



SOURCING SECRETS TO SAVE YOUR SANITY AND SERIOUS TIME WITH TAMARA SCHAUFHAUSER

THRIVE BY DESIGN WITH TRACY MATTHEWS

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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: Welcome to the Thrive-By-Design podcast, episode number 79. Today I am super thrilled to be here with a special guest from the Flourish and Thrive community, and if you didn't know already this is Tracy Matthews speaking to you. I'm the Chief Visionary Office over at Flourish and Thrive. One of the questions we get all of the time, one of the frustrations that I hear from a lot of designers is it's so hard to find materials, manufacturers, resources especially when you're just starting out, but also sometimes we're looking for something tricky and I hate to say it but a lot of vendors in the jewelry industry are not super internet savvy and they would do their businesses a huge favor if they actually could get online, but a lot of times they don't have well developed websites that are picking up SEO for search or even a good web presence at all.

So today I have a very super special guest on and her name is Tamara Schaufhauser and she is the designer mastermind behind Gilded Grey Jewelry and she had another collection before called Sheer Addiction Jewelry. She just rebranded and Tamara was in our mastermind in 2016, and she was always such a bright light and super helpful when sourcing topics came up. So I asked her to be on the show today to talk a little bit about the sourcing secrets that are going to save you a lot of (1.55 unclear) and some serious time from someone who is really good at sourcing.

Tamara has a passion for sourcing which I think is interesting because she actually loves doing it and I think it's the worst thing in the world. So it's pretty cool because she actually really loves doing it and so she wanted to share some of her super simple hacks to help you find things easier online or other ways when you're trying to source new product or materials or small quantities for your business, and then some tips for those of you who are trying to grow as well.

So it's going to be a super awesome episode. I already know because I recorded this intro after we did the interview. Before we get started I wanted to do just a little formal introduction of Tamara. Tamara





Schaufhauser of Gilded Grey collects and restores aged brass and gold plated pieces sourced from Paris and New York and then adds her own stylish point of view. There's always a touch of irreverence and she mixes materials and layers new ideas over antique details. The result is gorgeous jewelry that is wearable well into the 21st Century. So Tamara obviously has a really [3:00] amazing collection of jewelry. She's a really talented designer.

Also we've put together a sourcing checklist for you which is super cool. We've created this checklist. You can head on over to the show notes over at www.flourishthriveacademy.com/episode79 to grab that checklist and download for some free sourcing tips. For those of you who struggle with sourcing you're going to love it. Alright let's dive right in to the interview.

Today I am thrilled because I have a very special guest on the show today. A couple of weeks ago I interviewed one of our designers in the Flourish and Thrive community and now I decided to do the same thing again and it's going to be sort of a mission of mine to get some insights from people who've already done it. So this week I have a very special guest on the show, Tamara Schaufhauser of Gilded Grey, and I'm thrilled to have Tamar because she has not only been in the Flourish and Thrive Academy mastermind. She graduated from our 2016 mastermind, but she is also an expert at sourcing and I'm so excited to have her on because one of the things and the questions and comments and inquiries that we always get is how do you find resources when a lot of these suppliers don't have websites or they're not online.

So Tamara welcome. Thank you so much for being here.

Tamara: Thank you. Thanks for having me. Thrilled to be here.

Tracy: Oh my gosh so we're going to have fun today because we're going to talk all about sourcing. It's going to be a great call. Before we dive in I would love for you to share with our listeners a little bit more about your journey, about your jewelry brand and why you're obsessed with sourcing.

Tamara: Absolutely. Thanks for having me again. I love being here because obviously had such a great experience in the mastermind and getting to know everyone and getting to know you so well and all the great stuff it's done for my business as well. So thank you and thank you for asking me to do this.

Tracy: My pleasure.

Tamara: As far as my journey, I think I've been in the business for a long time, almost 15 years and started completely in a different spot than I am





now but it all ended up in the right spot. So it was great. I started out, I actually lived in Switzerland for about ten years. Worked for Johnson & Johnson and for Golf clothing line and had moved back to the States. I was looking for something for me to do. I had little kids at the same time, and believe it or not I started out with wine charms, if anybody remembers those.

Tracy: Oh my gosh I totally have those.

