

SFF170 - Darci

[00:00:00] **Heidi:** Welcome to another episode of the Successful Fashion Freelancer podcast. I am your host, Heidi, and here on the show we talk about true remote freelancing, where you get to work when and where you want with multiple clients, setting your own rates, all the good things, and getting to do the work that you love.

This was how I built my successful career in the fashion industry for over a decade, earning a hundred thousand. Plus a year working on my own terms versus when I worked for a brand, when I had my own brand and I was on the verge of burnout because I was working so hard and I was getting nowhere super underpaid.

Um, freelancing is the only way that I found success and happiness in the fashion industry, and that is exclusively what we talk about here on this. In today's conversation, I am chatting with Darci. Darci is from Puerto Rico. Um, her English is her second language. She lives in Florida now, and she is a pattern maker who's seeing phenomenal success in [00:01:00] her career as a freelancer.

There's my cat heads up. She was a little vocal during the interview too, so you're gonna hear that she's been a challenge lately. I can't leave her outside the room. She, hows outside the room or she like sits on my lap very quietly or she decides to jump down and howl. So just, you know, pets can be a challenge.

Anyways, that's Puma. She's part of the interview too, but Darci is doing some amazing things. She talks a lot about. Confidence in how she's overcome a lot of those barriers in her career. Confidence on the business side of things, confidence on English being her second language, confidence on, um, navigating projects and juggling projects and, uh, learning various computer softwares and jumping into CLO and jumping into Tuka Tech to offer her clients 3D off, uh, services.

Um, and how she's kind of overcome some of those confidence battles. We also talk about as. You may have guessed by the title of this episode [00:02:00] how she does not have a portfolio and how she is getting work. Um, full disclaimer, she has a teeny tiny one page simple PDF with a few screenshots. Literally, that's it.

Um, she shares how like the idea of a portfolio kind of took over her life in terms of what she had learned in fashion school and what she felt like she needed. And then after going through some of my programs, she was like, Wait, I don't need this. And she has built a very successful career with multiple clients.

Um, she talks transparently about her wages and what she's earning, and she's planning on raising that. Um, With pretty much no portfolio. So, so many great things. In this conversation with Darcy, I'm really, really excited to share her story with you. Um, if you are curious about learning some of the stuff that Darcy's learned, she is one of the students inside my Freelance accelerator program, and you wanna learn more about how to kickstart, how to grow, how to manage all those business aspects of the process, what your portfolio should look like and what it does and doesn't need to.

A lot less than you think. We cover that all inside [00:03:00] of Freelance Accelerator. It only opens a couple times a year. You can get yourself on the wait list over at [so heidi.com/fast](https://soheidi.com/fast), f a s t. You can grab the link below in the show notes. Um, if you wanna jump start right away into my best free resources for fashion, head on over to [so heidi.com/freelance](https://soheidi.com/freelance).

Again, we'll link that up in the show notes. Thank you so much for listening. If you're enjoying the podcast, make sure you subscribe wherever you are tuning in. And without any further ado, let's jump into my conversation with Darcy. We're ready. Are you ready? Yes, . All right. Um, Darcy, I am super excited to have you on the podcast.

Um, can you please start out by introducing yourself to everybody and letting us know who you are and what you do in fashion?

[00:03:44] **Darci:** Hello, Heidi. My name is, uh, Darcy. Alicia, and I am a pattern maker and sample maker, and I'm currently helping small brands and startups to guide them or kind of helping them through the whole well, [00:04:00] product development.

Okay.

[00:04:03] **Heidi:** Awesome. Um, so tell us a little bit about your background in fashion. Cause you were telling me before we hit record, you went to fashion school in Puerto Rico, which is where you're from, but what you, you've learned, Tell us a little bit about that experience. .

[00:04:19] **Darci:** Okay. . So I've been always interested in sewing since I was 15.

I really enjoying kind of doing home projects and kind of playing around like I think a lot of, uh, stuff started doing Barbie and dull clothes and all of that. Yeah. Yeah. So, yes, I was always interested in sewing and later on, um, I went to a fashion school in Puerto Rico. They, they just, um, They mostly do one of the kind couture, like it's not a technical school where they will teach you computer uh, design and all those more technical stuff.

So it was [00:05:00] based on sewing and pattern making for one of the kind dresses. So it was mostly draping on mannequin and patternmaking. So after that, I. I was working in the studio that I had in Puerto Rico doing, um, pageant dresses and um, uh, couture gowns for galles and all that kind of, uh, glamorous

[00:05:24] **Heidi:** custom, like made to order.

Yes. Okay. It

[00:05:26] **Darci:** was made order, all of it. Okay. So, uh, 10 years ago I moved to Florida. Now I'm living in Tampa, and that's when I, I, I realized that there's no market for that here. Yeah. Um, people mostly go to D'S Bridal or you know, this bridal shop. They can find freed dresses for a very affordable price. So that's when I.

You know, kind of, I don't know. I was like, I'm not gonna leave the industry cuz I really enjoy what I do. So I decided, start working on [00:06:00] factories. So I started as Citrix, um, I was sew, then I had the opportunity to, um, work on pattern making. . And then in my last factory that I was working, I had the opportunity to learn, um, pattern making and the software I, Okay.

I was sent to take a core training, two weeks of core training with Gerber Amar, and that's how I kind of switched from the. Papered and handmade patterns to, um, computer aid programs. So it was kind of exciting. I'm not gonna lie. At the beginning I was like, Oh my God, I won't be able to do this. This is so hard.

