

**EPISODE 108**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[00:00:04.1] ANNOUNCER:** Welcome to the Creative Empire Podcast. Each week, Reina Pomeroy, the life and biz success coach, and Christina Scalera, the attorney for creatives, are taking you up close and personal with successful influencers in the creative community and tackling your biggest business hurdles. Their mission is to help you, creative entrepreneurs, think beyond your daily biz so you can make the brave decisions that build your Creative Empire.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:00:35.3] RP:** Welcome back to another episode of the Creative Empire podcast. It's Reina and Christina here today and today we are talking with Katie Hunt. Katie is the founder of the Trade show Bootcamp, she's the business strategist and a mentor of the creative entrepreneur, she is like so full of great information.

She is also a strong proponent in professional development and surrounding yourself with a community that is really pushing you to get to the place where you're ready for whatever the next step is. Katie has taught so many different classes on Creative Live, you can find her at all the great conferences like Savvy Experience, the Seanwes Conference, B Sage, The Unique Camp, I'm like forgetting all the things.

She is an expert at talking about wholesale, and has such great experience in helping creatives work out their business development strategy. Katie, we're so excited to have you, thanks for coming on the show.

**[0:01:23.4] KH:** Thanks for having me, really excited to be here.

**[0:01:26.1] RP:** Awesome. We are just going to dive right in. Tell us a little bit about, I guess the place where we should probably start is talking about wholesale. If somebody has a product and is maybe toying with the idea of maybe, possibly in the future sometime, considering going wholesale, what are some of the things to think about?

**[0:01:47.3] KH:** Sure. Let me take a step back from that and say that most people kind of fall into wholesale. Especially if they're — most people are selling on Etsy, or they dole out their own product line, and they're not sure what wholesale is. It feels like a big beast. It feels like this big unknown, and they just don't know what it entails.

In reality, it's a completely different go-to-market strategy than selling direct to consumers on your website, or even going to things like craft shows. Wholesale means, just for anyone that I'm going to back it up. Wholesale means that you are selling your products to a retail store. It could be an online store or a brick and mortar store, most often it's a brick and mortar store.

Then, they are turning around and selling that directly to the end consumer. In this scenario, your customer is not the person using your product. It's a store. You have to think about it from their perspective. What is going to entice them to buy? It's not how pretty the item is, or the functionality of the product, it's more about business, right?

It's more about profit margins, and it's more about how it can be merchandized, and what their customers need on the shelves. It's really a different mindset. They have to approach it from that perspective first, of realizing that the target is different.

What the customer needs is different. Unlike retail, where it's you know, one candle or necklace or greeting card. Wholesale, there's minimums, and I teach a lot about this in my Creative Live, and actually I taught four classes for them last year where we talk about the basics of wholesale, what it means, and how to really know if you're ready.

If people are on the fence, if they think wholesale might be a good step for them, that's a really great place for them to start and kind of get their bearings as to what wholesale entails and whether it's right for them.

**[0:03:30.0] RP:** Awesome, we'll definitely link to that in the show notes, if you guys are interested. How did you get started in all of this? You have a really unique background. How did you even fall into wholesale, and now you're teaching all about it?

**[0:03:41.9] KH:** Yeah, you know, it's such a roundabout story, like all of our stories tend to be, right? I was working in a law firm for several years, managing our business development and marketing, and I was working with individual attorneys to help them build a practice, and basically build their own individual brand, and business is where my background and my passion lies.

I actually have a dual MBA in Marketing and Finance from Loyola Marymount University here in LA. That's the side that makes me really excited, but in 2008, I was getting married and I wanted to have a creative outlet. I started to design. It's a common story in the stationery world. I designed my own wedding invitations, and that then led me to do things.

Other people wanted greeting cards, other people wanted wedding invitations, so I started doing things for other people. I started with an Etsy shop, I then went to the National Stationery Show and sold to some stores, I was basically learning things as I went, and learned a lot of hard lessons.

