



---

## HOLIDAY SALES PREP 2016 EDITION

### THRIVE BY DESIGN WITH TRACY MATTHEWS

*One really good thing to do is to look at your numbers from last year and then create small or moderate or even big increases over the numbers that you had last year.*

***You're listening to Thrive-By-Design business marketing and lifestyle strategies for your jewelry brand to flourish and thrive. Let's get started.***

Tracy:

Well hello there and welcome to the Thrive-By-Design podcast. I'm Tracy Matthews your host today the Chief Visionary Officer at Flourish and Thrive Academy and I'm very excited per usual to be here chatting with you on the podcast. So today I wanted to dive into something that is really important for you to start thinking about right now and I know that when I had my wholesale business many, many years ago starting to think about this thing in the middle of the summer was sort of a pain in the you know what. I was really focused on summer sales and being in the moment in the summer but I noticed that anytime that I didn't start focusing on this thing during the summer months my business did not do as well as I would have liked it that year.

So without further adieu you guys probably know what I'm talking about. Right now it's time to be focusing on your holiday sales prep. So today the podcast is going to be all about the holiday sales prep for 2016 and I'm calling it the 2016 Edition. So I'm excited to have you here today and I'm excited to be here today to talk all about holiday sales because now is the time. For those of you who haven't clued into this I wanted to just remind you of this. For most jewelry businesses at least 50% of their revenue comes during the last four months of the year. So this is a really important thing to remember and that's why it's so important to be prepared for these last four months aka the holiday season.

So I have seen this trend in my business especially when I was selling products on my website and then also selling my jewelry to stores. Definitely the holiday season is the busiest time so I think for most designers with the exception of certain industries or specialty types of designers this is going to be your busiest time. Now I say with the exception of certain specialty designers because the interesting thing is I shifted my business model to more of a bridal market where I'm focusing on heirloom redesigns and also doing a lot of engagement rings and wedding bands. I noticed that my business is a lot busier at the beginning of the year now which is really interesting and it gets super busy right before summer and then I get busy again in the early fall but I'm not as busy





---

typically over the holidays and I find that that's when I'm always hustling for more sales which is kind of interesting.

But this is for most of you. [3:00] Not everyone is in the engagement ring and wedding band business so this is not going to be applicable what I just mentioned but it is applicable to most of us because if you're really selling products over the holidays most of you are going to be super busy over the next four months or the next six months I should say preparing for the next two and selling for the next four. So you don't want to miss out on this very, very important time because you have the opportunity if you're focusing on it in the right way to really build and have a huge impact on your sales for the rest of the year. So I wanted to mention that and that's why every year we put out a free guide for you to grab called 151 Ways to Boost Your Holiday Sales. We're going to have that over at the podcast notes. You can grab that over at [www.flourishthriveacademy.com/episode50](http://www.flourishthriveacademy.com/episode50) and go ahead and grab it. You can also grab it just go straight to the source and grab it at [www.flourishthriveacademy.com/boostsales](http://www.flourishthriveacademy.com/boostsales).

So I wanted to start right now with a little story about my success really focusing on building momentum and intention and gamifying the holiday sales season. So when I had Tracy Matthews Designs years ago my salesperson Hillary and I were really trying to hit some super big numbers and they were going to be huge increases over the previous year so we were setting some big hairy goals as you've probably heard that term before but we were setting some pretty big goals for ourselves and we really wanted to make it. So what we did is we turned the holiday sales season into a game. So we set some goals and set some projections and then we would be focused every single day on working towards those goals. So because the sales figures were one of our number one goals for the last four months we started preparing six months before by getting some press and getting features in December issues of magazines.

I don't think we got any holiday gift guides that year but we definitely did pitch several and it was definitely worth it because I feel like we got exposure other ways like some of the editors for the gift guides ended up featuring us in still shots in magazines anyway and so that worked. That was really great. We started mapping out a plan of outreach and who we wanted to get reorders from. We started making appointments for the tradeshow that was happening in August the Accessory Circuit Show so that we had made sure that we had appointments with the buyers who we needed to see so they could buy the collection and then we started to make a list of anyone we didn't see at the show and we would be calling them and emailing them consistently every single day.