I never had, I had no experience in Adobe or any of those, um, CAD softwares. So for me it was kind of a challenging, but then, I did it. So [00:07:00] it was, Yeah, I, I learned it. And pattern ofs is just, they're just tools. You have to know the basics of pattern making. Mm-hmm. and measuring and all of that. So I had that experience, but it was mostly handmade and all with, you know, paper.

And all that traditional pattern making, um, techniques. So I was excited that I was learning something new. And um, from there I have always, um, listened to your podcast since 2017 cuz I was working on a company that I had a coworker that she's like, you have to listen to um, this lady cause she brings a lot.

Industry details. And so I started listening to you and then, but I was not consuming your course. But because I was always kind of like, I don't have the money to do it. I, I'm, I'm afraid and I'm not gonna learn. It's something remote. I never had take any courses remotely, so I was kind of, I don't know, like [00:08:00] doubting on that.

And then, and then on 2020 when you, um, you did a sale or kind of a program that it was called Pay What You Can. Pay what you can. I think it what's called

[00:08:15] **Heidi:** Yes, pay what you can. The pandemic had just hit and I was like, I guys gotta do something really generous to support the world and our community in our industry.

And I offered a bunch of my courses for pay what you can Literally \$1.

[00:08:32] **Darci:** I know. So I took advantage of that. Yeah. That's amazing. So, I don't remember, I think it was \$75 that I paid. I don't remember what it was. Um, and I got the, I think it was Beautiful Flats. Okay. It was the first one that I, I took because I wanted to um, kind of learn, um, how to do tech pack.

Cause I had worked previously in factories, but they only do plm. Oh, okay. And so I knew, I knew [00:09:00] how I was not in that area. Nothing. I was only doing pattern making and paper. And then the lady that used to do the computer pattern, she would digitize that pattern. Okay. And do the grazing and all that. So, but I was familiar with what detect tags and what to look in the tech tags and how to do a pattern based on the tech pack and all that.

Stuff. So I wanted to kind of do the, the test class. So that's what I took first. The beautiful PLAs. Yeah. One of your courses. And I was surprised of how much I learned from the person that never had experiencing Adobe. Yeah. Nothing. So I learned a lot. I was able to go, The modules were so easy and I understand, and I really enjoyed the course.

Yeah. After that one, I think I took, uh, development designed to develop for the type [00:10:00] of design to development. Mm-hmm. , the second one I took. I was so excited. I learned a lot , so I, and it was in Excel, so of course something

that we can all have access to it. Mm-hmm. . Um, so I went through that course too, and.

After that, That was in 2020. I was not doing much. Okay, so let's rewind the story. . So, um, 2020, like you said, the pandemic hit and a lot of, you know, the industry changed a lot. Yeah. So I was one of these persons that I was, um, I was scared at the beginning of the pandemic, I'm not gonna lie. Yeah. And I was, I don't know, like it was, I wanted to start working, um, as a free.

As a freelancer. Um, so I went ahead and quit the job that I was in, which was not a good idea. You have to plan ahead before doing that. But yes, I quit the job in April and I [00:11:00] said, Well, I'm gonna start doing it because I have been working in factories, you know, the last 10 years.

[00:11:05] **Heidi:** So I kind, This is April, 2020, right after the pandemic.

Mm-hmm. , You quit? Mm-hmm. . Okay.

[00:11:11] **Darci:** So I quit and I desire to stay at home and to start, um, given services, uh, pattern making services and, um, , because now I was in, I, I took the class so I knew how to at least doing, and then, um, that was 2020. I don't, I, how I say this, I didn't took as much clients at. Um, I was, I was expecting it is hard to start in freelancing.

It's hard, but because I have a network of people that I have, you know, met in the, I have not moved, so I still in Tampa for this 10 years. So I have, uh, met a lot of people. Yeah. Uh, so they bring me clients every time that they were, Hey, there's someone looking for a pattern. So that would send, send it [00:12:00] to me.

And that's how I kind of start to get my first clients. It was through network, through people that have worked before. Yeah. And in 2021, I, it was 2021. I don't remember. I attempt a fast class. Okay. But. It was not the last one, it was the previous, I think it was December, 2021 and starting in January 1st. I don't remember.

Okay. Pretty well. But I took a fast and because I knew that your courses have value and I was learning a lot, so I was like, Okay, I'm gonna jump into it. Yeah, I'm gonna take it because I really needed, um,

How to communicate. Uh, I needed that confidence, how to communicate with the clients. And I needed strategies because yes, I know my work, which is

pattern making and I love to, so I can do any sample, but I was lacking [00:13:00] on that part of the business of, okay, so how I do contracts and how I teach, how I go for those clients, they're not gonna come, you know?

Yeah. By itself. So, That's when I started, I took fast and then since I, I kept, um, hearing you talking about Upwork. So I give it a try on, I start pitching and in April I got two pitches that landed. Two jobs. Yeah. So in, I liked it. It was, it was, it went smooth. It went smooth. Okay. Um, so I was able to get almost \$2,000.

So not

[00:13:44] **Heidi:** bad. That's amazing. Just from two projects.

[00:13:47] **Darci:** Mm-hmm. . Yeah. So, yeah. So that was good. I did, uh, sample and I did tech packs. Okay. And that's in those projects. So, I cannot like it. And, [00:14:00] um, I, I kind of changed the way I was teaching after I took your course. I kind of learned that it has to be, um, you have to focus more on what is the value that you're gonna give to the, to the brand, and what is the brand looking for instead of what can I do.

So as soon as I start sending my features that way, like it's more Okay. The value that I can provide to what the service that you're looking for. Yeah. Instead of, I can do this, I can do that, I can, It's like, So that has been working. That's what landed the two projects on our work. And after that I have not been able to preach again.

