TWO'S COMPANY

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF STYLE, PASSION, & FAMILY
Celebrating Two’s Company

Two’s Company... 50’s a Celebration

The gift industry is rarely kind to people and companies over the long term: trends come and go, suppliers tend to burn out or just fade away and often the passing of a generation can mean the passing of the company as well.

And then there’s Two Company. This year it celebrates its 50th year in business, a remarkable achievement for any modern company but a simply astonishing one for the gift business.

Through two generations and literally tens of thousands of products over these five decades Two’s has taken its place as among the best companies at identifying trends, and presenting them to its customers in a creative and inspired fashion. Just as important, they have delivered them in a timely and efficient manner.

Gifts & Decorative Accessories celebrates the Two’s Company anniversary this month with this special commemorative magazine, a compendium of all that’s made the company so special, and why it’s ready for the next half century.

The Editors

What I’ve found remarkable about Bobbie and Tom is the beautiful working relationship between them. They don’t always agree on strategic moves, but share mutual respect for each other and the same goal of developing a product line that emphasizes style, elegance and uniqueness, and work hard to achieve success.

–Stuart B. Newman, Advisor
BOBBIE, THE BEGINNINGS OF TWO’S COMPANY WILL BE FAMILIAR TO ANYBODY WHO HAS STARTED A BUSINESS IN THIS INDUSTRY BUT CERTAINLY, YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES HAD A FEW TWISTS.
BG: My husband Bob and I struggled for years. We realized that we had better find a different way to make a living in order to send our three young boys to college. We were in search of an idea to develop into a business. At that time, Bob worked and traveled to Asia for an import company, and before children, I was a production assistant on the Jackie Gleason and Ed Sullivan TV shows. Our skill sets were very different. One day Bob came home carrying a giant inflatable replica of a Heinz ketchup bottle. I took one look at it and shouted “yes”! It was a humble beginning with $5000 – our entire savings.

FROM THE BEGINNING, YOUR SONS PLAYED A ROLE IN WHAT YOU WERE DOING, RIGHT?
BG: We expected the kids to perform; it wasn’t just fun and games. They always worked summers at Two's doing whatever was needed: traveling to trade shows, getting samples ready and selling at shows. The original name of the company was Two Plus Three and that represented the two of us and the three kids.

BG: We always thought that school was our work and Two's was the fun. So whatever we did we were excited with the responsibility. I remember when I got my driver’s license. I felt empowered as I could now do what I did at shows, sell. I drove around to local shops and worked with retailers learning about their businesses and how we could help them. I knew that I could not come home without having opened at least one account. Some nights were quite late!

EVENTUALLY YOU CHANGED THE NAME TO TWO’S COMPANY AND STARTED TO EXPAND FROM THOSE ORIGINAL INFLATABLES INTO ALL SORTS OF LUCITE HOME AND ENTERTAINING PRODUCTS FROM PICTURE FRAMES TO BAGEL BASKETS; YOU WERE KNOWN AS THE KING OF LUCITE.
BG: We were one of the first to delve into the use of Lucite, now known as acrylic. We had great fun interpreting common household products into this new and exciting material. Our culture of endless creativity was truly born here.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING FOR YOU AND THE COMPANY?
BG: My husband died of lung cancer when the company was nine years old. He was always number one and everyone called him Mr. Gottlieb. I was always Bobbie (short for Roberta). When he died, the banks met with me and said, “are you sure that you want to continue?” They did not hide their doubts in my ability to run the business. Somehow, I found that I could not come home without having opened at least one account. Some nights were quite late!

You have three sons but it soon became apparent that one was the right fit.
BG: From the beginning all three of the boys had an affinity for the business. But Bob seemed to be the most interested in the business. As shows he was our secret weapon: a cute boy who looked even younger than his age with extensive product knowledge who disarmed the unwitting customer and came away with big orders. He had design sense as well. When he was just 12, he designed several products one of which was a toothbrush/toothpaste and glass caddy that was very successful and featured in House Beautiful. When he was in college, he opened up a small shop on campus selling Two's products. He also had a dorm plant business, a hot trend in the 70’s. At the beginning of the fall semester, he and his friends/partners traveled to schools in New England setting up on campuses and selling house plants for students in the dorms. From his childhood, he always showed a great entrepreneurial spirit and passion for the business.

During his junior year at Tufts, he went to Taiwan to study Chinese and while he was there, we figured he could do some quality control for us with the factories we were working with. It was not easy to reject product that our small factories had spent time and effort to produce. That’s where he got his grit.

When he graduated, he went to work at Bloomingdale’s as an assistant buyer, where he utilized his Chinese and worked with top management at launching a storewide China country promotion. Soon after that, an opportunity availed itself to work with one of the first American companies opening an office in Beijing in 1984 when China first opened its doors. Grit played a major role there as well. Back then, China was considered a “hardship” post for overseas employees. Eventually, I convinced Tom to come home when our sales manager left. I called him and said, “if you are going to join Two’s this is a good time. I need you back here. ”

If there was ever a business more aptly named than Two’s Company, it would be hard to find. Bobbie Gottlieb and Tom Gottlieb, mother and son, are unquestionably the two of Two’s, the heart of the enterprise and the people who set the tone for everything that happens at the company. However, there is also very much a Company behind them. More than 200 people are in sales, product development, design, operations, and all the other moving parts of a company that, while privately owned, serves as one of the largest players in the gift and home space.

