



EPISODE 209

The Surprising Journey of Launching a Physical Product (With Lara Casey)

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AMY PORTERFIELD: Hey there, welcome back to another episode of The Online Marketing Made Easy Podcast. I'm your host, Amy Porterfield, and I am so thrilled you are tuning in.

I've got a question for you. Have you ever thought about creating a physical product to sell online, maybe even adding one to your digital lineup? If you have, have you found yourself overwhelmed with not really knowing where to start in order to bring that product from merely an idea to something your customers can physically hold in their hands?

As most of you know, my business consists of all digital products. I would say about 90% of my audience is the same. But I still get questions pretty frequently asking me about creating physical products.

I get questions like, "How do I know if I'm ready to add a physical product to my digital mix?" Or, "Where would I even go to get started?" Or, "What kind of physical product could I add to the mix?"

I tend to get a lot of questions around this topic. Since I'm not the expert I thought I should bring an expert on. Before we do that I'll say that I've got some great friends who have added physical products to the mix and they're doing great.

We have John Lee Dumas with the [Freedom Journal](#). We have [Melissa Norris](#), who was a past guest on our show, who has a book as well as digital products. We see this over and over again with people branching out, even with coffee mugs and tote bags and fun things to add to the mix.



There is a lot of possibility here. So, to shed some light on those types of questions and to get some valuable behind-the-scenes insight from someone who's had major success in launching and selling physical products online I'm bringing on Lara Casey.

You might already know Lara Casey. She is the founder of CultivateWhatMatters.com and if you've ever hear of the famous Power Sheets she's the creator. She also authored two books, Cultivate and Make It Happen.

This woman knows how to create a physical product and sell online. Lara's going to talk to us about how she knew it was time to launch a physical product, how she figured out and managed all of the details around designing, producing, and fulfilling a physical product.

To keep it real she's going to share with us some of the ups and downs as she created her product along the way.

Before we jump in, this episode is sponsored by my free masterclass, The Ultimate List-Building Catch-Up Plan. Whether you have digital products or physical products that you're selling online you need an email list.

In this free masterclass you're going to learn my proven three-stack system for leveraging the most powerful, what's-working-now list-building strategies without the stress, tech confusions, or crazy overwhelm.

If you've been struggling to build your email list online and you want to figure out how to get started, sign up for this masterclass. It's totally free and is at <http://www.amyporterfield.com/listbuilding>.

Without further ado, let me introduce you to our special guest today, Lara Casey.

AMY: Lara, welcome to the show. Thank you so much for being here.

LARA: Thank you for having me, Amy. I'm really excited.

AMY: Me too. Me too! Before we jump in, for my listeners who may not know you yet, tell them a little bit about who you are and what your business is all about.

LARA: We are all about planting seeds. We are all about helping women to cultivate what matters and giving them the tools they need to plant seeds of growing



intentional relationships or cultivating their faith. Whatever it may be specific to them, that's what we do.

We do that through several different things. I founded *Southern Weddings Magazine* ten years ago, which feels like another lifetime ago. But out of that grew our business now which is call Cultivate What Matters.

We also have the *Making Things Happen Conference* that I have been doing for nine years, teaching women the principles behind Cultivating What Matters. I am a mom to three. I'm a grateful wife and I'm really passionate about helping an instant-results culture embrace the power of progress.

AMY: That is good. Say it one more time.

LARA: I am very passionate about helping an instant-results culture embrace the power of little-by-little progress instead of perfection.

AMY: That's so good. I love it. You have a really popular product. So before we get into all of the details you've got to talk about that too.

LARA: It's so funny to hear someone say that it's a popular product back to me because I still pinch myself. It's something I created for myself originally. It's called the Power Sheets.

AMY: It's a hot commodity. People talk about this all the time. You've got to tell my audience, what are these Power Sheets?

LARA: The Power Sheets are our goal planner. They help you to uncover what matters most to you, make an action plan, and then tend to that little by little and take action.

AMY: Beautiful. It's a beautiful...It looks like a planner. Would you call it a planner?

LARA: It's funny, we get asked that all the time. This is really your day planner's best friend. We do call it a planner because it fits into the marketing realm of being in that same type of vein. But, it's more about an action book. That's what it is.

We want people to not just plan but start planting things in their lives and to make a mess in this.



AMY: It's fantastic. We're going to link to all of the details in the show notes so people can check out exactly what you're talking about. But, let's get to it because I want to talk to you about creating a physical product.

Tell us what your very first product was and why you decided to create it.

