



How to Overcome Terrible Etsy Sales

THRIVE BY DESIGN WITH TRACY MATTHEWS

“A business is really built on daily action, simple steps toward your goal. It's not like all of a sudden magically you're going to have any overnight success. It's like a snowball. Every little bit adds up and builds momentum, and that's how your business grows.”

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

Intro: You're listening to Thrive by Design, business, marketing, and lifestyle strategies for your jewelry brand to Flourish & Thrive. . Let's get started.

Tracy: Welcome to the Thrive By Design podcast episode 142. Hey there, it's Tracy Matthews here, the Chief Visionary Officer over at Flourish and Thrive Academy, and truth be told, I just woke up from a nap, so I have extra energy, which is super fun! Welcome to the show today! We are going to talk about how to overcome terrible Etsy sales, and I don't want to totally surprise you because what I'm going to share in this episode is related to Etsy but is also unrelated to Etsy, but it is also going to help you think outside of the box when you're planning either your Etsy strategy or your online digital marketing strategy and trying to grow your sales online through any platform because everything that you are about to learn is important for a holistic digital marketing and online strategy. I think I just got really close to the mic so if my voice spiked up, that's why.

I want to share a quick story before I dive in and take a word from sponsor and then dive in to today's episode. This all has to do with a conversation that I was having with one of our Flourish and Thrive designers. She has a very successful business. She is doing multiple six figures in her business, and she runs a husband and wife team out of Houston, Texas, and they're a great business. They've been in business for a long time. They came to us trying to get a little bit more structure in their manufacturing process and able to kind of streamline and hire on people so that they could actually grow in scale beyond where they currently work. Last year, they had an amazing, amazing holiday season, and when I mean last year, a year and a half ago holiday season – we're talking





about, let's see, 2016, at the end of 2016. So about a year and a quarter ago, whatever, they did about \$150,000 on Etsy alone – insane! And the majority of their online sales were coming through Etsy, and it was something that they really banked on, it's something that they focused on, optimizing a lot. They knew that there were always going to get a lot of customers through Etsy. They had their product priced competitively, and they were kind of winning that Etsy game where you if you price them the right way, people end of buying your product over others because there is all of this comparison shopping. They had that sort of dialed in. They were getting a ton of SEO traffic from Etsy and for good reason because they have a really great product, etc. So, anyway, long story short, last September and October, there were a bunch of hurricanes here, not only in the United States, but all over the world, in the Bahamas, and the islands, etc., which most people know about, and their shop was closed down. Literally, their studio was closed down, and it was flooded, and they were unable to work for a couple of weeks, and so what ended up happening is they got a bunch of complaints on Etsy because people had placed orders that they weren't able to ship, and they had no internet or way to even communicate with their Etsy clients. So, finally, when they could get back on online and get situated, they ended up eventually getting back to people. Of course they got some canceled orders, but with that, they got complaints from Etsy, and Etsy closed down their shop right before the holidays, which is crazy, because they bank on that big holiday season to really build their business.

So I want to tell you the story for a very specific reason. It is because you can spend all your time building your success on a platform that someone else owns and then for no good reason, I mean, there was a reason behind it, like they weren't able to ship their orders because of the hurricane, but Etsy doesn't take in the human factor of stuff that happens, right? [laughter] This was like a life or death act of God [laughter] as they say, in those contracts where it's like force majeure, like if there is an act of God, we are not liable, whatever. [laughter] This is one of those things, where it's like a force majeure, I feel like where it's an act of God that was like totally out of their hands. They weren't able to handle it or address it right away, and their shop got shut down, which I know that they were in the process of fighting it being reopened, but by the time that they did, the entire holiday season was going to be over, and that revenue was gone.





