

The 5-Step Holiday Sales Prep Plan

THRIVE BY DESIGN WITH TRACY MATTHEWS

“When you have a successful holiday season, and that revenues coming in at the end of the year really sets you up for less stress in the next year. It helps bring in, you know more cash flow and financial security into your family and it also creates a bigger impact in the world.”

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 by Design podcast, Episode 313. Hey there, it's Tracy Matthews, Chief Visionary Officer of Flourish and Thrive Academy and the host of the Thrive by Design podcast, and you guessed it, today is all about holiday sales preparation. Well, here's the thing. We know that wildly successful brands who leaned in to their holiday sales prep in the summer, and in September, September is technically the summer. So I always think of it as fall, but it's still technically, the summer, have better results during the holiday season and those who wait until October or November to try and scrap together a plan and so my objective today is to help you get fully prepared, so that when the holiday sales season actually goes into full swing, you are focused on selling, you're fully prepared, you feel like a boss because you got things handled, and you're preventing the burn out because you're giving yourself enough time to really lean into this busiest time of the year and you really want to capitalize on it because you know, you can make up to 50% of your sales at this time during October through December, if you plan it, right. And so that's the objective this class, I'm just going to help you think through some of the things that you want to be considering now.

So you can get on it and have an amazing holiday season, which I think everyone can agree they would like to do and that's why next week I'm hosting a masterclass, called How to Make the Most Out of Your Holiday Sales Season With Marketing That Matters. During this masterclass, I'm



going to be sharing some high impact strategies that are algorithm proof to scale your sales without the burnout. It's perfect for holiday season. But these are things that are going to work for you all year long. So it will extend way beyond the holiday. And you're going to love it. So I'd love to invite you to join if you're interested in learning more about that head on over to flourishthriveacademy.com/holidaymasterclass

For more details on how you can register and save your seat today, I promise you are going to love it. It's a great class, you'll really enjoy what you're going to learn. Plus my books coming out November 10. And we are going to be having a pre party and a pre-sale event happening later this month. And I would love to invite you to get on the waitlist for the Desired Brand Effect book, we are going to be giving some really great prizes during the presale process and I'd love to invite you to join and if you'd like to be part of our promotion partners and in order to find out more about that, I just want to invite you over to get on the waitlist over at desiredbrandeffect.com and get on the waitlist right there and you will get more information as soon as the presale happens for the book and if you're listening to this a little bit later in the pre sales already happening, you could still use that same link desiredbrandeffect.com. To find out more about pre-ordering the book and being part of our promotional partners group, you're going to love it and there's some great perks and benefits to be a part of that which will be revealed very soon.


So I'm looking forward to both of those things. I hope to see you on the class next week. And without further ado, let me chime in with today's episode and I really want you to get in touch and ready to go for your holiday plan and that really starts with the first step of the holiday planning process, which is to create your strategic plan for Q4. Now, that might include what's happening in September. So what I really want you to think about is like how are you going to market your business in October, November and December. So what you want to do for Q4 is you want to start by setting a sales goal, creating a theme for that strategic planning period, that three month period. So if your theme is sales or theme is scale or if your theme is less stress and no burnout, like come up with a theme and focus on that.

I think for most people during the holiday season, their primary focus is selling mostly their most of their product. So what I recommend people to do is to focus on 1-2-3 objectives during that time. So that might be just a

general sales objective. But for the purposes of this, it might behoove you to think about like revenue streams that you want to lean into. So maybe it's online sales, wholesale, if you sell wholesale and then in person events, so And that way, you can leverage the multiple revenue streams for your business to really have the best impact, and use each of those revenue streams to get more sales, maybe on your website or at the in person shows. So set your sales goal, create a theme, determine your key revenue streams, I'm going to tell you less is more, unless you already have an established business and another type of streaming and here's what I mean by that.