LARA: About 12 years ago my husband, Ari, was deployed to Iraq with the Marines. As you can imagine, at the height of any time of war or turmoil, it can leave you feeling very anxious. This first product, which was *Southern Weddings* Magazine, came out of that pain that I was experiencing at the time.

As my husband was deployed to Iraq I sat on my laptop computer alone one night and just thought, "I just really have a deep desire to create beauty in this world that feels so broken."

That sounded like a really grand thing at the time but it was my real desire. So I got on my computer and started mocking up a wedding magazine cover. I didn't have any formal training in this. No background in this.

AMY: What?

LARA: I know, just out of the blue. I had an interest in weddings and I started to kind of get my feet wet into wedding planning at the time. I think I bought an eBook that was something like Wedding Planning 101. It was 99 cents at the time.

AMY: I love it.

LARA: But what it was really about, I was fascinated with stories of transformation and how, even in the gift of a wedding celebration, you could transport people from feeling despair and hopelessness to a place of hope and to a place of thinking about the future.

I mocked up this little wedding magazine cover and I had no idea where it would go from there. I just knew I had to create it. I had a restlessness that I'm sure a lot of your listeners feel at times and I put it out there to the world.

I thought, "You know what, this is something new and different." I started a blog at the time. If you would have said the word "blog" to someone they probably would have thought about the movie, "The Blob", and had no idea what you were talking about.



AMY: Okay, this was during the wild, wild west online. Blogs weren't even popular.

LARA: That's right.

AMY: Wow! Okay.

LARA: So I started a blog to talk about creating meaningful meanings to married life and I started sharing the idea about this wedding magazine. Long story short, it really took off. People were excited about something new and different in the South, not just talking about roasted chicken and tulle at a wedding but a story and how that story could transform guest's lives.

The first physical product, I used my whole life savings for, and I created a physical print version of *Southern Weddings* Magazine. Again, I had no experience in this, Amy. I have a degree in Music Theater, no background in journalism. I just had this desire to do it and I figured I would just figure it out.

I created the first edition on Microsoft Publisher.

AMY: This is so great.

LARA: I don't recommend it now. But you've got to start somewhere so that was the first physical product. There is something to the tangible. I still feel the exact same way I felt 12 years ago about that.

There is something to holding a product in your hand that has the ability to change someone's life, potentially more than a digital product that maybe they see once and forget about. This is something people can pass on. They could pass it to their sisters, their moms, their best friends, and it really started a revolution in the wedding industry.

This was back when the only publications that were out there were really big corporate publishing houses. Then there was me and my cat in the apartment.

AMY: What year are we talking about? When was this?

LARA: This was 2008, I think.

AMY: Oh yeah, I'm with you.



LARA: So 2008 and that was the first physical product I made. If you fast forward five years from then I had a major life change happen. Our marriage was really rocky at the time and within that time period, five years later, our marriage started to come back together.

That led to our fifth anniversary issue of *Southern Weddings* being about “love never fails.” Our first shop product that we sold in more of an ecommerce platform, it was a big cartel at the time, was a print that said, “Love Never Fails.”

Each of these things, if I told you my whole story, all of the stuff that we’ve created has really been born out of a pain point, out of some challenge that I experienced in my life.

The print was more about how we could get meaningful messaging into people’s hands. It was more about the profit of people and not about dollar signs. It eventually became dollar signs but it started with the heart of getting the messaging, literally, into people’s fingertips. We believed it would have a domino effect and a ripple effect.

AMY: Yes, I love this. Then, from there...

LARA: From there it was right around that time that our business started to boom. As the heartbeat of *Southern Weddings* started to really beat with that message of “love never fails,” people really started to grasp onto it and I became really overwhelmed.

I was really overwhelmed with so much work and I had just had my first baby. Our marriage was coming back together so I was trying to balance and prioritize that. I know you’ve had so much of that in your story too, Amy.

How do you do it all? What I realized, the obvious, is that I can’t do it all and do it well but I can choose to cultivate what matters.

Right around that time I just sat down at my desk one day and I thought, man, I have all of these things like my Facebook page, my Twitter account at the time, I don’t even think Instagram was a thing. How am I going to tend to all of these things and make them grow?

I would come to the end of a year and just get so frustrated looking back and thinking I could have made progress on these things if I had tended to them little by little.



So I got real frustrated and I said I needed to fix this. I made myself what I called a “tending list”. It was just a list of all of the priorities, these seeds, I wanted to grow in my life and in my business, things I knew that if I just touched on them a little bit at a time it would add up.

