



Building Community and Die Hard Fans Around Your Brand with Chelsea Farmer

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 220. Hey there, it's Tracy Matthews, chief visionary officer over at Flourish and Thrive Academy and I am so excited to talk about how to build community and die-hard fans around your brand with my girls Chelsea Farmer.

Chelsea is one of our coaches in our SOS program and I hired her because the group was expanding and we really needed to kind of fill the gap with things like subscription boxes, repeat sales, marketing promotions, but more from a grass roots level and then also connecting with your perfect customers and how to kind of leverage all that for what we call the sharing economy, which is one part of the three parts framework that I call The Desired Brand Effect that is really designed to help overwhelmed jewelrypreneurs become in demand designers simply and scale their business to multiple six and/or seven figures.; As you're going to see, Chelsea is doing this really well and it's awesome. I asked her to be on the show today because we just had our SOS live retreat last week and she did a little talk for my peeps about building community and how she's created die-hard fans.

This whole thing kind of like dials back and you already hear me talk about it briefly in the interview, she one day texted me, we had reconnected, she actually was like a little bit bored in her business and we had reconnected because I was hiring an operations manager around this time last year. She's like, "I know this is weird, I still have my jewelry company, but it runs



without me, I don't really need it, and I'm kind of bored, I need a new challenge, so I saw that you're hiring and I'd like to throw my hat in the ring." I was just like, "Alright, we'll do it." She sent over this Kolbe score that was like insane, fives all across. If anyone has taken the Kolbe A, which is an entrepreneurial assessment, someone who has fives all across is just like a business baller because they are super balanced in everything, which is unusual for an entrepreneur but super cool. So I was looking at that, I was like, "She'd be `good."

But I knew at the end of the day she had her other company and I really needed someone who had full time energy to devote to our business. I said to her, "Chelsea, I would like to bring you on that maybe in a different capacity. I'd like to bring you on as a coach." And we didn't do it right away because she got really busy, as you're going to hear in this episode, she reinvigorated her passion for what she was doing in her business, and her business is up like 1300% this year because of it, and this year over last year.

It was interesting because like when the time was right, I brought her on as a coach and she is getting, like she's really getting crazy results for our students in our SOS coaching program. You're going to love this interview today, especially if you're doing jewelry or designing jewelry in like a moderate price point or lower price point, because everything that she shares with you will work for any type of brand, but at the end of the day, like if you have something that's in an easy price point, that community aspect of how she builds community is awesome.

What I think about it as a high end jeweler and someone, she went to a GIA as a high end jeweler myself, someone who's designing pieces in the thousands of dollars and all on the customer realm, what she's talking about creating community and getting your previous customers to be a brand advocate is really the core of everything that we do over here at Flourish and Thrive, and it's at the core of what I do in my business as well. The majority of my sales come from either people finding me through internet search randomly through Google and/or referrals from previous customers. When you get the sharing economy right and you can create these 1000 true fans, as Chelsea has thousands of true fans at this point, then it's really easy to keep growing your business. That's exactly how we help you in our SOS coaching program.

We are riding high over here at Flourish and Thrive because we just came off our live event and it was an amazing, like one of the best that I've ever



done, like honestly the best ever. I am excited, I talked to my team, I'm like, "I think we should open up the program to 20 more people." and so we are opening up SOS, it's our Strategic Online Success accelerator and the core of this program is really about building a business that allows you to remove yourself to scale and to leverage the power of online in multiple capacities, not just like straight up e-commerce sales, running ads and turning out sales, but be able to leverage the power of online to build a brand that is leveraged, that is more profitable, that's bringing you in a lot more money and a lot more revenue and getting ambitious designers established to that place where they're easily attracting multiple six and/or seven figures in revenue.

If you're someone who is already doing at a minimum at least \$40,000 in sales and if you're already at \$100,000 dollars mark that's even better. If you're someone who really is trying to get to \$2-3-4-500,000 in sales quickly, within the next year it's you, but you're stuck because you're kind of doing all the things and you're feeling overwhelmed and you have to keep working hard in your business thinking it's going to grow it, but for some reason it's not really moving the needle, than I'd love invite you to apply for this epic program, because what you will discover will literally blow your mind.