And so I'm telling you this story because this is a perfect example of someone who really built this business platform on Etsy and lost a huge revenue stream, but then was reliant on that huge revenue stream, and it just went away because Etsy decided to shut them down. And so you've heard me over the years talk about taking control of our business, talking about taking control of how you're running your business, and I have never, ever been against Etsy, I just don't understand why people would make it the only way that someone can shop for them online, and not that this brand that I'm talking about, they do have a website, but they were focusing a lot of their energy on getting Etsy sales, and weren't necessarily focused on getting those people to convert on their website. So I have heard not just from this brand, but I have heard from a bunch of other people too that their Etsy sales have been down over the last 6 months to a year since Etsy has changed their algorithms, that certain things have changed, and they're trying to kind of pivot it. We have a lot of designers here really focused on building their own branded websites, and not only just a branded website, but like a robust e-commerce platform, and so what my first suggestion here, which I'm going to weave into a second after I take in two words from our sponsors, is actually like the first suggestion is really don't put all your eggs in one basket, and we're going to talk about that in a moment, but before we do, before we dive into how to overcome terrible Etsy sales, I'm going to take a word from our sponsor, which is Whatify today.

Whatify is an amazing platform, and Whatify actually integrates with Etsy, so if you are selling on Etsy, I would highly recommend that you check out Whatify because they have this really amazing A/B split testing technology that will help you split test your images so that you understand and you can see which images that you're posting are actually converting for better sales, and what we're trying to do is to do these little tweaks, these little things that increase our sales by small and bigger increments, and so it has been proven that the software Whatify can improve your Etsy sales by up to 10% or even more in some cases, so it is a really great platform, but the good news is that I was talking to Jake, the CEO at our Live event, and I was like, do you have a plug-in for Shopify? He was saying, it's coming. They have done something a little bit different with their Shopify plug-in, which is really exciting. It is coming this spring, so it's going to be released very, very soon. I would like to invite you all to head on over, especially if you have a Shopify website, head on over to www.flourishthriveacademy.com/Whatify, and you can check out, on their





homepage, check out Get on the Wait List actually for their Shopify plug-in, and the Shopify plug-in is a little bit different than the Etsy plug-in. So it is a really great opportunity if you're on both platforms, to use both of them, because they're both going to help you in different ways, but really dramatic ways. Super great! This also does A/B split testing, but it checks out pricing, which is super cool. So Shopify is a different type of platform because it doesn't necessarily foster the same kind of competition that Etsy does. People get Etsy ADD, they head on over to another shop, and they forget about your shop, and then they're gone forever, and you have no control over that, but if you're on Shopify, a branded website, you might have other reasons that people bounce. Maybe it's a pricing or whatever, so you can do A/B split testing on your actual pricing on your website, and the cool thing that they've noticed in the sort of beta user, beta group that has been using this, is that a lot of designers are actually underpricing their works, and one of the things that is super cool is that more people, as they're doing these split tests, are actually buying at a higher price point. So we would never suggest that you price your product below our recommended pricing formula when you price for wholesale and then mark it up to your standard retail price point. If you're in our Laying the Foundation course or in our Diamond Insiders, you definitely know about our pricing formulas, and if you haven't checked them out yet, make sure that you do. We give you 5 different pricing formulas depending on your business model that you can put in right away, and once you have that figured out, you might come up with a range, like based on perceived value that you want to actually test out, and this is a great opportunity to do that. So head on over to www.flourishthriveacademy.com/Whatify, and you can use the code FlourishAndThrive as you check out, get on the wait list for the Shopify plug-in, sign up for, if you're on Etsy, sign up for the A/B split testing platform for your photos, and see your sales start to increase. I love it!