At that point you know, Google wasn't as resourceful as it is now. There weren't Facebook groups that you can lean on. I did a blog post with a friend of mine, she asked me to write up five things I learned from doing my first show. Things I wish I had known going into the show. She posted that, and every year come around Stationery Show time.

I would start to get a lot of emails from people in the stationery world who were thinking about the show, were thinking about wholesaling, and they all have the same types of questions. How much does it cost? How much product do I need to bring, is it really as scary as it sounds, and so I would thoughtfully spend a lot of time writing these people back, and I noticed that, again, the questions start to become the same.

In 2011, early 2011, I decided to get some of my colleagues together, and these were all people, fun fact, these were all people that I had met on Twitter and I had gotten to know through social media. At that point, Twitter was where we were all connecting and sharing information and things like that.

We set it up for our first round of Paper Camp calls, They were teleconference calls, they were four teleconference calls, and we basically got everybody together, and I shared what I knew, and they shared what they knew, and the whole point of it was that we would help share information to create stronger, better, more profitable businesses for each of us.

Then you know, it's kind of nuts, but I eventually left my day job and started doing boot camp full-time, and we've now gone on to have online courses and in-person conferences, we're hosting our tenth Paper Camp Conference in February. Yeah, it's been a roundabout journey, but it actually makes a lot of sense when I look back and see what I was doing in the corporate world with now I'm working with people I'm passionate about.

It makes a lot of sense, I'm doing a lot of the same types of things that I was doing for the lawyers that I'm doing for the creative entrepreneurs now.

**[0:06:27.0] CS:** I love how you say that you were on Etsy, and then you went to National Stationery Show, and you went on. You just kind of gloss over like the giant stepping point — I know you didn't mean to, because you've been doing this for so long. For a lot of our audience, that's a huge step to go from Etsy to a trade show.

**[0:06:45.3] KH:** You're right.

**[0:06:48.1] CS:** I wanted to tease that out a little bit, and maybe if this is in line with some of the programs you offer, like how can people learn more about taking that step, and like what are some indicators that it's a good time? Because the National Stationery Show is like a big step, right? It's several thousand — lots of thousands of dollars.

**[0:07:07.8] KH:** Yeah, it is. Thank you for pointing that out. First of all, I'm a little bit crazy. I come from a family that we just do things, and I mean, we think it through, of course, but you know, it was a kind of thing where I started my business in October 2008, I saw some good traction, it was fun for me, I enjoyed it, and my mom was like, "You want to do this as a business? Well, if you're going to do it as a business, you need to go big. You need to go to the Stationery show."

That next May 2009 was my first show. I will tell you right now, I was not ready, I made a lot of mistakes, and to your point, Christina, most of the time, you spend on average \$8,000 to do the National Stationery Show.

Many spend more than that, and some do spend fewer, but that money, the \$8,000, really only covers your show space. It covers their booth design, travel and lodging, and then any of their marketing and sales tools. When I say that, I mean, their catalogues, and their order forms, and their pre-show mailers that we talk about at Paper Camp.

All these things to garner attention for their booth and their products, but what it doesn't include is their product cost. We always talk about developing their product as one of their general business expenses, and that it shouldn't be tied to shows, even though most of the time people are producing product in anticipation of a show, or directly to release at a show.

Again, once you factor in those products costs, you're spending a lot more, but to go back to your question of like, making that jump from Etsy to wholesale. Some things that you can do to know that you're ready. Really, you need to have a thoughtful, fleshed out product line. We always recommend that people have at least 48 SKUs, which is a single product, before they start to wholesale. The other thing I want to point out is that just that you can sell wholesale without doing trade shows.

I think that there's a misconception out there a little bit that people think, "If I'm going to do wholesale, I have to launch at a trade show like the National Stationery Show, or NY Now." That's not the case. Some of our best examples of people that launched a wholesale and did it well are people that waited and did the show later.