The program is based around a core path that I've created about where you need to start to really have success in your business, it all starts with your online presence. Then we weave that into marketing strategy, advertising strategy, leveraging online to offline, offline to online, etc. so that you're building, like basically having a 360 strategic plan around everything that you do, that you're planning every 90 days, that you're working that plan every 90 days because when you do, you see massive results, and with that we offer individualized coaching based on where you are in your business journey.

It's really epic, it's helped people, I mean you've heard me talk about a lot of the designers in this community over the years that it's helped people. It's help people like Fabi learn to email market in a way where she was like literally having a decline in her sales from online that allows her to pick up an extra \$5000 in revenue in one day just by sending out an email. You're going to hear some really amazing strategies that Chelsea is going to show later, but I wanted to just show a little bit of a snippet of what Fabi has to say about the program.



Fabi: My name is Fabi Giguere, I am the founder and designer at Achiq Designs, we're located in Cheshire. So prior to joining SOS I really didn't have a clue about how the website. I worked I thought just having a beautiful website was going to bring me a lot of clients, and little did I know, I was completely mistaken. I was very lucky to have different coaches that taught me what's going on behind the scenes, so I really needed to do more digital marketing and work on my social media so that we can get results and get that traffic that we needed.

Since joining SOS I have seen a lot of difference in how I'm approaching my business, from starting to changing my mindset to start delegating, so I can have people help me so that I can be more productive on what I'm good at and what I'm happy doing. So that's one thing. The second thing is that I've always freaked out about doing emails and stuff like that, so I was like, "No, I really don't want to bother people with the emails." but then I saw it like this year after the holidays, then I saw it was a little decline, and I went and I said, "I have to really start doing something about it." So we sent emails. Just to give an example, last week, so we sent the end of the summer sale and we sent an email, we gave up percentage off and in wow, three days we had people buying, and I think we made like \$5000. That was like really good. That was just one email campaign.

Tracy: So if you're interested in applying to our SOS coaching program, we'd love to invite you to get on an exploration call. You can head on over to FlourishThriveAcademy.com/SOS. We have 20 spots available right now for holiday season, because we really want to help you up-level your game and get you on point so that you're doing and developing amazing marketing promotions that are actually going to get you to the next level and selling through emails right away and use that email marketing strategy that you have and your community building strategy that you have so you just continue to create the sharing economy in your business. So head on over to FlourishThriveAcademy.com/SOS and apply before all the seats are taken.

Alright, before you dive in to the interview which Chelsea, I wanted to do a little intro. Chelsea is amazing. Her business, Horse Feathers Gifts began during the height of the recession when Chelsea Farmer quit or office job and set out on a journey of inspiration, purpose and creativity. From barn sales to style consultations, the Horse Feathers brand quickly came



together exemplifying heirloom quality at everyday cost. What started as a small local shop soon moved into a national online brand.

As a graduate at the Geological Institute of America, Chelsea harnessed her education and love for beautiful jewelry, designing beautiful pieces that endured like heirlooms, yet held up to everyday wear. Horse Feathers Gifts has been featured on Fox News, Martha Stewart, Where Women Create magazine and her bohemian designs can be spotted on your favorite TV shows such as Revenge, Big Little Lies, Pretty Little Liars and many more. Awesome. Let's dive into today's episode with Chelsea Farmer.

Tracy: Well I love talking about creating die-hard fans and community around your brand and I'm really excited because I just got to spend several days in York City with my girl Chelsea Farmer, and I'm excited to have Chelsea on the show today. Chelsea, welcome.

Chelsea: Thanks for having me.

Tracy: Chelsea, how did we meet? We met through Jen Soralo, right?

Chelsea: We did. I think we were all going to go to Bali together. So it's kind of random.