In the last month. I have. Send pitch because I have been taking, uh, off work projects cuz I have, I always find clients locally. Okay. So right now I'm very busy with the ones that I have outside of the platform. So I haven't been able to pitch again, but definitely, [00:15:00] yes. It, it works for

[00:15:00] **Heidi:** me upward. That's amazing.

So, and you're in a great spot where like you don't need to pitch cuz you've got enough work going on. Um, . I love that. Like you took the strategies you learned inside fast and you adjusted your pitch and it sounds like you got, like, you saw the change in that, you got results. Mm-hmm. . Yeah. Um, okay. Talk a little bit about, cuz when you, you sent the email to be on the, the podcast you said, um,

My biggest fear is the language since I speak Spanish and English is my second language. Um, I mean, like you said, you know your work, you know, pattern making, right? Mm-hmm. . But some of the business side of the things like the contracts and the negotiating and the pitching and the talking to clients and managing the projects and all that stuff is a, a challenge and a fear that a lot of people have.

And then that was compounded with the fact that [00:16:00] English is your second. Talk to us a little bit about what, how has that felt to like navigate that space and where you're at with that right now?

[00:16:08] **Darci:** Um, it was scary, I would say at the beginning. I always kind of do the statement at the beginning when I, when I am a call in a call.

What if I, the first, I say like, Hey, just to let you know, I have a heavy accent and I still learn in the English. So if I don't understand, I will be asking questions. Mm-hmm. Or if you don't understand anything I say, you can rephrase it. Mm-hmm. , uh, let me know if I can rephrase it for you. Um, so it's kind of, people are being very, I, I'm, I was scared at the beginning, but no, people is very understanding sometimes.

They're okay, no problem. We know we all come, you know, from different backgrounds and different languages and you know, we all hear kind of, you know, I felt it, it was scary at the beginning, but now I'm, at this point, I'm much more confident [00:17:00] and kind of being straightforward with them by being okay. You know, I have a little Easter with the English, but you know, it's being, it's being good.

Yeah, it. The listening to the strategies. Sometimes when you talk in the course, you know when sometimes you kind of guide us through the examples of what could happen. Mm-hmm. and how would you respond to that? Mm-hmm. , it has helped me a lot because, Oh good. Yeah. I kind of. The words I can, you know, go through and, And sometimes I go back when I have a situation.

Yeah. I go back to the videos and say, Okay, so this is how I'm gonna say it. . Yeah. So,

[00:17:37] **Heidi:** yeah. I mean, your English, I'm going better. Your English is very good. Oh, thank you. It's very good. I would not qualify you as a heavy accent. Not even close. Oh really? Oh yeah. I mean, I can tell that it's your second language, but you're very fluid.

I can comfortably understand everything that you're saying. Um, but totally fair. Like to have that [00:18:00] like fear, like you said, that was your biggest fear. Mm-hmm. ,

[00:18:04] **Darci:** um, at the beginning, and I was like, I'm, I don't know how to, as soon as I send the pitch, and of course I'm writing in Word and you gave me the review and it will, you know, get all the word incorrectly and all that, but as soon as the client says back to me, yes, I.

I am interested in working with you. That's when, you know, I kind of freeze and be like, Oh my goodness, it's gonna call me like, Yeah. You know? Yeah. Having a call is always, the voice to voice is a little different. Yes,

[00:18:33] **Heidi:** yes. But it sounds like better it's not been an issue. Like people are understanding, they, they get it.

It's no big deal. Right? Yeah, yeah.

[00:18:39] **Darci:** Yeah. I, I prefer to. All the time, email conversations more than mm-hmm. , you know, cuz I can't tell when the email kind of correct my wording and all that. So I try to be more email instead of call. But yeah, if I had to jump in a call then

[00:18:55] **Heidi:** yeah. Well you're very personable and very comfortable to talk to, so [00:19:00] I don't know if people wanna talk to you.

I would, I would think about, um, how you can maybe be a little bit. I think it's great for you to get on a call. That's what I'll say. You're very personable, very well spoken. Um, I wouldn't avoid it. Just gonna throw that out there. . , Okay. Um, talk a little bit, I mean, a couple of the other things that you said.

in your email you said it is so rewarding to be in control of my time, especially when being a mom and working on projects. I really love. Talk a little bit about, I mean, you worked in the industry for, um, what was it, 12 years, 10 years in, in, or you said after eight years of working in factories, um, I don't know how old your kid or kids are, but like can you talk a little bit about how freelancing.

change the structure of your life and what that looks like for you.

[00:19:58] **Darci:** Okay. So yes, I [00:20:00] have one son, he's 17. Okay, so he was grown up . Yeah. But yeah, when he was younger it was a struggle cuz

mom has to be always working in factories and you know, factories. Do you have a time when your day starts? But you can sometimes not leave.

Leave until the. Was done. So, you know, it's, it's tough still. I found myself always putting overtime and coming home late, and I kind of feel like I missed a lot of good things. Yeah. You know, from his early life and now that he's in high school, he's now gonna be a senior, so I'm kinda feeling better than I'm here, that I'm here to help him.

Whenever he gets from school, I'm here and it kind of feels so much better to be able to be more present in his life and yeah, so freelancing has gave me that opportunity. Yeah. That to [00:21:00] be more present in his life though. Kind of

[00:21:02] **Heidi:** enjoying it. Yeah. What is your like, I mean, you said like this month you haven't been pitching at all, you've been busy working on projects.

