



How to Navigate Closures in Your Brick and Mortar Retail Store

THRIVE BY DESIGN WITH TRACY MATTHEWS

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 250. Hey there, it's Tracy Matthews, Chief Visionary Officer of [Flourish & Thrive Academy](#), and I am here today to talk to all y'all's who have a brick and mortar store. And to talk a little bit more about what you can do now to navigate store closures. I'm excited today, because I have three designers on the show who are going to inspire you with some really beautiful things that they are doing to keep sales and revenue coming in their local area, and to keep their customers engaged while their stores are closed.

We have a range of different designers and brands on the show today, and I'm considering doing a part two, because I've been recording these podcasts in real time, I have so many designers who have retail spaces or brick and mortar spaces that customers actually come into.

And you're going to hear from [Mallory](#), who is on the show today, who also carries multiple brands in her store, and she's talking about how she's partnering with designers to collaborate and basically help them because she was going to have to cancel a lot of orders, and she wanted to be able to help them sell through the product that they had already made. And we're going to be talking with [Joyia Jones](#), who has a store in St. Croix and she's going to be talking a little bit more about some of the fun things that she's doing to help keep her customers engaged and buying jewelry for her.

And then we're also going to be talking about or talking with [Nicole Gariepy of FantaSea Jewelry](#), who has been on this podcast before. She is also a coach and a mentor in our [Diamond Insiders Mentorship](#), and I'm really excited to have Nicole back on the show, because she just has some really great advice, and I think you're going to be really inspired by some of



the things that you can do to keep some sales rolling in, especially if you're doing traditional brick and mortar.

These designers have all been using this time very wisely. I'm not going to spend too much time on the intro because this is going to be a longer episode. Each of my interviews was at least 10 to 15 minutes, and I want to get into the designers first. But one thing that they are all doing, all of these designers, is that they are sending more emails than they feel comfortable with.

And the one thing that is saving jewelry brands right now, especially the jewelry brands in the Flourish & Thrive community, is that they are sending out emails, or up-leveling their email marketing game. But I know the biggest issue with so many people, especially if you're a creative type, is that by the time you sit down to write the email, to design the email, to rewrite the email because you don't like what it said, to check to see that it's mobilly optimized and all those things, you get frustrated and it takes so much time.

And so, I was asking our community and working with my team, I'm like, "How can we help people where they are?" I know that right now email marketing is going to be huge, especially as things still haven't reopened after the COVID times, maybe some cities and some things are starting to reopen soon.

Cities like New York City are going to be closed still for a while, how can people reach their customers quickly? And so, that's exactly why I designed and created the [Emails That Sell Bundle](#). You are going to love this, I want you to listen to this, and I want you to go check it out right after you listen to this episode. And we'll have a link to it over on the show notes, because I realized that one of the things that is a huge issue for designers, because I end up joining the email lists of the designers that we work with in our coaching program, SOS.

And one of the issues that a lot of them have is that they write, no offense guys, but they write boring subject lines. And so, what ends up happening is those subject lines or the emails don't get opened. And if your email's not getting opened, then no one's going to see what's inside the email, and if no one sees what's inside the email, they're not going to click through and get to your website.



This email bundle was designed to help you write better subject lines, so I gave you over 600 subject line prompts. We have 13 or 14 beautifully designed Canva email templates with instructions on how to download them, upload them into Canva, how to break them apart to use in your Mailchimp, your Klaviyo, your Omnisend or whatever email CRM you're working with. We're also giving you our urgency promotion system.

The system was developed for SOS coaching students to help you basically create urgency around what you're selling so that people have a reason to go now to actually buy. Plus, I'm going to be giving you a 12-Month Done-For-You Marketing Calendar. All of this goodness is valued at almost \$1,500 but it's yours today for, wait for it, 37 bucks. I'm not kidding \$37. If you're interested in learning more, head on over to flourishthriveacademy.com/emailbundle. We'll also have this linked over in the show notes. That's flourishthriveacademy.com/emailbundle and grab your bundle today.

