



EASY SALES TACTICS FOR NON-SALESY JEWELRY DESIGNERS WITH ROBIN KRAMER

THRIVE BY DESIGN WITH TRACY MATTHEWS

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Tracy: Hey there this is Tracy Matthews and I'm so excited to be here on the podcast today with my co-founder of Flourish & Thrive Academy Robin Kramer. We are here to talk about easy sales tactics for non-salesy jewelry designers. Robin yea we're here.

Robin: I'm so excited to be here Tracy. I'm very excited. You know how I love sales.

Tracy: You do love sales. So I'm real excited about this topic because this is really an area we get a lot of questions about, and I know from personal experience I do feel comfortable with sales that's like sort of in my DNA but I didn't always feel comfortable with selling my jewelry. It was very personal to me. I felt like I was being pushy if I talked about my work. I didn't feel like people really cared that much or whatever, and at the end of the day you're your best salesperson and I didn't realize that until a couple of years into my business and it took a lot for me to sort of get over the hump of feeling comfortable with sales and delivering my sales tactics in a way that was not salesy but more of service to the people that I was working with.

Robin: You hit the nail on the head Tracy. That is absolutely what it's about. It's about providing a service and coming from a different mindset. I think you know my title at Dogeared when I was there was Director of Sales, but I really felt like it should have been Director of Relationships because sales is just not about communicating what you have to offer just for a product and money it really is about developing a connection and a relationship with your customers that you have for life. Don't you think?

Tracy: I totally agree. I mean we talk about this a lot in our courses and in our discussion groups and in our private communities that sales really is about relationships. And when I think about this I think





about some of the customers that I work with in my jewelry business for custom designs and there's one client that I'm working with on a cuff bracelet right now. It will hopefully be delivered by the time this podcast goes live, but he's within the last year ordered three multi-thousand dollar projects from me in a year because of the relationships that I've built with him. So I'm offering him a service. I'm making it easy for him to get something for his wife that he loves and in return he pays me money for it and for him a huge benefit because he doesn't have to think about it and that's the reason why I like talking about sales from this perspective because when you're doing it the right way you're really helping people. It's not being pushy on them if that makes sense.

Robin: Absolutely. I mean it just... it excites me [3:00] when I hear you talk about it this way because it's really into the core of what I feel sales is about and really it's about creating that relationship because when you have a business it's not just about how many people can you get buying from you. It's about creating those relationships where you have repeat customers. You know there's been studies on this that it's so much easier to maintain a client than it is to get a new one and when you have a customer that you've been working with you get to know them, you get to know their anniversaries and their special dates, and you get to know their needs and you actually provide that awesome service of they get to know the quality that you provide and it's just such a win/win situation.

Tracy: It is. Well that's what I try to deliver at the end of the day.

Robin: Well it's worked, right.

Tracy: Yes, yes alright.

Robin: Well you know it reminds me of this great quote that I know we both love from Patricia Fripp and it's "You don't close a sale you open a relationship if you want to build a long term successful enterprise," and I just think that that just says it all in a nutshell.

Tracy: Okay so why don't we... should we dive right into the nuts and bolts right here?





Robin: Let's do that right.

Tracy: So I want to hear some of your sales tactics that are really geared towards relationship building Robin because I know that there's a few and I kind of want to let's get right into it so that people can really take the information that they're going to learn today and start to feel more confident with their sales.

Robin: That sounds great.

Tracy: Okay perfect.

Robin: So I've got some tactics that I think will really help people. I think that what you said initially is you come from a place of providing a service absolutely and the next thing is you get to know your customer or your potential new customers. Get to know them by asking them questions learning about if you're working with stores learning about the store, learning about the customers that shop there. If you have... if you're working with them directly like you do with your clients what are they looking for? Do they have certain tastes? What do they like? What's their esthetic? So really getting to know them and learning as much as you can about them. Also with that you want to ask a lot of questions right?

Tracy: Yes. I ask a lot of questions. I'm sorry to interrupt you, but even in my custom intake form I ask tons of personal questions about them because I think it's really important to get to know who they are as a person.

