



# How to Improve Your Website Conversions with Reese Spykerman

THRIVE BY DESIGN WITH TRACY MATTHEWS

*“Sit down and write a main headline that's going to go at the top of your page. It should be specific, not generic. It should, it should hook people quickly. And then follow that up with some text that is, you know, further takes like describe is what your headline says maybe goes a little deeper. Follow that up with a call to action.”*

**Welcome to Thrive by Design, the podcast for ambitious independent jewelry brands, looking to profit from their products, get ready to make more and sell more doing what you love, without spending every single waking minute doing it. Hey, and if you're a creative fashion or product based business, I want to welcome you to the show. I'll be dropping big tips on launching, growing and scaling your business. Spend more of your precious time using your creativity to make you ready. All right, let's do this.**

Tracy: Welcome to the thrive design podcast episode 275. Hey there, it's Tracy Matthews, Chief Visionary Officer of Flourish and Thrive Academy. And today we're going to be talking about how to improve your website conversions. And I have a very special guest on the show today. Reese Spykerman. Reese is someone who I met through my good friend, Laura Belgrade. And I'm excited to have Reese on the show today, because we are talking about things that are really important that a lot of people don't think about and that is improving the buyer experience on your website. Now I came up with this because I was looking at a website or reviewing a website a couple of months ago, for a designer in our community. And I kind of you know, she remained nameless, but I was kind of thinking like, what is this person thinking?

Like, how do they think anyone is going to buy off this website, because a lot of times, you know, when we don't come with a design vein, you know, we might be starting a business or getting our website up. But we're not necessarily designers. Nor do we have like a big budget for design. Or we



go the other way we make this beautiful website that's beautifully designed, but it's not really set up to move people through that buying experience. And so I wanted to have reason to talk a little bit about that today on the show, which is exciting. And that is exactly why we also developed a brand new product over here at Flourish and Thrive Academy. It is coming out for a very special very short period of time. over our pre Black Friday sale.

We're going to do Black Friday, a little bit early this year. We're doing it on November 20. And our cyber weekend ends on November 23. And it's called Sold Out Shop. And this program is designed to help you get more traffic to your website. Increase the conversions on your website, I know that there's a lot of things that you don't know how to do because you're not a designer, we're going to help you do that simply so that when people land on your site, they know where to go next so that you're getting your copy tightened right. So they are moving people through the sale so that you're building know, like and trust and you are getting those people to buy from you over and over and over again. This was constructed a while ago. I'm very excited about it and we are offering it for 60% off at a very, very deep discount. For this black friday event. It is honestly priced in a no brainer way. So if you're interested in learning more about that I would love to invite you to get on the waitlist so that you don't miss a beat. Head on over to <https://www.flourishthriveacademy.com/sold-out-shop/> to get on the waitlist right now.

Now before I dive in, I want to introduce Reese. Reese Spykerman is a design and copywriting consultant who helps ecommerce and small businesses increase their website's revenue by optimizing their customers' online buying experience. Reese is a graduate of Missouri School of Journalism and for the past 15 years, she's combined her writing background with powerful strategic design techniques to help hundreds of global small business owners. Some of you might have seen their product sell out and achieve a five times boost in revenue. She's also designed a website in a book cover for the New York Times best selling author, Chris Guillebeau. She's been in countless podcasts, including the winning ecommerce podcast in entrepreneur and thrive global to name a few. All right, let's dive into this episode with Reese.

Well, I'm super excited to have a very special guest on the show today. Reese Spykerman. Reese, thanks so much for being here.



Reese: Thank you so much for having me. Tracy, I cannot wait to talk with you today. We have such an exciting topic.

Tracy: Yes we were introduced by my friend Laura Belgrade. And I'm super excited because one of the things that we're always working with our audience on is building websites that convert better and what I mean by that is that they have a great user experience when someone lands on the site, they know what to do, and it moves people to actually buy their jewelry or creative product. So I'm so excited to hear you talk a little bit more about this topic. So tell me how did you get into kind of designing websites and conversion, design everything that you're doing now.

Reese: Yeah. Well, before I did conversion design, I was a designer of websites for about 15 years. And before that, I went to journalism school. So what happened is along the way, I kind of married those two things in business strategy as well. And over the years, as I was designing for businesses, I noticed that sometimes a lot of people would come to me and they were so focused on the aesthetics. And what was happening is it was to the detriment of them, getting customers things would get in the way on the website, and they would get very particular about wanting it to look a certain way.