From its modern corporate offices in suburban Westchester County, NY, Bobbie and Tom direct a company that is 50 years young this year and poised to continue in its place as industry leader, innovator and creative force. In Bobbie’s object-filled office, she and Tom sat down to talk about the company’s origins, her taking over after the premature death of her husband, the Two’s DNA, the uniqueness of the mother-and-son relationship and what the future holds for the company. As Tom will tell you, expectations always have been and always will be high.
Celebrating Two's Company

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS TOM...

AND WHAT ARE HIS BEST TRAVEL TIPS FOR GETTING THERE

One of Tom Gottlieb’s first jobs at Two’s Company was checking out the company’s suppliers in Taiwan while he was studying there as a teenager in college. He hasn’t looked back since. Many decades—and a whole lot of frequent flyer miles—later he continues to travel the world to create the best products, discover the best crafts and to find the best inspiration for the company.

Who better then to recommend his own personal list of travel tips, suggestions and wardrobe advice? Around the World in 80 Days? Phineas Fogg has got nothing on Tom Gottlieb.

1. WHAT AND WHEN TO WEAR

Packing time is essential to a successful trip. On my iPhone notes, I have a list of what I am planning to wear day by day. It makes getting going each day very efficient, especially with all our city hopping.

2. CARRY ON

A rolling bag with an easy-access outside computer compartment is essential for navigating security and airports efficiently. Be sure to pack an extra change of clothes for those rare occasions of lost luggage.

3. FAVORITE CITY HOTEL

London’s Hamyard Hotel. Interior designer Kit Kemp has created inspiring environments in all of her properties. The ultimate luxury for those who appreciate art, culture, design, color, pattern and texture.

4. DON’T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT

Zip Lock Bags. After the iPhone, I don’t think anything can replace these to carry them anywhere to hold wet items, extra snacks and to organize things.

5. TWO’S POWERBANK

The worst feeling while traveling is running out of juice. The Two’s power banks come with a built-in cord, are compact and have that extra power in case of an emergency.

6. BEST ALL IN ONE TOTE

The Two’s Black Bag. So light and easy to carry, a handled bag always comes in handy to hold samples on long rides to factories or as an extra airport carry on to hold those last minute purchases. I have two or three with me at all times.

7. WHEN IN FLIGHT

Lululemon black workout pants and hoodie. Comfort is key especially on those long flights. The hood adds extra comfort, something that is a constant feature especially on some of the longer car, train or off-road journeys.

IS THAT WHEN YOU REALLY DECIDED TO BE THE OTHER TWO IN TWO’S, TOM?

TG: I always knew that eventually I would come back into the business but I wanted to explore the world first. I learned so many things while away. When I came back, it was to be the head of sales. I knew how to sell. I knew every product, sku #, price, minimum, packaging and product selling points. I understood selling but not necessarily sales management.

Having not known anything about sales management, my expectations were high...as they are today. There was a lot of trial and error in managing sales people. Moreover, I was quite young back then. I will admit that at times my enthusiastic spirit was a little too much for our sales reps. Thankfully, some of our reps were comfortable enough to share that with me. I had a lot to learn and did. We always believed that a lot could happen when you are focused on what can be achieved. The passion, enthusiasm and the drive have always been an integral part of our culture.

IN THE EARLY 90’S YOU MADE A CHANGE FROM INDEPENDENT REPS TO A COMPANY SALES FORCE. WHAT WAS THE THINKING BEHIND THIS BIG CHANGE?

TG: We always had a few in-house sales people who only sold Two’s Company. They traveled to shows, worked the phones and supported our customers. We always found that they made the buying experience seamless and were most successful. They knew the product and how best to buy it. We realized early on that a focused, dedicated person would serve our customers best. So when we got big enough, we started investigating our options. A good friend of ours, Russ Berrie, was one of the only companies with dedicated company sales people and was very successful. They were our inspiration for the development of a national, dedicated sales team.

WHILE THERE ARE MANY FAMILY COMPANIES IN THE INDUSTRY, VERY FEW HAVE A MOTHER AND SON RUNNING THE OPERATION. WHILE THERE ARE MANY FAMILY COMPANIES IN THE INDUSTRY, VERY FEW HAVE A MOTHER AND SON RUNNING THE OPERATION. WHO BETTER THEN TO RECOMMEND HIS OWN PERSONAL LIST OF TRAVEL TIPS, SUGGESTIONS AND WARDROBE ADVICE? AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS? PHINEAS FOGG HAS GOT NOTHING ON TOM GOTTLEB.

Steve, Jon, and Tom My Three Sons 1969

Bobbie and Tom in Paris, 2018

WITH ALL THE CHANGES IN THE CONSUMING HABITS OF THE POPULATION AND IN THE GIFT BUSINESS ITSELF, DO YOU WORRY ABOUT THE LONG-TERM VIABILITY OF THE COMPANY AND THE INDUSTRY IT OPERATES IN?

TG: In terms of the company, we have a remarkably dedicated staff many of whom have grown with us and have been with us for decades. We’ve inspired them and empowered them to be the best that they can be. In terms of the industry, there’s definitely been a shift in buying habits. We believe that people today enjoy all types of experiences, especially those relating to products that touch them in some special way. That’s why we really focus on the emotional side of product.

BG: We are seeing a lot more independent retailers that are creating better and more compelling customer experiences. The stores that are buzzing are those that focus on speaking with their customers in new and exciting ways.

SO WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS FOR TWO’S COMPANY?