Robin: That is so fantastic and I couldn't agree more. The other thing too is do some research. If you're working with a store go on Yelp. Find out what their rating is or what people are saying about their store. Go on their website. Learn about other brands that they're carrying. See **[6:00]** if your line actually merchandises well with the other products and brands that they're carrying. Maybe it's they have children the same age as your kids just really kind of getting some connection points so learning not only about their business but learning what they like personally. I have a great story where one of the designers that's in our community she was getting ready to meet with a buyer and she was doing some great due diligence and doing some research and found on Linked In that this buyer actually went to her alma mater. So she had an





immediate connection with the fact that they both went to the same college and it eased the buyer excuse me the designer when she went into meet with the buyer it almost put the designer at ease because she was like oh hey this person went to the school I went to. It made it not such a scary process.

Tracy: Yeah and you have something to talk about too.

Robin: Absolutely.

Tracy: Awesome. So I want to dial this back a little bit because you want to get to know your customers and potential new customers. Now I gave one strategy for working one on one with people. People come to me and I don't know them in advance or I haven't been introduced to them personally I have them fill out a custom intake form. So there's a lot of designers who are going to be working directly with consumers so how would you recommend that people get to know their customers if let's say they're trying to sell them mainly on a website or they're selling in person shows?

Robin: Great question. Well in person shows these are the things that when I was doing shows that really stand out being engaging, talking to people and it's not just hi are you familiar with my line.

Tracy: Yes.

Robin: I want to find out oh my gosh that is, she could be this person walking by has a great necklace on and you're complimenting the necklace and maybe you have a bracelet that goes really well with that or you know it doesn't always have to... this is really important it doesn't always have to be about your selling, it doesn't have to be about your jewelry, it's about starting the conversation. So it could be oh this person has a great nail polish on or they have great shoes or something that's authentic and honest that you're engaging a conversation with. So I think that's really important. It could be that wow it's really hot in here.

Tracy: I think we've said that before at different shows. Wow its freezing, wow it's hot.

Robin: Exactly, exactly but it kind of eases it. I think people are kind of a little guarded especially going to shows and always feeling sold to.





Tracy: Yeah.

Robin: And it really should be about the conversation and getting to know; learn them. If they've got a cute dog with them say something about that or I always think it's so interesting because a lot of designers have so much fear about approaching people and talking with people about their jewelry and when you stop [9:00] making it about the sale and start creating it about the relationship and just engaging in a nice conversation it changes the playing field.

Tracy: So small talk with a purpose.

Robin: Small talk I love that yes small talk with a purpose.

Tracy: So I want to... when you make it more about the relationship then about the sale. I love that little take away so great, great point. So talk a little bit more about finding a point of connection. Oh wait I want to back up one second before we move on. Now for people who are selling on their website do you have any specific tactics? If they aren't going to see someone face to face.

Robin: Yes. Provide as much information as you can. It's not just about having one image. I think it's really nice to be able to see maybe the necklace if it's let's say it's a necklace; to see the necklace on or to see it at a different angle or when because I always come from a buyer prospective. Give me as much information as you can. What are the materials you're using? What is the length of it? How big is if it's a charm how big is the charm.

Tracy: Right.

Robin: In perspective to size wise. I also love the romancing of it so not just the nuts and bolts I want to know what inspired you to make this or what makes this necklace so special? What makes this piece so special? Sundance Catalog, I bring them up because they have great copywriting.

Tracy: Mm-hmm (affirmative).





Robin: And to even... it doesn't have to be this long paragraph it could just be like a nice sentence using words that really describe why you created it or what's so special about it. It can really connect. I also think you providing suggestions that goes well with something else. And I think to what I love and I see some websites doing is providing information not just about the jewelry per say like maybe it's how to clean your jewelry or maybe it's this necklace goes well with. There's a website called Polyvore where you can actually create these wonderful styling scenarios where this dress and your necklace and these shoes. So giving a picture of what your customer would possibly be wearing or.

Tracy: Right. I'm going to stop you there. So basically it's like drawing a man with not only the visuals of your website but also with the way that your writing and drawing them in so I'm just going to use another example from my own website because I just did a rework on my about page and my copywriter helped me and I've always... my about page was always really about the customer but I really wanted to take it to the next step. So one of the things that I do instead of saying here's my inspiration is I identify who the customer is so that they know who they are and that's a place and a spot for engagement. So what we're really talking about is getting engagement and making a connection. [12:00] So whether it be with words, whether it be with visuals, or whether it be with conversation.