And the analytical part of my brain just was struggling with that, because I wanted to say, Well, I understand you want it to look beautiful, but you also want people to buy from you. And so that evolved into me doing just design execution, but really doing design strategy, as well as copy strategy. And both are so important for converting people on your website and in all your marketing materials. So I really marry both the copy and the design. And you'll find that when I talk about this, I try not to use a lot of industry jargon, I try really hard to break it down in a way that maybe your mom could listen into and understand what we're talking about. So that's what I get really excited about doing.

Tracy: I love it. So one thing that I wanted to kind of ask is like, can you like crystal clearly just like, explain what conversion design is or what it means to you and why it's so important.

Reese: Right.

Tracy: We kind of did that. I mean, you kind of explained why it's important. But I want to kind of go a little deeper into that.



Reese: Yeah, let's do that. If we think about the world we live in now, in particular, we've got millions of websites, advertisements, social media posts, they're all competing for our attention for our buyers attention, the noise right now the noise levels are off the chart, it's so high. So conversion design helps you break through that noise so that you can grab people's eyes, hearts and minds. So when noise is high, it's really imperative that every single element on your website, and even in your other marketing pieces are really thoughtfully approached. And we're going to talk about this a little later in our conversation. But basically, with conversion design, we are grabbing attention, we are keeping it, we are building trust, we're overcoming objections. And then this is really critical, making that next step for your visitor to take really clear every step of the way on their journey.

Tracy: Yeah, there's nothing worse than landing on a website, a jewelry website, or a product website or something like that. When you're just like, okay, the images are terrible. Like, this person looks like a total rookie, I don't know what they stand for. It's like an image with nothing else. There's like no words on it, like, what do I do next? And how do I know what to do? So I'm excited to dig into this conversation.

Reese: Me too.

Tracy: So let's talk about some of the issues. You know, I know that, you know, people, a lot of times, members of our community, you know, they're some of those times are in that startup phase where they don't have a big budget to hire someone to help them. So what are some of the three biggest mistakes? Or the three biggest issues that you frequently see creatives or entrepreneurs make on their websites?

Reese: Mm hmm. All right. So issue number one, is they will talk too much about themselves. It's a huge thing, especially I think, in the artists and creative community. And I understand why. Because for many people, art is such a personal extension of who they are, their creativity, they're very proud of it. There's a lot of emotion that goes on in art. And then what happens is they come to their website, and maybe they put it together themselves. And they approach their website with that same kind of internal view. And the problem with it is unless you're like Taylor Swift, right?

Like you're your celebrity brand, you aren't going to capture people because I hate to say it. I know it's painful to hear. But people don't care so much about you as they care about what's in it for them. So that's the first mistake is you'll go and on the homepage, it will be like, Hi, I'm Tracy



Matthews. And I really love art. And I love jewelry. And I did this because I had 15 years where I didn't know who I was. And then I went on this soul searching journey. It's like, how does that help anyone buy anything? How does that help them want to buy your product? Right?

Tracy: Sounds like an about page gone wrong.

Reese: We'll see it all over a website. And I would love to just sneak in a tip here. The reverse to this antidote to this mistake or problem is to turn it around its head and use the word you as much as you can. Like, in other words, when we read the word you think, oh, she's speaking to me.

Can we lean in and we want to read more? So That's one of the ways you can fix that. Here's number two. Okay, it's, it's the focus way too much on bells and whistles on the website. And let me tell you about a website, a jewelry website that I came across a few months ago, they had a really great ad, okay, caught my eye, it was for a high end jewelry brand. And then what happened is I was on my phone, I got to the site, and the site was nearly non functional, the entire background of the page had this like video in the background plain automatically.

And I finally figured out and I did this because I was very, I wanted to figure it out as a web designer, but I think if I had been a consumer, I would have, I tried to figure out how to get to the rest of the site. And all the other pages have the same issue where there were these random background videos, it was so noisy, and I'm thinking if I put myself in the shoes of the person who made this site, they probably thought it was very impressive. It made the site really slow. It kept me from being able to navigate easily, I didn't know what they were selling me, I may have very well been in the market to buy a high end ring. And I know out of there because the site didn't make it easy. So again, that was too many bells and whistles on the website. That was number two. Number three,

Tracy: I've seen that happen so much. Because like designers like oh, I want this. It's like this is like it's like almost like people are back in the arrows, arrow flash site or something in there. And especially when in the mobile version, I know that some sites have movies playing in the background that are part of like to create interest. But you definitely do not want something like that on your mobile version, because most people are shopping on mobile, and they have to be able to navigate quickly to that next step. Right?