One example is E Frances Paper. Ali, one of the three women that own that business, came to Paper Camp in February. She learned all she needed to know to learn how to launch her wholesale program, and she realized that they had a lot more work to do. She had planned to do it at the May Stationery Show. After coming to camp, she decided to wait, and they worked on their mailing list, they worked on their product line, they worked on getting their sales tools and their terms and conditions together, and then they launched the wholesale market in September of that year.

They did it with a great marketing campaign, that great snail mail campaign where they sent like balloons, and confetti, and samples to their products and stuff, and it was a big hit. If you look back at Instagram, it was posted all over the place. People really enjoyed getting the packages, which made for a fun experience, and then it also really mirrored their line and their brand and aesthetic well. They got a lot of orders from that initial push.

Then when they went to the Stationery Show the following May, they already had a ton of experience of taking those orders to fulfilling those orders, and also building out their product line as well.

**[0:10:25.6] RP:** Okay, I'm going to ask a really silly question because I am not in the world of wholesale, and I'm guessing that people who might not even be exposed to this might also have this question. What is the main point of either doing a show or staying out of the show? What are the pros and cons there?

**[0:10:43.5] KH:** The best thing about shows, like the National Stationery Show or NY Now, is that the buyers are essentially coming to you. You're going to one place where there's going to be hundreds, hopefully, of buyers, or thousands, hopefully, of buyers, and so getting your product in front of them in person is so incredibly valuable.

Think about it, when you get an email, and you can see the products but you can't touch them, you can't feel them, you can't play with them, you can't — it's not as much of a good experience, right? It's harder to tell if it's something you want to buy. At a trade show, you have buyers coming in and out of your booth all day, basically, and some of them are a lot more tactile, so they want to touch and feel everything.

Some of them just want to place their order and go, but by being at a show, you're in a central hub where people are buying and they're coming through. The goal of these shows is ultimately sales, but what I always tell our alumni is that the success of your trade show should be measured much more on — you can't measure the success of your trade show just on the value or the number of sales that you get, the dollar value of the sales you get.

There's so many other benefits to going to a show. There's marketing exposure, there's the contacts you meet, there's people you meet outside of buyers that could be beneficial to your business. Sales reps, for example, they are people that will go out to shops and sell your products in the shops. You meet a lot of them at shows.

There's licensing opportunities, many of our alumni are working with bigger brands and licensing their art to companies that are then using their art on their own products and reselling it. That's another way to bring money into your business. There's a lot of value in the relationships, the exposure, and the contacts, too. The other thing is, people do buy at these shows, but follow up after these shows is super critical, and that's where a lot of buying also happens.

If you have a chance to meet these people in person, to build that relationship and get to know what their needs are as a customer, you can then follow up with things that are applicable to them and appropriate for them.

**[0:12:46.8] CS:** So trade shows aren't done? The internet hasn't killed in-person meetings and hasn't replaced that tactile feel. That's good news.

**[0:12:56.2] KH:** I'm of the opinion no. Because what's the alternative to a show? As I mentioned, the benefit is that everybody's kind of in one place at one time, so that's really great. Let me back up. The internet has changed the way we're selling, and it has provided a lot more opportunities for our people to get their product in front of buyers, whereas before it was them just going to a store or them just mailing a package to them.

I don't think trade shows are dead. I think it's still a great way for people to get in touch with their large group of buyers at one time. The alternative is that they're going to have to hit the road themselves, or get sales reps to hit the road and go out and meet with those buyers one-on-one. That's a costly thing. I think trade shows are changing. I think that the show management for the various shows needs to be more aware of this, how social media and the online world is playing into the sales process, but I don't think that shows at this point are dead.

**[0:13:49.9] RP:** Awesome. Katie, can you tell us a little bit about Paper Camp, too? You've eluded to it a couple of different times, and how it's really transitioned and this is your 10<sup>th</sup> one coming up. Tell us what that looks like?