TG: We still love our independence. We may look at more partnerships, as we are doing with a British company, One Hundred Stars. We also are looking at acquisitions that would expand our product offerings. Above all, we remain committed to being a partner for our retailers, offering products that are unique, creative, have great quality, good value and, in the end, create a memory and make you smile.

BG: At this point, I defer to Tom more often. The mother-son relationship is actually much easier than the usual father/son because I want him to be better than me. It’s wonderful working with a partner who thinks alike. It allows us to demonstrate for our staff a level of consistency and reliability. We support over 200 families and, despite the size, we have been successful in maintaining our small company culture and family values. Frankly, I think that is what many love about working here at Two’s.

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1970
Two’s Company is officially a company – by gift industry standards, anyway – as it exhibits at its first trade show at New York’s long-forgotten Coliseum, with Bobbie and Bob Gottlieb at the helm.

1975
In its third year of designing Lucite home products, MOMA recognized Two’s Company for its timeless modern design. Two of its designs, an acrylic tape dispenser and a hair spray face protector, are added to the permanent design collection of the Museum of Modern Art. They are two of more than 1,000 acrylic products the company will eventually create and successfully sell.

1978
Company founder – and one of the two in Two’s – Bob Gottlieb passes away as the other half of the team Bobbie Gottlieb takes over as president, making her one of the early women in the industry to run a major company.

1980s
The decade sees a dramatic expansion in the product assortment, into new materials like glass, paper and fabric, while continuing to build out the acrylic collection, including the blockbuster, Wallflower.

1983
Tom Gottlieb joins the company full time in the U.S. after a stint in China, first as head of sales and then president. He becomes the new other One in Two’s.

1985
Two’s Company expands its distribution network to global partners from Europe to Japan to Australia. 33 years later, the Two’s UK family Mulhouse Design continues to distribute the entire Two’s brand to shops throughout England and beyond. Two’s continues to sell in over 35 countries today.

1986
The 80’s saw the “items” craze. From the Wallflower to the It’s a Lock, Two’s had HOT items that flew off store shelves.

1990s
1994
Two’s becomes one of the first companies in the business to move to its own dedicated sales force and away from independent reps, giving it a major advantage in customer service. Today, it has some 90 full-time salespeople on its team. Easily recognized at shows by their “Two’s white attire.”

1995-2000
Showroom expansions occurred throughout the 1990’s in prime locations in each market. In Los Angeles and New York, a lobby location on the first floor in Atlanta just off the elevator on 17 and in Dallas on the main thoroughfare between the Trade Mart and WTC.

1999
Tozai Home debuts, giving the company a real presence in home décor, starting in home décor, starting in home décor, starting with an Asian bent and progressing over the next 18 years into a contemporary decorative accessory line.

2004
Cupcakes Cartwheels
Cupcakes and Cartwheels is born with the introduction of colorful and fanciful tabletop designed by a local artist. Over time, it evolved into a youthful collection.

2006
The new corporate head-quarters operates in Elmsford, NY in suburban Westchester County, an award-winning contemporary loft space that reflects Two’s design and creative ethos.

2009
Twos completes the integration and investment of a new ERP business system to operate all aspects of the company from warehouse operations, sales systems, website, and all back office functions. This will set the stage for the next decade to initiate major improvements in all aspects of the customer experience.

2016
A major expansion of the Atlanta showroom opens, as with all Two’s spaces, front and center on the show floor. Show booths and showrooms continue to get the highest attention thanks to an in-house design and construction team that works up full-size versions of every display at their headquarters workshop in Elmsford, NY.

2019
Two’s Company is honored with the ICON Honors Medal of Excellence, one of several major accolades it receives from many, including Gifts and Decorative Accessories magazine and Gift for Life.
With a dedicated sales team of 90, Two’s Company is one of the few suppliers in the industry to have, not only its own in-house sales team, but also “Two’s University”, a program focused on continuous sales training.

“Even the best sales rep sales in comparison to the focus, knowledge of product and support that a Two’s Company salesperson can offer,” says Tom Zimmerman, who heads up sales.

And what makes for a good salesperson? “Our best salespeople have several things in common. They understand their role in sales support, they are inspiring and inspired, fiercely competitive and have a strong sense of empathy. They’re good communicators and love our business.”

Zimmerman says getting the balance right is critical in sales. “This all sounds very professional and, make no mistake, they are serious about business but, they never lose sight that this is a fun business and that focusing on what the consumer wants is key; a gift for a friend or loved one, something that they hope creates a memory. ‘The Two’s sales experience is all about creating a memory as well’.

I watched in amazement when traveling to Salt Lake City to experience a Two’s Territory Manager at work. This manager actually brings his boom box with holiday songs playing softly in the background while he presents the Christmas collection. And when on the road with a Nashville Territory Manager, I watched him hand to a customer his own blend of trail mix. It was delicious, but unfortunately for me, he wouldn’t share the recipe.

Going the extra step seems to mean everything to Two’s Company. I was told that there is even a Territory Manager from Seattle who grows her own lavender, dries it and distributes it in small organza totes to calm the senses.

‘I bring my happiness with me every day.’

“Amy Batch and I are calling on store owners and their first priority is how to make a buck. I do it to help retailers grow their business, earn a profit and have a few bucks along the way. I bring my happiness with me every day.”

Chris Kitchings of The Bowerbird in Old Lyme, CT shared “I buy Two’s not only because of its great product, but the fantastic sales support that I get from Dana, who understands my store, the trends and most of all respects my time”. Another savvy retailer Sonia Malloy of Splurge Gifts in Greenwich, CT said, “Two’s Company has the amazing ability to continually evolve with the changing needs of their customers. They offer quality, on-trend products at fair prices, enabling us to earn extra margin and surprise and delight the end consumer. Their sales staff is the best in the industry as you can always count on them to provide excellent customer service.”