Reese: Yeah, and I'm glad you brought that up about mobile too. Because here's a little statistic for you. At this point, at least half of your market, if not more, and it grows every year are shopping on your website on their phones. So mobile responsiveness and speed are so important. And the bells and whistles just really kind of make things not so great on mobile for probably.

Tracy: Whoo. Yep, that's true. Okay, what's the third issue?

Reese: Third one is, it's kind of related to number two, and we talked about it. It's they focus too much on making a pretty design that obscures the products or services. So they've got design elements on the site. They're beautiful. But what's happening is they're also so much of a distraction. Like they're competing with your product for attention. And I've been to so many sites that actually have beautiful, lovely aesthetics. I look at them. I'm like, I wish my home looked like this website. But yeah, and I think we part of us all really covets that. But the problem is, it's almost like you again, you're competing for your visitors attention in the website in and of itself becomes so noisy, that your products get lost in all that other beauty. So there's the design that is distracting you from finding that Buy button or finding a way to reach out and contact you for a commission, that kind of thing.

Tracy: Yeah, totally, totally. You want to be able to have design that is beautiful, but not distracting and getting people to that next step.

Reese: Yeah.

Tracy: So you know, a lot of people are doing their own site, and they're getting their e-commerce site set up or whatever. And they're just starting out, and they don't really know where to start. So what advice would you give someone who's just starting out? Like, where should they start when they're building a website?

Reese: It can be so overwhelming to do a website yourself. And first, I want to tell anyone listening, like give them some kudos just for taking on that project, because it is a beast to take on. And if you are doing your website, yourself, my hat is off to you. It is not a small feat. And just thinking about if you're listening, and you're thinking about what I've said, and you're feeling overwhelmed, I have some advice for you here that answers Tracy's questions that I think will help reduce the overwhelm. And it's this, I would love for them to start with their copy first, and break their site down into key pages. Maybe the whole the about and you've got your if you have several products, you're going to have to deal with several product pages.



But in general, your product pages are all going to look the same from page to page. So then, I've got a formula that I want you to think about for most of your pages. And it's basically this sit down and write a main headline that's going to go at the top of your page. It should be specific, not generic. It should, it should hook people quickly. Yeah, and then follow that up with some text that is, you know, further takes like describes what your headline said maybe goes a little deeper. Follow that up with a call to action. Maybe you want them to join your email list. And by the way, I'd love to see you give them something free in exchange for signing up for that list.

Then I want you to create your two or three more sections for each page. And for each section, give it a headline, and have a couple paragraphs of text. Once you do all this and you do it for every page of your website, you have yourself a framework that you can actually say, hey, I've got these little containers, I've got my copy ready to go. It's the most important part, in my opinion. Now let's find a design that can kind of work with this little framework. What do you think about that one, Tracy?

Tracy:

I think that's great. Yeah, you know why? Because, I mean, anytime we've done a website for Flourish and Thrive Academy, our designers always like we need the copy first before you can do anything. But I think the most important piece is like when someone lands on your site, they need to know who it's for. And so if you can have something like a headline that actually brings, you know, Donald Miller talks about this, like making the customer the hero of the story, because if they can say that, so me, within five seconds, they're going to continue on to the next step, or they're going to opt in to your email list, or they're going to look at your shop and kind of explore your products.

So I think it's really important to start with that copy first, to get that person moving to that next step. And that also has to be paired, in my opinion for a product based company with images, so they have to be beautiful. Ideally, what I really like to see on homepage is like a model shot or something where it's some sort of lifestyle image where it's basically like a visual example of like who their your dream client avatar is, and then have the copy overlaying that because I think that that can be a really powerful way to kind of like someone sees like an image, like we have these designers and jewelry designers, Jeana and Jared Rushton And they were in our Momentum program formerly called SOS, we helped them restructure their entire website, and they redesigned it. And the before and after of the



two, like the first one, I couldn't tell, I mean, I knew that they did bridal jewelry, but if I didn't know them, I wouldn't wasn't able to tell if their website was a photography website.

Because if photography was beautiful, if they were selling blankets, or if they were selling like wedding gowns like that, it looked like those three things, not jewelry, actually. So when they did this whole redo of their website, they did a bunch of beautiful photography, the images, like still expressed that sentiment of like bridal or like this alternative bridal feel that they were going for. But the difference was that they made the focus on the jewelry and like that feeling instead of the couple, which made a huge, huge difference in everything. And then the images were shot in a way where they could overlay copy on them and put a call to action button, like get your custom and go here to start working on a custom ring or something like that. I mean, obviously better copy than that. I don't have it in front of me. But so it makes a significant difference in the second that they switch their website over, they started getting daily and weekly inquiries for engagement rings, whereas before it was more of a poll or like a push you know.