So our focus everyday was to focus on getting sales and to making that goal and what ended up happening is that the





sales started to trickle in which was really [6:00] cool and we made it fun. So every time we would get a sale coming in Hillary and I would celebrate and make sure that we had a little dance party in the office, we'd get really excited, I'd give rewards. Sometimes we'd go have after work drinks if we landed a big sale. So it was really fun. Every week we reviewed the sales numbers and we measured where we were and because we were staying so accountable and staying on top of it we noticed that we started seeing this phenomenon of our sales increasing and before we knew it we had a bunch of orders running in or coming in nonstop and I think the coolest part of it was that we got confirmation that one of our catalogs; Sundance Catalog was going to place an order from us and we're like oh awesome we're going to get an order from Sundance and we ended up getting an order that was about five times what we expected it to be to the tune of 50,000 dollars.

So the cool part about this because we were so on it building all this momentum and reaching out to stores, making sure we were on top of it starting in the summer and doing the efforts for the press and making sure that we were sending out newsletters and all that stuff we ended up building so much momentum that we ended up exceeding our sales goal by over 50,000 dollars because that order that came in was 50,000 dollars bigger than we had expected. So super cool phenomenon. This can happen for you and what I really encourage you to do is if you dread kind of dealing with this stuff or focusing on it what can you do to make it fun and pleasurable for you because that's the most important thing is when we have to do things in business that aren't necessarily our favorite things or cause us anxiety or make us feel vulnerable because we're putting ourselves out there. This is a great opportunity for you to do something to make it fun; to gamify it.

So think about different ways that you can do that. I think that that's a really awesome way to get started with your summer sales. So I want you all to stay accountable to yourself and after you listen to this episode I want you to sit down and sort of write out a sales plan and it could be really rough even just on a notepad and paper. Set some goals for yourself that you want to hit this holiday season and one really good thing to do is to look at your numbers from last year and then create small or moderate or even big increases over the numbers that you had last year and if you're new in business then you could just make up some numbers based on your existing sales. If you don't have many sales then make something up that sounds good to you that would be a reasonable goal that you could probably hit without being disappointed if you don't get there. So sometimes if you set a goal that's too high it's too far of a stretch and our minds don't wrap our brains around it and so it's hard to reach. So make sure that it's something that's actually achievable.





So I wanted to go through some of the reasons why it's important to start [9:00] focusing on your holiday sales and starting to prepare for them now. The first reason is that it brings you better media opportunities. You probably have heard a lot of people in the product based business space talking about holiday gift guides. Well right now starting in June through about August editors are curating materials and products for their gift guides and gift guides are awesome because if you get featured in a gift guide often times it's a huge sales driver. I can't promise that it's always going to be because different kinds of press, different publications depending on what they are drive different types of traffic. However if you land something in the right gift guide and it's leveraged the right way you can see huge sales success which is really, really cool and it doesn't matter if it's just holiday gift guides.

Remember that there are gift guides done for a lot of different kinds of things so keep this at top of mind as you're just moving through your business for other holiday season maybe there's a Valentine's Day gift guide coming up for February you'd want to start reaching out to editors in October probably for that or Mother's Day gift guides which are great which you probably want to start reaching out in February for that. So I got a Mother's Day gift guide one year and I remember this so clearly because it was before the internet; before people were really ordering on the internet. They were actually picking up the phone to order things or calling and basically ordering from stores as well but I got a placement in InStyle's Mother's Day guide and I ended up selling; my phone was ringing off the hook and I ended up selling over 150 units in a day. Sold out of all the inventory I had for the pearl's. I just wasn't expecting that much in sales and then was like I ended up being back ordered on some stuff.