Anyway, I am super excited! So let's dive in to how to overcome terrible Etsy sales. A couple of weeks ago, we released our brand new website over at Flourish and Thrive Academy, and www.flourishthriveacademy.com. If you haven't been there yet, check it out, and on the website, we really have been listening to you guys over the last couple years, and we know that a lot of you have very unique problems. Some of you have really successful businesses. Maybe you're doing six figures, multiple six figures, close to seven-figure businesses, and you have very unique problems, very different problems than





people who are just starting out, which is a lot of people in our community that are just starting their business, or they are on that path trying to get consistent sales, and trying to get consistent exposure, and they're not really sure how, and then everything in between, those of you trying to get to that next level, get business and systems and your production. Maybe some of you are trying to break in to wholesale and others of you are actually really trying to build a business online, and so we noticed that the majority of our community are either trying to build a business online and/or trying to get consistent sales, which a lot of those sales happen to be online. So really unique. It is fun to be able to know this about the people who follow you. So we've created a bunch of amazing downloads, and if you haven't checked them, I would highly recommend that you head on over to www.flourishthriveacademy.com and check out the quiz that is on our home page that is going to show you exactly how we can help you the best, and the resources that are specifically for you, and on top of that, today, I wanted to talk about one of those downloads, which is actually the Conversion Crusher: 27 Ways To Actually Get More Sales and Conversion on Your Website and turn browsers into buyers, which is something that we're all trying to do, so as we dive into this episode about Etsy, some of the things that we talk about today are definitely in that Conversion Crusher download, and I would highly recommend that you check it out. You can head on over to, just grab it directly, over at www.flourishthriveacademy.com/ConversionCrusher, and you'll have a short link to go just straight to the download and/or you can just hit on the homepage and download it straight from there or on the episode show notes, which is totally cool. So I wanted to highlight that. I will mention it again at the end of the episode, and it's a really awesome one. Super great!

So let's talk about overcoming terrible Etsy sales, and I hope that you are hanging tight even if you don't have a branded website yet. If you have a branded website, whatever stage you are, if you're already making a ton of sales, if you are trying to get your first sale, if you're somewhere between where you get sales sometimes, and you're not really sure how to convert it, okay, I'm going to talk to you a little bit about some of that stuff today, which is very exciting and also very useful, even if you're just selling on Etsy too because these are great things that you can think about as you start to maybe play with your Etsy strategy or go deeper. Who knows? This will help you maybe decide.





So the first number one thing that you really need to do to overcome terrible Etsy sales is to have your own branded website, and the reason you want to do this is because in a branded website where you can actually sell e-commerce on it, the reason why you want to do this is that you need to take control of your business, and if selling online is your primary way of doing business, then you are doing yourself a disservice if you're allowing other platforms to control your business destiny basically. So, I want to remind you download that Conversion Crusher guide because it's going to be really important as you're setting up and refining and tweaking your website to have better conversions, and once again, the link will be in the Show Notes. This is super important, but I also want to remind you that it's very important to build your site on a robust e-commerce platform. There are many out there and some of you, I know some of my friends, you have really great e-commerce businesses, use platforms like Shopify, and others have custom websites that have been very expensive to set up. So what I always recommend is that most of you should probably go for a platform like Shopify, if not just go for Shopify, because from what I've been hearing over the past couple of years, it's really the best if you are selling e-commerce, and we're huge fans of Shopify because of all the Apps and plug-ins. Obviously, like great brands like Whatify are even building Apps for Shopify because they see what a popular platform is, and the way something gets popular is because it actually works for the business, and all of our coaches who are actually designers who are selling online use Shopify too and/or are converting to it, like literally some of them have been on... unless they're just doing custom work like I am, those of us are still on old-fashioned WordPress, but we are taking orders online, it's a little bit of a different process, so for those of you who are actually trying to build e-commerce, Shopify is the way to go. It's just that there's so much you can do with it, and just really quick sidebar here, we've negotiated a really amazing discount with Shopify for the Flourish and Thrive community. You get 10% off your monthly fees, ongoing, for as long as you have your account, and you'll also get an extended free trial, and you can check that out over at www.flourishthriveacademy.com/Shopify that will take you right to the special page that Shopify has built for us for our Flourish and Thrive Community. A lot of our members have taken us up on the offer. They're loving Shopify. They're really building things out and having a blast with it, so if you don't have a Shopify site yet, and you're thinking about transferring over, a





great opportunity for you to save some cash because that is a good business move for sure.

