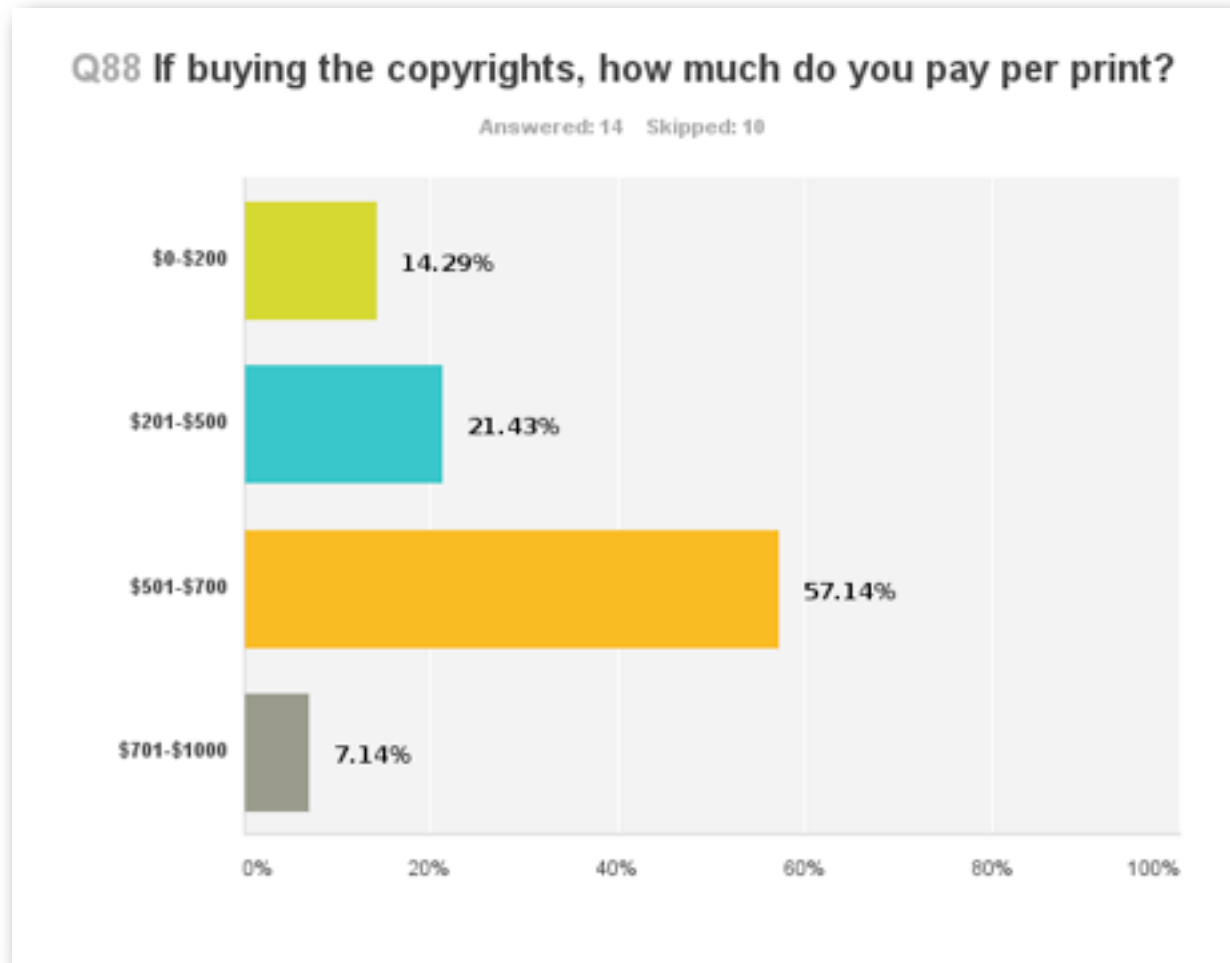
Where are they buying patterns?