Like what does your work look like, Like your schedule look. .

[00:21:15] **Darci:** So right now I am doing, I'm kind of off on the timing cuz my boyfriend has another, uh, kind of schedule. So, and my son is on vacation, but he has a job outside. So it's kind of, we are all going through a lot right now. Yeah. And I am not putting as much hours as.

As, as before. Okay. So right now I will say I wake up and I'll do kind of three, four hours in the morning and kind of take a break at the middle of the day. Mm-hmm. and kind of do two hours later. So, but, because right now what I'm doing mostly is pattern making and it's in the computer. I have my laptop with me and I'm kind of, you know, here and there.

I kind of jump into the computer for two hours and stop and, but I have. Ability to [00:22:00] do that and it's amazing.

[00:22:01] **Heidi:** Yeah. That's a big change from like going to the factory and like be being physically like, have to be there from like whatever time to, like you said, until the job's done. Sometimes that might be really late.

That's, that can be a challenge. Mm-hmm.

[00:22:14] **Darci:** it, it was, Yeah. So yes. Now I do, uh, most days, I would say five hours a day or maybe. Okay. Not like three in the morning, maybe two in the afternoon and something like that. Vice versa, like sometimes less or more. Okay.

[00:22:30] **Heidi:** Okay. Awesome. Um, would you be open to talking about your pricing structure at all and like how you're, like you said you got those two projects for \$2,000.

Um, would you be willing to share some details on like what the projects entail and how are you charging hourly or project, like what does that actually. .

[00:22:49] **Darci:** So I am doing hourly and um, I will say the next, probably next year, I will be starting working on project [00:23:00] based. Okay. I think for now, like I said, like like when you recommend in the course, please start hourly.

Yeah. To just see how long things takes, because sometimes. Uh, that could be very dangerous, like money wise. Yeah. Because sometimes if we do project and we take more time, you lose that money and there's no way that you are gonna go back to the client and say, Hey, pay me more.

[00:23:24] **Heidi:** Right. No, it's like, it's, you have to eat that loss at the end of the day.

[00:23:29] **Darci:** Yes. So I've been doing early rate. Um, my rate is 55. For pattern making. Yeah. Um, and I know that there are a lot of people tell you more, like they're a little bit high, but I kind of scared sometimes to, you know, go up and give that steps. So I think next year I'm gonna start, uh, going project based and probably racing their age a little bit more and let's see how it goes.

Yeah. But [00:24:00] for now, I am, I kind of have it. My services, I kind of have it all divided by, um, grading and pattern making and sample making. So I kinda have different rates for everything, so Okay. But pattern making, which is the, the service that I do all the time. Um, yeah, that one I do 65 an hour. Okay. Yeah. I keep my.

Um, 55 and probably I will, um, yeah, I will go up a little bit more. Um, you know, we kind of every year learn a little bit more and we add value, We add value to our techniques and why not? So, and of course the cost of living is growing every year. Yeah. So, yeah, I think next year I'm ready to, Give me a raise.

[00:24:56] **Heidi:** but like what you, why are you [00:25:00] scared to raise it?

[00:25:02] **Darci:** Um, I don't know. Cause I don't think that the customers are gonna have an issue with it. Cause I have not, you know, feel. Uh, like they say,

Hey, like, that's too high right now. Everyone is, seems to be comfortable with what I'm charging. And I have had, I have had, um, clients that will come and say, Well, uh, I cannot afford that to remake it, a fixed price at this price and these fries.

And they kind of try to, This is my budget and that's when I'm sometimes being like, I cannot do it for that, I'm sorry. Mm-hmm. But it, you know, like I generally, I said, no, I, I can't take it. You hold your ground, let's move on. Yeah. Yeah. Cause you know, being for 12 year industry, I know

[00:25:50] **Heidi:** you one

[00:25:52] **Darci:** things were free and teeth and it's, you know, it's very common to find clients that sometimes they wanna try to, you know, get, [00:26:00] uh, more from you for less money.

Yes. So I'm kind of, I'm aware of that and sometimes, I just hold my place in being like, No, I

[00:26:08] **Heidi:** can work for that. And I always say like, there's always gonna be those clients that want something for less and they're just not your clients and that's fine. Mm-hmm. , and you move on and you hold your boundary on that because it's actually really good.

If everybody started doing that in the industry, it would be just really good for everybody,

[00:26:23] **Darci:** for all of us. Mm-hmm.

[00:26:24] **Heidi:** for all of us. Um, are you focusing on like a specific niche or category, or are you just doing like pattern making for anything? Like what does that look.

[00:26:33] **Darci:** Yes. After taking the course, I kind of narrow it down to only women's wear.

Okay. Um, cause I can work both women's in needs and, and, and I would like to stick with women's only. Okay. Cause I used to do, I can do men's uh, children, but now I was like, no, I need to narrow down with what I was always, um, comfortable with. Yeah. And what I know more and it's women's wear.

[00:26:59] **Heidi:** [00:27:00] Yeah. Um, and is it just women's wear in general or is it like a specific type of brand or specific type of clothing you're going after?

Like you focusing on like the gowns in the evening wear or what does that look like?

[00:27:12] **Darci:** Um, no, the gowns in the evening wear, I haven't, um, worked on that for the last five years. I haven't been a long time done anything on that, but right now, all my friends that I'm working right now, Um, athletic wear.

Athletic. Okay. Um, athletic and then woos. I have kind of like sundresses brands, kind of summer flowy dresses and, and mostly I will say, uh, leather wear, people are looking for that. Yeah. Okay. Like gold apparel? Yeah. Uh, running apparel and yoga apparel, so.