So the next thing that you want to do is to keep spending time tweaking your site so that you're getting better conversions on your site. So that Conversion Crusher guide that I shared with you earlier talks about some of the things like setting up strong call to action or CTA on your home page, making sure that the images or videos that you see when you land on the first page take you to exactly what you're trying to get them to do, and most cases, it is to shop, not to necessarily sign up for the email list, which is a great thing to do if people aren't ready to buy, have a pop-up or something, or sticky sidebar, or hello bar or something like that, but ultimately the goal of our website is to move people to a sale. So if you have, a nav bar on the top of your site with a super huge logo that is taking up a ton of space and too many navigation tools at the top, it becomes super confusing if, when someone lands on their site, all they see is your logo, and they don't get to experience your jewelry.

The first thing that you want them to see is styled images so that they immediately can tell from the look and feel of the images that they see that your brand is actually for them, so make sure that you have a site where you're doing things that are set up for conversions like making sure that people know what you're about as soon as they show up, and that they know where to go next.

As I mentioned, you do want people to sign up for your email address, but not right away because if your email pop-up pops up literally within seconds of someone joining on their site, a lot of times people bounce. They leave the site because they get annoyed and they're like, oh, I'm going to be stuck in this squeeze page. So a really great tool is to make sure that that pop-up, if you have a pop-up or something like that, that it pops up at least 15 seconds, maybe a little bit longer after someone has been on your site hanging out, not right away. It is super annoying.

Or I actually really love it when a pop-up pops up as someone is leaving your site, so it is a great way to capture leads and engagements, and you want to make sure that you are spending your time driving traffic to your site in different ways. So, if you are selling on Etsy and all this stuff is really important, and I'm going to go back to the emailing thing too, is that you're doing things to actually get people after they've purchased from you on Etsy over to your site





and become customers on your website, not customers of Etsy. Does that make sense to you? Every time I've bought something on Etsy, I can't remember... I remember about 2 years ago or 3 years ago, I bought a desk on Etsy from an amazing artist here in New York, and they're based in New York, the couple actually hand-delivered the desk to me, and I wanted to reach out to them to buy another piece of furniture, and honestly I couldn't find my Etsy receipt and logged into my account. I couldn't figure out what the name of the store was. I tried all these things. I like literally was trying to hunt them down. I could not, for the life of me, remember what they were called, and they lost a sale for me because they were on Etsy, and that's how they were selling it. It wasn't like a brand that I didn't buy from their site. There wasn't name brand recognition.

Anyway, I'm not alone, like there are a lot of other shoppers who do buy stuff on Etsy, but they don't remember who it's from. Like usually when I go on Etsy, I'm going to see like, oh, I want some leg warmers. Who is selling leg warmers on Etsy? Where can I get the best price? And I did this the other day. I wanted want of those super chunky knit-wool throws that are super cozy for my apartment, and I found like 5 vendors selling the exact same throw, and I shopped around, I emailed them all, asking about the different types of yarns or like colors, and when they can ship, and stuff like that. I actually put it on pause for a second, but I found the same type of throw somewhere else, like on a branded website, where I knew like I could return it, and all that stuff because it just felt safer, and it was still an independent brand, but it just felt safer to me to actually consider buying from an actual vendor than an Etsy seller.

So I am only saying this. It's not like a jab you were selling on Etsy, but this is the kind of stuff that goes through people's minds. If it's going through my mind, it's going through thousands of other people's minds. So, I'm not alone in thinking this and other people feel the same way. So remember that. You want to always be, if you're selling on Etsy, figuring out ways that you can get people to your site, which brings us to building an email list.

