

10 years of Cubiqz

Cubiqz has been developing, producing and supplying lifelike cardboard furniture for ten years. Not only in their own country, but also far beyond borders, the furniture offers endless possibilities to home stagers, real estate agents, project developers, housing corporations, and anyone who wants to temporarily create a certain atmosphere and experience within a space.

IT IS HIGH TIME TO LOOK BACK UPON THE PAST SUCCESSFUL DECADE, AS WELL AS TO LOOK AHEAD, TOWARDS A FUTURE FULL OF NEW POSSIBILITIES, ALONGSIDE ENTHUSIASTIC OWNERS CINDY VAN DIJK AND KATINKA KOLENAAR.



By: Esmar van Langen - **Esmar verwoordt**

Over ten years ago, it all began with an idea of Cindy's, who was an interior stylist at the time. When she set up vacant real estate for sale, the kitchen was always an issue. Should you install a kitchen in order to create a more atmospheric experience, or should you show the space without a kitchen, saving yourself a big investment? Cindy: 'That is how I got the idea of developing a kitchen made of cardboard. I talked about my plans with Katinka and the ball started rolling.'

“ **from cardboard kitchen cupboard to universal total concept** ”

The ladies turn out to be a match made in heaven, and after a long period of reflection and development, they decide to found Cubiqz. Cindy: 'We did a photo shoot of the kitchen at my house and then used those photos to have kitchen cabinets designs made. That's how the first prototypes were created. When the printing sheets of the kitchen cabinets came in and my son walked over to them and tried to open the cabinet, we looked at each other and we knew we had a good product.' The ladies soon realized that selling the product on its own made little sense. The goal was to create the right atmosphere and experience, in order to eventually sell a home for a good price. Katinka: 'We had to translate our idea into a total concept, so we put a lot of time and effort into this. After the kitchen, we quickly started working on other products in order to be able to furnish a complete home or building. Beds, sofas, chairs, dining tables... you name it, and we either have it, or we are developing it.'

Cubiqz consists of eight different box sizes as a basis. It is a modular system that can be combined endlessly. You can now use our cardboard modules in order to create lifelike situations in homes, offices and at trade fairs.'

A turnaround in Home Staging

In the early years of Cubiqz, the market for Home Staging was still in its infancy, but in the past ten years, the ladies have changed this market completely with their unique concept. Cindy: 'Yes, I agree that if we hadn't come up with this concept, Home Stagers would still be carrying around heavy furniture.' Katinka adds: 'And they would still have to rent storage space, make large investments buying or renting furniture, and have to call in help in order to furnish a home. Now, you can easily take your furniture in the car with you, or carry your exhibition stand in a bag. How great is that?'

The power of building together

From the very beginning, Cindy and Katinka sought out to collaborate. Katinka: 'We see strength in collaboration, not in operating individually. We still work with the same Home Stagers as in the very beginning'

At the start, they truly acted as brand ambassadors for Cubiqz with the brokers. We received a lot of feedback through them, that we could respond to quickly. We deliver the product, and the stagers use it to furnish spaces. That really is a profession in it's own right, and it's impressive how it has evolved over the past ten years. The beautiful photos we regularly receive from projects often make our mouths water.'

-Our website and online shop are available in five different languages. Every customer is addressed in his own language -

Cindy and Katinka also work a lot with training institutes for whom cardboard furniture is ideal teaching material. Licensees and partners abroad also have an important role to play. Cindy: 'They know their own market better than we do and together we are working on the expansion of Cubiqz within and outside of Europe. Katinka proudly adds: 'We are loyal to our cooperation partners and customers, and they are loyal to us. This way we have established really good relationships over the past ten years, in which all parties reinforce each other.'

Entirely thought out

Katinka: 'It sounds simple, but our product is entirely thought out. It is right from all angles: the models, the sizes, the fabrics, the prints, and how it can be used and reused modularly. The quality of our cardboard furniture is second to none. We are true perfectionists and we understand why suppliers sometimes find us very difficult to work with. But we aim for perfection and we won't settle for less. This allows us to maintain our high standard and our customers appreciate that.'

Cindy: 'Cubiqz is a very inexpensive way to furnish a home and that really sets us apart in the market. Our favorable demographic location in Enschede, allows us to serve the Dutch market as well as all other countries in Europe, easily and quickly. Through our partners and licensees, we also have stocked warehouses in Spain, Italy and in the USA, allowing us to also deliver there quickly. Katinka: 'We think it is important that our customers are well served. Personal customer contact and good service are our top priorities.'

Taking copycats as a compliment

Copycats are always lurking around to copy a unique concept and I am curious how much this affects Cubiqz. Katinka: 'We see it as a compliment that they want to imitate us, but on the other hand it also detracts from what we have built up. Imitations can be so bad that they look awful, and the customer gets the wrong impression of cardboard furniture as a means of presentation.' Cindy: 'Fortunately, we have registered our products under design law. This way we can ensure that our well thought-out concept remains unique.'



10 years

Beautiful moments

Katinka and Cindy both fall silent for a moment when I ask them about their most beautiful moment in the past ten years.

Cindy: 'I cannot name one specific moment, it is an accumulation of beautiful moments. But every time a new product, in which we have invested a lot of time and energy, is completely finished... yes, that is such a moment.' Katinka: 'And when we are at the fair with that product and receive super positive reactions, we are really proud. By the way, when we were at a fair for the very first time, we thought we would impress with our beautiful products. But what happened? People passed our booth without blinking or blushing. They didn't realise it was a cardboard kitchen. You can't get a bigger compliment, but that was obviously not the intention. Our story had to be communicated clearly and we drew the visitors' attention at the next fairs by hanging kitchens upside down on the wall or by having someone walk around the fair floor with a refrigerator on his neck.' Cindy adds with a smile: 'And with thought clouds above the products. Once we got the attention, people were impressed..'

Katinka & Cindy

Cindy and Katinka speak the same language and their noses are always the same, both private and business. They both have a textile background and have traveled extensively to the Far East for purchasing and product development. Katinka: 'I cannot describe it, but it is very special what we have together.' Cindy: 'We are always on the same page and I never have to convince Katinka of anything.' However identical the ladies are, their work for Cubiqz is very different and clearly defined. Katinka is without a doubt the commercial brain. She is responsible for marketing, social media, the website, and acts as the first sounding board for the customer. Cindy operates more in the background and is an expert at inventing and developing products. She keeps in touch with producers and ensures that everything runs smoothly logistically. Cindy: 'Our roles were divided naturally and this way we both do what we are good at.'

New ideas

Their ten-year anniversary is a celebration that Cindy and Katinka do not want to let go by unnoticed. November will be a festive month with all kinds of nice surprises. The talented ladies are bursting with inspiration and new ideas for the future. Katinka: 'One of the great opportunities we see, is expanding our concept further. We are looking for more partnerships abroad, so that we can expand our sales market. Our concept is now mainly used for furnishing empty spaces, office buildings and trade fairs, but you can of course come up with many more application possibilities.' Cindy: 'We are proud of what we have achieved over the last ten years, but we are far from finished and we look to the future brightly.'

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