

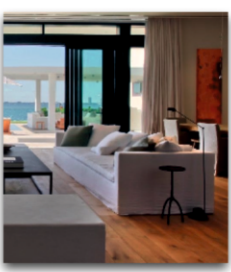
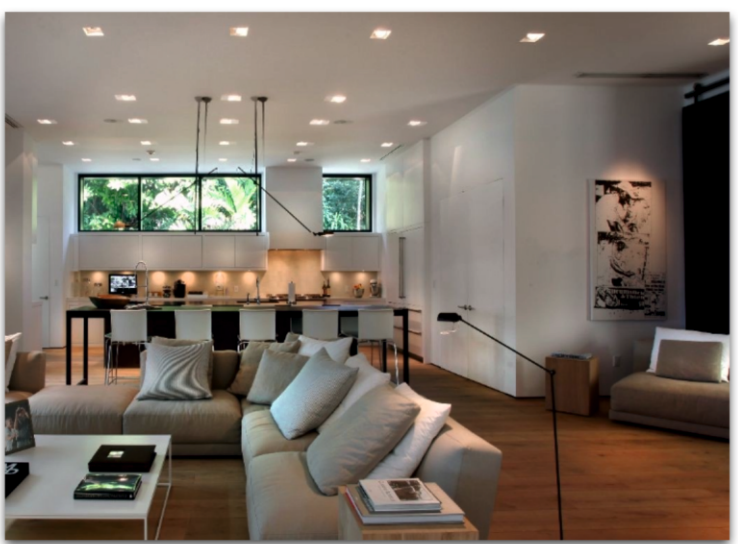
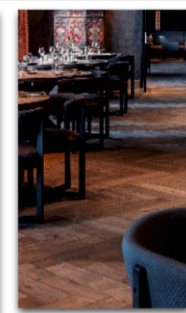
VICTORIA KATHARINE PLAYER

Striving to procure the best European White
Oak to Enhance Any Home, Office, or Business

COVER STORY

PRESIDENT





Victoria Player is the president of Simply Oak™, where she is committed to providing the best European White Oak to builders, designers, architects, and end-users. With her expertise in European White Oak flooring, Victoria offers exceptional guidance to her clients throughout the selection process, explaining all the wood's features and specifications. Her clients can expect to receive a stunning floor that will elevate the look and feel of their home, office, or business.

Having worked in the high-end luxury industry for over 21 years, Victoria began her career in the private jet market before shifting her focus to exporting white oak flooring from Europe over the last 15 years. She demands that Simply Oak™ maintain her high standards of quality and sustainability.

Born in Oxford, England, Victoria is now based in Miami Beach, Florida, USA. When she is not taking care of her clients, Victoria can be found on the water. She enjoys paddle boarding, snorkeling, sailing, and all the benefits that living in south Florida has to offer.

Prior Journey

Victoria has spent 21 years working in the luxury market.

Initially, she gained experience in providing high-end service to wealthy guests in private jet aviation. Later on, she transitioned to the upmarket flooring industry and learned the trade at a different flooring company before eventually launching her own business, Simply Oak™.

Victoria recognized that there were areas in the flooring industry that could be improved, particularly in terms of service and sustainability. With this in mind, she felt compelled to start her own company to ensure that she could provide exceptional product quality while also prioritizing her responsibility to the environment. Her goal was to help preserve European white oak for future generations to enjoy. Hence, launching Simply Oak™ became a necessity for her to achieve these goals.

Prioritizing Clint Satisfaction

Victoria has found that each project is unique and comes

with its own set of challenges. For instance, smaller home projects can often be completed quickly if the architect knows exactly what the client wants and contacts them promptly. In such cases, they can start acquiring and milling the wood immediately.

However, larger projects, such as office buildings, can take years to complete due to various reasons. The client may be unsure of their requirements or may change their mind during the initial process. The financing process may also take time, especially if it involves overseas channels. Additionally, construction may not commence for some time, resulting in delays in delivering the product.

Despite these challenges, Victoria and her team are always prepared to help clients through every step of the process. They understand that their job involves providing assistance, no matter how long the project may take. Whether it's a small project that can be completed quickly or a large-scale endeavor that takes years, the team at Simply Oak™ is committed to helping their clients achieve their vision.

According to Victoria, effective communication is critical to providing solutions. By establishing clear and consistent communication with clients, problems can be addressed promptly as they arise. She has received feedback from clients who have expressed dissatisfaction with suppliers who do not communicate accurately, leading to delays in delivery or unexpected changes in materials. Victoria finds this unacceptable and believes that every effort should be made to avoid such issues.

Simply Oak™

At Simply Oak™, the team's aim is to provide exquisite flooring options that can elevate the appearance of any setting, be it a residence, workplace, or commercial space. It takes great care to source the highest quality European White Oak and offer exceptional services to builders, architects, designers, and end users alike.

European White Oak is renowned for its visually appealing and pleasing tactile properties. It is a superior choice when compared to other woods due to its density, stability, and beauty. Historically, this wood has been used in the construction of some of the most magnificent cathedrals and castles in Europe. With proper maintenance, the beauty and value of this wood will only increase over time. Despite being considered a luxury item, European white oak is also known for its warmth and coziness. In fact, even Victoria's childhood home was adorned with this exquisite flooring, and she strives to make this experience accessible to a wider audience.