It is literally a no brainer price. We had just heard back from many designers saying that they had the best month in sales ever in March that they used to spend so much time writing emails. This was the best investment they've ever made in their business because it's taking them literally minutes as opposed to hours crafting an email and so, so much more. Head on over to flourishthriveacademy.com/emailbundle and grab yours today. This will work fantastically if you're a jewelry business, if you have an aspirational product business or any type of business that sends emails and is selling products. So, let's do this.

All right, let's dive into today's episode with [Mallory Shelter](#), [Joyia Jones](#) and [Nicole Gariepy](#). Let's do this. Well, I'm really excited to have Mallory Shelter as one of my guests on the show today. Mallory, thanks so much for being here.

Mallory: Thank you for having me.

Tracy: Well, I'm excited because you've been a member of the Flourish and Thrive Community for many years and I remember a couple of years ago using you as an example for some of the content that you were using on your blog because you would feature your customers and show how they were wearing your jewelry. And I just loved that.

And so, I posted something in our Diamond Insiders and I'm like, "Who in here has a [brick and mortar](#)? And you commented and I'm like, "Of course,



Mallory has a store." I wanted to talk to you a little bit because you're doing some really amazing things to keep your retail location alive. Before we dive into that, give us a little background on your jewelry business and your career in the jewelry industry.

Mallory: Yeah, I started seven or eight years ago as many Flourish and Thrive members do where I was working full time and running my business on the side, seeing if it was actually viable, on the side of working full time for a number of years. And really that enabled me to save some money and sake money back into the business and really figure out who my customer was. And then when it got to a point where the business had grown enough and I felt like I was able to do it full time to support myself. I left my full time job and started running my jewelry business. When I started I focused primarily on bridge and wear everyday jewelry, so a lot of gold fill pieces, sterling silver.

And as I started doing it full time, I made the transition more into higher end pieces as well and custom work. So, now my business as the [Mallory Shelter Jewelry](#) side of it, it's a mix of both. We still have our gold fill line and then I also do a lot of custom higher end pieces, engagement rings, wedding bands, heirloom resets, that type of thing.

Tracy: I love it. And you're typically working out of your store, correct?

Mallory: Yeah, I opened my storefront in 2018. And the space, funny enough just was set up so that it had the original storefront in it and it was a perfect divider in the space. So, I now have a studio in the back of the shop.

Tracy: Oh, that's awesome. You're not going to be able to see it on the podcast, but we're on video too. What's the necklace you're wearing? Is that one of yours?

Mallory: It is that one of mine. It's an [Ariel Gordon piece](#), it's just made with love.

Tracy: I love it.

Mallory: I'm currently hoarding all of the pieces that we are not able to sell in the store right now.

Tracy: I'm doing the episode today all about retail and innovations and retail because obviously with this COVID-19, and coronavirus pandemic, retail's clothes, you can't really go shopping unless it's for essential items. But people are still selling jewelry, they're innovating and the way that they're



reaching their customers. I wanted to talk to you a little bit about that because I loved what you had to say. So, why don't you just dive into some of the things that you're doing to keep sales coming in the door? Because you carry multiple brands in your store, it's not just your jewelry, correct

Mallory: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, a bit of background on the store. We opened in 2018, we're coming in two years in a couple months. And the whole idea behind it was for obviously me to sell my own work, but then to also feature, we now have like 50 other jewelry designers in the shop. Just a space where people could shop, artisanal slightly higher end jewelry.

But not have that experience where it was like security guards in all white and very sterile and not super inviting. We really encourage people to ask questions and try things on and that type of thing. But putting a lot of emphasis on independent designers and primarily female designers. I guess, it was foresight or luck, I don't know why, but from day one I felt pretty strongly about having an online presence.

And what I found from having the store is that people would look for things online a lot and then eventually come in and try something on. But that online to retail transition was really important for us. And over the past two years, we've built up a strong customer base of people who now are familiar with the quality of our products and know what they can expect when they purchase from us.