Reese: Yeah, I love that example, too, because the images can really be the supporting character to your copy, where if we can take up taking so much information with an image like on a really subconscious level. So as we're reading your copy, if we see an image that supports what your copy is telling us, our brain is kind of further processing it without even needing to read all the copy in order to see immediately. Oh, that's me, I absolutely want a custom ring or necklace for my upcoming wedding.

Tracy: Exactly. Yeah. So now I want to move into a question of time because everyone's like, how much time should I be focusing on? Or what percentage of time that I'm working on my website should be focused on making it look pretty, or the aesthetic or the conversion part versus like creating content? She started tracking organic traffic?

Reese: Right. Well, I touched on this a little bit earlier, when I suggested that people focus on copy first what we just talked about, I really, really believe in the importance of copy and content. And I would much rather see you have a fairly minimal design template that you're working from with very compelling copy. Because at some point in your business, if you reach a point in your revenues, where you bring in consultants, someone like me, it's so much easier for me to come in, and then add things that help with



that conversion journey than it is for me to dismantle and take apart a really noisy website design.

And but there's there's the way that I kind of split down the path from my colleagues in conversion rate optimization, it's this, a lot of them won't use any design as decoration and I because of my background in design, I still think there's a place for design, small bits to build your brand and show your personality and style. And what I love is if we think about jewelry, it's a really great analogy for what I mean. So jewelry is a really personal thing, but it's not the essence of who we are.

If you and I stopped wearing jewelry, like this fundamental person would still be there. So design elements are kind of like jewelry, what we can do is if we were to remove the design elements in your copy still stood on its own and you had a minimal website, look, it would still work. But then let's bring in small design elements that help build your brand and showcase your personality. But that doesn't get in the way. Just like some people like to be really loud in their jewelry, but a lot of us might like to be more like it's a personal intimate thing. And it's there and showcasing your personality, but it's not the star of the show. Right? So I like to think about design elements that way and use that analogy of jewelry about how you can use design to show your style. But if it went away, the fundamentals of what your businesses would still remain.

Tracy: Exactly. Oh, I love that analogy. It makes so much sense. Like because you could just like you're adding on these things that actually like, almost like if your website were the outfit that like compliment the outfit instead of like, being outfit. Right.

Reese: Exactly.

Tracy: That's cool. So we talked a lot about the buyer journey over here, because I think that's really important, like kind of filtering people through the phases of awareness. So what does it buyer's journey mean to you? And how do you recommend that people kind of incorporate that into what they're doing from a website in a marketing standpoint?

Reese: Well, I really like this simplified model of the buyers journey. So I'll just reference it quickly, especially in case you have any listeners that this might be a new term to them. Um, it's basically what your buyer goes through when they are either exposed to your brand or looking for a product or service to change their life in some way. So there's three stages that I like to



talk about is the awareness stage, the consideration stage and the decision stage in awareness, first realizing that they either have a problem or they have a desire, really, in the consideration stage, they're researching their options to either solve that problem or fulfill that desire.

And then in the decision stage, they're making a choice on what their solution is going to be. So if we think about a jewelry business, and your marketing your website, it's like your buyers becoming aware that they might want a piece of jewelry or need one for an upcoming event in their life. Okay. And they research their options, that's the consideration stage, they go down a rabbit hole looking for just the perfect necklace. And then they want to make a decision, they found the necklace, they'll buy it. So it's rare that someone's going to see your product and out of the gate, buy it.

Now, there's cases where that may happen. And I think a lot of it probably depends on things like price point. For example, if you are selling necklaces, to teenage girls, and it's a price point under \$20, the timeframe between when her mom sees that necklace and makes the buying decision for a lot of people is probably going to be really short, it might be a 10 minute buyer's jury. But if we're talking about higher end jewelry, yep, we're going to be they're going to think about this for a while, they're probably going to research some of your competitors.

And what you'll probably do is initially, maybe you'll have an ad that attracts them, you have an ad, maybe on their Facebook feed that showcases one of your beautiful products. That's the awareness stage that makes them aware that, you know, it's been a long time since I bought myself a really meaningful piece of jewelry. And now I think I want to so they click on your ad, maybe they go stroll through your store, they're considering it, they might even leave your store. And later on make a decision and the decision might be to buy from you it may be to buy from someone else. And I talked a little bit about something you can do in the awareness stage. It's an advertisement. It might even be for example, like what I'm doing now, I'm on a podcast talking to you, I'm making people aware of a potential issue. So maybe your jewelry will be showcased on a local TV show.