Tamara: The crazy thing was, and this is part of my sourcing journey actually, is I had a good friend and we sent those into Neiman Marcus catalog and that time obviously there's wasn't much on the web whatsoever so it was all catalog work. Sent those in and they ended up in the Christmas [6:00] book, and not having sourced what I was supposed to be sourcing, prior to sending the design I ended up on a plane on my way to New York trying to figure out how am I going to come up with all this product I'm going to need make this account work. I was really green and didn't know what I was doing, but I learned a lot from that experience and it was great.

It kind of got me into the world of making jewelry with the parts and pieces that I was finding in addition to that, and I had another friend send one of the pieces I was making off to a hairdresser who happened to be the hairdresser for Ryan Seacrest and that ended up on American Idol with him and some other stuff. I found myself kind of in business both times by accident by also by staying open and kind of going through the projects as they came up. So from there I ended up building a line and starting the business.

I had a small studio retail walk in area for quite a while, a number of years and then I've been online ever since. So it's been kind of a journey.

Tracy: Journey, amazing. So I'm curious, do you know what episode of American Idol you were on?

Tamara: I was on the second one.

Tracy: I think my stuff was on it on the third to like seventh season. When was David Cook on it? You were Carrie Underwood season?

Tamara: Yeah, oh no the season before. I was Reuben Studdard.

Tracy: Yeah I think I was after Carrie Underwood. So maybe the fourth or the fifth. Oh my god that would have been so fun if we were on the same episode. We could find a screenshot. Okay so you kind of talked about your journey into sourcing. You were really obsessed with sourcing because of this journey that you had to take with finding these one charms or making this product that you had sent





to Neiman Marcus and that's really cool. Is there anything else that sort of got you even more obsessed with it or is that end of story?

Tamara: I think the one other thing other than just the true source, the product and making sure it was really keeping your eye open for different and unique, my brand and the things that I make. I do a lot of one of a kinds as well, and constantly having my eye on something that's a little different, something that's a little out of (8.12 unclear) and something that sets me apart a bit.

I was lucky enough to be at a flea market in Paris and ran across some metals corners to mirrors from the 1800s, and because you needed four of them they only had three available so they weren't using it for restoration and I ended up getting my hands on those and working those into some jewelry pieces. So it's been a constant just how can I look at what's available from a different point of view and also digging to find those things. Again just to set the brand apart a little bit so that it keeps its own flavor the way I like to have it.

Tracy: Okay so cool. Okay so there's a lot of designers just starting out who have no clue about where to find suppliers and they're buying things not from traditional, maybe wholesale suppliers [9:00] or they're buying them double retail or at a bead shop. They're starting to grow their brand and they want to expand beyond just the basic things that they can actually find. So especially for those who are just starting out it can be a bit of a challenge to find good wholesale deals on small quantities. So what are some ways to source small amounts of findings or materials if you're just starting or especially if you're starting out?

Tamara: Sure, absolutely. I would say one of the most obvious places that a lot of people go and I think rightly so is Etsy. Jumping on Etsy and being able to find very small quantities of items at reasonable prices obviously because it's so competitive there. So if it's a matter of is your business being set up, obviously you're going to want to have a wholesale number in setting up your business correctly anyway, but if you're just brand new and you really just need very small quantities just to get samples together or started, obviously that's a really quick and easy way to get small amounts in the door.

I would say as far as online sources, even one of your preferred vendors Halstead, a company like that which some of these are very easy to Google; Fire Mountain and some of these others. As soon as you have your wholesale number I mean their minimums may be zero. It's taking the time to just fill the form out and get in contact with whoever it is that you need to get the information from and just set up two, maybe three accounts with online sources that will let





you buy for small amounts. Like I said, not every wholesale account is going to required you to buy hundreds of dollars. You want to start with somebody who is reputable obviously and some of the major ones that are online that even do require a wholesale account are going to give you some really good pricing on some really solid product.

So if you haven't set up your number or whatever yet, I would say definitely, probably Etsy is a really good spot just to grab small amounts without paying full retail because their pricing is great. Otherwise get a couple of those filled out and get them under your belt.

Tracy: Awesome. So I have a couple of other questions for you that I'm going to ask you a little bit later sort of related to that, but I think I'm going to ask you something else first. Let's say you're trying to get really specific. Let's say you're trying to find a particular kind of jump ring or something really specific. What are some tips for locating them on the internet when it can be so overwhelming to actually find stuff like that?