I want to move on because we want to make sure that we get through the topics and make this digestible. So let's talk about your next topic about bringing us to a point of connection when you're doing these conversations. Point number one is to get to know your customers and potential new customers through conversation, through engaging tools on your website, through copy, through making it about them and point number two which is also tied into point number one is to find a point of connections so you use a story about how one of our designers had a common school with the buyer that she was meeting with and there's lots of places. If you're a dog lover you could talk about dogs or you could talk about family or you could talk about where you live or where you grew up or all sorts of things. Small talk with purpose as we mentioned.





I want to get on to the next step because I think this is a really important one so why don't you talk about your favorite sales tactic or the point number three of the sales tactics that you think can make it really easy.

Robin: Sure thing. You know keeping track of all the details I have a pretty good memory but you don't want to just rely on your memory you really want to have a system; a customer relationship management system or if you want to start off doing a spreadsheet in Excel; something that's going to give you all the details so when you're calling and speaking with your customer that you speak intelligently, you can remember the conversation. Like I said it's really difficult to remember everything but if you have some tools to help you it really helps strengthen that relationship and it also helps that maybe they were going through a special event an anniversary that's coming up. You get to remember that and ahead of time contact them and say I'm so excited your anniversary is coming up please know I'm here if I can help you with any special gifts. You know you said something earlier Tracy that really just resonates with me it is about your customer. It is not about you, it is about your customer.

So there are a lot of great CRM systems out there you can get trial basis there's Insightly, Contactually, the bigger one Sales Force. The most important thing is find one that is going to be right for you and for you needs.

Tracy: I've been using Insightly and I love it. I mean it's not... the interface isn't the most beautiful I would like a prettier interface but it's been working really well for me and my assistant to communicate, also host files, and write down projects and know like check off things it's super cool and there's tasks oriented with it so I really like Insightly. And we're not affiliates for Insightly this is just something that I like to use so I just want to mention that. [15:00] Alright so should we move on?

Robin: Yeah let's talk about number four.

Tracy: Alright cool.

Robin: So number four is be thoughtful and sincere. So we've all been there where you're kind of talked to and not really engaged with.





So how do we take that to the next level? How to really be sincere and thoughtful and again being of service to your customer? You know it goes right now I think more than ever a handwritten note goes a really long way.

Tracy: No one hand writes notes anymore. I mean I do because I was raised that way but people think an email is an exchange for a handwritten note these days.

Robin: Let me tell you I agree with you Tracy. A handwritten note just goes leaps and bounds beyond plus it is a nice way to get your name in front of your client again; in front of your customer and it's something that they'll absolutely remember. Also if it's a special like I said earlier an anniversary, if it's a special anniversary or you're sending a gift that you made so in Tracy's case if she's sending something to a client of hers maybe including a special gift like a little you know some chocolates or something with a little note again adding that specialness to it and it just goes a long way. So anniversaries, birthdays, store anniversaries, the birth of a child so many occasions that you can do this and even sometimes what I like to do is say hey we was just thinking of you. So.

Tracy: That's good. I like that. People are like whoa that's so nice.

Robin: It doesn't always have to be driven by a specific event but those are great ways to do that and Tracy what about you because I know as you said you're amazing at thank you notes.

Tracy: Well I love the art of the thank you note. I buy beautiful thank you notes so that I can include them with my gifts but often times I'll send as you mentioned like a box of chocolates. I was reading in our Diamond Insiders Club to that we were having a conversation about what people include in their boxes for thank you. Someone was enclosing tea, another person had a jewelry polishing cloth. It really depends on your brand but I've done things like send candles or if I've met people in person I've given them like a bottle of champagne just like different nice little touches depending on who it's for. I try since my work is so customized I try to really cater a gift specifically towards the client.

Robin: Love that and it also means that you're paying attention to what they're telling you because you're getting something that they'll like.





Tracy: Yes, yeah alright. So should we move on?

Robin: Sure. [18:00]

Tracy: Okay cool.