But of course, we still rely almost all on physical foot traffic in the shop. Obviously, store closing is not a good thing for retailers, but because we had that online website set up, we pivoted pretty quickly and just started communicating with all of our customers about how we were online so that took a number of different ways. We sent out an email.

I've been very, very transparent with just my brand voice and our customers about how this has impacted us. So, obviously we have a huge overhead cost with rent. I have my salary and two other employees' salaries, things like that and I was just an open book about it so that people really understood what this meant for us.

We had team members of ours reaching out individually to customers of ours, not necessarily with the intent to sell things, but just to say like, "Hey, we're still here and the world is just going to keep moving. So, if you have



birthdays, anniversaries, you're having a baby, that type of thing, we're happy to help you find something if you're wanting that."

And the biggest thing that we've done, which has been immensely helpful with sales, is that we've actually started partnering with a lot of the brands that we carry to do trunk shows. When this all happened, it was coming off of New York Now where we buy most of our stuff. And so, I had to cancel a lot of the orders, which is basically devastating to those brands.

In talking with some of them, obviously I didn't want to just cut out cold Turkey and leave them in the lurch. We started toying with doing these trunk shows and they would supplement with a couple other pieces that maybe were higher end or not something we typically carried or whatnot. But we would offer 10 or 15% off. And I was doing Instagram stories, just showcasing the pieces.

We did a whole series on each of the brands that we carried showing more about, they're behind the scenes and how they work. And people responded really, really well to that. And that has not only driven our sales a lot, but it's also allowed us to then pay for the orders that we initially were planning to cancel.

Tracy: That is so awesome. Were you having like really high... What are some of the brands I should say that you were doing these trunk shows with because we should give them a shout out.

Mallory: Yeah. The first one we did was with [Zoe Chico](#).

Tracy: I love that. I've known her forever.

Mallory: I love her stuff. We've alternated between these higher end brands like Zoe Chico and then some more of the bridge jewelry. We've had them with [Zoe Chico](#), [Lindsay Lewis](#) who is a jewelry designer. We're doing one with [Alex Monroe](#) this coming week who's a designer out of London. We did one with a clothing Brand We Carry, but again, focusing mainly on jewelry and just taking the opportunity to share a little bit more about these brands because so often people, how would you know, unless you're doing the research on your own. Reminding people that there's a face behind the products that we're selling and they need to make a living too and all of that.



Tracy: That's so awesome. And so, do you feel like these efforts have replaced the income completely that you would have made with the foot traffic in the store? Is it just more of a supplemental thing?

Mallory: No, definitely not replaced. I mean, April and May tend to be our busiest months in the spring, just with Mother's Day and graduation and that type of thing. By no means is this replacing the other you downside and revenue loss we've seen is with custom stuff. Obviously, there's not a whole lot we can be doing with that right now and it really does require more of an in person meeting.

So, we've managed to do a couple of those online and are trying to pivot that online. But a lot of our customers tend to like that in store experience. It hasn't replaced income completely, but it's allowed me to keep on employees and continue paying them, which is ultimately the most important thing at this point for me. It's something.

Tracy: And that's an important goal because I know a lot of people applied for the PPP and they didn't get it because unless you were one of the first people to get in or you have... I feel like they were probably giving that to bigger companies first as opposed to people with just two people because it's more people that would be laid off.

It's important that I know I can totally relate with what you're saying because my number one goal is to keep everyone employed. Sometimes knock the goals out the window at that moment. We don't need to be hitting our [financial goals](#). It's really at that point in time to keep people employed because we have good people, we don't want to lose them or put them to a bad spot.

Mallory, thank you so much for being here. This is so insightful. Do you have any final words or any last bit of advice to any designers or brands who are trying to figure out how to get some extra sales in the door during this time when everything shut down?