Tracy: So long story short, I got a Twitter message from this girl's name Jennifer Soralo and she was looking for an engagement ring, so long story short, she didn't end up marrying the guy, and we became social media friends. She was a yoga jewelry designer selling on Etsy and on her own website. She didn't sell a ton on Etsy, she was mostly focusing on her website. And I posted on Facebook one day, "Does anyone want to go to a yoga retreat with me in Bali?" and she's like, "I do." and we don't even social media friends and it was so funny. Then I met you through her.

Chelsea: We had only been social media friends, so I also didn't know her anywhere but from online.

Tracy: We were all about to go to Bali together, which is funny. The cool part about it is that right after that I ended up going to Bali with Jen, you did not come, but you were kind of giving Jen a little bit of business advice because you have been in the jewelry industry, or you had your jewelry company for a little while, Horse Feathers Gifts. And then I don't know what happened, like we all ended up talking and I was like, "Well I'm launching this course for jewelry designers." and Jen was trying to get her



jewelry really off the ground, quit her job. And you were already doing well, but you ended up kind of enrolling in the course too, becoming a part of our community. And now, I'm not going to spill all the beans because I want you to share your story. Now like 10 years later, because you've been designing jewelry for about 10 years now?

Chelsea: Yes, 10 years this year.

Tracy: You've been crushing it, and I can't wait to talk about how you're crushing it. So that's my little backstory. So thanks for being here, Chelsea.

Chelsea: Yes, thanks for having me. I'm sad I didn't go to Bali with you.

Tracy: I know, we had such a good time. It was kind of like a weird emotional trip. You know, the funny part about, because Jen and I didn't know each other, we were sharing a room, we were both kind of on a budget, we couldn't invest in our own rooms. We're both kind of on this like personal, like separate personal journeys. Like she was like working out some relationship things, she ended up breaking up with her fiancé after that trip and starting her jewelry business like more full time.

And I was kind of like doing like in a way like a little bit of an Eat Pray Love thing, trying to like get over a break up and figure out like what my next move was after I closed my first business. So it was like really both of us were so introspective and it was weird because we didn't really know each other, but we would be like crying or journaling in our bed next to each other.

Chelsea: Those are the best trips.

Tracy: We were actually destined to become really good friends and she's been a student of ours for a long time. In fact, she's worked with us at a high level in our mastermind, in our coaching programs for many years. Chelsea, you are now one of our SOS coaches.

Chelsea: I am and I love it. It is one of my favorite things.

Tracy: I asked you to be a coach because I saw what you were doing, because we were like text buddies and you were saying you can't making this shizz up. You sent me like a shot of like a drop that you did on a Friday and it was like 10 minutes \$5000 or something.



Chelsea: Yeah. I think it was like about 18 minutes and we did \$5000 in sales in the middle of moving. Like we were literally loading boxes up and I kept at the live view of my website.

Tracy: So you're basically, let's just say a baller. Tell us a little bit about your journey into jewelry and your brand. I keep like telling people, I want them to hear from your mouth, instead of mine.

Chelsea: Yeah, I feel like if you talk about this more, because some people just see the present and think, "This looks so glam and fabulous." I'll give you a little back story which I don't even know if you know the whole story. But in 2009 my husband and I got married and we lived in Nebraska at the time and then we kind of wanted to just start completely over, even though we were just getting married. We sold everything we owned and moved from Nebraska to Kentucky into a single-wide trailer on my family farm and both started our own business.

So it was kind of like a sink or swim situation. And really when you have nothing and you have to create... You know, we didn't really know, I mean my family lived in Kentucky, but we didn't really know anybody else in the area and we really just to build ourselves up, and we knew what we wanted to go for and what we both wanted to do. So the best way for us to start that was to just not have anything tying us down and we both just dove completely into our business.

He actually traveled a lot, I ended up doing some traveling too for work, and so we really just completely committed to our business, and I think that's how my kind of grew as quickly as it did. I have this thing where I say "yes" to everything, which some people can't do, but I would like, it has to work, like it's my only option right now, we have nothing. I really just like committed and every time anything came my way, which it did because I was like this girl in town and had nothing and nobody knew me and then I had this jewelry business that I was trying to get going. So I would you know home parties or anything I could, literally if anybody asked me to pop up in their store I would pop up.

