



Client Conversations

Communicating Clearly
Morgan Harden,
The HON Company



Morgan Harden is a Business Development Manager at The HON Company in the Charlotte, North Carolina Area.

Morgan has created more than 100 projects with The KITS collaborator™ and sat down to tell us why she makes sure she's using the tool as part of her workflow, every week. She's a busy field sales representative and works with local dealers that sell HON in North and South Carolina - and helps those dealers when they're working with their customers on projects as well.





KITS: So Morgan, how long have you been using The KITS collaborator™?

MH: Working here was my first job out of college, so **working in the commercial furniture industry and KITS goes hand in hand for me.**

I started as an inside sales rep, and at The HON Company, and once you're assigned your territory, you get a laptop and KITS. I took a training course internally for it and I saw the value in it. I used it when I traveled to see external sales teams a lot. I eventually transitioned to my current role but it was my company that trained me to use KITS.

KITS: How does KITS fit into your current workflow?

MH: Most of the time it's about providing a visual so people can better understand our solutions. When I meet with my sales reps and their customers, **I see over and over again that customers just don't live in the furniture world as we do, so the visual perspective really helps them cut through the furniture lingo we might be using.** It's also a great tool in terms of finishes especially if we don't have the physical sample in front of us and it helps us if we need to be matching existing finishes or building elements.

Outside of that day to day use, when we go to consumer/vendor shows, we are usually running some sort of contest to give people a reason to come chat with us and share their email addresses. Often I will set up KITS so that people can customize their own chair design, and then send it to themselves. It's usually a big hit, people like doing it so it draws them over to us. People respond well to it with all the fabrics we have available. They like it, they feel like they are taking ownership of designing their own office chair. Then we will randomly draw a winner and then deliver them the chair they designed, and then we're able to keep in touch after the show with the addresses from everyone who entered.





KITS: Which features of The KITS collaborator do you find helpful in your role?

MH: I'd say I use it most when I'm working with desking and need to verify a project. We have a lot of parts and pieces to our desking line that allows you to configure anything - especially when we get into the modular ones. If I'm talking to a customer or working on a project that requires following up with a visual, **KITS helps to make sure that all the pieces are going to fit together, it's going to be the sizes that we need, and turn out as the customer expects.**

I also use the Quick Sheet feature - I'm actually working on a project right now where the client just needs budgetary pricing. So instead of pulling in the designer at this preliminary stage, we are making it on KITS and using that as a visual for the customer but also creating a Quick Sheet to give them preliminary budgetary options.

KITS: Does that make the sales cycle a more efficient process?

MH: Yes. In the early phases where customers are just trying to get a ball-park number for what a project might cost, we can get that back to the customer quickly and make sure we are on the right track. Later, I'll bring in a designer to finalize and make sure everything will fit in the room and other details.

So in cases where we don't yet have the specific information designers will need, or if it's a first-round concept and we know that it will be re-designed, **we can meet the customer's needs without tying up a design resource.**

KITS: How do you find your customers typically respond to those quick concepts/visuals?

MH: They are always very responsive. This week we did one where they really enjoyed the fast turnaround time and they also liked getting an idea of what they can do. Again, people that don't necessarily live and breathe furniture, are not sure of all the options they have available, or if their ideas are really going to turn into what they want. So to be able to give them that quick visual and then a ball-park price, they always find it very valuable.

KITS: Do you find that the KITS renderings provide enough detail?

MH: I think the patterns and even the hue of the colors are pretty accurate to what the finish is going to look like. I guess the only thing that's missing is touching the fabric. When you get into furniture, you learn to picture 'ok, that chair but these arms' and when you do it all the time, that's pretty easy. But when you don't, it's not so easy. So, it's really nice to just pull out my iPad and show them what I'm describing - the visual goes so much further.



KITS: Does that allow you to speed up the process, or move clients along the sales cycle?

MH: Yes because it really helps us narrow things down. When clients get a sense of the budget right away, we know immediately if we're too high or low, so that automatically takes away some of the fabric or finish options and we narrow things down fast. And then because we'll know they want one of a few colors, it leaves them with fewer and better options to choose from.

I would say it reduces the meeting time, but also how long a designer is working on one project. We've found they're usually able to turn out more projects if they have gone through the preliminary design work on The KITS collaborator. It really narrows it down for them and they still make sure the application is going to work, and they still put in their own input, but it very much narrows it down. The sales rep and the customer and I have often narrowed it down so much that the designer doesn't even need to meet with the customer directly. So the designer quickly turns around what we're asking for and from something the customer has already signed off on.

KITS: Is there a recent project where KITS helped close the sale?

MH: Recently I've been working with a fire department. The Fire Chief had been tasked with choosing everything and he was feeling very out of his element. So we walked through the space and did preliminary dimension checks. There were new offices being built and the final architectural files weren't prepared yet. We were able to bring in some fabrics and types of vinyl to showcase on The KITS collaborator and show how it would match up with some existing furniture. Once they were happy, we turned it over to the designer, who verified it, and we're waiting to place the order when we have the final architectural files. **We won it mostly based on how much we were able to take off of the chief's shoulders and really be the expert for him to go to with any questions, and really be confident that what he's going to get is going to be the right fit for him and his team.**

KITS: Do you have any advice for those considering KITS?

MH: I think it's just making a conscious effort to build it into your weekly cadence. I think sometimes we try to just 'talk it through' but making the effort to provide the visual makes such a difference. We're able to talk about it because we're so used to the terms and things but to the customer, you can see it in their eyes when they're not quite getting it, **so to put that in a visual it just really elevates your status as a partner in terms of your expertise and showing that you are going above and beyond to make sure they understand, and that you can help make this process easier for them.**



KITS: Which KITS features are you using most often?

MH: In the KOE catalog, I'll spend a little time putting in walls and a floor, especially if I've been to the client's space and know what it looks like. I won't spend a lot of time trying to match it, but will show the general hue or type of floor. Especially if they're looking at lighter furniture - we have a couple of whites in our line and so any time that's what they're looking for I'll try to match it up to show off those lighter products.

KITS: So, to finish up - would you recommend KITS to other people in the industry?

MH: I would absolutely recommend it, I think you just need to get used to it and use it consistently - I had a meeting today with one of my dealer principals where I was walking through the functionality and once he got it he saw the value - it's so worth making a habit out of it.

Our thanks to Morgan for giving us her perspective on where KITS works in the furniture sales process, and the value of providing visual examples to her clients.

For more information on The KITS collaborator, or to schedule a demo, visit try.kisp.com/kitsinfo



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