



## FASHION BRAIN ACADEMY

### **“I’m stuck and I need some direction for my startup clothing line.”**

*#AskJanesBrain*

These are the notes that go along with [this video](#), documenting a private client session I recently had with a startup clothing designer. This designer reached out because she felt stuck and in need of direction to get started.

#### **Session Notes**

Tiffany (startup clothing designer) and Jane Hamill  
Private Coaching Session

Date: [REDACTED]  
Designer Name: Tiffany [REDACTED]  
Company: [REDACTED] Designs  
Email: [tiffany@\[REDACTED\]](mailto:tiffany@[REDACTED])  
Phone: (813) 2 [REDACTED]

Here’s what the designer wrote to me before our Session...

“Hi Jane! A little background before our meeting. I sew but not well enough to make all the samples. One of my first questions for you will be about that. My product is going to be a “bridge” market women’s line – Eileen Fisher is the type of customer I’d like to have. I’ve already signed up for your startup course (thank you!) and plan to dive in soon.

In the meantime, I’m frozen by everything there is to do and overwhelmed with knowing what to just start with. I’m probably overthinking this but I’m booking this session so I can get some focus and direction before I start spending any real money on my business. I don’t want to mess this up too much LOL. Looking forward to our meeting.”

- Tiffany

Our meeting notes...

Designer Tiffany: I don’t know how to get started. I have so many ideas floating around in my head right now. Need some direction and CLARITY!

JH: First things first...

- Who is the customer

- Where do they shop?
- What are they already buying?
- What stores do you want to be in?
- Who do you want to “hang” with?

Designer: Eileen Fisher, White + Warren, Michael Kors, Vince

Designer: I think I want to start with wholesale...

JH: It all starts with your WHO – who do you MOST want to see wearing your product? A real person, not a compilation of demographics. Someone you actually know or know of...

If wholesale is your first objective...

### **HERE’S YOUR FIRST STEP:**

Reach out to the stores and ask for a 10 – 15 coffee chat.

JH – Send a HAND WRITTEN postcard / note to retail stores and ask if you can bring coffee – 15 min...

Be sure to include something like... *I’m an eager learner and I’d appreciate more than you know...so they understand you realize you’re asking a lot and will value and respect their time.*

When you get a meeting with a buyer / store owner, ask these questions:

- What do you wish you could find in the market?
- What do you KNOW you could sell but can’t find??
- What sells best in your store and why?

If I were you, Tiffany, and selling to boutiques was what I wanted, that would be my first step – ask the buyers their opinion! Do your research.

### **YOUR SECOND STEP:**

JH:

Fabrics wholesale, fabric trade shows (the DG Expo Show is a good place to start)

Collecting samples to use as references

Pattern maker – production experience

Craigslist – find a sewer with production experience. Be very specific.

Pattern makers – look on [Maker’s Row](#)

You could also reach out to local colleges who teach fashion design. Look for a pattern making Instructor who could do patterns for you on the side, NOT a student

Also, since you're already a member, reach out in the [New Designer Program](#) (NDP) Facebook Group for FL area people

*SIDE NOTE: the NDP Facebook Group is a private, members-only group for members of the paid [startup course](#) – not open to the public.*

Start getting connected. Check out the Fashion Group International in the Tampa area - FGI – other industry group:  
<http://southflorida.fgi.org/>

JH: Think HARD about your business model. Wholesale first? B2C? How do you want to make money? What works with your current situation and job?

*Discussion with client...wheels are turning in her head.*

Designer: B2C could really work for me. Build a business around my lifestyle the way things are for me now. Haven't thought of it like that before...

JH: Let's talk about ideas to gain a following. What can you do that's not a PIA – something you can actually IMPLEMENT consistently.

Designer: I'm going to spend the next 6 months getting this blog together. Direct to consumer seems like the way to go for me. I know I'm gonna need customers.

JH: *squeals with delight!!!!* Yes! Build your following BEFORE you launch

*QUICK NOTE: I (Jane) have a mini-course on this topic here:*  
<http://fashionbrainacademy.com/buildfollowing/>

*The COMPLETE startup program that Tiffany signed up for is right here:*  
<http://fashionbrainacademy.com/ndp>

JH: Choose ONE person as your target customer...an actual person you know, not a compilation of demographics.

### **YOUR THIRD STEP:**

Start building your following NOW – before you're even ready to sell – so you can get sales from day 1 of your launch.

As you said, get your blog and content creation together to gather a group of like-minded people together, your community. Get a community, then later you can offer them something to buy,

JH: Start with your "perfect" customer...Let's say your Buyer Persona is Janelle – would she like this? Would she "get it"? Then I can decide what to say in my marketing and blogging.

JH: Creating content is MUCH easier if you gear it for ONE particular person (a real person, Janelle) and not everyone who could possibly buy from you.

Designer: I get it and I'm excited to just START. I have an actual plan. Simple and I think DO-able.

JH: Bam. Get going! You can do this. I'll see you in the NDP member's area. Reach out if you need more help!

☺ **Note from Jane:** I hope this helps you, the reader, get some clarity on your first steps to launching a clothing or accessories line.

I started my clothing line and opened up my own boutique in Chicago when I was 25 years old, when I had no experience, no connections, and no idea what the heck I was doing. It was exciting and terrifying at the same time.

Within 6 months I was shipping an order to a major department store. I went on to sell to Bloomingdale's, Saks, Marshall Field's (now Macy's) and hundreds of boutiques across the country and the world. I had sales reps in 5 different cities selling my line.

I ran my business successfully for over 14 years until I sold both parts of the company - the wholesale and the retail store.

I firmly believe that if I could do it, so can you.

In fact, I created a course and mentoring program for startups that **includes everything I wish I knew when I started**. You don't have to make the same mistakes I did – you can learn from someone who's been there before and done it successfully.

You CAN launch your own profitable clothing line and I'd love to help.

**It all starts right here:**

<http://fashionbrainacademy.com/ndp>

Thanks so much for reading. I'm rooting for you and your new business!

Sincerely,

Jane

*"Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending." – Anonymous*