AN ALLIANCE GROUP — A PLACE TO SHARE BEST PRACTICES, TELL US ABOUT IT.

“Two’s Company has started an alliance group, a place to share best practices, tell us about it.”

“We started it in 2016 with the Northeast. We have had two more, the Southeast, with more to follow. The members enter all their financial information into a secure database so they can compare confidentially how they are doing versus others with real data and not anecdotes. The group, new good friends/advisors to each other, meet 2 or 3 times annually. They share and learn how to be better and grow their business. For us, we love the fact that we found another way to support our customer.”

WHERE SALES REALLY IS A TEAM

“We’re the place where everybody knows your name.”

An imposing figure in any trade show crowd with his tall stature, closely cropped white hair and usual attire of head-to-toe Two’s Company whites. TZ has headed up sales for the last 24 years, leading the transition from an independent rep sales force to an in-house dedicated team of 90. He is seemingly always on the road, at a show, an account or even commuting from his Long Island home to company headquarters in Westchester County, NY. And he knows how to sell.

FIRST OFF, WHAT SHOULD WE CALL YOU?

Growing up, we both always called me Tommy (and still do), my wife calls me Tom, but everybody else calls me TZ or TZ. With another Tom here (President Tom Gottlieb), I’m good with either name.

WAS SELLING IN YOUR BLOOD?

“My dad was a peddler and I remember helping him set up at the old Buffalo, NY Statler Hilton. I come from a long line of sales people. I suppose it’s in our blood. But I’ve never gotten out of bed one day to make a buck. I do it to help retailers grow their business, earn a profit and have a few bucks along the way. I bring my happiness with me every day.”

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YOU CAN CALL HIM TOM…

BUT EVERYBODY KNOWS HIM AS TZ
Whether you’re in Dallas, Atlanta, Los Angeles or the halls of the Javits Center in New York City, there is one streetscape you can always recognize: The Two’s Company show space. The company has made it one of its signatures, accompanying the great products with a vast array of compelling hospitality including an energetic sales team dressed in their easy-to-spot white attire, endless supplies of their world-renowned black tote bags, freshly baked cookies and a sea of bottled water. Their success in creating amazingly detailed storylines surrounding new products at both permanent showrooms and temporary booths has been an inspiration to the entire industry for five decades.

The Street of Shops, as the company calls it, changes every season and can range from an Elvis-inspired Tiki Bar to an actual hippie-dippie full-size VW van filled with great products to a vintage barbershop ready for its next customer. The Two’s Company show spaces garner the best accolades any company could hope for: Awards in design competitions… and the order-writing attention of its customers.
You may not have met Mark Ross, but if you’re a Two’s Company customer, you most certainly have met his handiwork. He is part creator of the company’s showrooms and trade show booths, part product designer and part of the management team, all which help to define the Two’s Signature Style.

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU DO AT TWO'S COMPANY?
In my 30 years at Two’s Company, I have done just about every job there is from sales to working in the warehouse. These days I forecast and spot trends and, once product decisions are made, I help to develop product and participate in sourcing. Then I start to envision how to present the product and what environment to create in our showrooms. I try to insure that our displays create maximize sales, inspire our retailers and what environment to create in our showrooms. I try to insure that our displays create maximize sales, inspire our retailers and create maximize sales, inspire our retailers and set the trends.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE DISPLAYS?
Three really stand out. A recent collection collection that took inspiration from childhood visits to the Tiki Room at Disneyworld and movies such as Elvis’s “Blue Hawaii” to create an iconic Tiki lounge with bamboo covered walls and a thatched ceiling. The collection included lots of natural products made from coconuts and seashells. You can’t go wrong taking inspiration from a classic Elvis movie.

SOUNDS LIKE THIS IS A PRETTY BIG SUCCESS?
Our displays tell the story of our products. The customer has come to expect great visual merchandising from Two’s Company and we try not to disappoint. We may have as many as 10-12 collections or stories each season. Some of our collections have become classics and remain in the line for as long as 10 years. Others come and go quickly. It’s like I have four homes and I redecorate them twice a year.

YOUR JOB DOESN’T EXACTLY SOUND LIKE SOMETHING ONE SETS OUT TO DO. HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN THIS?
My first job out of college was with a newspaper selling ads and laying them out in Alabama. Then I was a road rep and Two’s Company was one of the 30 lines that I repped in MS and AL. I just connected with the product and feeling of Two’s Company. So when an opportunity to move to NY and work as a liaison with the sales team became available, I jumped at the chance. After about two years, I was given the opportunity to work on showroom displays. Then one day I overheard Bobbie we said we needed a new vase for the wall. So that night I went home, sketched a design, made a prototype from cardboard and left it on her desk. She loved it and we turned it into an actual product, the Golden Bowl Wall Vase that was very successful. After this success, I was included in our overseas travel with Bobbie and Tom to work with our factories. I’ve been on the product team ever since.

THE ENTIRE ART OF IDENTIFYING TRENDS HAS ITS CHALLENGES DOESN’T IT?
It requires an inquisitive, creative and curious mind to spot a trend and figure out how to apply the trend to our product mix. It requires travel, exposure and a love of “stuff”. We are lucky to have a good team that makes decisions quickly and that allows us to lead and often set the trends. Sometimes we are too early with a trend and the customer is not ready for it. The longer I do this the more I understand it is not spotting the trend that is important but knowing when to “jump on the trend” and introduce it to your customer.