I created a set of worksheets to help me make progress on the things that mattered, tending to them little by little. It’s just like you teach, Amy, about it being focused on action by action. That’s really what it came down to for me. It had to be about action instead of just thinking about things.

Thinking about things was not getting me anywhere. That’s when my life started to change. I started to make progress on the things that mattered. People started to see me making progress amidst a lot of mistakes.

I got an email from a publisher who had read a series that I posted on my blog at the time about goal setting and about how I was doing this differently. The publisher emailed me and that’s how I got my first book contract for my first book, Make It Happen, and my most recent one is Cultivate.

Others began to ask me to create this set of worksheets for them too and it really took off.

AMY: I love these stories where you create something for yourself and then others want it and it grows into a business. I mean, how organic can you get, right?

LARA: Yes. We have an unofficial, yet official, office motto, if you’re not excited about it, nobody’s going to be excited about it. With us, we have to create the things that we use in our everyday lives, the things that we need and we just have to trust if we’ve done our research and we have looked at what the market needs and have listened enough that other people are probably going to be affected by it too if we are.

AMY: Really quick, if you created these worksheets for yourself did you just kind of put them out there and that’s how you knew others wanted them? Did you sell them and then hope others wanted them? How did that happen?

LARA: It was a lot of both. I think there was a lot of throwing things to the wind. There weren’t any shops around at the time. There was maybe one, Lindsay Letters is a friend of mine and she had a shop with a couple of prints in it.



There was no one that was really modeling this at the time. So we were just kind of testing the waters. At the time I was doing coaching for branding clients and I tested the Power Sheets out with them in little spurts.

I tested the content with the Making Things Happen conference, which we were doing twice a year. We still do that twice a year here. It was being tested but it wasn't a full-fledged test in an ecommerce platform.

At the time we really had to take the risk and put it out there.

AMY: I love that. So you were creating a solution to your pain point to begin with. Then your first customers were people in your local community and people who knew you through *Southern Weddings* and the Make Things Happen conference who had the same need and your product was their answer. Does that kind of ring true?

LARA: Yes.

AMY: Okay, great.

LARA: Exactly, that's right.

AMY: So tell us what happened from there as far as you knowing this was actually going to be a business and not just a one-off order for some friends. For example, did you have a certain amount of workbooks?

These worksheets really became a workbook, right?

LARA: Yes, you got it.

AMY: So did you have a certain amount of workbooks that you wanted to presell before you produced the product or did you place an order that you could afford at the time and then sold online, at stores, or events? Give us all of the details.

LARA: I designed the first round myself. We had a designer at the time on our staff who helped me out with that too. But, it was really very much in house. Like you said, the first round was a loose-leaf worksheet set.



It was just loose-leaf worksheets. I don't even think we sold a binder with it at the time. I think it was a DIY, choose your own binder, here's are your worksheets. We printed them at a local printer for a couple of reasons.

This is really important for anyone that's starting out on a product. Testing with a local printer is so valuable. First of all, you get to develop a relationship with a printer who is going to help you to navigate that process.

That was really important to us. We didn't speak this language. We didn't know what paper weights were or if we tested a pen on a piece of paper if it would bleed. We just didn't speak that language so we started at a local printer with a very small batch.

I think it was 500 at first. At the time that felt like a gargantuan amount of products. It was really scary. I will have to stop and say this too, I feel very strongly about the power of one.

I just thought, man, if we could get even 500 sets of Power Sheets into people's hands, I started to imagine the ripple effect. I hope that's encouragement for anybody that's starting out. Don't compare your numbers to somebody else. Do what you think is best for you right now and just think about the ripple effect with this.

AMY: I love that.

LARA: Really scary.

AMY: What were some of your biggest fears at this point when you started to put it out there?

LARA: There are so many things. The thought of just somebody buying something from us was scary. The thought that we even know how to do transactions or what if someone is unhappy with the product?

What if this product doesn't create results for other people like it has for us and the people we've tested it with? What do you do about customer service? How do you print labels? I think the biggest thing is that there was so much unknown.

The only way we're going to figure out how to do it well was to do it and get as much good advice as we could. At the time there were hardly any resources for shop owners like there are now.



AMY: I love that you put this out there. A lot of my students want the whole roadmap in front of them and they know I'm a step-by-step kind of girl. They say, "Amy, just give us exactly what we need to do."

But if you look back at people that have had major success they just put it out there and when an issue comes up they figure it out and then there's their process moving forward.

Customer support? I don't even have customer support. But if you've got a question let me answer it for you. I really feel like that's how it comes about.

