

EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

EPISODE 179: MY MOST-EFFECTIVE MARKETING TOOL (AND HOW YOU CAN USE IT TOO)

In April of 2014, I completely changed my business, because I made one small, spur-of-the-moment decision to follow my enthusiasm. It took me less than a week to kick-off what would become my best-ever tool for reaching new right people, building trust and loyalty, and increasing my sales at least 50% every year since. I started this podcast. And I've seen podcasts do the same thing in makers' and artists' businesses.

In today's episode I'm going to share how this podcast, in both audio and video form, became the best marketing tool in my business; and how you can use podcasts and videos in your own handmade business.

One Monday I had a crazy idea - I wanted to start a podcast. RIGHT AWAY. I recorded an episode in one take (you can listen to it - it's the first episode or you can find it at taraswiger.com/podcast1), recorded an intro, and uploaded it. I wrote a blog post about the steps that I took, called [How to Launch a Podcast in One Week](#), and I'm going to go over each step in detail in an upcoming class (details at the end of the episode!).

That was it - I decided it would be really fun, I made a "reasons why this would be awesome" list and a "possible risks" list and you know what? The risks weren't that big. I decided to give it at least 3 months of weekly episodes and if I hated it or it felt like a waste of time - I could just stop and the show would just pod-fade - the fate of MOST podcasts that are started up!

It started as an audio show and after I started Periscoping later that year, the audience asked me to livestream my podcast recording -- well, it was just me talking to my computer in my pjs but... ok! Then they asked me to put the videos of my live recording on YouTube (so if they missed the livestream they could catch it)... so I did! After a few months I realized I could make a better quality video if I recorded it right from my computer and just made a single recording and then split it into audio and video... so I did that. In 2015 my business was profitable enough that it paid

100% of our family's bills, so my husband was able to quit his day job and start editing my podcasts and creating images for it, so my podcast got a little better (he also made the theme song you hear at the beginning, which I get complimented on as much as the actual content of the show. In 2016, I started working with Joeli to make the videos even better for YouTube and she's been my video editor and YouTube manager, which brought the show to a whole new level.

I had wanted to start a podcast for FIVE years. When I think how amazing the show has been for my business, I have to wonder: WHY DIDN'T I START IT SOONER?

The biggest obstacles I had to overcome: **My own self-doubt and my ridiculously high standards.**

I had put it off for 5 years, waiting to finally be good enough. I thought I needed an NPR quality sound and editing - the perfect mic, the perfect pacing and storytelling skills, the perfect voice (ha!). Well, if you've been listening for more than a week or so, you know I never did figure that out... and my podcast works anyhow!

The problem was the Comparison Trap: I thought there was only one way to do podcasts and that was: elegant, well-edited and clever.

My favorite podcasts, way back in 2007 when I got my first iPod shuffle, were Brenda Dayne's Cast-On and then Diane Gilleland's CraftyPod. They both have gorgeous soothing voices and a highly-edited style with musical interludes and clever conversation and storytelling.

And so for 5 years I thought that's what I needed to be able to create before I had a podcast.

Yeah, that's never gonna happen.

And that fateful week, I just decided to be fine with it, in all its Tara-like imperfection. I've never claimed to have it all together and a big part of my work is talking about the harder, ugly, internal parts of business, so an imperfect podcast was the perfect extension of that work.

It's my best marketing tool: In the years since starting my podcast, my email list has tripled and my sales (direct from my website, not including all the other gigs I've been invited to do) increase over 50% every year.

HOW?

It builds trust.

Consistency

I'm showing up every week, week after week, no matter who has died, how sick I am or where I travel to. That builds your trust that if you buy something from me - I am going to deliver.

We just TRUST people who show up every time we expect them to.

Honesty

Because I insist on NOT being perfect or pretending like I have it figured out - that honesty builds trust. The fact that I am showing up, as myself, week after week builds trust.

I'm in your head

You are listening to this and I am accompanying you through your day. I get it, because I listen to podcasts as I run errands, run at the gym, and wash dishes.

That means that when it's time for you to join a class, buy a book, or meet me at a conference, you feel like you KNOW me. And that, of course, builds trust.

(And btw, I love this! I wanna ride around with you and chat with you while you do dishes!)

IT IS A TASTE-TEST OF MY PRODUCT.

My product is... talking. And writing. But mostly talking. Whether you attend a workshop at a conference or you buy Pay Yourself online or watch me live on CreativeLIVE, you're getting me, explaining things to you (along with lots of worksheets to apply it to your own business)... so although I love writing, a written blog post or even a series of images on Instagram is not really a taste test of what I sell. The podcast gives you a real sense of how I talk, how I structure lessons, and what I really talk about.

Now this likely isn't true for you - so the question to ask yourself is: What does your thing bring into people's lives? What is the best format to convey that? Maybe it's an image, maybe it's video of you making it, maybe it's audio that shows the personality that made your awesome thing.

If video or audio would help you convey the awesomeness of your brand, but you're not sure where the heck to start, my upcoming classes are going to help - more on them in a minute.

The other way this has helped my biz is that having consistent content in both iTunes and YouTube has brought me so many opportunities I would never have had otherwise. Producers and conference organizers can see that I'm consistent, I can speak in complete sentences, and get a taste for the exact kind of thing I'm gonna talk about at their event. So if you wanna teach classes, or get a book deal, or speak at conferences, you've gotta have some videos of you doing those things.

HOW CAN YOU DO THIS FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

Over the last few years I've worked with knitwear designers who have built profitable businesses through their YouTube channels (no video tutorials necessary!), coaches who have exploded their audience through a podcast, and many many other makers, event organizers, and artists who have grown their audience and sales through podcasts and YouTube channels.

And for the first time ever, I'm going to teach you exactly how to do it.

I'll be live on CreativeLive teaching Grow your Handmade Business with YouTube on October 24th and Podcasting for Crafters and Makers on October 25th. The classes are totally free to watch live - just be sure to register (there's a link at [taraswiger.com/podcast179](https://www.creativelive.com/podcast179) or in the show notes in iTunes or YouTube - and if you can't watch live or you wanna re-watch it later (it's going to be full of demos of exactly how to create your show!) - you can buy anytime access.

REGISTER HERE:

Podcasting for crafters and makers: <https://www.creativelive.com/courses/podcasting-for-crafters-and-makers-tara-swiger>

In the Podcast class we'll cover:

- How to launch your podcast in one week
- How to set up your home studio in 5 min for \$0.
- How to plan your content calendar

YouTube:

<https://www.creativelive.com/courses/grow-your-business-with-youtube-tara-swiger>

In the YouTube class we'll cover:

How to start your channel

The misconceptions that are holding you back

How to create content consistently (which is the key to success)

How to optimize your videos for find-ability and addict-ability (my YT pro Joeli Kelly is going to teach this segment!)

Be sure you register for free, so you don't miss it! Look for the link wherever you're listening to this or go taraswiger.com/podcast179.

Thanks so much for listening