**[0:14:00.8] KH:** Sure, I apologize if I'm going steps ahead. I feel like sometimes you forget the things you already know and have to come back to. Paper Camp is our in-person conference. We also offer it in an online format, but it's a different format. Its two different formats. Paper camp is where we teach everyone how to wholesale and how to do trade shows. When we meet in-person, it is very intense two full days.

We start by talking about product and how to develop a product line that is aimed at the wholesale market. That includes pricing strategies, minimum quantities, all these things that you need to know and have dialed in before you start wholesaling. The reason we start talking about product first is because if you don't have a solid product line that meets industry standards and has solid terms and conditions, you should not be jumping into wholesale.

You need to get all that back-end stuff organized and thought out before you make that jump to wholesale. We start with product, and then we talk about sales tools, how to make your catalogue, how to build that order form, what specifically to put into them, and we show a lot of different examples from our alumni base.

Then we talk about working with sales reps and how that can really benefit your business, but also how you need to have your business at a certain point before you start considering bringing them on, similar to jumping into wholesale. You want to have your systems in place and kind of ironed out before you bring it on people in that role.

Then we talk with retailers, and get their feedback on what they want to see from new brands, and then the second day, we talk in the morning for a great length about shows, and we go into great depth about the walls, and the options that you have for flooring and lighting, and all of the different things, so that you know what your options are and how to build out your budget, and you're not walking into this things blindly like I did in 2009.



We're essentially sharing all of the different things that we wish we had known before we got into wholesale and for a week into trade shows. We are coming up on our 10<sup>th</sup> camp, and over the last — we're also coming up on our six-year business anniversary, and over that span, we've coached more than 650 companies, independent makers, basically, on how to do wholesale and how to do shows.

That's been pretty incredible. Our Paper Camp online course is it's a little bit different format, there's some self-study work, as well as live office hour calls, and then we also have an online form where everybody chats throughout the course, so that they can get feedback or ask questions that weren't clear.

[BREAK]

**[0:16:33.4] CS:** How would it feel if someone laid out a business plan, a road map, or some kind of strategy that would get you started and get you closer to the goals that you dream of accomplishing in your business? Well, Reina and I actually have done this. All you have to do to get this totally free resource is head to [creativeempire.co](http://creativeempire.co) and click on free workbook. We will deliver to you 50 of our most potent, powerful strategies and proven tactics to getting our businesses visible, booked, and profitable.

If you would like to have this in your business for totally free, you can grab that at [creativeempire.co](http://creativeempire.co). We'll see you there.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[0:17:17.6] CS:** For the people out there that don't — when you mentioned like designing walls and flooring and stuff. I think it's a great example of all the things that you cover, just because you've now done so many iterations of it that you really do cover everything, and those are the kinds of things that you totally forget about. I saw, I actually was fortunate enough to go to the National Stationery Show in 2016, and it's funny, because you could always tell who the first-timers were.

I think like any store that was in New York City that had any kind of anti-fatigue mat, they had two of those down instead of the entire floor being squishy. Because you forget, like you're standing on your feet all day. You know, they had like the foamboard background. It was just — it was so apparently obvious who had planned for it, and who had just kind of thrown it together and maybe just thought like, this would look good. Maybe they had an idea in their head and it just took a lot longer to set up or whatever.

It's like, the little details that really made some of the booths that I passed by stand out. I'm kind of just thinking like, Ashley Gardner of Printable Wisdom, she had like this great two-booth spread, or maybe she had a full booth. I think it was a full booth. Everybody else gets like, half and then, obviously, Emily Ley, hers was all over Instagram and everything, and Valerie, we've had her on the show, of Lily & Val. It's really cool to see what people are able to do with, basically — I don't even know, it was like 8x8 feet of space.