For a lot of people, they have a really strong wholesale businesses, and they've been working on building their online sales for a while. So it might be that the whole sales kind of dialed in, they have their key accounts they're selling, the wholesalers have already placed their orders, or they're filling in reorders. And they're gonna spend most of their energy, because the whole sales dialed in into growing their online audience. Or it might be that you have a really strong in person show. And you want to build your online business by leveraging those two. So you can pick two to three or even just one you pick. But what I really want to encourage you to do is to not stretch yourself too thin. I know from personal experiences as my weakness, I want to try and do everything. And when I do that, it ends up making things less effective.

So I want to help you truly lean in to what's going to work the best for you. So that you can have the most impact and so that you can make the most money during this time. Because when you have a successful holiday season, and that revenues coming in at the end of the year, really sets you up for less stress in the next year. It helps bring in you know more cash flow and financial security into your family and it also creates a bigger impact in the world because you're reaching more customers and that, you know, really when we're thinking through the model of the Desire Brand Effect, that's the goal is what we're always trying to do is to create financial security and freedom for ourselves to make an impact with our art and to have a sense of accomplishment knowing that the work we're doing actually means something and someone else's let's so the next part of this strategic plan is I want you to kind of this is kind of bounces into your marketing plan, which is the next step, you want to plan on any big promotions that you're going to have the earlier the better.



So if you have already done this, fantastic. We've already recommended to our Momentum students and members in our insider community to really start mapping this out already and we're fleshing it out with them during our event this week, since we're in Day Two of our Momentum event for holiday planning and what we encourage them, the members of our community to do is to really map out key dates, so that they're ready to go and that their big promotions are mapped out in advance. So what they're doing now is really like creating the structure and the plan so that they can just fill in the details. So it's easier later. What I want you to be thinking about is are you going to do something over cyber weekend in Black Friday? Are you going to do it early? and have an event earlier than others so that you're not getting lost in the shuffle? Or do you want to do it on that weekend? Do you want to have multiple promotions throughout the month of November? You know, think through that, like what is it that you want to create and get all those initiatives mapped out now and if you do wholesale, I want to remind you that September is key for this, you really need to get your wholesale outreach done and completed by the end of September. If you don't your wholesale accounts, their money is going to run out basically we call it open to buy so they have a budget every single season. And if they're not a current vendor of yours, pitching new wholesale accounts is hard to get for the holiday season after basically September in most cases.

I mean, sometimes you might land local businesses or smaller mom and pop shops and stuff like that. However, you're going for stores that are competitive to get into, you know, their their considerations are pretty much closed in September, sometimes even in August, but in September, and throughout the holiday, probably what they'll be doing is reordering from the brands that are having high-sell through, meaning that they're selling a lot of their products, they already have an established relationship, their customers know them. So if you're trying to get into new stores right now is the time and you want to be following up with your current wholesale accounts to make sure that they get their orders placed so that you can put those in your sales plan and have it mapped out in your production and then you also want to think through like any Ambassador promotions, for if you have brand ambassadors, affiliate promotions that you might be doing with partners, or any other sort of loyalty, promotion, or collaboration that you're going to do so I would start considering like who are the people I might want to collaborate with. Something that I think seeing that works really strategically, is when

brands that serve the same dream client collaborate for gift guides that they cross promote throughout their communities and so for instance, the best the easiest example to understand of this would be like people who sell to people who are basically investors or people who buy like meaningful products.

So when I think of someone like that, it's someone who's probably doing a lot of yoga, and mindfulness and meditation and stuff like that. So it might be a meaningful jewelry partner partners with someone selling like hand painted water bottle bottles, and maybe it's someone who's selling Mandala art prints, and then someone who's selling like vegan leather, boho yoga bags. So think about like, it's like collaborative, you're not trying to compete with other things. So probably not going to be like two jewelry brands selling together. But what it could potentially be our collab brands that have the same dream customer, where you guys can partner on either virtual events or a gift guide or something like that. Or even like pre-packaged gifts, where you're selling like bundles together, and you're selling them on your website, in a collaboration can work really well, if you have it planned out and mapped out well.