LARA: I think you're right. I think if I would have had a "plan" to start out with we would have changed so much about it, especially with ecommerce or selling a physical product in a retail shop.

There is so much testing that happens and asking yourself, "Is this right for us, can we make this better? How can we put our unique stamp on this?" I feel it is actually an advantage to not know the entire roadmap ahead because you get the freedom to change for the better.

AMY: That's so powerful. I love that. In these early days when you did your first print run and you've got your loose-leaf pages out there you didn't do a preorder. You actually put the money down and ordered a certain amount, like 500, you said?

LARA: Yep. Got it.

AMY: And did you sell those online or in person or both?

LARA: We sold them online for the mere fact that we work out of my house. It is a small operation and it also brought a lot of challenges with it too. One of the biggest bumps in the road we had with production was having a lot of manual labor to do ourselves to package the products.

This is not something our printer at the time could do. We were collating the products by hand, packaging them by hand, stickering them, figuring out how to use the label printer.

AMY: Did you do it in your living room?



LARA: Oh yeah.

AMY: Oh my god, I love it. What did you say? I cut you off. You said, "Sticker to label," what was that?

LARA: We actually hand wrote out the mailing labels at first.

AMY: Stop it.

LARA: Oh yeah. We were grassroots. I remember going to the post office with hundreds of boxes and the post people looking at us like, "Are you kidding me?"

AMY: This is how it's done. I love how you built this because it's completely grassroots. You can't get more grassroots than that, just starting from something really small and doing all of the labor yourself. It's so cool.

You really had to just get in there and figure stuff out. Thank goodness the product you created was one to help you keep organized because it sounds like there were a lot of moving pieces, for sure.

So many people get to a place of overwhelm in the process of creating the product, whether it be physical or digital. They just get stuck and make zero progress. It sounds like this wasn't the case for you. You just kept moving step by step even when you didn't have all of the answers. That's such a big learning moment. I love that.

My next question for you is, you've got your first product out there. It was validated through continued customer demand and sales. How long did you stick with that business model? When was the next major turning point in your business?

LARA: I love this question because it takes me right back to the point of taking big risks.

AMY: Oh, talk to me.

LARA: Well there were a lot of big risks involved. At first our shop was called The Lara Casey Shop. That was just because it was my name at the time that was the heart of the teaching. I was the one creating all of the content and all of the messaging.



Over the course of several years we realized we/I did not want to just tell my story. It was not about me. This product was about other people's stories and those stories had so much power to them.

One of the biggest pivotal moments for us was stepping back and making the scary decision to completely change the name of our shop. Things were going well. That's the crazy part. Things were going really well. Sales were good and things kept trucking along. We've had a growth rate of almost 150% every year.

At the same time, this is where you really start to get to...I don't want to call it magic, but the real heartbeat of where I think success comes from is doing things from your core, your "why" and always being willing to take risks for that.

For us, we had this conversation. I'll never forget it. We stopped one day and said, "You know what? This name is not working." This wasn't about me anymore. How could we have a name that allows us to give other people the reins and make it about them?

We went round and round with a lot of different ideas and just kept coming back to why we do what we do, which is to help women cultivate what matters. So we changed the name of our shop from the Lara Casey shop to Cultivate What Matters.

That turning point was like a huge flood for us. It wasn't about selling a product. It was about teaching people a different way of living and about changing the way they think. That's when things started to really click.

AMY: I love that. I've heard a story similar to that where once you got really clear about the "why" to another level things do start to really click.

LARA: Yeah. It's easy to be complacent. It's easy to just look at numbers. But, again, when you're looking at the profit of people, like how can we actually affect people's lives in a more profound way, you're working with a whole different set of rules and it makes the risks worth it.

AMY: I love it. Then demand became even more at that point, right?

LARA: Yes.

AMY: So talk to us about what that looked like. Did you add more products? Did you move from local? Give us all of the details there.



LARA: It really looked like one Thanksgiving sitting with my family on shipping boxes for Thanksgiving dinner because our living room was full of boxes and that was the breaking point. That's when I said, I think we have grown to the point where something needs to change.

One of the moves we made was taking the fulfillment away from our hands and putting it into a local warehouse. That was a scary move because through *Southern Weddings* we have always held to the fact there is magic in a handwritten note and I would write handwritten notes with all of the first Power Sheets orders.

It would take me days with hundreds of handwritten notes because of that power of one. But in order to grow with your business to affect more people's lives sometimes you have to let go of things and choose more meaningful things that you can do on a larger scale.