I think it helped also because the product was featured on the Today Show although it didn't make the segment cut necessarily it wasn't spoken about in the segment. They did put the jewelry on the Today Show website so I think that really helped. So a lot of these gift guides are really leveraging in multiple ways. So even thought that was the Mother's Day gift guide the same thing happens for holiday gift guides and there's different; you have opportunities to get in print magazines now but you also have opportunities maybe a little bit down the road to be featured on a blog or to be in a TV roundup where there's a TV show that's rounding up your jewelry to sell on one of those shows. So there's things like the Today Show or some of those entertainment shows they have shopping opportunities at the end. Sometimes they are at a discount; sometimes they aren't so you can find one that works for you but anyway the point being is if you start preparing now you have the opportunity to get into gift guides and have better media opportunities down the road.





The next step and especially this is very important if you wholesale is that you can get in with buyers and start making connections if you have your collection ready before their buyers holiday budget is drained which is really important. The tradeshow for holiday season and fall [12:00] are in August and so buyers are getting ready for that but if you start reaching out to them now before they even go to the show and they have it in the back of their mind what you're doing then this is a great opportunity for you to get an order for holiday before they even see anyone else's line and before their budgets dry up. So that's a really, really important reason why you probably would want to start thinking about that now and making sure that everything is prepared before so that you can get in with the buyers before they're bought up for the season.

Another reason is that you will be able to shape and create a more complete marketing plan which I think is really, really important and essential if you want to be on target for holiday sales. Some of you may have heard of our Ramp Up Your Holiday Sales course that we used to do. We're offering it in a little bit of a different way this year so stay tuned for that but one of the great things about it is it keeps you on track with accountability for staying on focus and on point with your marketing so that you're consistently doing things on a daily and weekly basis that are keeping you focused on your holiday sales. So right now is the time to start mapping out the strategy and the plan so that you're prepared so that when September comes along or the end of August you can start getting your work out there and then also it will help get you prepared and reduce some of the busy work that happens if you wait till the last minute to start getting ready for the holidays.

So I don't know about you. Every year especially when I had my jewelry brand the holiday season; my wholesale jewelry brand I should say. I still have a jewelry brand as many of you know. The holiday season would get so hectic because not only was it such a busy time of the year but I had to also create samples for the upcoming show in January and then I would also be taking a vacation with my family to go to Sun Valley, Idaho which we do every year to go skiing or snowboarding and it became really stressful if I was trying to scramble at the last minute to get all this stuff done and then I ended up being so worn out by the time the holidays came I would inevitably always get sick and then I would have to come back and prep and leave for New York literally three days after I'd get back from my family holiday vacation and it was just so stressful and I know a lot of you have heard me talk about my family. I'm one of eight children so when we're all together it's a big ole party and a lot of fun so that's exhausting in and of itself but there wasn't a lot of down time for me and I'm sure that a lot of you can relate even if you





---

don't have as big of a family doing all the family stuff and sort of all the pressure and impact that comes with the holiday season in your business can be really stressful at crunch time so you want to make sure that you're as prepared as possible.

Alright so I want to reiterate some of the things that you should be doing now in order to make sure that you're staying on target. So I mentioned [15:00] this briefly earlier but you want to evaluate and set your goals. So you want to take a look at what you did for last year if you were in business last year and you were selling during the holidays. I would take a look at the percentage of increase that you're doing this year over last year if your sales are increasing and then I would make projections based on that or maybe even inching up a little bit higher for your holiday season. So ideally most of you and there are always exceptions to the rule would probably want to try to plan an increase and your increase can be anywhere from 10 to 100% and I know that sounds crazy but if you're just starting in business it's not unusual to double your sales year over year or if you had lower volume numbers like let's say you did 5,000 dollars per month September, October, November, and December last year it would be really easy for you to do 10,000 dollars if you have the right strategy in place and that you're reaching the right people.

So think about it that way and depending on your numbers you can figure out the percentage of increase that you want to have and in the case where it would be a lower percentage let's say you were booking 100,000 dollars in sales a month a 10% increase would be a really good increase because that would be picking up another 10,000 dollars in that month. Totally different types of businesses and nothing to really get attached too but just to think about where you are because this is really about your business and growing your business on your terms and how you'd like to do it. So that's the best to start.