[00:27:50] **Heidi:** Okay, got it. Um, and what do you have put together for like a portfolio to show brands?

Oh

[00:27:57] **Darci:** my God. That's it. [00:28:00] I don't have a portfolio. Heidi, you don't

[00:28:02] **Heidi:** have one. I love that answer so much. You have

[00:28:06] **Darci:** no idea. I just want, um, when I started off work, I just have to do a, a pdf. and I will grab, um, previous work and kind of pictures of pattern. I will take a screenshot of the computer like I do, um, just telling them I do all the patterns in the computer.

Mm-hmm. and I will do flats and I kind of get all together in one page and I will send, like you said, if they are looking for. Uh, specific type of, I will create a PDF for that and I would send that. Yeah. And that fit. I don't, I used to go crazy about it. I was like, Oh my God, what I'm gonna do? And I, it, I had the, when I had to do the portfolio, it was kind of frustrating.

It's like, Oh my God, what I'm gonna do? It takes me days to figure it out. And then after [00:29:00] taking the course, I was like, you know, No. Like, no, I'm not doing, I'm not taking all that time and effort to, No, because I am not in, into design. I am more technical. Mm-hmm. , I do more like, I enjoy more doing

pattern making and all this stuff, but I'm not the designer and kind of design the clothing from, so that part, no.

So I, I don't have to have a portfolio. So pretty with all these design and mood floors and stuff, it's like, no, I do pattern making. And that's the only, uh, thing that I send them to. This is the what the clients send me, and this is the pattern that I create and this is the final garment, how it came out.

That's, What I

[00:29:48] **Heidi:** always send, so a couple screenshots of like, here's the flag. Mm-hmm. , and here's what the pattern looks like. Like, and just an example project of like, and then here's, you know, digitized pattern and then final product, like three screenshots. Mm-hmm. , [00:30:00] one page pdf. That's it. So simple. Mm-hmm.

Yes. And that's been very sufficient and that

[00:30:07] **Darci:** been working and that's what's been working for me. So what did

[00:30:10] **Heidi:** you think you had to put together? . Say it again. What did you think, Like you said that, you know, before you thought this portfolio was this big thing, like in your head, what did you think the portfolio needed to be before you realized it could just be this like, PDF with a couple screenshots.

Yes.

[00:30:29] **Darci:** Cause I thought that we always had to had a portfolio when they teach you in school that had to have the inspiration, you know, inspirational pictures mm-hmm. and the colors and how do you know, like it's a process. I thought I had to have all of that from inspiration and, um, colors and kind of the design aspect of it and, um, Examples of runways and all that stuff, and it's like, [00:31:00] you know it, I never did it.

[00:31:02] **Heidi:** It's like I was, But that's, if you're doing design, you need all that stuff.

[00:31:05] **Darci:** Yes. Yeah. And that's when I, that's when I said like, You know what, I'm not gonna do it because I'm gonna focus on the technical part of just pattern making. Samples and tech packs and with the teex come the flats.

And that's how I always send, you know, kind of give them a flat so to let them know that I can do it.

[00:31:25] **Heidi:** Yeah. That's amazing. Um, it sounds like that was a huge relief to be like, Oh, I can just put together this one page PDF and call it a day and I'm done. Yes. Um, where are your clients locate.

[00:31:41] **Darci:** Um, I have three brands right now that are here from Tampa. Okay. Um, and the, the, the upward, it was completely remote.

I think one brand that was in Texas. Okay. The other one was in Florida, but uh, to the south. So I kind of always, Yeah. [00:32:00] Yeah. I really enjoy the physical fitting. Mm. Like, You know, I am always, I like to have it on a model and kind of pitch it here and there and kind of do that part. But you know, with remote, you know, you, we have to do what it takes.

So just pictures and videos. Um, it worked too. What do you But I really love the,

[00:32:26] **Heidi:** the physical. Physical. Mm-hmm. . So what are you doing for those remote clients? Are you like fitting it on a dress form or are you getting a actual fit model and then just doing it over Zoom? Like what does that process look like?

[00:32:39] **Darci:** So, for remote clients, um, they send, um, the pictures or the sketches of what they want. Mm-hmm. and I create the pattern from there. And I do, I'm doing first the treaty sampling. Okay. Um, before we even get to the prototype, because it's really [00:33:00] helping me and it helps sometimes because remember, they're not, sometimes, they're not designers.

They're just entrepreneurs. Yeah. That they wanna jump into the industry. Yeah. And they kind of done, sometimes they imagine things one way, but when it's done or when it's. Color. It's so, I always like to, I started um, going with Claw 3d. Or my 3d Okay. And it has helped me because they can visualize, sometimes they see it cuz I always say, Hey, the pattern is ready.

Here's the 3d. Right. Um, you know, kind of a mock up just to see how a look and then, Allows them to be Okay. So I wanted a little bit longer. I wanted a little bit more feeded in this area. Yeah, I think the slave needs these needs that, so I kinda. Have the treaty as my first prototype, and then when they approve that, then I will go ahead and do a muscle.[00:34:00]

Okay. Or kind of in a similar fabric, but I ship it so it's completely remote. I do the,

[00:34:05] **Heidi:** Oh, and then they fit it on their side. Mm-hmm. . Okay.

[00:34:08] **Darci:** Yes. So I have, um, everything, the machines in my apartment. It's not an apartment anymore. , It's almost a factory. Yeah. But I have, for the machines here, I will do the prototype and I will ship to them.