The benefit of this is that you you're able to increase your audience size when you do that. So there are definitely great ways to do this, where you can use collaborations like that to expand your audience, which I think everyone always wants to do, right. Alright, moving on to step two, which is all about, make sure that any new products are going to develop or new collections, all of your brand assets and promotional materials are done now. There's nothing worse than being like in the middle of November or trying to photograph new pieces and a big mistake that I see, especially with newbie jewelry designers and other handmade product business owners is that they're always making new product like so late in the season, when we come from like a traditional wholesale model back in the day, like all the holiday sales, assets, and all of the collections and everything. The collections were done in August and so it gave you enough time to not really have to think about, oh, what am I going to be selling over the holiday. So if you don't have know what you're going to be selling throughout the holiday, if you want to launch a new collection, get that design to me now. Get your pieces photographed, have them up on your website or ready to go. Get any promotional materials or direct mail pieces or whatever you're going to do. completed by the end of September, you don't necessarily have to post them or launch them yet.

But it's a good practice to kind of get it done in advance. So and then if you do have things that are already bestsellers in your collection, determine what those are, because those can be bouncing off pieces to actually lean in to drive more sales and traffic for the long time to create bundles around so that you can increase your average order value to partner together, there's a whole slew of things that you can do to actually increase your sales just by increasing your average order value. That's key right there. Once again, make sure all your line sheets are done your collections created any catalogs are doing if you're going to do a direct mail campaign or something like that, they'll send out to people in in snail mail, make sure that that's kind of ready, or at least in the very least mapped out. So you're ready to go. And it hits hits on time, and you're good to go.

Now, step three is a big one. This is all about creating your marketing plan in your calendar and this can feel overwhelming. So I want you to think about all your marketing channels, your email marketing, your social media marketing, the channels that you promote on social media, direct mail could also fall into this and PR and think about how you're going to be getting exposure for your brand. What is your consistency going to be like? How are you going to be creating that content that you put out there? What are you going to be doing to really make your promotion a big splash. So I want you to sit down and map out your content to start building your email list so that you can expand your audience, I want you to be strategic, like what are you doing now to get more people on your own marketing list so that you have more people to promote. And one of the things that has been really, really successful and I'm a shopper. So I know that it's successful because it works so well on me is SMS marketing, because people are getting overwhelmed by their inbox. So if you can really lean into a collaborative email and SMS marketing strategy and bank those two off of each other and start building your SMS marketing list, you might see that you're investing a little bit more in the tools to get the word out there, but you might see much higher conversion rates and I'll talk a little bit more about some strategies for that on the masterclass that I'm hosting next week called How to Make the Most Out of Your Holiday Sales Season With Marketing That Matters. You're going to love it and so get your marketing calendar all mapped out.

On this, you want to also map out if you're going to do any key partnerships or collaborations. You want to Be mapping your content. As

you're creating your batch days and everything through that know-like-trust, sell and loyalty filter. Once again, you want to have any sort of promotion via email or other marketing promotions planned out on that calendar, you want to also think about it are you going to be doing anything for in like messenger bots or using like direct messaging meaning like a like mobile monkey or mini chat, so that when people comment a word on your posts that you can send them things directly like you could think through all those things that you're going to do deliberately amplify your impact and then I want you to set a date to start batching content or even brainstorming the content and so one of my favorite strategies for batching is to start with, if you haven't listened to it yet, make sure that you listen to the episode about Pinterest that I just did with Andrea Li. I will have it linked in the show notes. But she talks about story pins basically. And this is a new way to kind of get the word out using Pinterest. But one of the things that she talked about in that was how she does her map days and she does it like she does plans that are current, her marketing and content and everything that she's doing for Pinterest and her other social platforms on one day, and she develops everything around anchor content. And I love it because she is an amazing coach for us in our momentum program. And also a good student because this is how we teach it. So you want to be thinking around your anchor content so that might be long form video content, or a blog post or something like that, where there's a couple of key pillars that you're doing maybe four core pieces of content that you break down into 35 ways and then you can supplement that with other types of content, like behind the scenes content, KLT content, know-like -trust is what KLT stands for.