Robin: Alright really, really important never make assumptions especially when you're working with your customers. It's really important to communicate. You don't want to do things in a vacuum and just never assume something about your customers. I find with my... I have a background in corporate retail. I've been in the wholesale industry a long time. It is amazing to me how many companies big and small will make decisions for their customers without actually talking to them and asking hey would you like this.

So I'm just going to give an example. I was working this one brand and I'm not going to point them out but they were doing... they really felt that providing some signage and press directly to the stores because this was a... they were doing wholesale. Sending them all these materials to use was going to be beneficial to the store buyers and the stores themselves in selling the product but the problem was they never asked if they wanted it. So there was a lot of money spent on signs, there was a lot of money spent on special displays for these signs. There was just bottom line a lot of money spent and the whole initiative went out and people weren't using it and the team that was doing this at the company was shocked that the stores weren't using it. Well come to find out they didn't have the room for it. They didn't want, some of the stores didn't want the product to be so branded because they had their own brand in house that they wanted to really push. So there were just a lot of assumptions that this great idea that happened at the company was going to be so fantastic for their customer when in actuality it really wasn't and it was a very costly mistake.

So when you're working; you're working so hard to develop these relationships don't let it fall short by just assuming things. Really, really talk with your customers. What are you looking for when you're developing a new collection and you have somebody who really loves your line or has been buying from you a long time? Have the conversation. I value your opinion. Find out what they're interested in or is there something that really works at your store





that maybe we could do together. We could partner. Maybe it's a trunk show; maybe it's going in and talking to the associates. Just involve them and ask them and communicate. Good solid relationships are based on communication. Don't you think Tracy?

Tracy: Yes they are. That's funny that you say that. [21:00] I mean it goes in personal relationships as well as in business relationships. So I really want to get into some nitty gritty sales tactics that people can actually use. So I know that a lot of designers are terrified to pick up the phone. So I think a few things that I do to make sales easy for me is I plan it into my day. So I usually try to schedule the sales stuff that I have to do during my most productive hours during the day. I usually recommend doing this in the earlier hours that you start working because that way you aren't going to pass over or skip it and not do it but what's worked for you Robin?

Robin: Well Tracy I'm a lover of the phone.

Tracy: You are.

Robin: I feel really strongly about having that connection. I think email is great. I think the social media is definitely important. I don't think there's any substitute for actually having a conversation with someone and I know sometimes it's really as you said earlier a lot of designers are pretty terrified by it but if you come from that side of I'm actually helping somebody do their job or feel a need. Maybe their needing a gift for somebody or in a buyer's case they need to have product in their store to sell but I never look at it as being a burden or an imposition. I look at it as though I'm really helping my customers. So picking up the phone also when you do live events be it a craft show where you're dealing with.

Tracy: Wait let me stop you right there because I want to talk a little bit more about the phone. So what kind of advice do you give to designers who are terrified to pick up the phone and do you have any examples of designers who have used the phone and really had success when they were like trembling in their boots before they picked it up?

Robin: Oh yeah great question. Yes I have found in fact one of the designers in our community and we have lots in our community that are terrified of the phone but have really... we have a course





happening right now where it's about accountability and they're making commitments to pick up the phone and what's happening is they're getting response. One designer stands out; one brand stands out to me is Friends for Frank who both... its two designers that have partnered together and they're amazing metalsmiths. They have an incredible line and.

Tracy: They really do have an incredible line and they're so talented.

Robin: So talented and the picking up the phone is probably the hardest thing for them and they are absolutely seeing the benefits and results from it. And let me tell you it sometimes doesn't happen right away in fact most times it's not an immediate buy but again it is cultivating that relationship [24:00] and connecting and a lot of what I heard from the designers that have Friends for Frank is that they would call and people would say; buyers would say oh my gosh thanks for the reminder. I'm going to be placing an order in a month or I'll get to the... thank you for reminding me about that. So it really is an opportunity to help them do their job and another tactic that I like Tracy is that why not do the order for them. If it's a customer that you've been working with for a long time and they've done buys with you putting together an order for them is actually gonna help them. They can just sign off on it. They can make changes to it but it really that is something I used to do all the time when I was at Dogeared.