Okay. Um, sometimes they are the, the, the fit model themselves. Okay. So they will just try on it. Sometimes they call me so I can see, um, with the movement, like, Hey, it's doing this, it's doing that. So we can kind of go in the video or just pictures and they kind of team like, Okay, I like it more here, there, and they kind of send me the spec okay.

Of what needs to be changed. And then we'll go for the second round of pattern making. Okay. So I'll do, uh, corrections on the pattern. And I [00:35:00] will do a second sample and that's how it goes. But it's mostly remote. Oh, okay. It'll be mailing, mailing the samples

[00:35:08] **Heidi:** and then you feel comfortable with them, like kind of pinching and saying, This needs to be adjusted, et cetera.

Like you're not there physically being able to see and like touch and feel that. So that's a, you know, that's a. Big jump to then just be watching them on the video. They're not a technical mm-hmm. . I mean, they know how something fits and feels in their body. Mm-hmm. , but like, there's sometimes nuances, right?

Where it's like mm-hmm. . Okay. If it's pinching here, we actually need to adjust over here. Right. Um, but you're just, you just maybe know the nuances so well that you, that this works.

[00:35:44] **Darci:** Yes. Cause I have been working. For a long time. And these, so even sometimes they're like, Oh, it needs this and that. And I'm like, Are you sure it needs that?

Because if I take from here is gonna do these other things. So I kind of go with [00:36:00] them through the process and being like, sometimes they ask me, Oh, take this much. And I'm like, No, that's maybe as much. And then the , let's just do it because yeah, I kind of, You just know Guide them through. Yeah, I guide them through and, Okay.

[00:36:18] **Heidi:** Yeah. That's amazing. Cuz a lot of people like wonder like, well how do I do this remotely? And so it's a little bit maybe more challenging and you have to ship the samples. Mm-hmm. so you can add some time. But it's totally possible. Yes,

[00:36:30] **Darci:** it is possible. And that was one of the things that I was scared in the beginning when starting freelancing because Yeah.

Um, I, I was completely working in factory, so I, I didn't know if this was gonna work and I kinda. , uh, quit the factory job and I kind of started doing on my own and it was scary. But now after a year and a half, I can say, Yes, it works. It, it works. You can do it. Anyone can do it. . Yeah. Right.

[00:36:59] **Heidi:** Oh, I [00:37:00] love that.

What would you, I mean, you said anyone can do it. Like if someone out there is hesitant and nervous because for whatever reason, like what would you tell.

[00:37:12] **Darci:** to go for it to invest in themselves because I come from completely paper like patterns made by paper and it for me, when I work this factories and I see the pattern maker, the digital pattern makers that they have, and I see them working in the computer all day and I see myself and I was like, Oh my God.

And like I will never be able to do that. You know, that's insane. How can they do a pattern in the computer? Yeah. And all these, you know, so, and I, I went for it and I took the classes on it. I had the opportunity with this factory does send me, uh, to Gerber to take training on it. And, um, so from being [00:38:00] able to, you know, having doubts about if.

Going to do it or not to being able now to feel so comfortable in the computer doing a pattern. It's like, yes, anyone can do it. Yeah. You have to, you know, it's a lot of time. Of course. And especially because all of the software change from one software to the other, you know, like the interfaces between all of them is different.

Mm-hmm. . Um, so because now I'm using another software, I'm not using burber, so I'm using, Are

[00:38:30] **Heidi:** you doing, Oh, ok. So you, I'm doing. Okay, so you're, but you're using CLO also?

[00:38:37] **Darci:** Yes. Yes. Cause CLO two Cat, they do have 3D sampling, but it's, it's, I cannot afford it. Right. I like, it's very expensive. Yeah. So I only use with them the 2D.

The 2D software. Okay. And then after that, then I can import my files to call and kind of do the claw. I think it's, [00:39:00] they feel a little bit new on the pattern side of it. Oh. Like I won't use it for. Kenneth for feeding and very detailed patterns, I won't use it. Okay. So I just use their software to kind of, uh, sew my pieces together and visualize how it looks in the, in the avatar.

[00:39:21] **Heidi:** Do the 3D mockup. Mm-hmm. . Okay. But the actual patterns you're making, into KA tech? Yes. Yes. Okay.

[00:39:28] **Darci:** I use. Okay. And so I have been able to learn all the stuff. So yes, it takes a lot of time, a lot of effort, a lot of cry. Sometimes when I get stuck and it's like, Oh my God, I, But then I kind of go and, and I look for you.

YouTube. I kind of ask friends and I, until I get it when I'm doing something specific like you have to be so, Consistent and just go for it. Yeah. So yeah, it's [00:40:00] totally, it's, it's totally possible. So anyone that it's thinking that they have been doing paper patterns for some, thinking that they cannot do, um, computer patterns and, you know, CAD softwares, Yes, they can do it.

Yeah, it is possible.

[00:40:16] **Heidi:** That's amazing. Um, Where did you learn Chlo and to good tech? Did you just learn it all off of like for YouTube videos?

[00:40:26] **Darci:** Um, um, Tu Tech is very similar to Gerber, kind of like the interface of them. It's kind of similar in a same way of doing a pattern. Okay. Um, Buttu Tech, I took classes online when I started, when I went with them for cloud subscription because they're.

Cloud-based description. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. , Um, I took classes from them and then I kind of go in cuz they don't have, uh, really good videos on YouTube, but Okay. , I, but I kinda, you know, kind of compare to [00:41:00] what I was doing on Gerber and kind of go through. Okay. And Claw has been YouTube mostly. Yeah. Has a lot, a lot of, um, it was top of the beginning cuz it's very d.