So introducing people to your brand, creating affinity building trust with them and then, you know, shouting out previous customers and stuff like that. So get your batching going and just start brainstorming now and a trick that Ana Maria, Andricain, another Momentum coach of ours has is to use sticky notes for this process. So you can use your brainstorm your brainstorming with sticky notes and stick them on a wall or on a whiteboard or something and you can use that to move them around. So it becomes really easy to map out your content that way. Alright, so step number three, create your marketing and content calendar and plan.

Step number four is to curate your collaborations and exposure outreach, and any sort of short lead PR. So basically, this is just a exposure campaign because one of the things that we know is that if you can get into gift

guides, or get on TV or get on a highly traffic log, by getting a feature, this can really increase traffic to your website and increase your exposure and get you more sales in the long run and for in the short term for the holiday season. So we're a little bit too far gone, because in July and August is really when you want to be leaning into getting like print magazine holiday season gift guides. But the good news is that a lot of these shorter lead things and dot coms, because they have shorter lead time, are still preparing things. I mean, some big publications or holiday gift guides are probably filled. But there's other ways that you can pitch the media for holiday features, holiday products and stuff like that. So you want to definitely get on that now. And I would definitely consider pitching your local newspaper or your local TV station, anywhere you can get local press because people want to support local artists and designers.

So for instance, if you're not in a freezing cold area during the holiday season, and you're doing some sort of in person show that's outside or even indoor show, right? You can call up your local TV station and ask them if they want to cover the local art fair event, and they can come and interview you at the booth. It's a way to get traffic to that event. It's a way to get exposure for your brand. It's a way for people to find you online, and also a way to fill your PR portfolio and build more trust with your audience, and it really works. Quay Flom of Quay Anne Designs has done it many times for her events. We had Marsha Newquist do it. It works great. Ana Maria Andricain, did it and I could list off like probably 10 more designers who have done this, and it worked really well and definitely helped them out with their sales during that time period when they were getting featured.

So make sure that you start to create your collaboration and an exposure outreach, and you have a list of shortly PR that you want to reach out. And what we like to recommend is to create a shortlist like pick the top 20 that you want to go for. Don't make this big overwhelming thing because then you might never do the outreach and because it can't become so overwhelming. So think about like 10 to 20 places you might want to write guest blog articles and pitch them maybe 10 options or maybe 20 options if you can think about it, of where you can make on camera appearances in your local area or your bigger metro area, think about different places different or different blogs that you could get featured on or.com magazines that you can get featured on. So think about it to be strategic, which is great. Another thing that I want you to really think about is

collaborate, once again, with people who have the same dream client, who are already, you know, kind of serving the same people as you are. Because if you can create collaborations, you can create your own holiday gift guide and each of you can post on your blogs and your website to get to cross promote traffic to each other's websites, as well. So think outside of the box and then there are great platforms like Medium or Mind Body Green, or different types of blogs, where you can actually write articles or curate pitch your own gift guide for them and pitch to them, like the five must-have gifts for this holiday season four, insert your dream client right there. So these are great ways that you can actually get exposure from highly trafficked areas to get traffic back to your offer or blog.

Now, I'm not a huge fan of pitching influencers, these days. However, with the right blogger, influencer, ones that are savvy marketers, you could develop also an affiliate partnership where they're promoting your product, they give a discount to their community, and they earn a commission. So if you can find partnerships like that, that's also another way to increase your sales and impact over the holiday season. The thing is, is that a lot of these influencers just want to get paid to play, which means they want you to just pay them money to feature on your Instagram feed. And for most people, unless they really have a small and dedicated audience that actually shots from them. It doesn't always result in sales. And with Instagram algorithms changing all the time, you know, that's another indicator that it's becoming harder to partner with influencers. But if they're writing on their blog, and their blog gets a lot of traffic, and they're savvy marketers, and they want to do affiliate campaigns, you can work something out where you create affiliate links, and they promote your products on their blog and on social media as a way to, you know, cross promote and be a revenue generator for both parties, if that makes sense. Love it. Anyway. So step four is to curate your exposure and PR outreach list.