TEN THINGS MARK ROSS CAN’T LIVE WITHOUT

1. A GOOD BOOK. Fiction and biographies are my favorite. I read a lot of southern authors but the last book I read was the biography of Bill Cunningham, the NY Times photographer who documented the comings and goings of well-dressed New Yorkers.

2. MISSISSIPPI. I take a little bit of home with me everywhere I go and in everything I do. I try to visit four or five times a year and spend time with family on our farm. Faulkner said it best: “To understand the world, you must first understand a place like Mississippi.”

3. MY GRANDMOTHER’S CAST IRON SKILLET. I love times spent with good friends and good food around the table and cornbread made in a cast iron skillet with sweet tea is a must for me.

4. A GOOD NAP. My job is demanding and includes lots of travel to different time zones so anytime I can catch a quick nap it keeps me fresh and on point in my work and personal life.

5. OLD MOVIES. I love old movies for their innocence and also for their styling. Many times I watch an old movie with the sound off just to study the sets for inspiration with showroom designs. Doris Day movies are a personal favorite for their amazing sets and wardrobes that inspire.

6. FLOWERS AND SCENTS. I love fresh flowers and always try to have some in my home or hotel room. My love of fragrance and cologne comes from my father who always wore “The Baron” and encouraged me to find my own personal scent. I chose “Anteus”, a very old Chanel fragrance Coco made for one of her lovers.

7. GOOD BED LINENS. Spending so much time traveling there is nothing nicer than climbing into a bed made with freshly laundered sheets, essential for a good night’s sleep. I prefer percale to sateen and they must be ironed.

8. FRIVOLOUS. We have to have some fun in our life. For me, champagne is a treat I choose when I can. It turns everything into a party!

9. THE THRILL OF THE HUNT. I love puttering around antique shops, flea markets, shows, the country farmers market and taking it all in. You never know what you may find and what treasure you might uncover.

10. A GOOD WHITE SHIRT. A starched white shirt makes everyone look good and will take you from the backyard to the boardroom in style. It’s my “go to” when I can’t decide what to wear and always makes a good impression.

While he has lived in New York most of his adult life, Ross is originally from Mississippi and so his style is equal parts city sophisticate and rural gentleman. His list of must-haves stretches from those rural roots to his global travels today.
Celebrating Two’s Company 50 Years of Style, Passion, & Family

Mackenzi Farquer
Lockwood, Queens, NY
One season, Two’s came out with a macaroon collection, and it changed my life. I purchased their macaroon trinket boxes, and very soon after, we were able to have it featured on a prominent wedding blog and Martha Stewart Weddings! Sales came pouring in and I couldn’t order them fast enough! We ran out of places to put them. We sold so many, that we were able to put some cash aside to help finance our move to a larger location (1,200 sq. ft.) in 2013. Now it’s 2018, and we’re still getting orders on these boxes. In fact, we got an order last year just last night.

J. Lamancuso
HELLO WORLD
As a small retailer, we have been privileged to be customers of Two’s Company for 15+ years. It is obvious that Bobbie and Tom understand the importance of building strong relationships with their retailers. This shows through in everything they do and their great sales team and support staff. We were honored to be included in the Two’s Company Northeast Region Gift Alliance. The Alliance has been a great tool for us to stay current in an ever-changing and extremely challenging retail environment.

Frank Joens
General Manager LA Mart
Consistently I revel in the fact that there are always “ooohs” and “aaahs” from registering buyers and designers as they gaze over to the beautiful Two’s Company showroom. For decades, they have been a constant in being an active partner of the LA Mart community. They are true partners with the LA Mart in so many ways.

Kellee Twaddle
Rose and Dove, North Andover, MA
I love how on-trend Two’s Company products have been. When creating product they really pay attention to quality product that tells a story.

Lisa Newman Paratore
Homestyle, Providence, RI
My favorite experience with Two’s Company was visiting the home office and distribution center in Elmsford. Seeing the people who are making it happen in real time gave me an appreciation for the authentic heart that is put into the business. From the leadership team to the design team to the staff that manages the day-to-day operation of the company, Two’s Company has attracted the best. My sales rep Ellen has taken tremendous care of my account for over a decade. She is a gem.

J. Lockwood, Queens, NY
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Donna Scoriels
Regional Sales Leader, Two’s Company
One of the many things that makes Two’s so unique is that it’s a family owned business. One memory that speaks volumes is Hurricane Katrina, which devastated my territory. The Two’s family stepped up to the plate to help me and my customers. To this day, my customers still remember how Two’s was there to keep them in business.

Amanda Thomley Marsh
Western Regional Sales Director
Two’s Company
My first memory of Two’s Company began years ago while attending the Atlanta Gift Show: I was tagging along for a buying trip...I left with a warm chocolate chip cookie and a black Two’s bag on my shoulder. I was happy, but couldn’t seem to forget the meticulously displayed showroom and room after room of on-trend product (that I wanted)! It was many years later that I found my way “home” to Two’s Company and for that I am forever grateful. To me, our competitive advantage is our product and the people. We are family owned and I am thankful that 50 years later it still feels that way.

Cindy Morris
CEO, Dallas Market Center
I’ve known the leadership at Two’s Company for over 2 decades. Their passion has always been driven by being customer-centric, whether by hosting events for them to explore and exchange ideas, or by creating vignettes full of merchandising ideas. On behalf of Dallas Market Center, another family owned business, I salute the Two’s Company family.