Tracy: Tell us a bit about that transition.

Chelsea: I started selling online pretty much immediately when I started. I actually right before we moved from Nebraska, my mom had told me about Etsy, it was right when Etsy was getting going. They were featured on The Today Show the same week I moved. I was instantly on Etsy, because I didn't



know a lot about websites or anything like that yet. Etsy was just a really good platform to get started on, because it wasn't as over saturated as it is now. It was a good platform to start with, but about a year and a half into having an Etsy shop, it was going really well, because like I said, there wasn't any people on there.

About your half and a half in I decided to actually invest in getting a website. Due to all of that, I mean literally I think it's just because I was so die-hard into saying "yes" in growing my business, like you know, there's no other option, I got a lot of press attention and it just kind of helped me build up my online sales, because I would be featured on different media outlets or news or do interviews. Those people would join my email list. So my online business has really always been really successful, it has just grown even without me having to put like a ton of energy into it just organically from doing interviews and things like that that happened to come my way. I never said no to any interview.

Tracy: You're such an anomaly, just like a spitfire. It's so fun to see how things grow. I've seen, I mean I'm not going to report that unless you want to, but I've seen like the kind of sales that you do, and it's legit. Sending me screenshots, and you sell \$40 bracelets.

Chelsea: Yes, yeah. I think our most expensive item is \$82 and it's a setup bracelet.

Tracy: That to me is looney tunes, because you're doing... I mean can we kind of tease that you're doing over seven figures?

Chelsea: Yeah, we totally can. This year is actually insane. Our sales are even up 1300% from what they were last year, and I know we're going to talk about this, but I can promise you it's because of how we started doing launches.

Tracy: We're going to talk about that. I think that part of what... Would you want to share that or should we start more with like how you started building community? What do you think?

Chelsea: It all kind of ties together. Yeah, let's start with community.

Tracy: Okay, cool. So you know you had this like you started doing like pop ups in stores, doing home parties, I think that's a lot of ways people launch their business. Then you go on Etsy and you launch your own website, and I remember back then you were on a platform called the Magento and then you switched over to Shopify, because you're like...



Chelsea: Magento was a nightmare. I do not recommend it to anyone.

Tracy: And then you moved to Shopify and I was so happy to hear that, because a lot of people were like fighting with me in the beginning when I was like... Not fighting, but I don't know what to say, like opposing.

Chelsea: Being like resistance a little bit.

Tracy: Originally I was like WordPress, you could do like as much as you want, but Shopify has just become the forefront leader in e-commerce for small brands that don't have big budgets for customized websites. And so I think it's really, or custom websites, I should say, because you can customize Shopify. So we've chatted so much about this over the years, and as I've watched you grow, like one of the things I think is really interesting is that you've really been able to create an amazing community around your brand. So when did you start kind of diving into this concept and knowing that building community around your brand was going to be something that made a huge difference?

Chelsea: So I kind of noticed from the get go how much the local people in our area really supported anything that I was doing, and when I went online we started mainly Facebook, I was like there has to be a way to connect with your customers in the same sense that you get when you're hanging out with them in their houses and stuff. So logical for me, I was like, "I'm just going to act like we're best friends and this is how I would talk to you." I think that that has really made a huge difference you see.

People will often, who almost try to act like, I'm going to say, too big in their britches and like they're better than or try to seem fancier than they are and don't really interact with their customers on a personal level, and not that I share a lot of like personal details or anything, but I just try to talk to them like I would with one of my girlfriends. So most of my customers have really become good friends, just on online and things like that, but I think if you...

Okay, so the way that I did it was just basically sharing all of the behind the scenes and what goes into the business, and I think kind of bringing your customer along on that journey with you isn't something a lot of people do, and it's a really good way for them to feel super connected to your brand and know that you're authentic in everything that you're doing. Because they can see, they're like on this journey with you. So for instance



when I started, I wasn't making \$40 bracelets, my pieces were closer to the \$500 range.