**[0:18:44.3] KH:** Yeah, the smallest booth is 6x10, but most of us do the 8x10 booth, and Emily is actually one of our alum. She came to boot camp a few years ago before she did the show on her own, and yeah, it's incredible. I mean, we do have people like Emily and Kristen from Thimblepress, and the girls at Social Type and Wild Ink Press, they have typically double booths because they're more established brands.

Yeah, there are so many details that go in to doing these shows, and until you really get in there and investigate what comes with your booth, and then what you need to build, or bring out, or do, it can be pretty overwhelming. A lot of times what we tell people is it often times boils down to time versus money.

There are certain things you can do to save yourself the time of setup, because that's also really stressful, the setup process, and sometimes it's worth paying a little extra to have the help there to save time, and so it's all a very big balancing act, but ultimately your booth needs to look professional and needs to mirror your brand, and it needs to highlight your products.

Your products need to be the hero of that booth, and you need to really use that whatchamacallit? You really need to use that key space for merchandising for your items with

the highest profit margin. There's a whole bunch of like, little pieces to that, that we talk about at camp.

**[0:20:03.2] CS:** It's a great thing to highlight, right? No matter what industry you're in, right? Not everybody's a stationer here, but no matter what industry you're in, you just don't know what you don't know, and so involving yourself in educational opportunities, and I would even argue that some people that maybe are not even thinking about wholesale or boot camp, they would benefit greatly just from like — I know how organized you are, and the systems you have in place, and I remember you talking about like how TaskRabbit comes, and picks up your stuff, and gets your laundry done for you and stuff.

Just to learn how such a strategized and streamlined business runs would be so valuable, but you just don't know until you make that investment. If somebody's on the ledge and they're like, "I don't know, should I buy it, should I not?" For a Trade show Bootcamp, or any other educational opportunity that they might be considering, what are some things that they should think about, obviously, other than just like this is a huge financial investment?

**[0:20:59.4] KH:** Right. Now, that's a great question, and again, whether my programs or somebody else's, I think these types of conferences and educational platforms are so valuable for so many reasons. Yes, you're spending money upfront, but you're building relationships, and business is built on relationships.

The people that you meet at these conferences are going to be people that you may end up working with down the road, or that may recommend other people work with you, or as you mentioned, maybe you'll learn some tips from them about, you know, how they streamline their life, or their business, or whatever it might be.

You never know what's going to come out of these things, and so many entrepreneurs work on their own in their home office or just on their own solo. It can be really isolating, so in my person — in-person conferences are so incredibly valuable, because it gives you a chance to connect and really build those true relationships.

We talked about, there's an educational component to the formal things you'll learn at the conference, but also the informal things that you'll pick up at the cocktail receptions, or lunches, or the people you meet just kind of hanging around in the lobby.

I'm a big proponent of in-person conferences. I think that online courses are a great alternative, and I think they're a necessity, given not everybody can travel, but whenever I can, I try to get there in-person, because the face-to-face is so valuable, especially for those of us working on our own.

**[0:22:17.1] CS:** Yeah, what would be the advantage of participating in an experience with you, either in-person or online, versus just like reading a blog for hours on end?

**[0:22:26.3] KH:** I think reading the blog, and you know, following us on Instagram, too, because I read a lot of things on Instagram and got some great feedback and tips, too. I think that's a really great place to start. I think if you're just fresh in your business, and you're not sure which direction you want to head in, if you're not sure what type of products you want to create or what services you want to create, follow people online. Listen to podcasts and do your research on their blogs, their websites.

If you're serious about making your business a business, and making it something that's profitable and sustainable, and something that is going to feed your family and be your full-time gig, you really need to reach out and build relationships.

That is where your business will thrive. You never know what types of connections, where they'll lead to collaborations or referrals. Yes, start online, by all means, and maybe then move to online courses that are a lower price point that can get you some of the information you need. The other thing I'd recommend is, I've seen a lot of people that — or have heard feedback from a lot of people, rather, that are buying all the courses and all the things.