Tom A. Korreich
Marsh & McLennan, NY
I have known the Gottliebs for over 50 years and worked professionally with them for over 30. In fact, I vividly remember playing with some of their first products — the oversized Heinz Ketchup, Chiquita Bananas and other products in the late 60’s. Two’s Company as a whole, inspires leadership within their staff and also with the local and greater community, devoting their time, considerable resources and talents to numerous, diverse nonprofit organizations and causes. The Two’s culture promotes and rewards critical, outside-the-box thinking, which I believe is at the foundation of their success. It is no surprise that Two’s has prospered for so long.

Jean Charles Chappuis
Asiatides, Paris France
On the 50th anniversary of Two’s Company only one word comes to my mind: Admiration! Admiration for Bobbie, an extraordinary lady loved and respected by the trade who created the company; admiration for a brand that constantly renews itself to stay attractive and desirable; admiration for an exceptionally faithful team, supporting the values of the company; admiration for the respect and love received from the suppliers everywhere in the world; admiration for the respect customers are enjoying. But nothing could have stayed so long, so strong, so enthusiastic without the generosity and the talent of the new generation represented by Tom Gottlieb.

Isabel Harvey, Wellesley, MA
Two’s Company has an OUTSTANDING customer service team. Any problems we have they handle it without hesitation! My Rep, Chris is amazing. Thanks for 30 years of greatness! We would be lost without your cool and creative energy!
Turning ideas into reality – and then making sure customers learn about these products through the Two’s Company catalogs and marketing channels – is a big part of Marla Marcus’ job as the Vice President of Creative and Product Management. But there’s a lot more to what she does to make it all happen…

WHAT MAKES FOR A GOOD TWO’S COMPANY PRODUCT?

Style and Smile! When we brainstorm, we bring it all to the table…no idea is off limits. As the design process moves along, the ideas take shape, both literally and figuratively. At product reviews, we ask ourselves…

Style…is it well-designed, unique, on-trend, and have the brand’s sensibility?

Smile…does it have that little extra something that makes it irresistible?

Critical to the mix is price point and quality. They provide the value that bring success to our customers.

DID YOU START OUT TO BE A PRODUCT DESIGNER?

Not really, but it makes perfect sense. I studied Packaging Design at FIT in New York City. What I love about packaging design is the three dimensionality, which translates well into product design. So the evolution was natural.

I started my career at Estee Lauder which was invaluable, as it gave me the opportunity to learn about how a large corporation functions, including departmental structure and workflow. From there, Two’s recruited me to be their first in-house packaging designer almost 20 years ago.

AND NOW YOU’RE DOING SO MANY THINGS AT TWO’S.

It has been an amazing journey. From packaging designer to vice president, from a one person “art” department, me, to managing a team of over 30. I have been given the opportunity to develop the department and the opportunity to develop the department and an incredible team along the way, totally integrating product design, packaging design, sourcing, in-house photography, catalog design, website, social media and corporate graphic services. It is not always easy, as there is a tremendous amount of pressure to get it all done. But I wouldn’t have it any other way!

WITH SO MANY PRODUCTS, ARE THERE ANY FAVORITE ITEMS OVER THE YEARS?

Well, the best sellers, of course. It really is hard to pick favorites as the products are our “babies” and we love so many of them. Even though I have been doing this for a long time now, I still get excited when I walk into a store and see our products. I usually snap a shot and send it to the designer who worked on it. There is a great feeling of pride and accomplishment when we see our products come to life out there in the world.

THE STEPS OF MAKING A GREAT PRODUCT

It all begins with a great idea
MEET THE TWO’S COMPANY FAMILY OF BRANDS

GREAT GIFTS
Our signature brand, Two’s Company is a total gift and lifestyle collection celebrating the latest trends of today. From entertaining to home décor, each look encompasses a wide variety of products featuring photo frames, candles, trays, bags and much more. Our designs are crafted in a wide spectrum of materials including porcelain, silver plate, cotton, wood and glass. And many of our items are hand crafted and packaged, making the perfect memorable gift.

DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES
Inspired by centuries of arts and crafts from around the world, Tozai Home brings you the best in home décor. From Paris to Bangkok, London to New York, our collection features contemporary adaptations in design with a distinctive style. Our focus has always been on sustaining and celebrating some of the world’s oldest crafts. Many of our products from hand-painted porcelain vases to mosaic lacquerware trays, from hand-carved wood mirrors to inlaid bone boxes are created by artisans working in small studios. Each story that we tell includes items with integrity in design and our commitment to the highest quality that will be enjoyed and treasured in homes for decades to come.

YOUNG AT HEART GIFTS
There is nothing better in life than bringing a smile and happiness to a friend or loved one. Through innovative products with great packaging, Cupcakes and Cartwheels creates the perfect gifts. Come play with us and discover the joy of dreaming as you tour the collection. You are sure to discover happy and colorful products, all designed around popular themes and focused on celebrating all that is young. Whether a playful, quizical, or spirited design, you can be sure to find it at Cupcakes & Cartwheels!

FASHION ACCESSORIES
Being fashion forward and radiating style has never been easier! 2 Chic brings you an endless selection of fashion statement pieces like scarves and shawls, and great jewelry that will keep you on trend. Each season’s offerings include a wide variety of looks featuring super-soft fabrics and fine materials. 2 Chic not only looks good but also feels good. With four new product introductions each year, we cover every season. Inspired by global trends and high fashion themes, from Resort Wear to High Glam, you are sure to find what fits every taste and style.