Tracy: Were you doing fine jewelry then?

Chelsea: I did lampwork jewelry.

Tracy: Okay.

Chelsea: I did work as a bench jeweler for a bit stronger, I went GIA, all that good stuff. It wasn't really my vibe. I found myself on this whole journey that we've been on, I actually really love customer service more than anything, so even though I love design, at this point in my business I just design whatever pieces we're going to be releasing, and then my team makes the pieces and I get to handle all the things that I really enjoy doing, instead of just sitting and creating all day.

Tracy: Yeah. Oh, it's so good.

Chelsea: I'm just going to say from a community standpoint I think just the journey and opening up and letting people kind of see what's going on, like I said, it's not a super personal level, but it's enough to be like, "Hey, you know we screwed this up this week. Thanks for hanging in there with us." and then people are like, "I love people all behind the scenes." It's not anything crazy, like I'm diving into super personal things, but it's just like here's the highs and lows of owning your own business, here's what all goes into it, and they really, really enjoy seeing everything that's going on and all the work that we do put into it and all the work that my team puts into it, and knowing that we truly care about our customers and about the pieces that we're making for them.

Tracy: I've seen this, because I'm in your Facebook group, and you started creating... You weren't always doing in a Facebook group. When did that transition happen?

Chelsea: So earlier this year is actually when we started our Facebook group. And honestly, so we've always had a store front for the most part, I opened my first store which is basically more of an art studio back in 2011, and then I really, just like I said, I loved customer service and hanging out with people, and so a store, obviously. You get to come shop with me and hang out. That was always something that I really enjoyed doing. I had my son back in 2016 and decided to just close up shop so that he could stay at home with me, and it wasn't going to like make me lose my mind running



back and forth between the shop and the studio and my home with my new baby.

Once we closed up our store there was like a two year stand in between where it felt really disconnected, and I know a lot of people feel this way because I talk to designers who do shows and they absolutely love interacting with their customers, and then they get behind their computer and they have no idea how to speak to them. Like it's not the same in their mind. So what I was doing was I was like, we're mailing all of this stuff, we're shipping thousands of orders a month and I have no idea what people think about it once they get them.

I was like let's create a Facebook group and make it super casual, which was my goal. We used to get tagged on social media a lot by our customers, and I feel like as social media has become this like picture perfect world, it's made people more apprehensive about feeling insecure and like their photos aren't good enough and they don't want to post them and put that out there in the world, and I really think it is because of the Instagram perfect world now.

Tracy: Definitely.

Chelsea: I was like there has to be a way for us to connect with them, and then be able to show their crappy iPhone photos in their pajamas if they're wearing the bracelet.

Tracy: Yeah, exactly.

Chelsea: So when we started our Facebook group, the whole point of it was, I was like I want to know what people are doing in their everyday life with our jewelry, like I just want to see how they're wearing the pieces all the time on a more casual level and we can all basically hang out, and that's what we did. So we created it, and I kind of like said something to a couple friends of mine and I was like, "Hey, this is what we're doing. If you're in your PJ's or you're nursing your baby or you're drink your coffee or walking your dog, will you just snap a picture of your jewels?"

I really want to be showing the lifestyle that is Horse Feathers, instead of just showing all of these like glam model shots all the time." And honestly, it just took on a life of its own. I think once you put it out there and give people the freedom and it's a closed group so it's a secure area and they don't have to worry about everybody else seeing their random photos of



their bracelets all day, and it just kind of like took off and everybody loves it. I mean there's probably 30 to 70 posts a day of people wearing their pieces. Which I love seeing, because now I'm even more motivated to make more stuff, because I'm like, "Yes, I get it, like they're wearing it and they love it, and now I'm more energized to create more pieces."

Tracy: Yeah. So how did you kind of like build this community and turn it into a platform for a business growth? Because that's, you know you've done this, you've created a community around your brand, how are you using that to grow your sales and like sell out in 20 minutes?