Then they're never getting through those courses. I would encourage you, before you buy any online courses, to really think about what your pain points are in your business. Think about what your struggles are and where you truly need the help. What is going to get you to that next level, or over the hump that you're facing right now, and focus solely on that.

Don't enroll in productivity classes, and systems classes, and wholesale classes, and design classes. Focus on one thing, and make that your priority until you've refined that, and then think about what your next step is, and look for things that tailor, provide you information for that next thing after that.

**[0:24:04.7] RP:** Love that tip. I think that we can all use that, because especially at the beginning, if you feel like there's so many things to make progress on, you're going to feel like you have to opt into everything. You have to buy all the courses, you have to go to all the conferences, but honestly, if you focus on just a couple of things and get really good at that, you can move onto the next thing, and actually get better quicker, I think, than trying to multitask and trying to digest all the information. Honestly, you're going to be ingesting information, but not actually digesting information, if we're going there.

**[0:24:34.1] KH:** And it's overwhelming. There's so much great information out there, and if you do start looking at all the things, you're going to get distracted. You'll lose your focus and really, you'll find yourself spinning your wheels and not making any progress. So really put your head down, focus on the one or two things that you're really trying to accomplish, and get the help that you need for those one or two goals. Whether that's reading blogs, listening to podcasts, or signing up for courses, but yeah, focus is key. Focus is really the key to growing your business.

**[0:25:05.2] CS:** I like the — and I am going to take credit for this, because I have not heard it from anywhere else, but I use the analogy of having a boat with a bunch of holes in it when you first start a business. That's what you have, a shabby little boat that's falling apart, and all these little holes in it, and you are trying to madly patch those holes, and so if you just patch one hole at a time, it's not going to pop back out and be a mess later. So it takes longer, it might feel more panicky, but as you're moving forward and ultimately in the long run, it's going to be something that is a lot more stable and helps you float along better later.

**[0:25:39.7] KH:** Absolutely, the overwhelm also leads to paralysis. I feel like people become less decisive because they're overwhelmed with all the options, and what I always tell people is try something. Give it a go, even if it's not a 100% final the way you want it, I always say done is

better than perfect, because if it's close to done, or if you've gotten in most of the way, throw it to the wall and see if it sticks and make iterations along the way as you need to.

but I find that a lot of people are trying to wait until their coaching package is perfect, their products are totally wonderful, and you can change things. It's your business and you set the rules. So you can make changes as you go along, based upon what your needs are and what things change, but just get things out there. Produce your work and get it out in the world. Don't hold yourself back.

**[0:26:31.7] CS:** Yeah, that's a great point, Katie, because okay, I agree you need to be good at making decisions, because if you're not then it's going to take you forever. So you just have to choose something, and it may or may not be the right call. You just have to go forward.

What are some other traits that you see in the students that you see where you're like, "Oh, she's onto something," or he, whatever, he or she is really going to do something amazing with this business, and what are some things that maybe people could strive to cultivate in their life to be more successful entrepreneurs, as far as characteristics that you see, or patterns of behavior, or something like that?

**[0:27:10.4] KH:** Sure. I'm going to talk about their products for one second, which also ties into characteristics, but I think I've seen a trend where we have had several people come to camp that have a very strong aesthetic and they know their brand really, really well. They know what types of products they want to create, and they have a cohesive line, and I think those people put a lot of thought before they came to camp into what they wanted to make and how they wanted to make it, and I think those steps are really important.

Having that cohesive line does make it easier for them to sell their products, because it looks like it's all in-brand. They look more established, I guess, but in terms of personal characteristics, I think we need to have a little humility. We need to realize that yes, this is a business, and yes, this is very serious.