Mallory: Yeah. I would say definitely get clear on your [brand voice](#) and how you're communicating with customers. I mean, now is a great time to make sure that your messaging is tight, your website looks clean, those types of things. And I think, I hear from a lot of people that they're hesitant to start because they don't know where and now is the time to start.

Tracy: Yeah, exactly.



Mallory: I would say just go for it. And I think people appreciate candidness and people want to support other businesses. I would say, just keep those things in mind and keep going, everyone has to make a dollar. And I think people are receptive to that and are trying to support if and when they can. And so yeah, keep on going.

Tracy: On tracking, tell us your website.

Mallory: My store's website is shopshelter.com and then my personal brand is malloryshelterjewelry.com.

Tracy: Awesome. Mallory, thank you so much for being here. This was so fun.

That was awesome to be here.

Mallory: Talk to you soon.

Tracy: Well, I'm excited because I have [Joyia Jones](#) here on the show with me and she has a retail store in St. Croix. I'm excited to have you on the show, Joyia, thanks for being here.

Joyia: Thanks for having me. I'm excited too.

Tracy: You're in our [SOS coaching program](#) and I've posted something in our Diamond Insiders and was talking about this in SOS too because I wanted to know which of our designers had retail stores who are still selling because obviously with lockdowns and closures and all the things a brick and mortar retail is being affected. I'm trying to develop and inspire other people with brick and mortar stores about some of the things that they can do to keep their people employed, to keep the sales coming in the door. And even if you're not going to meet your regular store or business goals, what are you doing to keep that revenue coming in the door.

Joyia, before we dive into that, I'd love to know just a little bit about your background and your business.

Joyia: Sure. We've been in business almost eight years now. It's a family business. It's my husband and I. We have five employees. I've lived in St. Croix for 13 years and my husband is born and raised, he's a fourth generation Croxian and our son is a fifth generation Croxian. So, we are deeply steeped in the island roots here, which is really wonderful. And yeah, it's definitely a crazy time. And as a brick and mortar store, when this first happened, I felt like I'm a triage nurse. Like shutting off all the bleeding arteries and in the SOS



event, the live event that we had, one of the things that was inspiring to me to change how I was doing business and now that's what all my newsletters say is how we're doing "business differently," was the conversation with Jason or with your boyfriend. His name's [Jason](#)?

Tracy: Yeah, Jason. [He was on the podcast](#) a couple of weeks ago too, so you guys can look that up.

Joyia: He said he did this [activity about what is the story you're telling yourself](#)? And the story that I'm telling myself is that 95% of my sales walk through my door and 5% of my sales happen online. And the question was, is that story really true? And it's probably really not and how can you change the story? And so, I changed the story that day to my online business is growing and the way that I connect with my clients is growing and I am growing too, I am going to do business differently. So, that's what we started doing.

Tracy: Wow. I love it. Oh my gosh. Well, and I'm sure that because you have a brick and mortar in a tourist area, that lack of travel is impacting that. Tell me a little bit about that and then I want to know what you're doing to actually get sales in the door.

Joyia: Yeah. The weight and the stress is heavy because when you live in a tourist industry, this is our time to sell. This is our season. So, these are my biggest months and the doors are closed. As soon as we move into June, July, August, September, and October, that's my off season. And sometimes we close one or two days a week during the off season. That's when we do our vacations and things like that.

We already make money in season to survive an off season and now we're going to be missing many months of our season, which is terrifying. And that's what other brick and mortar stores are going through too, I'm sure, especially if you live in a seasonal place like I do.

Tracy: Okay, cool. Yeah, I can totally relate to that. And I want to just go down to St. Croix right now and go on vacation because I've been cooped up. I want to go to support you guys. Well, they just opened the beach so I wish everybody could come here.

Joyia: It's been closed for two weeks with the Easter holiday to keep everybody more quarantined and they just opened the beach back up. So, we're going tomorrow for my husband's birthday.



Tracy: Amazing. Amazing. I'm jealous. Well, it's hot here in Arizona and no beach. Tell us a little bit about what you're doing. What kind of sales activities are you doing to bring to make sales? Your online business is growing.