Um, software, if I'm gonna compare to Adobe or the pattern software, very different. Um, it's very different. It took me some time, but I'm hanging there. I I'm not at the point yet to doing the kind of, uh, trees rendering to Belaying

online and all of that. Yeah. But at least for what I'm using in which is only to get the pattern pieces together and, um, put it on the avatar.

It's kind of, it's, it's working. .

[00:41:45] **Heidi:** That's amazing. I mean, I love that. Like you're, you know, I think we can get really stuck on like, I have to be an expert. I have to know all the things. I have to be like so confident and competent in every [00:42:00] aspect of the software, but you're like, No, I know it good enough. I know like how to do these certain things.

And if you don't know how to do it, you'll figure it out. Might take some time, might take some late night tears. , but you've put yourself out there and you're doing CLO for your clients. Even though you're not like an expert at the software, there's still a lot of stuff you don't know. Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm. . What gave you the confidence to like to do

[00:42:28] **Darci:** that?

Um, So, I don't know. I really liked the, when I started seeing, um, the treaty, um, videos and I started seeing people posting at the beginning, I was like, Okay, that sounds like not realistic. It's like how I'm gonna be able to try and just a avatar and all that. And then I give it a try. I give it a try and, and for what I'm looking for, [00:43:00] because that, I, like I said, it's.

it's not as good as the pattern making software, so I don't know, kind of. Um, but I give it a try and I did it. And like I said, I'm only using part of it. Like I'm only using it for visualization of the pattern and it's working for me. And I don't know, I think I'm not scared anymore to this computer software.

Yeah. Like I'm going for

[00:43:27] **Heidi:** That's amazing. And you're like offering it to your clients and they're happy with what they're getting. Like it sounds like it's just going really well. And you don't have to be an expert. You'd only, you don't have to know all the things.

[00:43:37] **Darci:** Mm-hmm. . Yes, I am not, um, I am not doing it like, as like, I'm not charging them to be like, Oh my God, I'm gonna charge you for these 3D samples.

Okay. No, I'm just doing it kind of inside my pattern making service. But

[00:43:52] **Heidi:** you've got like a, Well, but you're charging hourly. So like, the time that you're spending in clo, are you getting paid for

that?

[00:43:58] **Darci:** Yes. Yes. [00:44:00] That's the time that I, I put into my pattern. Time. Okay. Okay. So it's like after the pattern is made, I, the time that it takes me to do the 3d, I am putting it there.

[00:44:11] **Heidi:** Okay. That's amazing. Yeah. That's amazing. Um, so many awesome things. I mean, you went from, you know, eight years working in factories, English, second language, not feeling like super confident to. Charging 65, you're gonna raise that rate soon. I know you are with your skill and experience. Um, and like you said here in the email to me, you said, I've gained a lot of confidence, especially when communicating with clients.

I mean, I think you've gained a lot of confidence in a lot of spaces, but that sounds like you. jumping into the computer software, learning that stuff, even if you didn't feel comfortable offering that, gaining confidence to communicate with [00:45:00] clients even though you like, weren't feeling super savvy on the business side of things.

And you know, English being your second language. So much growth over the last couple years, Darcy, it's amazing.

[00:45:12] **Darci:** I know, I know. It's, it's kind of when I look back, you know, 10 years back and I wouldn't imagine that I was gonna be doing these now. Yeah. So it, Yeah, it's possible. It's possible. It's, it's, it's good and it feels so rewarding to be able to kind of do all

Yeah.

[00:45:32] **Heidi:** That's amazing. Congratulations. You should be really proud of yourself, .

[00:45:35] **Darci:** Thank you. Thank you. And of course, because you know, your courses help me a. and I, I recommend it to people. Like it's really, It's worth it. It's worth it. I learn a lot, especially the confidence that I'm getting now. It's because.

I see other students, I see the community and um, and thank you for [00:46:00] that because I really enjoy being part of the community cuz you know, we

always kinda, um, share ideas and kind of look for questions. Sometimes when we get stuck in something, we will reach to someone and kind of, it's a good, uh, environment.

Yeah, for sure. I like the, the pace that you create for us. It's really, it's really good. Yeah.

That's

[00:46:20] **Heidi:** amazing. Have you connected with Mari. Mari Medina? No, she, Cause she's also from Puerto Rico and she lives in New York City now.

[00:46:30] **Darci:** Yes, I saw her at her podcast

[00:46:32] **Heidi:** and yeah, she does the same sweaters but haven't connected with her.

Yeah. And she's got a, well, she's not newborn anymore. I think her daughter's probably like eight months by now. But I don't know. I ju maybe it's just cuz you guys are like both really sweet and like very personable. You're both from Puerto Rico. You're both moms. I don't know. You should just say hi to her.

She's really nice. Yeah. I feel like you guys would've a lot to talk about. Oh, I

[00:46:55] **Darci:** will. Definitely. Yeah. And then I, I met, um, Ellie, [00:47:00] Ellie Cowell. Oh, you did meet Ellie? Yes. Uh, we met at the text process.

[00:47:06] **Heidi:** Oh my gosh. You guys shared it on Instagram? Yes, I remember.

[00:47:11] **Darci:** Yeah. . That's so cool. Yes. I was just walking through and I recognize her.

Yeah. Um, so I, I said to my boyfriend, Oh, she's from so Heidi, I'm gonna say hi. She's from So Heidi ,

[00:47:27] **Heidi:** you have no idea how excited that makes me. That like two random Lance Accelerator students, like connected at a, in real life and it was, you like recognized her from her testimonial picture or something.