If you are a designer, where do you need to be? 61% are finding designers on blogs. This number does not necessarily means that designers need to have their own blog, but this data does suggest that networking with bloggers and staying visible on the web is key to being discovered by new clients.
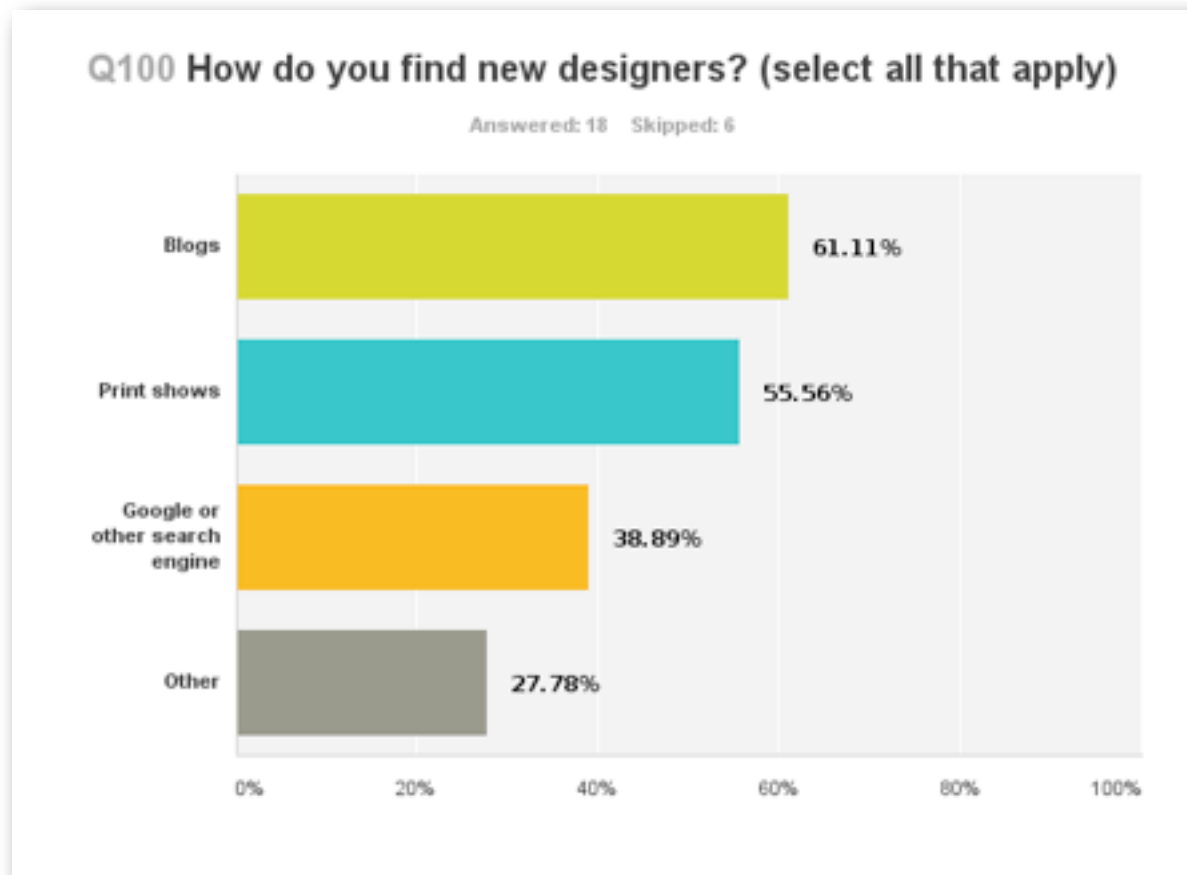
A surprisingly strong 55% of new designers are found at shows, which supports the theory that **shows such as Printsource and Indigo are great for networking, making contacts and getting discovered, but are not always where the most sales are made.** In the previous chart we saw that only 36% of pattern purchases are being made at shows, so it is important that designers look at print shows as an investment in the future of their business rather than a guaranteed immediate payoff.

How much are they paying?

An overwhelming majority are paying between $500-$700 per pattern.

Q88 If buying the copyrights, how much do you pay per print?

Answered: 14   Skipped: 10

Range	Percentage
$0-$200	14.29%
$201-$500	21.43%
$501-$700	57.14%
$701-$1000	7.14%

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

Workshops.

Join us for one of our exclusive workshops that offers personalized feedback in a group setting. We currently cover a variety of topics from repeats to collection development and will be introducing new workshop topics in 2014. Please register for our newsletter to stay informed.

Personal Mentorship Sessions.

If you are looking for a more personalized path, then please contact us for more information about our private mentorship programs.

Designer Features and Promotion.

Pattern Observer aims to support, inspire and promote pattern designers on a daily basis. Through our featured designer posts, facebook shares, tweets and pins, we want to bring exposure and help to promote your pattern design business. If you are interested in being featured, please email us seven to ten jpgs of your work, along with a short bio and description of your business.