Chelsea: It's a little thing called urgency, it works there really well. So one thing that we started doing also, we've done it a couple times so we didn't really do it consistently was we created a schedule for when we are going to do certain launches and releases, and we really trained our customers to get into this system and this mindset of when things are coming, and they will even help us like on all social media and in our Facebook group will help build up the anticipation and remind people when we're releasing something.

So for instance, on the 15th of the month every month we do a stack of the month. Which is a like an exclusive set of bracelets that you can only get when I started, the idea was that you can only get it for that month. Now you can only get it for the first hour, because it sells out. It's kind of crazy. But, so they help build up will stuff like that, and they, will be posting on social media, "Don't forget the Horse Feathers stack of the month is coming out, set your alarms."

So really just having more of a, I think just like a community aspect of them wanting to help us grow, because they are genuinely, like they generally are friends at this point. I think them wanting to see our business grow and seeing the journey that we're all on together, they're basically helping us market everything for free every time we release something. I mean there's hundreds, if not thousands of people telling all of their friends and families what we have something new coming out. It's pretty incredible.

Tracy: That's so cool. So you started an ambassador program. Do you want to talk a little bit about that and how you incentivize them and how the ambassadors are kind of helping you build your audience?



Chelsea: Yeah, I think it's crazy if you don't have any ambassador programs. Honestly, at this point. So that way, I'll tell you what I've seen happen with it, because we didn't execute one for a long time, and mainly because I kept thinking people just work with influencers, and that wasn't my vibe, that's not what I wanted to do, I wanted it to be like real, authentic, like everyday life people who truly already love our brand, so it's super simple for them to talk about. Instead of trying to like convince somebody or like give them some verbiage to say on a social media platform. Like people know when stuff's not authentic.

Tracy: Exactly.

Chelsea: So what we did was, we started our ambassador program, we talked about it, once again, we do releases, so we talked about this for about two weeks before we ever released the application and we required them to get on our email list in order to even see the application. So if you were not on our email list, you didn't even get the link to the application. The second part of that is that we were only looking to bring on customers. So even when we brought on our ambassadors, one of the questions that they had to answer was "how many pieces of jewelry do you own from us", and I thought this is the best way to get the people who are already truly committed to your brand to work for you even more.

Because word of mouth is honestly the best marketing tool, so having people who are already in your brand, they know everything about it and then already own the pieces, it's more authentic coming from them, than it is if you're trying to train someone on how to talk about your brand. So that was one of the things that we did, and we really just brought on some customers who have been great customers for a while, we brought on like 20 people to begin with, and we still have the same 20 people, and basically they get a small commission for helping us build up anticipation to all of our launches, all of our releases, they help interact with our customers on social media, and they really just love our brand and want to be a part of it, and this was a great way for them so kind of get an incentive for doing something that they were already doing.

Tracy: So this is the sharing economy at its best. This is something we talk about in the Desired Brand Effect, it's actually the second part of it, and it's so important because when you can create that connected experience with your customers, it's easy to get a conversion.



Chelsea: Yes, for sure. It's crazy. So people ask all the time, they're like, "How do I become an ambassador?" and we just say, "Work like you already got the job." and that's how you get the job. So then we have hundreds of other people who aren't even in the ambassador program who are already volunteering and doing all of the work because they hope to be in it at some point.

Tracy: So how to you incentivize them?

Chelsea: They get a 10% on all sales that are generated through their link, so you can do a link or a code in Shopify. If you're not on Shopify system. Shopify is literally the best thing in the entire world. But anyways, they get a 10% commission, and then if they generate a minimum of \$300 in sales, we also give them a \$50 gift card. So that's per month. I will tell you the people who get the \$50 gift cards to our store, which is what you want, because you want them to buy more of your pieces, they're bringing in thousands, it's not just the \$300. Like anybody who meets the \$300 is at about \$1000 mark in sales.

Tracy: Amazing.

Chelsea: We didn't offer an incentive at first, and these girls were like so committed, so all they were getting was a \$50 gift card, but they were bringing in like tens of thousands of dollars a month and I was like, "Okay, we got to give them a little bit more." Because I was like, this is insane, they're helping our business grow so much, that I had to do something else.