Alright so the next step would be to start planning. So now is the time to roadmap as Robin likes to say all things that are involved with sales and marketing. You want to be breaking down your sales by month which we mentioned and make sure that you're focusing on mapping out those gift guides that you want to get into and planning your marketing so that when November and December hit you are prepared and potentially you could get some placements in some great magazines to really help your sales. So make sure that you map out any efforts that you want to do for sales and marketing onto your marketing calendar and you start to target some of those bloggers and some of those local publications that you know you want to target and I wanted to mention this too is that some of the bigger publications and the bigger media outlets require a lot longer lead time especially magazine and print publications. They typically require because they have to be





---

printed anywhere from three to six months out. That's typically how far in advance they're working.

Now other types of publications and media outlets work on a shorter schedule. Now there's so much digital marketing out there even traditional print magazines have digital marketing content that they put out that's not necessarily printed in the magazine but is sometimes posted on their website or other places because people are consuming a lot of information online these days. So those things might typically have a little bit of a shorter lead time especially getting with bloggers. So you want to make sure that you are kind of mapping it out [18:00] based on the media outlet and local publications unless they're a print magazine they typically are working still a little bit further out if it's printed but the opportunities they don't need as much lead time as a major media publication.

So you can start connecting with the editors now and ask them about when they're going to be featuring any gift guides or when they're going to be pulling for holiday product and something just a little tip that we've learned over the years is you want to sort of pinpoint some of the major media outlets that you want to be in and you can figure out what they're doing; what they have planned on their media calendar so that you can target your pitches correctly and kind of have a heads up by Googling; insert the name of the publication and then media calendar so I'll repeat that. You want to identify the media outlet that you want to target and then Google media calendar and then typically what that will do is take you to a page on their website where you might have to enter your name and email but it's for the advertiser's and then it tells the advertiser's everything that they're working on in the editorial calendar based on the month. So it's a great tool so that you can really target your pitches and create a great story around your brand to use in the pitching for the products and you make sure that you're targeting the right editors, etc. So hopefully that helps and you can find that.

And then the other thing that you want to make sure that you're doing right now is that you have your collection finished and ready to go. So it might seem really early to have a holiday collection or a fall collection done in July and I get it yeah it sounds a little insane but the thing with this is that it's important because you want to make sure that when buyers start buying in August and September that you're ready to go and that your line sheets are done, your photographs are done, your pricing is solid so that you're not working on that in September when you should be marketing and getting all this stuff on your website and selling it so think about it that way. That's really important.

And right now is a great time to start planning. I'm going to jump back to the planning stage because I didn't think about this before but right now is a great time to start planning your





holiday trunk shows. I know in my business I don't have inventory now but if I did I would certainly be doing these. Hosting holiday trunk shows is a great and wonderful way to (1) reduce extra inventory, get rid of old merchandise, and have incredible holiday sales for your business by offering clients directly in person the opportunity to pick up your jewelry and pick up a bunch of things for their friends and family. So we used to have sample sales at the end of the year. We'd also host a bunch of trunk shows around the country in the United States.

I remember I would do one in New York, I would do one in San Francisco, and then I would also do one in my hometown of Newport Beach at my sister's house and it was always great because I got to hit my following in all those cities. Occasionally I would travel to other cities too but it was a great opportunity for me to reach some of my [21:00] dream clients in these local areas where they could grab a bunch of stuff that maybe was limited edition or things that I wasn't really offering on my website or that they couldn't buy in a store. So think about it that way that's another thing that you should be planning and make sure that your collection is finished so you can get it up on your website and you have your line sheets if you're selling to stores ready to go.