One of those things that was really important to us was to have a local warehouse where we could still have a touch point there. We could still deliver handwritten notes. And, I could get my dining room back.

As far as production goes, yes, we outgrew our local printer. That strain of the manual labor that went through that really became unsustainable for us. They were such amazing, sweet friends that helped us with so many people coming to my house to collate Power Sheets on my back porch all the time.

It just started to not add up. So we started to look at different options. To give you a little bit of background, we are a debt-free company, which I am very grateful for. It is something we worked very hard for.

We didn't take out any loans for this growth. We have embraced the principle, not just in our business but in our lives and what we teach, that it's okay to grow slow. We have many times had to deal with sell outs, which sounds like a wonderful problem to have.

It's a blessing, for sure, when a product sells out. But for us it was by necessity. We only ordered as much as we could. In being a debt-free company and in believing that growing slow was really important to us it took us a long time to figure out a better option for production and we wanted to be really intentional about that.



Fast forward now and during the bump we started working with a company called **Codra**. Codra is essentially like a middle man between us, the designer, and the shop and international production and even U.S. production too.

We actually found them through my book publisher. My book publisher is Thomas Nelson and they produce a lot of Bibles and book content like that. So we found a relationship with Codra through them.

I'm telling you this because I feel like more than looking for the right price point and more than looking for the best deal, it's about looking for the right relationship because if you're really in this for the long haul and if you really want it to be a product that is sustainable for the long term then that relationship behind it has to be too.

All of that is to say that the team at Codra are our best advocates. They have found us international partners and even domestic partners, production manufacturers, that have really strong integrity.

This was so, so important to us that the integrity of our product started even at production and went all the way through our customer all the way down to the way we package things. There was no stone left unturned.

That was the biggest bump for us, making the leap of faith to go with an outside production house.

AMY: I'll bet. That's scary stuff.

LARA: It's scary stuff. It's really scary stuff. But it's been so worth it. Again, to cultivate that relationship has been absolutely worth it. We have been able to give a much more high-quality product to our consumers because of it without the strain of all the manual labor on our effort too.

AMY: Yes, I'm sure that was life changing for you. Oh my goodness. So now they are being printed in China. But you have a middle man so you don't have to go over to China to watch to make sure everything is working properly and all that stuff.

LARA: That's correct. We love them so much because they take such care to make sure that our manufacturing partners are also really taken care of. They are the ones that travel there all the time and they are there working with multiple clients at a



time so it's just neat to know they have such integrity with those relationships and they are passing that on to us.

AMY: That's so good. Now, did you have to get a business loan to move on to this next big step in terms of moving from local to international printing?

LARA: No. And I'm really grateful for that. We just grew at the pace that we knew we could sustain. But this is where we had to get really smart. When you reach a certain point, really at any point in your marketing, as you know more than anybody else Amy, you've got to get smart about your marketing.

You've got to get smart. You have to have the right data and that's when it was about four years into our process. We've had Power Sheets for almost seven years now.

About four years in is when we started to really look at the data and we started to look at our analytics and we started to grow our email list and work on these things we felt were great benchmarks to knowing, for sure, that if we could get to those key performance indicators like having a certain number of newsletter subscribers or whatever those metrics are, that we would feel more sureness or confidence in making a larger purchase or more inventory for the next run.

We really had to get smart. We couldn't take risks with that anymore or just shoot the wind with a number that sounded good. We had to start looking at the data and making great strides toward that.

AMY: I think it's sometimes scary to look at the data. I know some of my students say they sometimes don't want to look because they're not really sure what they're looking for and they might not even want to know the truth if they are being really honest with themselves.

This was something you did that most people don't do and you got really knowledgeable about what the numbers told you.

LARA: We started with no list. We started with no email list. I remember when our former marketing director came to us and asked us to tell her about our email list. It was like you write about all the time, Amy. It was like I felt the list shame. I was like, what kind of list are you talking about here?

AMY: That happens to us all.



LARA: It does. But I think more so than any numbers it was about providing helpful content for people. We're not product producers. Like I said, we're seed planters. First and foremost we're about helping women change their lives and giving them the tools to do that.

If we weren't doing that in our day-to-day content there's no way that product is going to be a long-term thing in their lives anyway.

AMY: That's so true.

LARA: We had to get smart about our content and provide helpful content.

AMY: This is fascinating. To give us a little perspective here can you share a quick timeline from the printing of your first workbook to where you are at this point in our chat now producing your product in China?