Tracy: I love; that's one of my favorite tactics is putting their order together for them because I really feel like that in and of itself can make the buyers job whoever it is it just makes their job easier. I'm working with a client right now on an engagement ring and he's very detail-oriented. He's a graphic designer so he has a lot of the visual aspects. So in certain cases it's a little bit more work for me because he does provide a lot of feedback but in another way it's good because it gives me a lot more to go off of. But it's your job to sort of direct them so I selected all these stones he wanted to keep seeing more and I had to guide him and say look these are the best ones that we've found. I showed him a few more and I was like these are not as nice. More isn't always better and I think that's sometimes if you're able to guide your buyers and help them come to a decision for them it makes their jobs easier and it will make the sales less terrifying for you if you just go in with confidence and say look this is the direction that we should go in.





And he gave me a bunch of other feedback and I was like this is a good idea, this is not a good idea and here are the reasons why and then it helps you sort of narrow the playing field or narrow the vision so that you can get to the sell which is the important thing.

Robin: You know what Tracy is so right. Confidence is key absolutely and when you were saying that it was making me think of the fact that when you approach it and more is not necessarily better.

Tracy: No.

Robin: But when you approach it and you know your line I mean be proud of what you do. Be confident in what you do and when you're talking with a buyer be it your customer that you have or a store know these are my best sellers. This is new. Have in your back pocket suggested buys.

Tracy: Yes. One other thing so let's talk a little bit more about just briefly about scheduling your day and how to get the important things [27:00] done. We like to call them revenue generating activities early on and then I also want to talk about frequency of phone calls and emails or phone calls versus emails I mean the either or isn't necessarily as specific but as far as the follow up sequence so that you aren't terrified when you're doing this like oh and I doing this too much at what point is it annoying?

Robin: That sounds scary.

Tracy: So let's talk about the scheduling, the RGAs during the day first and then we'll talk about the frequency.

Robin: Great. Well what you had said earlier is that you do it in the first thing in your day and I think that's really important. You're fresh in the morning. Usually if you're working with buyers they're at their desks in the morning so it's a great time to do this because once you get later in the day I don't know about you sometimes the committee in my head.

Tracy: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Robin: Is telling me take a break or oh my gosh it's too late to call or if you commit to doing it first thing and block out a couple of hours.





Two to four depending on what your ultimate goal is first thing in the morning and you can alternate through the work week and say Monday, Wednesday, Friday you're going to be calling and Tuesday, Thursday you're going to be focused on sending out emails but definitely put it in your calendar and when you do that and one of the tricks that I know I learned from you is turn off everything else and focus on just the revenue generating activities that you have scheduled.

Tracy: Yes. I love it. Alright so as far as frequency goes let's say you pick up the phone and you don't get someone would you... see this is a good question. Let's say you're building your confidence muscle you're like I'm going to do this I'm going to make some phone calls. So let's say you pick up the phone you don't get the buyer. What's your advice on leaving a message? I think this is really good advice.

Robin: Well.

Tracy: Or strategy. I don't even know what you're going to say but.

Robin: Nowadays I think it's important to leave them a message because everybody knows your phone number.

Tracy: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Robin: You know you can't hide/block your number so I do think to leave a message and I would just say your name and that you look forward to speaking with them. It doesn't have to be anything lengthy in explanation and I would follow up probably a week and a half two weeks later. You know it really depends on kind of what you're doing. It could be you need to reach them for something specific like for example.

Tracy: I'm saying if it's a new client though. Let's just assume new business because I think follow up for existing business is a little different.

Robin: Well you know what I love to do for new businesses. I love sending out a postcard then either following up with a phone call or an email and my preference is **[30:00]** a phone call and then an email.





Tracy: Okay and so that would be; that's like three points of contact.

Robin: Exactly.

Tracy: Postcard, phone call, then email.

Robin: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Tracy: Okay cool. And then what if you don't hear back? Would you follow up again or would you just go on to the next season?

Robin: I would take a break.

Tracy: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Robin: And if you have something new to share so for example if you do the three points of contact and then all of a sudden the holidays are coming around and you have a special holiday line then it's another reason to contact them.

Tracy: Okay. So when you have a new reason to contact them that's the next point. And I feel like this goes for press and any sort of sales efforts. So when I'm working with clients one on one I mark dates and everything, I follow up with people, I send an email newsletter probably like every month or six weeks. Probably not enough but the way my clients work is a little bit different because it's very much about the relationship and their personal relationships and sometimes I just work with someone once but hopefully I work with them much more often than that and it's really about the correspondence and the follow up.