In the consideration stage, what you want to do is make sure that they have all the information they need in order to think about whether your product is the right one for them. That means a product page that gives them all kinds of information, everything from the specs and the dimensions to the more emotional side of things. A story about your product and how you



came to design it or you know why the stone is really special? What's the meaning behind the stone, that kind of thing. All those things really help in the consideration stage.

And then in the decision stage, that's really where I come in a lot of times that's where we make sure there's no friction that's preventing them from buying when they've decided that they want to buy the necklace or the ring or whatever from you. Is your checkout process really easy? Does your product page have things on it that help them understand that they can trust you Is there a guarantee it's all that kind of stuff that In the decision stage, when they're almost ready to pull the trigger and hit that Buy button, we want to make sure there's nothing standing in their way.

Tracy: Yep. I love it. I love it. And that's kind of like where you're building trust. So like, let's talk about that. Because that's the most important piece is like how can you build trust with people who don't know who you are? To get them to take that next step to actually buy from you? What are a couple of ways that you can do that on your website?

Reese: I have to say trust is one of my favorite things to talk about and to help people with and I run a kind of a trust based business. And I love thinking about how we can help our customers really trust us? So this is my favorite question. And the first way you can do that is you can add media logos to your website. So this means on your homepage, let's say you've got that top part of your page where you have that headline we talked about, you have a really compelling photo and image to pull them in, we'll listen, if you have been featured anywhere, even local media write ups or regional papers, I want to see you pop those logos underneath that top area, because here's what happens.

You're basically borrowing the trust that people have in these other institutions. And then they're associating that with you and your brand. And they're like, hey, this person's legit. It also tells them that you're running a serious business operation and that you aren't a YOCO mom and pop shop in your basement, even if you are the media logos help kind of deal with that objection for you. So that was the first one. You can also add testimonials and social proof. you sprinkle these throughout your website, don't just slap up a reviews page, put them on your homepage on that product page, oh my goodness, put them even I think it's really helpful if you can put them on your checkout pages, that area where people are getting ready to do the thing that's paying for the for them pull out that



credit card, you never know if the testimonial is the thing that helps them say, Yeah, I really do deserve this for myself. And the testimonial reminds them of that. So that builds trust, you can also add guarantees, if you offer a money back guarantee.

Let people know, I love to also add little logos on the product page that has things like free shipping, Money Back Guarantee, or even things like if the Better Business Bureau signed off on your business then put that kind of logo. So those are all persuasive design elements, those logos that help with conversion. So those three ways to build trust, we're add Media logos, and testimonials and social proof, and ad guarantees. I love it.

Tracy: Yeah, we're all about sprinkling that stuff everywhere. Because I think the social proof the press, like all these things that all your placements, customer reviews, videos, like there's so many different ways that you can do that to get to show people like what it's actually like to work with you if you do like a high touch service like I do, or to just like give people confidence to know that you're not some like random random in your basement. He's gonna take money in rent. He's kidding. Research has been awesome. And it was like, perfect, concise, like right to the point. And I love this interview so much. And I know that our listeners are gonna love it just as much. So where can everyone find you?

Reese: Hmm, well, I have a free gift for your audience. Find me via that. And it's 10 website mistakes that you're probably making that are losing you leads and sales and how to fix them fast. It's really it's a quick sheet for them to go through. They can get that over at my website at <https://www.designbyreese.com/fixes/> And listen, when they get that freebie. They are rolled right into my email list. And if they reply to my emails, I reply back to every email I received. So that's a great way to connect with me.

Tracy: Amazing Reese, thank you so much for being here. It's been a pleasure.

Reese: Thank you so much, Tracy.

Tracy: Thank you so much for listening today. And if you are excited about getting better website conversions, just like I am. Remember we have this incredible offer head on over to <https://www.flourishthriveacademy.com/sold-out-shop-waitlist/> and get on the waitlist and get in to getting your website converting better every single day. I'm super excited for you because I want you to end the year



strong. So let's do this together. This is Tracy Matthews, signing off. Until next time, take care.

***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. And we'd love to hear what you think. Please rate and review the show and if you're inspired, please share this with your friends. Cheers to Seeing you flourish and thrive.***

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