So I wanted to talk about some of the things that are really important to have success during the holiday season because it's easy to derail and go off track especially if you're a solo business owner. I know that there's a lot of things to be remembering all the time and I remember hearing the story about the CEO of Alex and Ani Jewelry and it was an interesting story because he spent all of his mornings focusing on taking action and only doing things that were going to build a revenue and reach him towards his revenue goals. So everything that he did in the first part of the day was to take action towards his goal and towards his plan. So I like that story because I think that's an important reminder that the first thing that we need to do in order to have a successful holiday season and a good business in general is to make sure that you're taking action and that you're taking the right actions; that you're focused on the right things that are really going to build your business.

The next thing that you want to do is to sort of build up momentum and you do this by being prepared now. So you're going to have your; so that you're not distracted later. Have your line sheets done, have your pieces photographed, have your collection designed, make sure that you have a sales plan and a marketing plan and that you're pitching the holiday editors for the gift guides if that's something you want to do now so that when you're actually in the holiday season you can focus on building momentum and increasing and riding the wave and building those sales.





---

So that brings us up to the next thing is staying accountable to yourself and to your plan. So Robin and I like to talk a lot about accountability partners which I think is interesting but I really do believe at the bottom of my heart that the most important person that you need to be accountable to is yourself. You're in charge of your destiny. That's the reason why you probably started a jewelry business anyway is to have creative control over your financial future and to also be able to have this passion that you love of creating and making jewelry and talent and turn that into a business that's successful. So in order to do that you need to stay accountable and do what you say you're going to do. So if you say that you're going to outreach to five stores a day or five editors a week then you better do that. So stay accountable to yourself, set priorities, and be on top of it or get support from others who can help you stay on top of it as well.

And then some other things that are really important in having a successful holiday season are making sure that your head is in [24:00] the right place. Now I talk about my insight all the time I can't help it I'm a former yoga teacher. Your mind is the creator of your destiny. In fact I'll tell you a little story about me. I was really trying to create some space in my life for some personal things that I wanted to bring in and the only way I could do that was to step away for a little bit from some of the stuff that I was pushing towards and one of those things happened to be my business and I took a break from really working on booking sales for December of last year and January of this year which is an unusual thing for me because usually January is a super busy month for me in my custom jewelry business.

But it was something I needed to do because I needed to get my head in the right place. I was really focusing; I'd been focusing a lot on business for many, many years and I wanted to sort of create something that was a little bit different for myself that allowed maybe a little bit more space and a little bit more freedom in my life so that I could still have abundant income and abundant sales and all that stuff but also have space to do things that I wanted to do like spend time with friends and family and all that stuff and when I get really into work I can have a tendency to be a little bit of a workaholic. That's like a truth about me and I have to purposefully make plans sometimes after work hours in order to get out of my office because I work from home or else I won't stop working and we all need energetic space and we all need to be in the right mindset for success.

So I remember I did this purposeful break and then I had to get back in the game because I realized alright Tracy you've got to get some sales coming in the door because you are running a business here and you are running a business so you have to have sales. So I remember I'm like alright you're going to do this. You're going to get your head in the right place and what





ended up happening I'll be really honest with you is that because I wasn't having the sales and I did this purposeful step back from my business my head started to go to a negative place like I'm not good enough, I'm not worthy, I suck, I'm not going to sell anymore jewelry, I'm starting to panic and stuff like that and I had to really work through that energy because I realized that was just some mindset that I was having and it was postponing and it wasn't until I really made that shift and I was like hey okay now I'm ready to work on this again.

I started attracting clients immediately and that's I know in my history that that's happened so many times to me that I know how powerful mindset is. If your head is in the right place, if you believe it can happen, and then you put the action behind it you can do anything that you want. I did this again more recently. I went to Italy on a writing retreat because I do a lot of writing for both of my businesses. Copywriting for Flourish [27:00] and Thrive and then also for my jewelry business blog posting and all that stuff and writing newsletters and I'm always trying to up my skill set in all areas of business that I need to do.