Tamara: It can go from an hour and then four hours later.

Tracy: I know right, you're in the rabbit hole.

Tamara: And you have no idea how you ended up there, absolutely, I get that. One trick that I use and I use it a lot is go to, for example say jump rings, maybe I'll jump on just a major retailer for example, Fire Mountain Gems or something, and the easiest way to do it is decide what size [12:00] you need obviously based on what you're making and your gauge and your metal that you're going to need. So click through their chart, find exactly what the description is, take that description and then throw it up in your Google and Google it. Because the difference being, if you type in jump rings, it's just insane. It's impossible to narrow it down.

So if you go with an industry standard very tight description to start with from 6mm sterling silver 20 gauge and you put that in, now when you Google the easiest thing to do is then instead of looking at all of the results pulled up, go to shopping and click the shopping button which is right next to where your image button would be.

Tracy: Oh yeah that's good.

Tamara: And when that opens up what you're going to see is the price, the picture of what the item actually is and that will discount half of them for you right there because you can tell pretty quickly even in the quality of the pictures if the company is reputable or not, and it's also going to give you when you hover over each picture you're





going to see the company name. So it's just a really good way to immediately narrow it down to about 20 options. Once you go from there then you click on that item you're actually going to that item. You're not going into the site and digging again. So it truly helps narrow it down.

Tracy: So what if you're looking for something really rare, you could do the same thing probably.

Tamara: Absolutely.

Tracy: If you're looking for a specific kind of, I'm always looking for rose cut diamonds. It's so hard because then you're finding someone in India and I'm like I only need a 6mm diamond from India. Let's say I was trying to find a Champaign round 6mm rose cut diamond in New York City. Would I just put all that in Google?

Tamara: Honestly I would. I would start there and without doing it I can't say right off the top of my head for that specific question, but 90% of the time you're going to end up with the same 5 or 6 sources are going to start popping up for New York and you're going to know right away that is the options. They're probably bigger industry leaders, reputable that you're going to want to go with. The more specific you can get with that first one and using industry standards. I just think a lot of people just kind of type in findings. Oh my gosh it's just overwhelming.

Like I said, if you go to the shopping page too just to have the pricing right there because you're going to see automatically you can have 25 jump rings for \$5 or whatever it may be, and you can eliminate so quickly. It will save you a ton of time. I think in that scenario too you're going to see the similar companies over and over and you're going to start to get a really quick sense of who is providing what.

Tracy: Okay awesome, yeah that's cool. Also probably a smart move would be to [15:00] document who those companies were so that you don't have to go through this process again if you're looking for the same thing or something similar because then you start building a list of resources.

Tamara: Absolutely. You know what, if you're somebody who can't handle filling out those spreadsheet or getting all that information right away, just start screenshotting. Make a folder with screenshots. It will save you so much time.

Tracy: Save it in a Google drive file or something.

Tamara: Yeah.





Tracy: I love talking about collection. As a matter of fact I just got off a call right before this with one of our new mastermind designers talking about collections for them. So I wanted to ask you in your experience, because I've done both design the piece first or found the materials first, is there a better way to do it, to design the piece first and then try to find the materials or vice versa because you always hear that dreaded problem coming up like I design this piece and now I can't find the component.

Tamara: It's a real challenge. I have always usually found the piece first then designed. That's just kind of how my mind works. I think when I see something that triggers a design idea and then I can go that way with it, it also really helps because I know immediately how much is available, whatever that thing is I'm looking at. I know about how many are available, I know if that's enough for the project that I'm looking to design for, and if you go the back way and do it that way, it's going to save you a lot of time. I mean if you really have something in your mind and you want to do it, I think it's great. I just think you do know that it's going to take a little more research and a little more digging to kind of pair those two together.

Tracy: Yeah that's a good call. So I've done this before. You kind of want to identify how many you can potentially get and see if it's even worth it. But what if you are working with a supplier and they're like oh there's plenty in stock and so you buy a sample lot and then all of a sudden you go to buy for production and it's gone.

Tamara: Right and you are going to scream. This can't be happening.

Tracy: The struggle is real.