Joyia: My online businesses are rolling. What I did, I was already doing an online spin to win for Easter right before this happened. And that was an event that I used to do only in the store where you would come in and with your purchase of \$50 or more, you would draw an egg inside, there were prizes. There was either Easter candy or jewels, charms, gemstones, fun things like that. My web developer and I had already created this to be done online for the very first time.

That was already in the works before the doors were shut down for the pandemic. So that was a huge blessing. But again, that's me training myself how to take the events that I always do in the store and now do them online.

Tracy: Wow. How did that roll out? Was it good?

Joyia: Great. It was so great. We have tons of supporters anyway that love St Croix and want to be down here and we have a great newsletter list and we have a great community of people. And so, people loved that. I mean, as soon as you get a free thing in your bag and you get to play this fun spin to win, that really brought some steady sales in, which was nice. And then we've started doing things differently in the sense of, we've created a virtual styling page. So, one of the fun things about coming into our stores, you get to come in and hang out with me and try on the jewelry and stack bangles and the rings and you can't do that now.

Now, I've created a virtual styling tape page that talks about, "Hey, I know we can't do this in person, but we can do this via all of the great technological ways that we're communicating now during a pandemic." Now, there's a page on my website where you can set up a virtual 30 minutes styling session with me. The calendar's right there. I did one this morning with a girl in Australia. It was midnight her time, 10 o'clock my time.

Tracy: Amazing. That's so cool. Did you make some sales off that?

Joyia: Well, we just started it. And so, now I'm bundling it with my gift certificates. So, if you want to buy a gift certificate for mom for Mother's Day, when you get your gift certificate and an email, you're also going to



get a PDF, which shows me behind the counter, which is the old way we did business. And then me now on my phone showing you the jewels and how you can stack them and wear them the new way we do business. And you can book your session right there on the landing page. The calendar's right there.

Tracy: [Virtual sales events](#). And I think, I know a couple of other designers I think are doing this in our community too, but just differently maybe they've...I love this idea of hosting virtual events, taking things online because it just goes to show you like, I think sometimes we think that we have to have people sitting in front of us in order to make the sales activity or the sales thing that we're doing work. But there's so many ways to reach people virtually, which is, this is just an incredible thing, right?

Joyia: And people have always said, "Oh, are you a jeweler?" And my answer has always been, "No, my job is to connect with people through jewelry. It's the connection piece that I craved that I love." And that's the part that's missing. But what I realized is it's not really missing. I don't get to touch them with my hands, but I get to see them now in person. I mean, I'm on a call with a girl in Australia. It was amazing and she visited St. Croix three years ago and we're working on some custom pieces for her. This is my way of connecting with you in person and I get to see you and we get to laugh and we can drink wine.

We're going to have a virtual live event in our... We created a Facebook group when all of this happened and we have a bunch of fun members in there and we've been doing cool stuff and we're going to have our first live event doing a collaboration with another brick and mortar store around the corner. My friend Lori Hirons has to go boutique, so it's clothing. We're pairing it with our jewelry and we're going to do the event live on Facebook. We both created a Mother's Day gift guide and the links to the gift guide will be there. And we'll be showcasing the items that are in the gift guide.

Tracy: I love it. That's so great. And then you're just going to be doing a comment sold type of thing where people are just buying it right there or will you drop links to where they can purchase on the website or how are you going to do that?

Joyia: Because they have the gift guide, the gift guide has the links and they just purchase on our individual websites and we're giving away raffle prizes there. We're going to do the raffle prizes based on their comments. But no,



it's not a comment sold. It's just a, here's the gift guide and you can go shop on. So, there's no pressure. We just want to check in on our clients, we want to have a glass of wine with them and we want to show them all of these great ideas for Mother's Day that we're doing. And then that's why I'm also going to plug how you don't know what to get right now. That's okay. Do a gift card and get the virtual styling session for free.