LARA: Yes. We first started in 2011. That was the year, like I said, my marriage started to change. I had my first baby, my daughter Grace. I had printed that workbook for myself to use at first in that time of feeling totally overwhelmed. How do I narrow down my priorities and do something about them?

Fast forward actually almost two years later. In 2013 was when we produced that first small batch of, I think, 500 workbooks at that local printer for our first customers. The next year we bumped up production to about 3,000. It was a pretty big bump up.

We had some good demand in that first year of selling them through, I think in our first year we were selling them on Big Hotel, and then in 2014 we switched to a platform called **Shopify**, which we absolutely love.

We're still on Shopify and it's been great for us. We bumped up our production that year, in 2014, to about 3,000 and we printed at the same printing house here in the U.S. But that became really cumbersome with the labor and doing it in my house and interrupting Thanksgiving dinners.

In 2015 we sought out a really great international partner through Codra. We also do most of our printing here in the U.S. too for our accessory products. We use a couple of printers, one that we love is **Curry Printing** in Dallas, Texas. Then **Smart Press** is another partner that we use here state side.



We try to do as much as we can here too. But, in 2016, that's when things started to change big time. That's the year that we changed the name of our company. Then, this is so crazy, when I was preparing for this interview with you, Amy, and reflecting on what I'm about to tell you now, it kind of blew my mind.

AMY: I can't wait. I'm ready.

LARA: Up until this point this was a mostly black and white product. If anybody knows me, I have a very colorful product.

AMY: Yes, I can't believe it.

LARA: It's like this is really one of the hallmarks of our company, it's about living your life in full color. So we took a really big risk. I remember being so scared to put color in our product. I thought nobody was going to like this. It's not neutral enough. We're not going to reach everyone.

When you try to be everyone or everything for everybody that's when you really miss the magic. So we took the really big risk of putting color into the Power Sheets and we put stickers in there and started to make goal setting fun.

That became our hallmark. That's also when we embraced that mantra of "If you're not excited about it, nobody's going to be excited about it." We changed it from being loose-leaf worksheets to a bound workbook.

One of the other big things we did is start to cut products from our shop. We had grown our shop under the impression, I think a lot of people do this and fall into this trap, that more is better.

Once you really find your niche and you find what matters, having one central focus, is really what propelled us forward. We decided to make Power Sheets the main product with everything else as a support to that main focus and system.

AMY: I can't get over how many great lessons are in this podcast episode. I'm freaking out because it's all the stuff that I teach but you're saying it differently and putting it into a different light and I'm just beaming with this.

I love that you shaved down some of your products to get really focused on the one that was really doing well for you and you knew it was the right fit for your audience.



LARA: And that's scary. Cutting things out makes me feel like you're not going to please everybody. But it had to become more about the impact. Couldn't we make a better impact if that was our main focus? Could we help people make a better buying decision by giving them less to choose from? Yes.

AMY: Yes. I love it. That is really helpful to kind of look at how things came about and when they came about because people are always asking how long this takes and what phases they are probably going to need to go through. It's really helpful to see someone else go before you.

What I'd like to do is go behind the scenes a little bit more and I want you to tell us what your business looks like today. You gave us a little hint. We know the product. But you said "accessories" so I'm very curious about what that means.

I would also love to know about your team size, your production site, your warehouse, and all that good stuff.

LARA: So much good stuff to share with you. I love that you encourage our listeners that this doesn't happen overnight. It is a joy and honor to be able to share the start of the story instead of just where we are now because I would feel so intimidated if I just heard the end instead of knowing that it took hard work and most of these things that were successes were because I made a lot of mistakes on the way.

AMY: Another good one. So true. A lot of mistakes along the way got you to exactly where you are today. That's just not lip service. I'm sure if we had more time you could tell me ten huge mistakes that you would love to think never happened but they did.

LARA: Oh yes. Now, I'm grateful for that. But out of all of those mistakes and trial and error we have come up with a product lineup that, like I said, centralizes on and focuses on the Power Sheets about uncovering what matters to you, making an action plan, and then doing something about it.

We know that everybody's life, there's not a one-size-fits-all program for everybody's life so we have to be able to customize that for different people. We haven't shared any of this yet but I'm excited to share here that for 2019, our new release of the Power Sheets, we have some in stock right now that are six-month undated sets but we have a new release that starts in the fall for 2019.



We're going to have four covers for the one-year sets. This is exciting for us because people always wanted to choose the color that matches their life and there is a lot of intentionality that went behind those covers too.

There are four one-year sets of Power Sheets and one six-month undated set. That's a very intentional decision too. People sometimes find out about us in the middle of the year and we believe there's nothing magical about January 1 so you should be able to set goals at any time you want.