Tamara: In an ideal world I would say for sure you have two sources because it does happen. Even your suppliers they're getting things from somewhere so they can't always 100% control that, but I definitely try. First getting a sample, that sample I won't have committed yet to until I know how many I'm going to need and what the project is going to require. So again it's a little bit of doing a tiny bit of work ahead of time is going to save you a lot of heartache on the backend.

Tracy: Okay awesome. So let's talk about quality because it's sometimes hard to find reputable list. We all want to find unique suppliers [18:00] and stuff like that, but is there some sort of benchmark to determine where to find the best quality for sourcing and how to do that?

Tamara: I think one thing that I use a lot is whether it's a big wholesaler I'm dealing with or if it's an online source, if there's very little information about what the product is made of, I can pretty much guarantee it's going to be an average product, a very average product.





Tracy: Okay, that's interesting.

Tamara: Back to the jump ring thing, if you need a 16 gauge jump ring for some heavy duty bracelet or something unique, you really need to go to a source that's going to have the listings on what the gauges are, what the finishes are. Definitely they should have a map how those work or what you can look at or questions that you can ask about the plating. I constantly have found when I have ordered from a site, where even though the picture had even looked like a better quality and they didn't have the information on there, the reason it's not on there is because it's pretty basic.

Tracy: Or it sucks.

Tamara: Yeah, exactly.

Tracy: Have you ever been in a situation where you've had to send something back and you had a problem with it?

Tamara: Yep more than once. Again that was normally when I wasn't dealing with some of the suppliers that I had built relationships with. So what I would tell you, I've even sent chain back that I didn't think the plating came out well on from a very good supplier and they were amazing about it. So that too, huge difference, building this relationship with a supplier, taking to them directly, getting a contact name, knowing who you're talking to when you're calling to order and calling that person every time you go to order. They'll actually call me now constantly and say we got something new in, new plating. We have this going on and that just saves me so much time because we built a relationship over time.

I think, don't be afraid to send things back if the quality is not right. I mean that's inventory and stock that you're going to have to carry otherwise. I think it's important that you use that money towards the items you actually want.

Tracy: Absolutely. Okay so here's another question I think is really important because we want to make sure that we're doing our due diligence and making sure that we're working with the right kinds of people. So what are some of the questions to ask vendors or suppliers or manufacturers when you're considering working with them for a new collection line or to buy a product from the?

Tamara: Sure. First thing I always do, I mentioned this just a few minutes ago, is get a contact name, somebody that I know that I can talk to every time I call and I call a lot. I call all these places a lot versus just emailing or ordering online and waiting to see what's going to happen. I actually get on the phone and call them a lot. There's a lot of really good suppliers that aren't very mobile [21:00] friendly still.





They're not online and they're pretty old school still and they're quality is amazing. They might be second or third generation companies but they just haven't built out their websites yet.

Tracy: It's so crazy to me because websites are so cheap these days. You can just buy a template site. It blows my mind that people don't.

Tamara: It totally blows my mind and I think they get overwhelmed the amount of product they have and how they're going to list it, but I'm like really help us out here. This will be great for all of us out here searching if we could see more online. Just not everybody can jump on a plane and go to New York and source everything pounding the streets. One other thing I was going to say is get samples, samples, samples. Whenever you're going to start with a new vendor and there's something that you're looking for particular, again whether it's basic as jump rings and clasps and chain or whatever it may be, ask for samples, ask for plating samples.

I think too even if they won't send them free, pay the shipping just to look at the samples because it's going to save you so much heartache in the long run versus going ahead and ordering thinking it's going to be okay and then having to go through everything that it's going to take to undo that. So any time you can get samples in first do it. If you're at the Tuscan Trade Show, sample, sample, grab everything you can get your hands on.

Tracy: I know right, seriously.

Tamara: Label it, grab the cards, the business cards, the more samples you can get the better it's going to be.

Tracy: So there's a couple of ways to approach this sourcing. You can do your Google search, try to find people online. You can also find them on Etsy for when you're just starting out maybe, and then you could also walk trade shows. Get a list of the Bead and Button shows or the Gem shows or any sort of manufacturing show that's close to your area and pull cards. This is so old school, but I feel like you still need to do it sometimes because that's the best way to get the most amount of suppliers. Are there any other ways that you have found or any ninja ways that you found people?