Tracy: That's so cool. So obviously, you know it's easy for me to see this, because I know you and I've been following you for a long time, you've been a part of our community, like deep on the inside and on the outside and now as a coach for our members. Hike have you like really created like motivation for your employees to kind of like get on board with this community aspect and really be loyal to you and your brand?

Chelsea: So most of our employees have been with us for a minimum of six years.

Tracy: Wow.

Chelsea: So that's pretty good. I think just the community aspect of it, when I show what we're doing behind the scenes, I do not, this is not a one person show and everybody knows that. Even from the beginning if somebody



was just helping me, because obviously I didn't have help at first, but when somebody was helping me maybe package orders or something, which was probably my mom, I would still show my mom helping me. I've never tried to make it seem like I'm the only person doing something or if anyone is helping or working in any way, I'm always talking about them.

I will name drop who's shipping your order or who's working on this. I want them to feel important because they're very, very important to my brand and I wouldn't have it, like this couldn't exist without them. So I really try to make them feel not only included in everything, but also highlight them in any way that I can. I feel like I'm really good about finding people strong suits and then letting them just kind of take control of that particular area in the business and letting them just really like grow in that aspect.

Tracy: That's awesome. I mean that's what they say, it's like if you want to hire A players, you hire them potentially for a role, but then you watch at what, you know, if they're really committed and loyal. Sometimes they might move into a different role. When I think of our team, when I hear Jess, you know originally I was hiring her for writing position, and I ended up hiring someone else for the writing position, but I could tell she was so loyal and committed and wanted the job so badly, because she believed in what we were doing over at Flourish and Thrive so much that she basically was like, "I can do all these other things, so if there's any..." I'm like, "Well you can come in to customer service, because we need some help with that." And then that customer service role turned her, she's now a director of education for the company.

Chelsea: I know, she's the most amazing person.

Tracy: Yeah, I mean she really loves, loves community and she loves building community and she loves the people and cares so much about what we're doing.

Chelsea: Just imagine how different it would be if you would have just kept her in that box saying, "You can only write."

Tracy: Yeah, I mean I didn't even hire her as a writer, but yeah, exactly.

Chelsea: I think that's what hurts people sometimes on their mindset, they're like I'm only hiring for shipping, but then somebody gets in there and they're really awesome and make things or they're really awesome at customer service, so instead of saying like, "Oh hey, you'd be great at this." you just



kind of keep them in there. I think not let people grow or reach their full potential in whatever they're doing is why people have a really high turnover rate and have a hard time finding employees that will stick with them through anything.

Tracy: Exactly, exactly. So I asked you to be an SOS coach a few months ago. We don't even like necessarily like have a review system for our coaches, but they would like post in the group, "I had a call with Chelsea, my mind's blown." and after the event last week we were all here in New York City, several designers were taking action on the things that you taught them, and it's just exciting to have you. So I wanted to ask you what's your favorite part about being an SOS coach?

Chelsea: I honestly just love seeing other designers grow their business and I'm going to say it, reach their full potential and get out of their head on something. Sometimes it's nice to just be able to have a conversation with somebody who's been in the same boat to really like see how things could go or how clear things could get, instead of just feeling stuck. I just think I love seeing them grow their business and how they, like you're saying, implement things. Like when we have a conversation and then I see them start doing something, I'm like, "Heck yes, high five." Virtual high five. I just absolutely love watching them grow their business and just becoming friends, honestly. Like I knew over half of the people that were at the event and I loved it, I was talking to everybody.

Tracy: So fun.

Chelsea: Yeah, and it's just, it's a really awesome community also. I think we talked about this before, it can be really isolating when you have your own business, because other people don't really understand all of the ins and outs and everything that's like weighing on your shoulders. Sometimes it really is paying the bills or not, and it's really hard to get other people to understand that when they have a normal 9-5 and they're like I just get a paycheck. That's not how it is as an independent designer sometimes. So there's a lot of struggles that people don't necessarily see, and I think if you have this community of women and some men who can kind of help encourage and lift each other up and brainstorm ideas and different things like that, it's really, really invaluable.