So when you are – this is topic number two of how to overcome terrible Etsy sales – when you're building your email list or you're selling on Etsy, you can't collect email addresses, right? It's against their terms of service, but there are things that you can do to try to build your list, and you're not going to get as high of a conversion as if they landed on your site and bought something from





their site because you can automatically capture an email address, someone can opt in right at checkout to be on your list, etc., but you can offer a box stuffer. You can put a box stuffer in the box that gives them a discount to actually shop on your website later if they sign up for your email list. You can follow up on orders, start a conversation with the people who bought from you on Etsy, and ask them if there is any other way that you can help them or if there is anything else that they... If there's anything else that you could basically like... If there are any gifts that they want to buy or whatever, and be of service reaching out, and eventually convert that person into a shopper on your website. You have to be a little bit careful with that because it is against... some of that is like, you have to... like following up on orders, I think is fine, but if you have a conversation with someone, it's a lot easier to kind of move them in the direction of like buying from you instead of buying from Etsy.

You could also deliver offers on orders for people for sign up for your messenger bot. So you could put a box stuffer in, you can have like a box set that's delivered, like they can sign up to buy a special exclusive box set or discounts or something like that, that they sign up using your URL from mini chat in Messenger so you can deliver all that in Messenger so that you can start building subscribers in your Messenger. You can offer free downloads that people can grab, like if you're selling on Etsy, one of your box stuffers could be like download Our Care Guide on How To Actually Take Care Of Your Jewelry Product, and they download it on your website, and it's a great value, a guide where there is a ton of information that helpful, but in there it shows different products of your jewelry, and then eventually potentially gets them to buy your product.

So a couple of different ways that you can actually build your email list from your Etsy people. The other thing that I want you to start doing is instead of driving traffic on your social platforms or other places that you're trying to get exposure to your Etsy shop, I want you to make sure that you're driving all of that traffic and pointing them to your website. Use Etsy as a second platform, not your primary platform even if you're getting more sales from Etsy right now because you can shift that with consistent energy, consistent effort, focusing on the Conversation Crusher guide that I'm sharing with you, make sure that you download it over at www.flourishthriveacademy.com/ConversionCrushers,





really, really important. So make sure that you're driving traffic to your website, not to Etsy for sales. Really important!

And the reason why I tell you this is that a lot of times, you're going to lose sales if you do that for your own products to people who have Etsy ADD like me. They're like, oh, well, let me see what else! And then they bounce off your page and go somewhere else and then forget where they were. This happens all the time, and I wish there was a way to sort of like launch a heat map of where people hang out on their Etsy site [laughter] so that you can see if people are funneling in from social and other platforms, like where they eventually go, and how much traffic you get. The same thing with your Pinterest and all that stuff, like do what you can to move people from those platforms to your Etsy site. You can also create specific landing pages that people can go to, either built on your website to send people from social platforms where they're just looking at the individual products, where they're not getting distracted, or where they can grab a download straight from social. There are a lot of different things that you can do. So when you set up a landing page, you can offer products, you can offer a look book, you can offer advice, you can give them exclusive care video, whether they can download and keep to watch later on; so many different things that you can do.

The other thing that you can do to overcome terrible Etsy sales is, I was at this conference a couple weeks ago called Traffic and Conversion, and I ran into a friend of mine who I met at a snowboarding retreat a couple months ago, and his name is Eric, and Eric runs a very successful digital marketing agency out of Los Angeles, California, and Eric was telling me that everyone is talking about digital marketing strategies here, but I'm going to talk about guerilla efforts because they're super underrated, and I agree with them. I think that so many people expect to wave a magic wand and their website and/or Etsy shop is going to be super popular and converting right way, when actually a lot of our growth goes from offline to online, and guerilla marketing is super important, and we can't forget about it. There are a lot of things that you can do like direct mail campaigns, sending actual physical postcards to your customers, sending thank you notes, sending different things where you get a physical product. I feel like people are getting lazy these days, and they just expect people to show up, and they don't want to focus on the organic stuff that actually makes the most traction because there is a personal connection