Tracy: So good, so, so good. What has been like the funnest thing that you've seen happen out of this experience, maybe a surprise from a client or something that you've tried that actually worked or something along those lines?

Joyia: Well, the human race is inherently good and kind and wants to help everybody out. And I have always surrounded myself in a [community](#) that is all about that. And I'm seeing that more than ever. I had one of my favorite things when a client reached out to me from the States whose niece lives here in St Croix and was like, "I want to get her birthday present. I support you. I surprised her. How am I going to get it to her?" We're all in quarantine. And I was like, "No problem, I'll do porch delivery and I will sing from six feet away."

Tracy: Oh my gosh.

Joyia: And that's what I did. And I put up a whole post about how many people this benefited. The aunt was happy because she was doing something good. We were happy because it was supporting our family. She was happy because she's getting a gift. And the piece of jewelry that her aunt picked was one that supported the Dolphin Swim team in our community and this little girl happens to be on the swim team. She grabbed off and swam earrings.

Tracy: I was not... So cute. You're singing from the porch, happy birthday, like social distancing singing. It's so great.

Joyia: And then a week later it was her mother's birthday, who's one of my best friends and same thing, a bunch of her girlfriends pitched in and got her a gift certificate and a couple of jewels and her husband and I went and I brought my son this time and we stayed far, far away and we sang and I videotaped her and I put it out. It was so cute. And people have been doing that, sharing the video. I sent a package the other day to a friend



and she did a whole unboxing video on her own for me and posted it on her Facebook.

Tracy: Oh, so great. So great. You're getting footage too, I love it, fun things to post on social, et cetera.

Joyia: And all organic because we're just trying to... We care about you, we care about our clients, we're trying to connect with you, we miss you. We want to know that you're okay. And everybody wants to turn around and do good things for each other right now.

Tracy: That's so good. Joyia, thank you so much for sharing this because that is the truth. Everyone's in this together. And I know that you just popped on really randomly at the last minute I was texting you. I'm like, "Can you jump out right now, I really want to get the sound bite or your experience for the podcast? So, thanks for sharing that. Where can everyone find your website? And the next time people are in St. Croix, where can they find your store?"

Joyia: Yeah, so my website is joyiajewelry.com Joyia is spelled J-O-Y-I-A and we are located right in the town of Christiansted, on being Queen Cross Street. We have a tiny little 400 square foot space. It's adorable and cute and you can come down and go to the beach and stick your toes in the sand and see me any time. As soon as they lift the flight bans. I can't wait. I'm going to come down.

Tracy: I can't wait. I'm going to come down.

Joyia: Please do. You would love it.

Tracy: Joyia, thanks so much for being here today?

Joyia: Thank you so much for asking me to be here. I'm so grateful.

Tracy: Well, I'm so excited. I've another guest on the show. [Nicole Gariepy](#). Nicole has a brand called [FantaSea Jewelry](#) and she's actually been on the podcast before. I think, what was that like two years ago or something?

Nicole: Three, three years ago.

Tracy: Oh my gosh. That was right around the time you posted something in our Diamond Insiders and you're like, "The negativity is not going to take me because all these things are going wrong and I'm still growing my



business." And so, I interviewed you about that and you guys said, if you haven't listened to the episode, we'll dig that up and listen to it in the show notes because it's a really inspiring episode about resilience. And so, Nicole, I want to thank you again for being on the show with me again.

Nicole: I'm so happy to be here and I'm less nervous this time.

Tracy: Well, now, you're doing all these videos. Nicole is one of our Diamond Insiders mentors and a diagrammatic coach. And she is just like a light of joy. And the thing that I love so much about Nicole is that when we asked her to be a coach, what her business had been growing, she had implemented our laying the foundation program and been a community member of our Diamond Insiders for a very long time.

And we asked her to be a coach because of all the work that she was doing and the thing that I love and one of the reasons why we have the coaches that we do and these programs is that they're all students, are all graduates of the [Flourish and Thrive programs](#) and they're walking the walk.

