

## Entrepreneurship in Small-Scale Interior Elements: Lighting Designers the Entrepreneurial Journey of Michael Anastassiades in Bespoke Lighting Design

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### ABSTRACT

Lighting plays a pivotal role in shaping atmosphere, perception, and emotional experience within interior environments. Beyond its functional purpose, lighting has the power to transform spatial identity and enhance human interaction with built forms. This paper examines how contemporary bespoke lighting design contributes to these spatial qualities by exploring the entrepreneurial journey of acclaimed designer Michael Anastassiades. Recognized for his minimalist, poetic, and sculptural aesthetics, Anastassiades has built a distinctive international brand that merges artistic expression with refined craftsmanship and strategic business innovation. His transition from civil engineering to design, followed by the establishment of his London-based studio, illustrates how creative entrepreneurship can emerge from interdisciplinary expertise. Through key collaborations with architects, galleries, and global luxury brands, Anastassiades demonstrates how small-scale product design can evolve into a scalable and influential enterprise. The paper also investigates his partnership with major manufacturers, the development of his signature design language, and the operational challenges he overcame while maintaining artisanal quality.

By analyzing Anastassiades' entrepreneurial mindset, networking strategies, and problem-solving approaches, this study provides valuable insights for aspiring interior and lighting designers seeking to navigate the intersection of creativity, craftsmanship, and business development.

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurship, Minimalism, Craftsmanship, Bespoke lighting, Design innovation, Product design, Creative industry*

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### I. Introduction

Lighting is one of the simplest physical elements in an interior space, yet it possesses a unique ability for enhancing ambiance, emotion, and spatial perception. In recent years, the rise of bespoke lighting designers has demonstrated how small-scale design objects carry the potential to shape interior environments in powerful and poetic ways.

Michael Anastassiades is a prominent figure among these designers whose work combines entrepreneurship, minimalism, and craftsmanship. Born in Cyprus and trained as a civil engineer before transitioning into design, Anastassiades established his London-based lighting studio in 1994 and gradually built a global brand centered on timeless, sculptural forms

His business provides lighting objects while collaborating closely with architects, galleries, and luxury brands. It functions as a

combination of product-based manufacturing and service-oriented collaboration. He has shown how a designer can establish a profitable entrepreneurial practice around intricate, small-scale components through creativity, networking, and careful problem-solving. This paper offers ideas that can inspire aspiring interior and lighting designers by examining his entrepreneurial skills, his collaborative style, and the challenges that he overcame.

### II. Entrepreneur's Skills and Type

Michael Anastassiades shows the qualities of a creative entrepreneur, driven by a strong artistic vision and a commitment to manufacturing sophisticated, handcrafted lighting artifacts. His experience in engineering influenced his technical understanding of structure, materiality, and production processes, skills that became crucial to developing his business identity. According to Sezgin (2025), creative

entrepreneurs typically succeed due to their ability to combine creativity with commercial awareness, Anastassiades exhibits this through his unique blend of artistic simplicity and strategic business decision-making.

His entrepreneurial strengths include:

1. **Strong Design Identity**  
Minimalism is the basis of his work: geometric simplicity, polished surfaces, and precise craftsmanship. This precision offers his products a recognized brand language.
2. **Craftsmanship & Material Mastery**  
He works extensively with brass, marble, and glass. His commitment to high-quality handcrafting distinguishes his products in a competitive luxury market.
3. **Risk-Taking & Niche Positioning**  
Instead of mass-market items, Anastassiades focused on a very specialized niche—sculptural, high-end lighting. This level of concentration is typical of innovation-driven entrepreneurs who differentiate through depth rather than breadth.
4. **Persistence and Slow Growth Strategy**  
For over a decade, he operated a small studio with limited resources, refining his craft and gradually entering the international design market.
5. **Ability to Balance Creativity and Business**  
He controls production quality, branding, collaborations, and intellectual property while continuing to develop new lines. With these attributes, Anastassiades exemplifies the kind of entrepreneur that turns small-scale design into a reputable company on a global scale.

### III. Networking and Collaboration

Figure 1. Michael Anastassiades' networking achievement in collaboration with FLOS



### IV. Problem Solving and Innovation

Bespoke lighting design is quite complex. Custom lighting necessitates technical accuracy, engineering expertise, and material innovation, in contrast to mass-produced goods. Throughout his business career, Anastassiades encountered a number of significant obstacles.

#### Challenge 1: Achieving Perfect Simplicity

His lights appear simple yet require significant engineering. For example, his famed balancing globe lamps needed internal structural solutions to support spherical glass forms on exceedingly

thin stems. Networking played a vital part in developing Anastassiades' brand from an individual studio to a globally recognized lighting company. He has ties to luxury furniture manufacturers, galleries, architects, and craftspeople. This supports Xu's (2024) claim that because interior lighting design interacts with architecture, engineering, and artistic creation, it benefits from multidisciplinary collaboration.

One of the most significant networking achievements in his career was his cooperation with FLOS, the Italian lighting maker. Architectural Digest (2017) adds that his initial collection with FLOS pushed him into the international spotlight, establishing him as a key figure in contemporary lighting design. This collaboration allowed his designs to be produced at a scale, quality, and distribution level unattainable for a small studio alone.

Additionally, Anastassiades engages with:

- Craftsmen for metalwork and hand-finishing
  - Architects and interior designers who specify his lighting for luxury projects
  - Design fairs and galleries, which promote his limited-edition works
  - High-end retailers and global distributors, expanding his commercial reach
- The Boulevard (2024) interview demonstrates that his networking method is grounded in long-term relationships rather than short-term prospects. He focuses on collaborators who respect craftsmanship and have an appreciation for detail and precision. The worldwide exposure of his brand was greatly aided by this networking philosophy.

thin stems. "What looks effortless is often the most technically demanding," he observes in the Boulevard interview (2024).

#### Challenge 2: Manufacturing Limitations

Minimalist designs demand extremely accurate manufacturing precision, especially in metal and glass. Early in his career, he struggled to locate manufacturers who could match his necessary level of quality.

#### Challenge 3: Integrating Technology with Craft

As lighting technology moved toward LED-based systems, new compatibility and heat management issues arose.

### **Innovative Solutions:**

Anastassiades frequently collaborates closely with manufacturers to create solutions based on engineering concepts. He collaborates with craftspeople to increase machining accuracy, finishing quality, and structural resolving. His studio also builds unique components that satisfy both aesthetic and functional objectives. In a larger design context, innovation in lighting increasingly uses additive manufacturing and Industry 5.0 techniques, allowing designers to experiment with complicated geometries and quick prototyping. Though Anastassiades' work remains craft-driven, the larger movement in the sector demonstrates how problem-solving is crucial to entrepreneurial growth in small-scale design.

### **V. Conclusion and Reflection**

Michael Anastassiades' entrepreneurial career highlights how small-scale interior elements notably lighting can affect complete spatial experiences. His success shows that a small studio can become a worldwide luxury brand through careful craftsmanship, strategic networking, and a distinct design identity. From his experience, I realized that entrepreneurship in interior design is not just about business strategy but also about persistence, authenticity, and innovative problem solution.

As someone interested in designing furniture and lighting, I find his approach very motivating. His focus on simple items that make a great impression connects with my own design aims. His career pushes me to consider developing a specialized design firm that stresses detail, quality, and innovation. Ultimately, Anastassiades' story reinforces the idea that great design comes from understanding the power of small details and transforming them into meaningful elements that elevate entire spaces.

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