

As I settled into a new life in Philadelphia in January of 2024, I was JAZZED to start running Charlie Darwin full time. Until now, I always worked other jobs been in school. Going all in required some serious personal growth. I was already seasoned at self-discipline, but having my entire income be reliant on Charlie Darwin revenue in 2024 seemed daunting. I spent a hefty chunk of time reflecting on leveling up my business, and I want to share with you what worked and what flopped.

In 2024 I spent a hefty chunk of time reflecting on leveling up my business, and I want to share with you what worked and what flopped.

Products: I did just a Spring Collection for garments, and opted out of launching a Fall Collection, since it hadn't performed well in the past couple of years. In turn, I leaned harder into selling more sewing patterns of my designs and published FIVE new sewing patterns! I originally thought I could put out one per month, but quickly realized that there is way too much labor and planning required.

Marketing: I committed again to using only one media platform - and that is Youtube! I posted 33 videos this year on my channel (my goal was to post 30)! And I reached over 6k subscribers! It wasn't all rainbows. The lengthy editing screentime is hard on my eyes/body and workload. In 2025, I'm going to try a more seasonal and energy-first approach to making videos instead of the "consistent" weekly grind, and I'm going to reduce my goal down to 22 videos. My most popular YouTube video now has over 90k views! I made about \$700 in adsense income from YouTube channel, it's not a ton but I wasn't getting paid a dime to post on Instagram.



Throughout the year, I also honed my voice in my weekly email newsletter. The size of my email list doubled this year, which I would almost entirely attribute to my YouTube channel.

Systems: In 2024 I made mindful investments! I invested in better video creation tools (camera, microphone, computer monitor, and computer chair), business coaching, and outsourcing my indigo dyeing. These changes significantly improved my relationship to my business, and I wish I had done them sooner.

I did pretty well downsizing into my new sewing room. It has more natural light, and I was able to make all my youtube videos with a clean, cute backdrop wall. I tried really hard to make my basement a nice, cute, calming space for doing my natural dyeing... but I ended up giving up and outsourcing the dyeing of my most popular dye color... indigo. Someday I'll get the dye studio I crave, but that's not going to be in this apartment!

First four sewing patterns: WORKED WELL ENOUGH! I got much better at making sewing patterns. Each and every pattern got prettier, more clear, better tested than the last! I sold all 4 of these patterns as PDF only, and they were generally well received.

Made to Measure Garments. I introduced the MANTIS maxi dress, the SANCTUARY jumpsuit, and the LUNA top as made-to-measure. They were not best-selling even though they were my most mindfully designed, best photographed, and best sewn of anything I've made thus far. I now know my newer designs can take months to gain traction, so I'll stand by them.

The SANCTUARY jumpsuit is my most requested pattern to digitize for my DIYers! So I know that the peeps like the goods-- which makes me think its high price point as a made-to-measure garment is what is holding the garment back from robust sales.

Summer Sales WORKED Idk what was in the air-- if it was my consistency on YouTube, if Taylor Swift promoted linen clothing somewhere, or what-- but I had relatively great garment sales from May-July. Even while I'm trying to grow the pattern side of my business, I LOVE sewing garments, so this was a deeply fulfilling season for me to feel seen and get even more polished as a seamstress!



Leah Widdicombe

Charlie Darwin Textiles

Investing in Business Coaching (Wandering Aimfully) WORKED - BIG TIME As a frugal and resourceful business owner, I was skeptical that business coaching could really be "worth it" for me. For three years, I simply took in all of the FREE content that Caroline and Jason Zook created about running an online creative business. Things changed when the Zooks released their Calm Launch Formula in August 2024, and I took the leap. I used their online course platform to host my pattern workshop, organized the whole thing using their

Notion system, used their full Notion Starter Pack to organize my ENTIRE business. and BAM!! My next sewing pattern launch skyrocketed from my usual \$800 to a lovely \$5000 in the first two weeks.

LADYBIRD sewing pattern. I created my most versatile sewing pattern yet, and used the marketing advice given to me from the new business coaches. I came up with the idea to sell my pattern in 3 pricing tiers (PDF, Print, and full Sewing Kit), had a Youtube video do pretty well a couple weeks before the launch, launched on a full moon... and 6x'd my usual sales within the first 2 weeks.

After 2 years of successfully doing an in-person holiday market in Pittsburgh, I couldn't find the right one to sign up for in Philly. So I made a page on my site that was dedicated to all things great for Charlie Darwin gift-giving (scarves, linen paper, etc) and promoted it via email. I met my sales goal for the month, and got to spend a relaxing 3 weeks away from my biz to reset and recharge.

“Charlie Darwin Textiles is an eco-conscious and artisanal textile brand that uses plant-based fabrics and dyes in earthy tones and textures. Every garment is handmade to your custom measurements and can be easily mended over time with our included mending kits.

We believe the garments you love should live long and biodegrade fast, not contribute to landfills.

Our signature 100% linen fabric is OEKO-TEX certified: free from harmful toxins and chemicals.”

***charliedarwintextiles.com/
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