As they're teaching and mentoring and helping the students, they're actually doing the work too. And they're showing up for their businesses. The coaching is not like their job. This is something that they do as a gift to our students. And so, it's just so fun to watch you grow. And so, I really wanted to have you on the show because I was thinking about it and I was like, "God, there's so many brick and mortar stores out there right now that haven't gotten ahead of this online thing." What are they doing to stay in business? And so, I'm going to ask you that question in a minute, but before we do that, why don't you tell us a little bit about your jewelry business and all the things?

Nicole: Sure. Well, the interesting thing is that this is my second jewelry business that I have now. And my first business was a brick and mortar. It was strictly brick and mortar. It was the big store. And that was where my jewelry career really started. Now, I closed that business in 2009. Just after the economy tanked in 2008, which is why when I found you in Flourish & Thrive, your story resonated with me so deeply because I said, "Oh, this is me. This is exactly what happened to me."

I took a break from working for myself for awhile and decided to go back out on my own in 2016 and with [FantaSea Jewelry](#), which is my business now. And I decided I want it to be all online. I want it to be strictly



e-commerce. And I had great success with that thanks to Flourish & Thrive and the [Laying The Foundation course](#).

Nicole: But then I realized that the next step for me was actually to be in front of people more. And it was ironically after the hurricanes of 2017 and we had some devastating hurricanes here. And I don't know what I was thinking, but I started to think about opening up a retail shop again and actually being a brick and mortar business. And no sooner did I really think about that, that the perfect spot fell into my lap. This is two, three months after a devastating hurricane. I honestly don't know what I was thinking, but it felt like the right thing to do and I went for it. I have to tell you 2018 was one of the best years for my business.

Even after those crazy hurricanes, it was amazing because I had opened the store, I got in front of people and I started connecting with people one-on-one and that was really where my business took off. And so, I went from, I'm still selling online, but to mainly doing... Most of my business was now coming from my retail store.

Tracy: And you had a really good online business too up until that point, you were doing well.

Nicole: Yeah, I was doing great, but of course, I always want more. I want to keep going. Now, I have the opportunity. Luckily, I had set myself up for eCommerce, so I'm just really going back to focusing on that right now.

Tracy: Let's talk about some of the things that you're doing not only in your local area but online to keep sales coming into your business. I mean, the interesting thing is I felt like a broken record so much for so many years because I was like, "Get online, everyone's got to sell online. Doesn't matter what kind of business you have.

You got to sell online." And now people are like, "Holy moly, I got to start [selling online](#)." I've even heard one of my friends reach out to who's a designer and she's like, "Have you heard of so and so?" She has a store in the D.C. area, and it's not Mallory who I interviewed earlier for this particular podcast, but another woman who is mainly meaningless.

And I'm like, she's been talking about getting online forever and now she's finally working on her website when we're in this. And it takes a long time to actually ramp up. So, anyway, let's talk about some of the things that



you're doing to support the brick and mortar, to go back and forth. I'm going to hand it over to you, so keep talking.

Nicole: Yeah, sure. And I love that you've been talking about [recession-proofing your business](#) for such a long time because I have gone through lots of trials and tribulations in my business career, so I'm always thinking, "What would happen if things went crazy again?" One of the things that I started doing right away, I realized the importance when coronavirus started to really get serious and we were sheltering at home and all of this, I realized the value in really reaching out to my customers on a personal level and doing really developing this nurture. I started doing daily Facebook lives on my business page and I just started really talking about positivity and connection and keeping in touch because my store was closed and I don't have that interaction with people anymore.

And I've been doing that ever since. I take Sundays off, but I do a daily Facebook live where I check in with my people. I've been sending out emails every week. At first they were very nurturing. I was just checking in with people and asking for them to reply to me. Now, doing all of this. It wasn't even hard selling. I was more soft selling. I was still letting them know there's free shipping on my website. You don't even need a coupon code. Everything ships for free for the entire month of April. I say that in my live videos, I say that in my emails.