We also have another cornerstone product which is our "Write the Word" journal. It's a Bible journal that allows me to just literally write Bible verses. Those have been super popular for people that want to cultivate their faith.

We have seven "Write The Word" journals. We also have a new product that we just released which is "Write the Word for Kids", five different goal guides, and this is where it gets fun as far as dreaming about, if you have a core product, how an accessory could fuel that product.

We have a goal guide for parents, a goal guide for friendship and relationship, one for wellness, one for finances. If those things are important to you that's where that supports the main product.

AMY: I see. I like how these extras all support the main product.

LARA: Yes.

AMY: I got it.

LARA: Here's where it gets technical. If we have a product that felt like it merited its own separate launch and didn't support the other products we would have a hard time getting people to purchase the main system that we're teaching about in our day-to-day content so it can actually be a distraction.

AMY: Good way to look at it. Great.

LARA: Other things too, we have our goal-setting sticker book because goal setting should be fun.



AMY: Yes. I was very lucky to get a present in the mail and months ago I actually wanted to buy these Power Sheets when all of my friends were talking about them and they were sold out.

I thought, dang it. And then this nice beautiful box comes in the mail and I was so excited so thank you for that. When this episode goes live I will be sure to show everybody. Also, stickers! I'm embarrassed to say how excited I was about those stickers but I was. That was extra fun.

LARA: We often talk about the stickers being fun but this is where a research backed data oriented mindset can help you create a product that's really fun. For us, knowing that there is power in the handwritten word as opposed to typing something digitally, there's power in marking something that's meaningful for you with a sticker.

For instance, we have stickers that say things like, "Top Priority," and "This Matters." But there's actually something that happens in your brain when you're putting a sticker on a goal that really matters to you.

Your mind starts to make decisions about that and you start to go through a series of trying to figure out how you're going to do that. There's a lot of intentionality that goes behind that but it's also a lot of fun.

AMY: A lot of fun. But I love that the data showed you that this would work so you are bringing it back there. It's so good.

Talk to me about your team size and the positions that you have on your team. What does that look like?

LARA: We have a team of nine women who I am very grateful to work alongside. Half of them work here in my home office in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and the other half work remotely.

We first have me, I'm the CEO and visionary. We use our Power Sheets for business but we also use the Traction model. That has been really helpful for us, for anybody that is starting to grow a team. Traction and the EOS principles have been awesome to get us organized as far as our team structure, who reports to who, and how all that works really well. So I'm the CEO.



We also have our creative director. This is where we kind of show our small business card. The creative director is also our chief of staff. We get to do that when we're small.

AMY: Yes, you do.

LARA: We have a director of operations who mostly handles the production side of working with our production partners on the products and making sure our fulfillment team is helping our customers to be delighted.

We have a graphic designer who helps with both product design and marketing design. Our customer delight manager is a huge position for us. That is probably one of the central focuses for us, making sure our customers feel delighted. That's why we don't call it customer service.

We have a content marketing manager, a PR manager, our conference director for the Making Things Happen conference, and we're hunting for a marketing director right now. If anybody out there needs a job...

AMY: Are you all local or are you virtual.

LARA: We are half and half so this is up for grabs either way. We're looking for a great marketing director.

AMY: That is exciting. I hope that someone's listening that is a perfect fit or knows someone. I love it. So really fast, when you say, "Traction," are you talking about the book?

LARA: Yes, the book, [Traction](#).

AMY: Yes. I'm going to link to it in the show notes.

LARA: Awesome.

AMY: That's go great. The same people that wrote [Traction](#), did they write [Rocket Fuel](#)?

LARA: They did, yes!



AMY: Okay, I love **Rocket Fuel** so I've talked about that on the show before and I'm glad you brought that up.

LARA: It's like how to do more with less. That's what it was all about for us. We wanted to stay a small team and even in our ten-year vision we have plans to hopefully just remain 12-13 people because we have that agility, the ability to be nimble, the ability like you to make quick decisions and act on them.

The Traction model is really helpful for us to be able to do that.

AMY: Fantastic. Then just really quickly, tell me about production site, warehouse. What does that look like for you now?

LARA: We just switched to a new warehouse in Kentucky through a company called **Easy Post**. Easy Post is a tech company so they are very much focused on advancements in technology. They created a software that is also labeled the same thing, Easy Post, but they also do fulfillment now.

Fulfillment means that we get our product to their warehouse and they take care of everything on the shipping side. Our system links in with them through Shopify and they take care of sending all of those out.