Tracy: Really invaluable. Your specialty, I was laughing so hard because I don't even know what we hired you for, I was like probably doing client work



and story work and community, and like your specialty is across the board. So what do you love doing the most?

Chelsea: So I love talking about basically the things we talked about right now, but ambassador programs, paying your customers to work for you, marketing strategies and how to really authentically get the right customers, creating a community, brand story, just everything that has to do with really building a great brand and bringing in the perfect customers for you.

Tracy: I love that. I want to mention something. I'm going to look up your Instagram right now. The reason I want to look up your Instagram is because I know that so many people have such a huge focus on getting more Instagram followers, and you have a good following, you have almost 13000 people.

Chelsea: I think a lot of my followers are also designers, FYI.

Tracy: The thing about this is you have a crazy business, and I know people who have like 30, 40, 50000 followers and are barely even scraping by making \$100,000, like \$100,000 a year, and you're doing seven figures. Like the thing that I think is interesting is that when you can create that, basically that group or community of raving fans of people who buy anything from you, who are so die-hard, they're just like pumped to buy, it's like you don't need a million customers, you don't mean all these followers. People are just focusing on the wrong things half the time.

Chelsea: Yes. I definitely agree with you there, and I feel like a lot of people, even designers that I talk to in SOS and in Flourish and Thrive have been worried about how do I get more followers or more engagement, I'm like you have to have the right people showing up. We do not go, we've never gone after social media followers. Even if we run a Facebook ad or any sort of ad, we always are directing people to our website. Because when people get in the right place, I mean if you the right people to your website, they're going to want to follow you on social media.

Tracy: Yeah, exactly.

Chelsea: There's no point in having tens of thousands of followers or hundreds of thousands of followers if nobody's buying from you, or nobody's even engaging with you. I think that's what a lot of people are really missing, is that and engagement and loving on the customers that you already have.



It is so much harder to get new customers than it is to just love the crap out of the ones you already have.

Tracy: I know, right?

Chelsea: Yes. I mean we have die-hard customers. Our customer retention rate is like 87%. We recognize people's names on the regular. If they send in a repair, they send us a Starbucks gift card. I mean they're like committed and they're friends, and it's just, it's really awesome, and I think if you spend too much time worrying about who's following you, you're going to be missing all of the time you could have spent just loving on the customers that you already have, which is why we created our Facebook group and we spend more time in there nurturing and loving on the people who are already where we want them, instead of just trying to get other people on board.

Tracy: That's so awesome. Chelsea, thank you so much for being on the show today. Where can everyone find you?

Chelsea: You can find me all over the interwebs @HorseFeathersGifts.

Tracy: Awesome. And you can also find her as a coach in our SOS coaching program.

Chelsea: Yes.

Tracy: Yes. Thanks so much for being here, have an awesome day, everyone.

Tracy: Thank you so much for joining me for this episode of Thrive by Design. I've had a blast being here, and I hope that you have too. Anyway, I am super excited because we are filling up spots in our SOS program, we just opened up 20 new spots, we have several of them already filled and tons of applications coming in, and I want to invite you to apply for the program and jump on an exploration call with my team. We really want to get you ready for the holiday season, this is the perfect time so that you're really nailing Q4, you have an awesome end of the year. Let's end strong and let's do this.

So if you're interested in learning more and you're someone who's already an established designer who already has consistent sales and you're doing a minimum of like between \$40,000 and \$100,000 in revenue a year head on over to FlourishThriveAcademy.com/SOS to apply. Thanks for being



here today, this is Tracy Matthews signing off. I'm super pumped, let's do this.

Thank you so much for listening to today's episode. It's my mission to help thousands of creative businesses, inside and outside the jewelry space, use their creativity to make money. Make sure that you're subscribed to Thrive-by-Design on iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher and wherever podcasts are played. We would love to hear what you think, please rate and review the show. If you're inspired, please share this with your friends. Here's to seeing you flourish and thrive.