Right. Uh, yeah.

[00:47:45] **Darci:** I love this student. And she was on your, I think, I think she was from the first, first students that

[00:47:50] **Heidi:** you had, so Yes. She was one of the beta students from like way back.

[00:47:55] **Darci:** Yes. So inside the factors, I, I keep seeing her. So in the [00:48:00] videos, .

[00:48:00] **Heidi:** That's right. Okay. I forgot about all of that. Oh, that's amazing.

That makes me so happy.

[00:48:09] **Darci:** Yeah. And it was so cool. It was just so cool to fight her there. Cause this is my second time I go to the tech process, so Yeah. But the first time, you know, I, I went with uh, another designers from here, from Tampa. Okay. It's part of us. We went, Yeah. This time I was just, me and my boyfriend, we just went to see what it was, the new technology machines.

I really liked, uh, sewing machines and all that. Yeah. And I wanna see how the industry is moving forward. Kind of exciting. Yeah, it is very exciting. So, yeah, so it was very exciting to see someone that is cool videos. I love that so much. And she was so, she was so nice and so she's so sweet. Yes. We kinda kept in, in, in contact.

[00:48:53] **Heidi:** Yeah. That's amazing. That's what I love about our community. Like I just feel like, you know, the fashion industry has such a [00:49:00] bad rap for people being not super nice. And I don't know, our community is just full of so many awesome people. It's really, really neat. Yes,

[00:49:11] **Darci:** Yes it is. I really like the community that you have built.

[00:49:14] **Heidi:** Yeah. Thank you. Um, thank you for being part of it. Darcy, where can everybody connect with you and find you? . Um,

[00:49:21] **Darci:** I have an Instagram. I am not a frequent poster. Like I'm so bad at those. That's good. Yeah. But I'm there. I, Darcy, Alicia. Okay. In both, I have a Facebook and an Instagram page, and my website is Dar Alicia Design Studio.

Okay, great.

[00:49:43] **Heidi:** We'll link to all that in the show notes. And um, I'd love to end with the question I ask everybody at the end of the interview, and that is what is one thing people never ask you about being a fashion freelancer that you wish they would? Oh

[00:49:58] **Darci:** my god, you know, ? Yeah. I have [00:50:00] read so many bobcats and now it's my time.

Everybody

[00:50:03] **Heidi:** says that. They're like, I know this question was coming and I am still not sure what I'd be to. .

[00:50:10] **Darci:** Okay. So did they ask? Um, let's see. I don't know. It's tough at the beginning. Yeah. Like people think, you know, when they see you two, three years down the road and they see the success and they think it was, it was easy.

Um, it is not easy. It's, it's tough, especially because we, freelancers is more, um, like. , it's, you know, the business part of it. It's kind of hard. It's, I will say that it's just the business part of it and, um, I don't know what to say. It is not easy, but, um, they can do it like this. This will be for all the designers that [00:51:00] want to pursue a freelance career, then, um, they can do it and is totally, totally possible.

[00:51:09] **Heidi:** And it's tough, but is it worth it?

[00:51:11] **Darci:** It's worth it. Yeah. It's worth it a hundred percent. I would say. It's worth it.

[00:51:15] **Heidi:** Yeah. Yes. I mean, I always say like, listen, Freelancing is hard. Working in the industry is hard. Having your own brand is hard. Anything in life that is like worth doing is hard. Nothing, Yes. Is like a snap overnight success, right?

Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm. . And we always have to put an

[00:51:35] **Darci:** effort. Yes. And I am kind of something, but I will, I will get better on that. But yet, yeah, to be very organized is something that you. Oh gosh. That's the hardest part of it. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:51:52] **Heidi:** Well, you're doing an amazing job. I cannot wait to see you. Continue to keep kicking ass.

Darcy, I'm so excited for your career and what you've [00:52:00] built is, it's really amazing. Congratulations.

[00:52:03] **Darci:** Thank you. Thank you. And thank you for all you do for the community that you have built for us freelancers and. It's amazing. It's been amazing being on your tribe, .

[00:52:15] **Heidi:** Oh, we're really lucky to have you part of the community.

[00:52:19] **Darci:** Thank you. Thank.

[00:52:22] **Heidi:** Thanks so much for listening to this episode of the successful Fashion Freelancer podcast. I really appreciate you being here and supporting the show. Um, I really hope you enjoyed Darcy's story. It was so fun to chat with her and bring this conversation to you. Um, she's done so many amazing things, and as she said, it's not always easy, but it is so possible you can do it as well if you wanna.

Kickstarted and, uh, get all the support to start your, or grow your freelance career like Darcy did. That is all available inside of Freelance Accelerator. You could head on over to. So heidi.com/fast, f a s t. Click that link in the show notes and get your name on the [00:53:00] wait list only opens a couple times a year.

We'd love to help support you. If you could also snag my best free resources for freelancing over at heidi.com/freelance. Again, linked in the show. Um, huge shout out and thank you to the people behind the scenes that make this show possible. Daniel, Brittany, Tara, my husband Mark, who does all the tech and editing, so many moving pieces and parts to a podcast, and I really appreciate all the support I have behind the scenes to make this possible and to get this into your ears.

Um, I think that's about it. I hope you're having an awesome day. Whatever it is you're doing, Thank you for listening. Make sure you hit subscribe wherever it is you're tuning in. Um, connect with me over on Instagram. I'm. Up and down as far as my engagement, but I'm fairly there and, uh, yeah, I would love to hear from you and hear your story and hear what you're working on.

So I think that's it. Have an awesome day and I'll talk to you in the next episode.
Bye.