From its humble beginnings a half-century ago as an item-driven novelty supplier, Two’s Company has expanded into a full line gift and home décor resource, with offerings across a wide spectrum of design aesthetics and influences.

Today there are four brands that reflect the face and texture of the business, all the while adhering to the Two’s DNA of creativity, style, design and quality.
The Two’s Company story is familiar to those who have both worked at or have done business with the company over its five decades. It’s also familiar to any entrepreneurial enterprise that started with a crazy idea, unlimited passion and energy and the sense that anything was possible. Fifty years ago Bob and Bobbie Gottlieb knew they needed something clever, something different, and something very saleable on which to build their nascent business around.

The oft-told story has Bob Gottlieb returning home from a visit to a local store and returning with a giant inflatable display prop he saw. Why couldn’t he and Bobbie develop an entire line around this theme and sell it to local gift stores? The craze was pop art—think Andy Warhol soup cans. Wouldn’t a lot of teenagers love to have giant replicas of their favorite brands?

It wasn’t quite that easy but, in fact, the idea worked. Two’s Company – originally called Two Plus Three to reflect the Gottliebs’ two parents and three young boys – was off to the gift races. Over the next five decades, the company was remarkable in its ability to bob and weave with the latest trends, moving far beyond giant inflatables into all manner of objects and materials.

Not everything was a success but their track record was better than most. Whether it was picture frames, vases, acrylic what-have-yous, totes or later, fashion accessories, Two’s developed a reputation for being trend-right and able to craft a story around its products that took the business from item-driven to one focused on entire coordinated assortments.

Nevertheless, certain items stand out over the years and on the following pages you’ll find some of the most memorable – and let’s not forget best-selling – products from the first five decades of Two’s Company.

The first decade for Two’s Company was a crazy one, almost as if our country and our people were ready to express themselves in some new and very big ways. Politically, it was a time of Watergate and let’s not forget those long gas lines at the pumps. Culturally things were exploding. We saw Andy Warhol with his famous Campbell Soup Cans, disco balls, Pop Art in all kinds of shapes and all kinds of oversized sculptures like the giant Hamburger by Claes Oldenburg. Two’s rode along with the trends, developing some great products, from pop art consumer goods and food inflatables to the development of more than 1,000 useful products made from a new material called Acrylic. Crazy indeed.

50 YEARS OF BEST SELLERS

IT ALL STARTED WITH A GIANT KETCHUP BOTTLE.

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THE EIGHTIES

The new decade saw the emergence of the Baby Boomers as the dominant players on just about everything that was going on. The country was enamored with what the stars were doing and we even elected one as President, Ronald Reagan. In the emerging world of videos, people were thrilled by Michael Jackson, while on TV, hit shows like Cheers and Seinfeld kept us entertained and smiling. Two’s realized that people loved to buy things that made them smile too. It was all about items and the Two’s new products reflected that, with many items that put a happy face on the day.

#2199 Wallflower, 1987 STILL AVAILABLE TODAY | #2560 Tulip Lights, 1986 | #1202 It’s a Lock Combination Lock, 1988
# 2540 Flashing Apron, 1985

THE NINETIES

The Internet was born, Bill Clinton was elected Boomer-in-Chief, everyone was going natural and organic, John Glenn was going back to space and The Simpsons – both OJ and Homer – dominated TV. The economy was strong and people were spending a lot on building new homes and buying everything. Two’s decided to develop a lifestyle brand to include many different looks and product categories. They expanded way beyond gift, introducing natural products to reflect the burgeoning eco movement and a new division, Tozai Home, serving decorators and home designers.

#3661 Seashell Photo Frame, 1994 | #BLF142 Blue and White Porcelain Collection, #4169, 1996
Plaza Set of 5 Vases, 1993 STILL AVAILABLE TODAY | #3140 Needlepoint Pillow, 1991

#2199 Wallflower, 1987 STILL AVAILABLE TODAY | #2560 Tulip Lights, 1986 | #1202 It’s a Lock Combination Lock, 1988
# 2540 Flashing Apron, 1985
THE 2000’S

The new Millennium saw Tiger Woods dominating golf and Apple introducing a new device called an iPhone. But it was also a time when the world faced many new challenges and people began to spend more time in their homes and “nesting” was becoming more popular. This focus on home, bath and body was reflected in new Two’s offerings, including an expanded personal care line, home care and more frames of all types.

THE TENS

Marked by a much more technologically driven world and the rise of social media, this current decade has seen Americans focusing on themselves, their image and personal purchases. The invention – and incredible rise – of the Selfie created the need to look good for the camera and Two’s responded with a broad range of fashion accessories with the 2 Chic line. At the same time, there was a continuing expansion and enhancement in all of the Two’s divisions with more looks, more fun, decorative accessories and kids products. With its product offerings reaching unprecedented levels of depth and assortment, Two’s Company gets ready for its sixth decade.
It’s about time…at least it was this past Halloween when Two’s Company staffers created a Time Machine in honor of the company’s 50th Anniversary. An annual event, the costume contest took on a special twist this year courtesy of a Time Machine led by the Two’s Mad Product Scientist. Team members dressed up as some of the company’s greatest hits over the past half-century, celebrating five decades of creativity and inspiration. Needless to say, a good time was had by all.
“I guess you could say I’m a maximalist. I try hard to control it but that’s who I am.” For Bobbie Gottlieb, being someone who loves objects around her homes is made all that much easier when you’re the head of Two’s Company. “I’m really lucky, I have a warehouse full of 3,000 products I can choose from. It’s hard to find an empty inch of horizontal surface in my homes that isn’t always filled.”