Tamara: The other would be your larger like the MJSA sites and some of those. You go to their sites they have some resource guides and when you get in those there's a lot of information there of different suppliers, what they're working and you can drill down a lot of those by city, by state. They're all set up that way. So you can get really in-depth information about maybe something local that you don't know about. I had a local company very close to me that actually they





were online, I knew of them, I had worked with them. I didn't realize they were so close so now I can actually go there.

Another great thing that I've done that's worked really well to is if you're on one of those sites and you go to their Facebook, I mean that's another great source. Be sure to get on their Facebooks or their Instagrams because there's a lot of additional information there, but when you do [24:00] do that on the right hand side you're going to see people who also like or likes by this page and there's going to be a ton of other resources of that similar company that you can just dig through right there too. So it's a really easy way to find an additional source just by being on a company's Facebook page.

Tracy: Oh that's awesome. I love that. Okay so we talked a little bit about, we mentioned rose cut diamonds, but if we're looking for beyond light bridge or costume, when we're searching for fine jewelry, do you have any tips on that, fine jewelry findings or materials?

Tamara: I think a lot of these companies do both. They can do some base metal stuff and they do some fine jewelry stuff. As far as the diamond stones and the higher end, I would probably start out personally going straight over to the Society of North American Goldsmiths or to one of these AGTA source directories and start there. There are companies and groups that work with fine jewelry findings, they're reputable. They're established. Because of the price point, I probably wouldn't just take my chance on something online without having researched it. Then from there honestly if I found a company that looks great, I would probably get on the phone again and call them up and start talking to them and find out who they service, what their terms are, what their minimums are and how they work.

Tracy: Yeah that's a great tip. Those show guides that you get from those organizations are pretty insane.

Tamara: They are and like I said I cannot tell you how many times I'm looking at a company but on the side or linked to it or somewhere are ten more companies similar. That's where I actually end up finding the one supplier that I really click with.

Tracy: Can you explain that again?

Tamara: Sure. So you were on Facebook and you typed in MJSA. On their Facebook page.

Tracy: Oh and it's like companies like them.





Tamara: Right. So if you look to the right in Facebook, in all the way they're running, they do ads and everything now is actually a great help. On the right hand side you'll see people also like...

Tracy: The people also like okay.

Tamara: So they're looking for other companies, they'll be listed there and then liked by this page are going to be a lot of industry people who are in the same business and they'll be listed there so you can kind of start clicking through there too.

Tracy: That's such a good tool. You know it's interesting I took a Facebook ads training years and years ago and that was one of the strategies that they used to target audiences which is so funny because I never would have thought of that for sourcing. It's brilliant.

Tamara: Yeah it saves me so much time I can't even tell you.

Tracy: That is brilliant, brilliant. Okay so do you have any ninja final sourcing tips for our listeners today? [27:00]

Tamara: Another good one that actually I didn't even talk about was Yelp which I wouldn't think that I would throw out there. I can't even tell you. For New York alone if you get on Yelp, you won't even believe the amount of information there and the reviews and that's a great one too. I mean getting them there and looking at the reviews it's unbelievable. Whether it's a specific product that they ordered and half the time it's more about the customer service, how their experience was, how the product was delivered. So it's really helpful.

Tracy: Oh that's amazing. Okay so cool. So after this episode we're going to be creating a really great download for you guys, our sourcing checklist that Tamara is helping me put together. So you can head on over to www.flourishthriveacademy.com/sourcingchecklist. Tamara thank you so much for being here today. Where can people find you?

Tamara: Thank you. I appreciate it. I'm at www.gildedgrey.com.

Tracy: Awesome and we'll link that in the show notes as well. Where can we find you on social media?

Tamara: Email me any time.

Tracy: Perfect. Do you want to announce your email or just go to your website?

Tamara: Just go to my website. You'll find it there.





Tracy: Okay perfect. Thank you so much and I'm excited to explore the sourcing topic a little bit more.

Tamara: Me too. Have a great day, thank you.

Tracy: Thank you so much for listening to the show today. Wasn't that great? Tamara is so awesome. So once again I just want to remind you, you can download our sourcing checklist over at www.flourishthriveacademy.com/episode79. Thank you so much once again for listening to the show today. As always I had a blast recording this for you. So enjoy and share this with your friends. If you're loving the podcast, make sure that you rate and review it and tell us what you think. Alright you guys this is Tracy Matthews signing off until next time.