The reason we have a business is to bring in money for our families, for ourselves, or whatever it might be, but we also need to be okay with saying, "Okay, that didn't go as planned. I'm going

to shift gears, and I am not going to be embarrassed. I'm not going to feel like a failure. I'm not going to let that bring me down," and so the people that recognize that just because something doesn't go quite as planned, it's not a reflection of them as a human being, or them as a business owner. It just didn't go as planned and so they need to shift gears. So I think there's a bit of humility that people also need to have. Does that answer your question?

**[0:28:37.2] CS:** Yeah, I think that's a great character trait to have, and it's definitely not something that a lot of us are maybe born with or want to have, because we want to be featured here, and we want to get seen or noticed for this or that or the other thing, but at the end of the day, does that really matter if you're not accomplishing what you want to accomplish? Where I see this a lot is where you're featured in some really cool place, but you're not making any money, and so that is a disconnect that needs to be fixed if you're going to have a business.

**[0:29:10.8] KH:** Yeah, absolutely.

**[0:29:11.7] CS:** Yeah, I love that you said that, and I love that that's what you put forth. As far as the successful things that you've seen people do, what are some really cool things that your students have been able to do that maybe just blew your mind for a moment, or you just weren't expecting? What are some really cool success stories that you could share with us?

**[0:29:30.9] KH:** Sure. Well it's been really fun, because over the last six years, we've seen a lot of people do really amazing things. I mean Emily Ley, like you already mentioned, she's doing amazing things with her brand, and she recently decided to get out of the wholesale game. When she told me that, I thought that was the perfect next step for her business, because she has such a strong relationship with her retail buyers, and her community, and the people that follow her, so it makes a lot of sense for her.

Robyn, we have from Meant to be Sent, is selling her planners in Nordstrom. Kristen Ley's doing amazing things, from Thimblepress, doing amazing licensing deals with people. I'm not sure if I'm allowed to share which ones yet, and then we've got people selling in Target. We've got some amazing success stories to share. Two of my favorite ones are actually more recent ones, and they're smaller companies that started more recently. One is Loudhouse Creative,

she's Francesca Fuges. She came to Paper Camp last year, and in her scholarship application, she wrote that her goal was to be in Paper Source. That was her top goal.

She went to the National Stationery Show, and less than a year after coming to Paper Camp, she was then in Paper Source. They had purchased some of her cards. I think it was after the show that they made their purchase, but she didn't meet them at the show, and so that was a huge win for her. It goes to show that sometimes writing down your goals, and knowing what you want to accomplish from your business, and making concrete plans or concrete goals, it really helps you attain them.

The other fun success story was somebody that attended my Creative Live class, the one about the catalogs, how to create an effective catalog, and she then came to Paper Camp and she brought a copy of her catalog with her, and I was so impressed because it was really well done. She did a great job with it, and then she used that to then reel in some new stores for her and her business as well. So there's big wins, there's small wins, but we celebrate them all. I think it's important to celebrate every step along your journey, and to recognize that even the small steps leads bigger change and bigger exciting things.

**[0:31:33.4] RP:** Katie, what I love about you is that you are so good at celebrating others success, and you don't take all the credit for it. I think that you celebrate them for yourself, too, but you celebrate others so well, and I just wanted to make note of that. You are proud of your students, and you're proud of the people who have come through your program, and it's a really beautiful thing.

**[0:31:56.3] KH:** Thank you. I am so proud, and we played just a small part in what they're doing. We do help them, we provide resources for them, and feedback, and give them all the things we have in our head, but ultimately, they're the ones that go out and do the hard work. So yeah, I feel like a mama bear that sees all these cubs go out into the world, and again, they're doing the hard work and I am so proud of them. That they work really hard for all their successes, but I do like to celebrate them.



I do like to let them know that we're still cheering them on after they've come through camp, and we have a pretty tight knit community that stays in touch through a private forum, and so it's always fun to hear the win celebrated there, too, but thank you Reina, that means a lot to me.