Bobbie invited us into her homes, a house overlooking Long Island Sound in the New York City suburb of Rye, NY and an apartment overlooking New York City’s Central Park. And while she says each is very different, they are both as much testing laboratories for the company’s products as they are where she lives. And they share certain characteristics.

“Both look out over nature and the environment and the outside really reflects how I decorate each inside.”

While the New York City space is a dramatic loft space, it is classically decorated to reflect the more formal style of city life.

Rye is more casual and is where Bobbie changes the decor to reflect the seasons. “In the winter, when it’s grey and bleak outside, I go with a lot of color. In the summer, when the water outside is blue and the flowers are blooming, I want white inside.”

One more thing they have in common: “They are both the backdrop for family and entertaining. They reflect all the special things that have happened in my life.”
Bobbie Gottlieb studied music at the La Guardia High School of Music and Art. After receiving her Bachelors degree at Cornell, she worked as Production Assistant on the Ed Sullivan and Jackie Gleason TV shows. Nevertheless, she will be the first to tell you that she was “unprepared for a career in business.” That all changed pretty quickly with the founding of Two Plus Three (which later became Two’s Company) and her eventual role leading the company after the death of her husband Bob.

Through the past five decades Bobbie has proven to be every bit as good on the numbers as the designs, a unique left brain/right brain combination that rarely exists. Two’s Company has been more than a job for her…..it has been an endless and renewable source of happiness.

Here are ten favorite things she shared that inspire and make her smile.

1. Working with, and being inspired by, creative, talented people. I love exploring new places, museums, stores, food and, best of all, new ideas.

2. Transforming my homes, which are works in progress, each season with slipcovers and accessories from travel and Two’s.

3. Our living room wall of family photos in Two’s Company acrylic box frames documenting travel, family and special moments.

4. Green Pentel pens… my signature color with which I’ve left my mark on memos, notes and the occasional white blouse.

5. Walking my Havanese named Tiger in Central Park… a tiny dog with a big personality.

6. Fresh flowers from my garden in Two’s tall stem vases, a decades-old classic and still a favorite of John Saladino and other prominent designers.

7. The vitality, color and energy of Kusama’s art.

8. Expanding my scarf collection from Tokyo to Bhutan… and from Etro to 2 Chic.


10. Breakfast in bed and watching Fareed Zakaria until noon on Sunday mornings.
Thank you for many decades of support and your sponsorship of this publication

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THANK YOU!

WE COULD NOT DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

Thank you to the team at Gifts & Decorative Accessories! With the encouragement of both Warren Shoulberg and Nancy Wolkow, we embarked on an amazing experience turning back 50 years or pages in history.

For Bobbie and me, this has been a work of love and quite an emotional experience.

THANK YOU!

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF STYLE, PASSION, & FAMILY

STAFF

We have always asked what qualities we should aspire to in order to be the best company we can be. About 20 years ago, we asked our management team to develop these and they came up with 7 core values. They are a Can Do Attitude, Collaboration, Commitment, Drive to be Better, Seeing the Big Picture, Winning Spirit and Innovation. In a short time,

these values took a life of their own and became the DNA of our culture. We see them exhibited almost every day and

for that, we are so thankful. Over these past 5 decades, we have been blessed to work with so many talented people. Some in fact invested over 40 years at Two’s, others 30 and many many over 20 years. Today, we remain so proud of our team and all of their accomplishments.

Thank you for all that you do and how inspiring, supportive and caring you are to each other, our vendors, our partners and our customers.

FAMILY

Sometimes we look too far to recognize the good things in life when often they are sitting right in front of us. Many of us at Two’s have invested endless hours for Two’s Company. We must send a special thank you to all the families of our staff for supporting and sharing their mom or dad, wife or husband, sister or brother. For

Bobbie and me, our spouses and kids have been amazing in understanding our dedication to Two’s Company. They have shown patience and tolerance for our business distractions, allowing us to travel and even miss some special moments and occasions. To Jill, Robbie, Jennifer, Dana we send many hugs of gratitude. To Jon and Steve thank you for always understanding, and always being there for us.

PARTNERS

Without our extraordinary customers believing and investing in us, it would be all for nothing. Many of you have been buying from us for over 20 and 30 years. That is truly amazing. It is hard to

express how grateful we are for

to have each of you as part of the Two’s Company family.

Your expertise, knowledge, unlimited commitment and dedication to our team 24/7 is what has helped to make us so strong for these 50 years. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for always going above and beyond for the Two’s Company family. And for those who have helped to support this publication, we thank you again for believing and investing in us. We look forward to many more years working together.

CUSTOMERS

Your enthusiasm and loyalty to our brand is our

community. Your enthusiasm and loyalty to our brand is our source of energy and innovation. Your love of Two’s makes it fun to create amazing products. Your dedication to our road sales team keeps them inspired to support you in all different ways every day. Your visits to our trade shows keeps us motivated to build award-winning displays. We are awed by your expertise in retail and thank you for being a Two’s Company Fan and Customer.

Cheers to you! We feel so fortunate over the years to have engaged an extremely talented group of people and companies to counsel, advise and support our efforts. You are one of our most important assets. We are proud to say that we have known many of you for over 25 years, and

some for an incredibly impressive 40 years. We are so happy
2.5 MILLION TWO’S BAGS HANDED OUT TO DATE...

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