So what I do is depending on where I am at the stage of a process or if I have landed the sale yet. I would probably follow up with them depending on like every couple of days to once a week depending on what our initial conversation was. Now if someone sent me an email through my website and I didn't know them I would invite them to a call first and then if I didn't hear back I'd probably follow up one more time and then if I didn't hear back I probably would drop it just because they probably found someone else and it's a cold lead and it's better to focus on the warm leads and the people that are gonna probably actually buy





something then spiraling down on people who aren't so. Alright so is there anything else that you want add?

Robin: Yes. I want to add don't be afraid of no.

Tracy: Yes. Thank you. Okay so why not to be afraid of no because this is important.

Robin: Because I think it's really; buyers will say no for various reasons and it is not a personal thing. So it's very important not to take and I think that's probably one of the hardest things designers have trouble with the word no because they take it as very personal and no could mean a varied of things. No because I can't place an order right now I am fully assorted, I've already done my buys. No I have a similar line; a similar esthetic in the store. It could be you know what I just bought my wife an anniversary gift so no not right now and it could you know there is that always no definite no I'm not interested which is fine but I always feel that for every no **[33:00]** you get closer to that yes and it takes a lot of no's to make a yes.

Tracy: Do you have a good example of when this; a brief example of when this has happened?

Robin: Oh I have a; yes I absolutely do.

Tracy: Let's get a specific story. I love it.

Robin: We have a designer in our community one of our mastermind students who she... oh my gosh I have so many stories of this. So she was; there is a store in Chicago that was one of her top stores she wanted to get into. She loves the store. She loves shopping there. She thinks the owner; the buyer is amazing and she would go to that store and she would show the line and she started this relationship with the buyer who's the store owner and the buyer just said... kept saying no but was providing feedback which is I think really important too. If you can get someone to tell you why and not you know don't force them to do that but also just ask is there what reason or I would love. And what's even better is just say I'd love to keep you updated on my new collection or I'd love to keep you informed for the next year or on my newsletter.





However you want to phrase that but to keep them updated in a really nice manner.

What I love about this designer is she didn't give up. And she listened to what the buyer was telling her and what the buyer was telling her what she needed for her store. Now the designer didn't change her designs but she kept in mind what the owner was looking for and I have to tell you after four years she got a yes.

Tracy: That's amazing.

Robin: And what's even better Tracy is that this store is one of her key accounts and top sales.

Tracy: I think I know who you're talking about.

Robin: And it's so exciting to see and the relationship that the buyer and the designer have is fantastic. They've developed this great friendship. They work really well together and it has been such a win/win for both. It's been incredible.

Tracy: Awesome. I love it. Well this was so fun for me because I love talking about easy sales tactics for jewelry designers who don't want to be salesy. I mean who wants to be salesy. So we covered a lot today I mean I think some of the key takeaways are to really develop the relationship. Make sure that you're tracking what's going on by using a CRM. Make it easy on yourself and have some things planned out. Be really thoughtful and sincere and make sure that you're communicating properly and then I think some of the other key takeaways are really making sure that you schedule time for sales into the day because that makes sure that you actually do it and then making sure that you're using a combination of phone and email and often times so many people are emailing these days the phone is often a better strategy. **[36:00]**

And then using the three points of contact technique that you mentioned maybe sending a piece of physical mail or something, calling and emailing, and then think outside the box of your three points of contact for you it might be different if you're working direct to consumer. Maybe it's sending out a newsletter, maybe it's reaching out individually to people on social media and then following up. And then making sure that you're coming from a





place of service and I think that's really the most important thing to sort of get you out of that crazy mindset like oh I'm being salesy or too pushy but if you approach sales from a place of service like you're doing them a favor then it makes the whole process a lot easier.

Robin: Agreed. So much easier and it's so much more fun.

Tracy: So much more fun. Thank you so much everyone for listening today. We'd be honored if you subscribed to our podcast. And if you like what you're learning please review and rate our podcast. We would be so grateful. And if you want more information about Robin and myself you can go on over to www.flourishthriveacademy.com for more jewelry business advice and free training. Thanks so much. Until next time.