So I went on this writing retreat and I was having a really tough time with something in business I can't really share it with you here but I needed to take a break and I needed to just trust that the systems I put into place were going to work. That I could let my team do what they needed to do and that everything was going to be okay and just walk away and take a break; a creative break and this is tied into mindset because I realized that as a creative being if you don't spend enough time being creative and getting out of your own way you're going to drag yourself down. So it's finding this balance right. There's never going to be a perfect balance of any of it but you need to make that space so that you can be creative to be in the right mindset so things can open up for you.

And what ended up happening is that I ended up magically like this I hate to use the word magically because it wasn't really magic but because I allowed myself that space in the midst of all this chaos that was going on; I've shared this in our private community but my assistant moved to San Francisco so I was without an assistant and in Italy and it was tough to run my jewelry projects while that was going but what ended up happening is I seemed because my mind was in the right place and I had just trusted that everything was going to work out but I was doing everything that I possibly could to make things happen is I started getting more inquiries. In fact while I was in Italy I had seven custom jewelry inquiries within one week and I get a lot of inquiries from my website on a weekly basis but seven in one week was a lot and not abnormally a lot but it just seemed like it was a lot just to be coming in. I was like I'm not even here and I'm getting all these inquiries.





And it was so cool because they were all amazing projects that I wanted to work on and I allowed myself that space and that creativity to kind of go do what I needed to do to get back in the right head space and everything started to open up. In fact when I got back I delivered a 5,000 dollar necklace and earring set to a client of mine who has been buying jewelry for his wife from me for the past three years maybe and he's purchased five or six things from me already in that time and I'm really grateful for the opportunity. I landed another wedding band gig that I got started. I am working on another diamond engagement ring that I booked while I was gone just because I was in that right mindset.

So the point being is that for the holiday sale season let me tie this all back here it's really important to make sure that you are in the right mindset for success and that you believe it can happen and that you're focused on the things that are going to give you the creative space to feel good about your business and make things happen. So [30:00] even if things don't go the right way you have to make sure that you don't focus on them. So bringing this back to the story with Hillary and me in my business in the beginning one of our ways that we gamified our holiday sales season was that when we got no's from clients we just moved past it and we focused on the yes's and we would celebrate every single yes that came in the door and the coolest part about that is it comes to the final part of really having an awesome holiday season is having the right support.

So you definitely want to make sure that you're surrounding yourself with like minded individuals or that you have someone that can support you. So in my wholesale business Hillary and my team were my support system but Hillary and I were supporting each other in reaching that goal. Maybe it's that you have a friend or maybe it's that you join a community like Flourish and Thrive Academy where you can be accountable with the 100's of other designers in the community who are supporting each other for success and you can celebrate. So that support piece very, very important. Make sure that you have the right support around you and that you're getting the help that you need whether it be from people that you hire, from people in a community, from people that you're working with, or whatever it might look like to you. It might even be from an accountability partner.

Anyway alrighty so let's recap. You want to start planning now. You want to make sure you have your collection together. You want to get your marketing and sales calendar underway and you want to start doing your outreach for holiday gift guides. Really important things to do right now. Alrighty I definitely want to thank you again for listening to this podcast and joining me today and I want to wish you all the best of best luck in this holiday sales season to really kill it with your holiday sales. I know that this is going to be an awesome opportunity





for you to have really, really great 2016 holiday season. I know it.

Alrighty so earlier in the podcast I mentioned a free resource that we had. It's called 151 Ways to Boost Your Holiday Sales. So you can go and grab that over at [www.flourishthriveacademy.com/boostsales](http://www.flourishthriveacademy.com/boostsales) or you can pop on over to the show notes at [www.flourishthriveacademy.com/episode50](http://www.flourishthriveacademy.com/episode50) and grab it right there because it will be linked on the podcast post. I really hope that you've enjoyed the show today and if you did I would love it if you haven't done this already please do this now. Make sure that you subscribe to the podcast over at [www.flourishthriveacademy.com/itunes](http://www.flourishthriveacademy.com/itunes) and then you can give us a little rating and review and tell us what you think. Thanks again for listening today and take care until next time and make sure that you download that free resource. Bye for now.  
[33:00]