And Step five is to create theme days. So one of the things that seems weird, but it's going to really help you keep your energy high. And I've talked about this in different ways, like having creative days, or having days that are just focused on calls or the days that you're doing content, one of the worst things that you can do to inhibit your productivity is to keep switching context all day, meaning you start by like doing sales calls in the morning, and then you're like, Oh, I'm going to do marketing content and then oh, I'm going to go and try to design some jewelry or,

and then I'm going to go back and try to think about operational stuff all in the same day, and your brain becomes really inefficient, because you're not focused. You're, it's using different sides of the brain. And so you end up being really ineffective. So the more that you can create theme days where you're focused on one thing that day, and you're just leaning into it, and you give yourself enough breaks so that you're not burning out or zoning out, the more impactful you will be with everything that you do.

So some things to think about on your theme days are when are you going to give yourself self-care because this is super important. I would right now get in good shape, eat really healthy, start taking your vitamins, you know if you're listening to anyone, you know, COVID still going around, which I hate to even bring up I don't like to talk about it on the podcast anymore. But you know, it's its a reality, I feel like for a while, so like level up your zinc and your vitamin D and vitamin C if you haven't had it yet, and you don't have antibodies, because this is going to be really important for you to prevent getting sick during the holiday season and with these new variants, it seems like things are even with vaccinated people, it seems like they're still getting COVID. So get your boost your immune system, take care of yourself, eat healthy, get a lot of sleep, meditate, do your affirmations, get your head in the right place, self-care, super important.

Create the theme days so that you prevent that context switching and then think about what you want to do. So the theme days don't have to be the same every week. But they can be theme days, like maybe Monday, the first week of the month is the day that you map out all your content for that month and then next day is the day that you create the graphics and you do the marketing. And then the next day is for when you start designing your products or you're developing your collection and maybe there's like three or four days in a row that you're doing that and then you have an administrative day probably once a week where you're doing calls and cleaning up the systems and stuff that you need to do for your business. So think about how you're going to keep your energy high with theme days. So that is the beginning of the holiday sales prep plan, episode. And those are my five steps. Now, you notice I didn't talk about specific marketing strategies, I want to invite you to come to masterclass next week to learn my favorite marketing strategies that are working right now. And these are strategies that you can lean in any time of the year. But we're focusing on using this for holiday season. And what I really want

to do is to help you make more sales with less stress, and more importantly, discover the secrets to a wildly successful holiday season.

So that you can use high impact algorithm proof strategies to scale your sales without the burnout because I don't want you getting burned out. The more you give your vibe high writing that positive wave of energy, the more successful your holiday season will be. Many, many years ago when I started Flourish and Thrive Academy, my co founder Robin Kramer and I had a program called Ramp up your Holiday sales that we retired it a long time ago. But part of that program was really about riding the wave of momentum. So I want to remind you of that, that as you ride the wave of momentum, what you do now will have a big impact later. So join me for this masterclass and let me help you lean into these strategies, so you can head on over to www.flourishthriveacademy.com/holidaymasterclass Or you can check out the show notes over at www.flourishthriveacademy.com/313 for more links and holiday resources because we have a bunch of resources for holiday season, previous blog posts, previous podcast episodes and freebies that you might want to download to really make your holiday season the best it's ever been. So thank you so much for listening today. I hope you enjoyed this episode today. If you haven't done so yet, make sure you get on the waitlist for the desired brand effect book as well. Super excited about that. And if you enjoyed what you heard today, I would be honored if you share this with a friend. So thanks so much. This is Tracy Matthews, signing off. Until next time.

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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