For production we will use the same people we've been using for the last three years, which is Codra, Curry Printing, and Smartpress. This new warehouse in Kentucky, the reason we chose it, through the advancement and technology there, it's a decrease in human error.

We had a lot of influxes of launch dates where we sold far more than we expected to where we had big bumps and our current warehouse just wasn't able to handle that without a lot of errors so it has been really helpful to work with a team that does Kickstarters.

They do high production for lots of different shops that might have 25,000 products go out in a day but they can also do our normal day-to-day quantities too.

AMY: Fantastic. I love it that things happen, you make choices to change things up and make it better, and that is how your business has grown over the years. There are so many different changes but they are based on needs and wants and mistakes and everything in between. It's so fantastic to hear.



I have two more questions for you. This question is about looking back. If you knew back then what you know now what would you have done differently?

LARA: I would have owned our mantra earlier, “If you’re excited about it, chances are other people will be too.” That really is the best form of marketing that we’ve experienced. If it is a product or a piece of content that we need and will change our everyday lives it’s worth taking a risk to put out there in hopes that other people will too.

That’s where we get to the power of one. I would say to take risks for what matters. I would also say to keep making it better. I am amazed every year when we start talking about the next year’s version of the Power Sheets or really any of our products. There are hundreds of changes that get made.

We don’t just rest on our laurels. We are making it better through listening and that means listening to our customers and asking them if it’s working for them. We are hearing their stories and giving them lots of opportunities to give us feedback.

Keep making it better. Never stop growing.

AMY: Amen to that. One last question. If you could give my listeners one or two pieces of advice if they are thinking about launching a physical product, what would that be?

LARA: I would say to make something that you need. Make something that you know you will authentically be able to tell people, “This filled a need for me,” or “This filled a need for my mom” or someone that’s close to you.

It has to have a personal story behind it. People grasp onto the power of story and they will listen to you if you are being authentic with them and telling them about your product.

The other thing I would say is just what we’ve experienced throughout this whole six-year period of having Power Sheets and 12 years of *Southern Weddings*, it’s okay to grow slow. You don’t have to have the whole plan to get started.

It is okay to grow slow and it’s actually really good to grow slow. Good things take root over time and little by little good things grow and bloom.

AMY: That’s so good. I’m just absolutely in love with this podcast episode. There are so many great little nuggets in here. This has been a real eye opener for me as well



because I've never done any physical product and would not even know where to start.

But these lessons you learned along the way are just priceless for anybody thinking of doing a physical product or just adding a physical product to their online business. I think your story shows us that there are no shortcuts but it can really pay off when you come from a place like you did of wanting to serve your customer well and providing them with products that can bring about change.

Thank you so very much for joining me here today. What's the best way for my listeners to check out all of your amazing products and stay in touch with you?

LARA: They can hop on over to CultivateWhatMatters.com/amy.

AMY: Perfect! Well, thank you so much. I cannot wait for you guys to check out these Power Sheets if you haven't done so already. Lara, again, I'm so glad you were here.

LARA: Thank you. Thank you for all that you do to encourage people to cultivate what matters too.

AMY: There you have it. I absolutely loved this interview. That's a topic I know nothing about so I was fascinated and I hope you felt the same. I loved how 1) You can tell how passionate Lara is about getting her product into her customer's hands because she knows it will make their lives better.

It is definitely not about getting rich and that is not even a goal of hers. However, she's doing pretty darn well, to say the least. I'm telling you, any time I've made a business decision solely based on money it never goes well.

I love that she has her eye on something bigger and better and more important. And, 2) I love how throughout all of the years and all of the stages in her business Lara's consistently broken stuff down into small, very doable tasks and kept pushing ahead.

I feel like everybody who's really successful with a physical product starts in their living room. I think that's just the way to do it. I remember seeing a picture on Instagram of Sara Blakely, who owns Spanx. Ladies, you know what I'm talking about.

There is a picture of her in a small apartment in the living room packaging all of the Spanx up in boxes. The woman is rolling in dough these days. Talk about changing lives, Spanx are changing lives.



I think the way to do it is to start in your living room as Lara did with sitting on boxes during Thanksgiving. There's something there.

I hope you loved this episode and don't forget this episode is sponsored by my free masterclass, How to Create Your Ultimate List-Building Catch-Up Plan. You can get it at <http://www.amyporterfield.com/listbuilding>. If you are not building your email list every single day there is no better time than right now.

I can't wait to see you again next week. Bye for now!