Simply Oak™'s wood is sourced from landowners who adhere to sustainable production practices, and all its products are certified to FSC® and PEFC™ standards. The wood is then processed at a mill dedicated to traditional craftsmanship.

Victoria's team guides the clients through a detailed selection process that explains all the wood's qualities and specifications, such as pattern, stain, and beveling options. Simply Oak™ has completed multimillion-dollar projects in the United States, Europe, Latin America, and Asia. She states, *"We are a global company and look forward to working with clients in new locations."*

Leadership Methodology

Victoria is a highly professional individual who values timely communication with both customers and suppliers. She understands the importance of keeping a close eye on

the suppliers to ensure that every step of the process is completed within the expected time frame. In cases where there are delays, she believes in being transparent and honest with clients and explaining any changes to plans or schedules. She recognizes that obstacles are a natural part of life, but believes that transparency is key to resolving them quickly. Victoria takes pride in her direct and honest approach, which has earned her trust and loyalty from her customers.

When customers are making flooring purchases, there is often an emotional component that drives their decision-making process. For new customers, it is important to provide support throughout the entire process, and that is where Victoria comes in. She understands that some customers may require hand-holding, and she is happy to provide that support even years after the installation is complete. Victoria believes in staying in touch with clients through follow-up calls or notes, not only as a good business practice but also as a way to ensure that Simply Oak™ remains top of mind. It is personally satisfying for her to know that her clients are enjoying their flooring, and this level of service often leads to repeat business and referrals. Customers know that Simply Oak™ is a reliable and easy solution for their flooring needs.

Values that Victoria Admires

Honesty and integrity are critical values that Victoria holds dear. She believes in being transparent and forthright with her clients, and values hard work and dedication. Above all, Victoria strives to ensure that her clients feel valued and cared for throughout the entire process. While she offers white-glove treatment, she also brings a softer, more feminine touch to the table.

As a woman in a male-dominated industry, Victoria understands that she must have a strong personality when pursuing business opportunities. She often finds herself dealing with men, whether they are developers, architects, or installers. This means she must be mentally prepared to overcome any perceived weaknesses and stereotypes, as she knows that failure to do so can lead to being overlooked or disregarded. Despite the challenges, Victoria sees overcoming these stereotypes as an essential part of being a successful business leader.

Words for All Women Executives

Victoria encourages female leaders to defy gender stereotypes and overcome inhibitions that may hinder their



progress. She advises them to exhibit strength, accomplishment, and confidence comparable to their male counterparts. Victoria urges them to pursue their goals relentlessly, without fear of failure. She assures them that their convictions will guide them through any challenges that may arise, and persistence and hard work will ultimately lead to success.

For those new to their careers, Victoria emphasizes the importance of education for success. She advises them to admit when they don't know something, without shame or fear of judgment and to take the initiative to learn it. She suggests asking questions and using this knowledge to seize opportunities as they arise. Victoria emphasizes that this approach is essential for success and is a common trait among successful business owners.

Victoria also emphasizes the need for women to support one another in male-dominated industries. She encourages women to compete among themselves to improve but also to empower one another. She advises women to stand up for what they believe in, learn to be assertive, and work together to achieve their goals.

Learnings as a Female Executive

Victoria admits that sometimes she encounters clients who have difficulty interacting with women in the business realm. These clients may not expect to work with a woman and can react dismissively or push people around, especially if they are well-respected men. In these situations, Victoria knows that she must be direct and assertive in order to earn their respect and get the job done.

She understands that women may need to work harder to gain the same level of respect as men in the business world, but she believes it is possible to do so. Women must learn to demand attention and speak up for themselves rather than waiting for it to be given to them. With hard work and dedication, women can earn the same privileges and respect as their male counterparts. Victoria believes that breaking through these biases is an important step toward achieving equality in the workplace.

Breaking the Bias

Victoria acknowledges that she wishes she had learned to be more dominant earlier in her career. As a woman, she was raised to be polite and accommodating, and to trust the opinions of men even when she knew she was

right. However, she has learned that being forward, demanding, and outspoken can be powerful traits in the business world.

In many cases, women are discouraged from being too assertive or vocal, and this can hold them back from reaching their full potential. Victoria believes that it is important to break through these biases and refuse to let negative self-talk or societal expectations hold you back. She encourages women to embrace their strengths and compete at the same level as their male counterparts, knowing that they are just as capable of achieving success in their respective fields.

Surpassing Previous Accomplishments

Victoria is committed to driving the growth of Simply Oak™ and establishing the brand as a dominant force in the industry. She recognizes the strength of the product and the value of the team behind it, and she is excited to see how far they can take the business. As technology continues to evolve, Victoria keeps up with the latest advancements to ensure that she can offer her clients the best service and products possible.

Beyond business success, Victoria also sees herself as a role model and an inspiration to others, particularly women. She believes in leading by example and hopes to empower other women to pursue their dreams and achieve success in their respective fields. Ultimately, Victoria's goal is to build a thriving business while also making a positive impact on the industry and the community at large.