**[0:32:35.7] RP:** Yeah, of course. So what do you think is next for wholesale? Is there a new current coming?

**[0:32:41.5] KH:** Good question. I think there's a lot of people moving to more online wholesale platforms. You know, Etsy Wholesale launched their platform a couple of years ago now, and that's becoming more refined. I think there is more and more independent manufacturers that are on Shopify, or their own online site, and they're now starting to build in more wholesale shopping. It's so hard, because when you sell wholesale, the way the orders are processed and the quantities that people can order are very different than your regular online shop.

Again, you're ordering one greeting card when you go to a website, but wholesale buyers are buying at minimum six cards, or 12 of that same card. So you have to set things up very differently. The pricing is also different. So there's a lot of different considerations, but I do see things, things are moving more on the online landscape, which I think is great. I think it makes it easier for buyers to buy, and I think it makes it easier for the manufacturers to get their products out there.

I don't know, I think there's still a ton of value in getting together in-person, and if trade shows are where that happens where we can get in front of buyers, I think that is super important, too, but I will say, at least in the stationery industry, we've seen a real uptick in the last few years in terms of the level of professionalism that people are bringing to their wholesale game, and they are not just faking it until they make it. They are truly making it polished and professional.

They've got their terms and conditions down, they've got their print in catalogs. They speak confidently about their products, and they speak confidently in answering the questions from their buyers. So I'm really excited to see that. I think that it's raising the level of professionalism, but it's also raising the confidence level in the buyers to purchase from smaller brands, smaller manufacturers. So that's exciting, too.

**[0:34:27.3] CS:** Yeah, and Katie for you and your creative empire, what do you think is next with everything that you have going on?

**[0:34:32.8] KH:** Well, one of the things that we're doing for 2017, one of my goals is to re-engage with our alumni that came through a couple of years ago, that were there when we first started, and to bring them an additional educational platform that meets their current needs. So for our businesses that started five years ago, their needs and what they are struggling with are very different than somebody that just started maybe a year ago, and so we're trying to bring in some new programming for them.

The other thing we're doing to help highlight our alumni is I am starting a podcast, and we are going to be interviewing our alumni and telling their stories. So telling their successes, telling their struggles, and it will also be very educational for anyone that is interested in learning more about wholesale, and running a creative business, and trade shows as well, but it will be out soon.

**[0:35:22.0] CS:** So great, can you share when this is going to be so we can look out for that?

**[0:35:25.2] KH:** We're still working all the kinks right now, but thank you.

**[0:35:29.8] RP:** Well, we'll update our audience when it's ready.

**[0:35:31.8] CS:** Yeah, in the meantime, where can people find you so they might hear about your podcast, and your offerings, and what social media, where are you on the web?

**[0:35:39.5] KH:** Sure, we are at [tradeshowcamp.com](http://tradeshowcamp.com), there is no boot in there, just [tradeshowcamp.com](http://tradeshowcamp.com), and then everywhere socially. Instagram is our jam. That's where I spend most of my time. We're @tradeshowcamp there as well, and all social platforms is @tradeshowcamp, so yeah, and we will be opening our online Paper Camp course in mid-February. So if you are all interested in that, we invite you to come, and then our next Paper Camp course, our in-person program, will be in September. I typically host that twice a year in February and September.

**[0:36:11.3] RP:** Awesome. Thank you so much for coming on the show, Katie. You're obviously so knowledgeable at all things wholesale, and shows, and all of that. So if you guys are interested in more information, please go to our show notes and check it out, and go follow Katie as well, and thanks so much for listening. Go build your Creative Empire.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[00:36:31.0] ANNOUNCER:** Are you ready to build your own empire? For more information, show notes, downloads, and tips on how to do it, head to [www.creativeempire.co](http://www.creativeempire.co), where you can find out more about this week's episode and the two lovely ladies behind it all, encouraging you to build your own creative empire.

If you enjoyed this week's show, it would mean so much to Reina and Christina if you could take two minutes to go to iTunes and leave a review. It's a little thing that makes a big difference for the show.

[END]