attached to it. This is really, really important. You can set up a referral campaign with people that are actually already customers of yours, people that you know in person, where maybe they become ambassadors, and they wear your product, and they can share little cards that have a referral link to send people to your website. They earn a small commission or points towards products for all the sales. It's just a win/win situation, and you can even require them in exchange for a free product, to have to get a certain amount of sales per month, and if they don't over like a specific period of time, if you've made them an ambassador, like you sort of kind of take away their ambassador rights or something like that. I don't know. There are a lot of things that you can do. You probably want to think through it, what would work or incentivize the people that are actually doing it, but ambassador programs are a great way to get people excited about it. They do take a little bit of leg work and effort, and you want the right people; also people with exposure, which is super important.

Ask for referrals. This is really important. You can do this digitally. You can ask people who have actually bought from you. You can ask people at events. You can invite them to show their friends. For every friend that they refer, they get X, Y, and Z. Super important.

Collect email addresses at any in-person event that you do, the live shows, trunk shows, parties, anything that you do, collect email addresses. I sound like a broken record, but it is very important. You want to make sure that you do this. It's going to be super, super important down the road, and those are the people who are eventually going to buy from you online more. You can put them on your insider list and give them opportunities to get exclusive offers because they met you in person some time. Make it really fun for the people who you're connected to.

And then finally make sure that you're actually emailing people on a regular basis, like at least once a month, ideally once a week and you want to create a connection and an audience for the stuff that you have to offer. So don't forget about this. This is really, really important to keep a connection with the people that want to hear from you. Make sure that you stay connected to them. Very important.

The final step to all of this is really the main point that I want to drive home, and this sort of like the fifth pillar to this whole thing, and it is something that I





started with, and it is something that I'm going to close with: Don't rely on someone else or another platform to build your business for you. You have to take control, be proactive, set up your own branded website, take daily action towards your goals. If you want to have 7 to 10 orders a day, do everything that you can to get those 7 to 10 orders a day or more on your website, and keep those sales rolling in. You'll have a lot more traction focusing on building a direct to consumer audience than you will doing just about anything else, and remember to keep nurturing those people. It is really, really important, and train your audience to buy from you at full price. This is super important. That is where your business margin is, that's how you're able to grow and build a profitable business.

Make sure that you're taking 3 priorities a day to move your business forward, that you're focused on those most important 3 priorities to keep moving things forward. It's super important. Keep it going, keep it trucking, keep things moving forward because that is the way, it's like those simple steps. We teach this often here at Flourish and Thrive. A business is not... there are no overnight successes, if I can speak clearly, but a business is really built on taking daily action, simple steps towards your goal, and moving the needle forward. It's not like this big whoosh of things that all of sudden magically you're going to have an overnight success. It's like a snowball. Every little bit adds up, adds up, adds up, and builds momentum, and that's how your business grows.

All right, I hope that was helpful! I want you to make sure that you check out our sponsor Whatify. If you are still selling on Etsy, great, make sure that you set up your own brand of website at some point though if you don't have it yet and take some of these tools to move people forward and start taking your business into your own hands, and if you're still on Etsy, you can use Whatify's amazing A/B split testing software to split test your images, and if you're moving to Shopify, we'd love for you to get on the wait list and test out Whatify's amazing split testing product or App, I should say, for pricing because what if you could sell each of your products for \$5 to \$10 more, and that was actually going to convert better, and you're making more money. How cool is that? I think it is awesome!

So you check both of those out by going over the www.flourishthriveacademy.com/Whatify, and you can enter the code





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Wow! Thank you so much for listening today. I just like dialed that in right at 30 minutes on the dot. [laughter] Thanks so much for listening today. It's been my pleasure to jump in here into your earbuds every single week, and thank you so much for listening! I love being here! Take care until next time! Can't wait to bring you next weeks' episode.