In my emails I've asked for replies. I wanted customers to reply to me and just let me know how they were doing. I was blown away by the messages I got. So many messages, so many personal messages. And then this all developed into just because I'm there and on top of mind people started inquiring about custom work. People started inquiring about a piece they had seen. People are sending me messages on my Facebook page because they wanted to know about this piece of jewelry that I just featured.

I've also taken a look at all of the custom work that I've got out of this, made a list of all the people who have come to me for custom plus custom work that I've already had sort of in my because I have, I work from a waitlist like you do. And I made the list of all my custom orders that I have pending right now. And that's \$2,000 right there. Not including internet sales, not including anything else. That was really...Now the emails that I'm sending are, I'm sending talking more about my collections where at first it was a little more nurture focused just to test the waters and see where



my customers were at. And then now it's back to business as usual. I have done a live event, a collaborative live event last week.

Tracy: It worked with a trunk show. You did that with Anna Maria, right? I'm going to interview her on Friday about this. I'm so excited about it. Anna Maria is another one of our coaches over here. And the thing that I love about the people that we hire to mentor our students, like I said, they're all graduates but they are walking the walk and they're trying new things and they're bringing stuff to the table for us. Like, "Look what I tried." Because it was basically like you were taking that concept of doing an art show online with multiple clients. So, talk about that.

Nicole: It was really amazing because I have done lots of [virtual trunk shows](#) on my own. I've had the experience of...I have a system that is right and tight, my customers love it. My first one I made \$5,000 and they've just gotten in three hours and they've just gotten better ever since.

Anna and I talked about her vision for the event with my experience of the events that I've done, put these two things together and just went for it. And the feedback that we got was amazing because we took a live video. We did the live video where we were showcasing the products on ourselves and then also put up still shots of the photos to the customers could get, look at the piece close up. And they purchased right from the comments.

So, it was a great event. We were able to also get new contacts because we were sort of sharing our network with one another and the feedback's been amazing. And we made sales from the event too. And sales have been rolling in after the event both from people reaching out to us and people just buying on our websites.

Tracy: Do you have a number for how much your [email list](#) grew doing that collaborative event?

Nicole: It wasn't a huge growth at all. I actually haven't checked the numbers recently. I know I checked the day of and I think I only acquired about 25 new signups.

Tracy: That's so good of you.

Nicole: It's not insignificant, but I have to check now to see what the final growth is.



Tracy: That's pretty cool. And I'm saying like that's not... I think that sometimes we discount how important it is, if you have people who are interested in what you're doing, 25 interested people in what you're doing is a good number. That's nothing to snub your nose out, you know what I mean? I don't know.

Nicole: Quality over quantity..

Tracy: Exactly. Exactly. Is there anything else that you're doing that has really been a standout fun thing?

Nicole: Those are really the big ones that I'm doing. I always have a virtual trunk show of my own that happens in either may or June. I'm still preparing for that. That is still going to happen. My customers know to expect that because my birthdays in June, so I sort of tie it into this event. I'm getting ready and prepping for that just as I would, virus or no virus.

Tracy: I love that so much and I look forward to seeing more boxes of your jewelry shipping out for free. So awesome. Nicole, tell everyone where they can find you.

Nicole: My website [FantaSea Jewelry](#) is spelled FantaSea, the sea, the ocean, F-A-N-T-A-S-E-Ajewelry.com and you can find me on social media, Instagram at FantaSea Jewelry. Don't forget F-A-N-T-A-S-E-A Jewelry and also on [Facebook](#). You can find me everywhere at FantaSea Jewelry.

Tracy: Amazing. Nicole, thanks so much for being here today.

Nicole: Thank you for having me. It's such a pleasure.

Tracy: Thank you so much for listening to the show today. I hope that you're inspired by these designers' stories. Make sure that you give them a shout out on social media and let them know that you're listening. I'm just blown away by some of the innovation and creativity that people are coming up with right now to keep their businesses running and they're making it fun. It's exciting and fun all at the same time.

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