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Cheetahs

Why did the lion always lose at poker? Because he was playing with cheetahs...

There are lots of interesting facts about cheetahs, for instance they are the fastest land animal being able to reach speeds of around 113kph and they can accelerate from a standstill to that speed in just a few seconds. However, they can only maintain that top speed for a few minutes before they are too tired to continue.

Additionally, they are among the smaller members of the big cat families, another interesting fact is that they are the only big cats that cannot roar, instead they predominantly purr. Unlike other members of the big cat family they hunt during the day and have amazing eyesight- being able to see prey up to 5km away. However unusually for a cat they have very poor night vision. They are unable to climb trees. Their blunt claws are poorly designed to protect themselves and will usually give up their catches to avoid a confrontation. Also, they only need to drink every three to four days.

You may well wonder why I'm sitting here writing out facts about big cats from the African continent and it's not that I've been watching a big cat special on Discovery or anything. It's more about being suited to your environment and circumstances. As a comparison a lion in short bursts can hit a top speed of 80kph and an adult male can weigh in at an impressive 190kg, more than double the weight of a cheetah.

Lions and cheetahs are each genetically built to be the best possible predator within their own environmental constraints. In our businesses where do we sit?

Do we try to straddle as many potential business areas and environments as we can be exposed to, or do we excel in one particular market or sector?

It's always a delicate balancing act, between trying to reach as many potential customers as possible and being an acknowledged expert in one industry or field.

The adage, "You can be a big fish in a small pond, or a small fish in a big pond" was never more apt. Where do our products and our businesses sit? What model best suits our needs and gives us the maximum potential for success?

Are we better being like the cheetah, built for agility and speed, or a lion, built for power and strength? Your environment and purpose will tell you.

A man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a white shirt, is sitting and reading a newspaper. The image has a blue tint.

Resources and news

What Are NFTs? Mapping the NFT Ecosystem [Infographic]

The NFT movement has now become a key growth aspect of the broader social media space. And while there are many skeptics, and many questions about the long-term viability, and value, of these digital art works, the growth of NFTs is undeniable, with Twitter, Instagram and Facebook all exploring new ways to directly integrate NFT art and ownership into their apps.

<https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/what-are-nfts-mapping-the-nft-ecosystem-infographic/611832/>

9 Ways to Improve Your Facebook Ad Results

Feel like your Facebook ad campaigns need some new life? Wondering what changes you can make to improve conversions? In this article, you'll discover nine ways to optimize your Facebook ad campaigns to get more bang for your buck using new or underutilized native features on the platform.

<https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/9-ways-to-improve-your-facebook-ad-results/>



New Trend Alert: “Anti-social” App Gets \$11Million in Funding

App developers and product creators, take note:

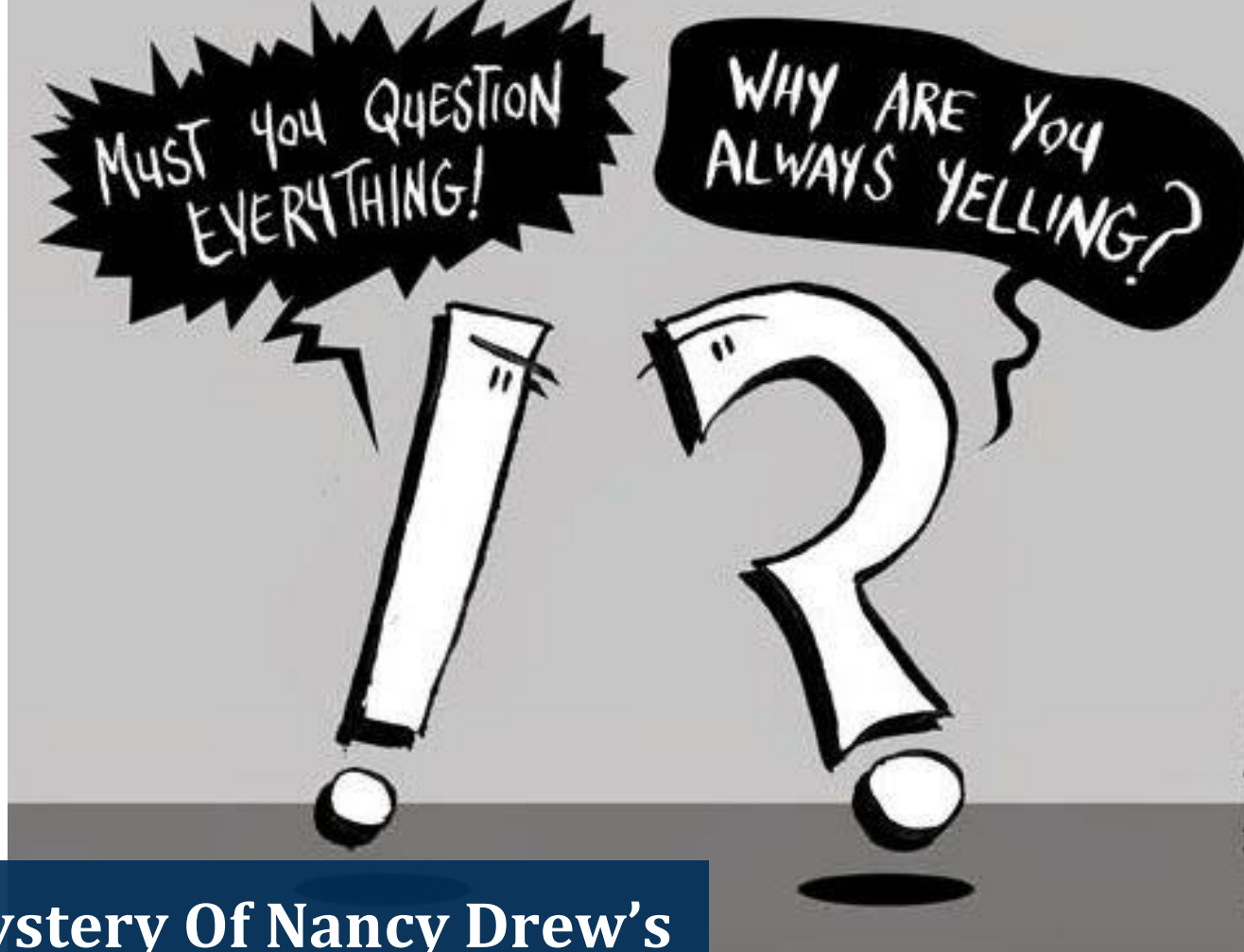
Lapse, an app that lets users form groups to take and share photos with a little bit of chit-chat in between, has raised \$11 million in a seed round of funding.

Lapse falls into the category of apps that are gaining attention among users and investors precisely for turning on their head some of the mechanics we've come to associate with social media.

While Instagram, TikTok and others continue to rack up millions of users, there is definitely some users who are wary of these social media channels and their agendas. They've been found to contain a lot of toxic content, and because it's ultimately hard to control how they are used (and abused) some users believe the solution is to abandon them.

On a less severe note, even those users who have found a lot of fun, or even business, in mass-market social media apps tire of their relentless push for engagement and exposure and thus want to explore more private or impactful ways of being “social.”

<https://techcrunch.com/2021/12/20/lapse-an-app-that-lets-you-snap-and-develop-rolls-of-film-with-groups-of-friends-raises-11m-from-gv-and-others/>



The Mystery Of Nancy Drew's Annoying Punctuation

I read anything and everything I can get my hands on because I never know if something might spark a new idea for me.

That's why I recently read a Nancy Drew mystery.

Nancy Drew was a young, fictional female detective who solved all sorts of mysteries. These books were published in the 1950s and girls loved them. Today they're collector's items.

So there I am, reading 'The Clue In The Crumbling Wall' and something is bothering me! In fact, it's distracting me something terrible, to the point where I'm having trouble following the story! This thing keeps appearing, even when it makes no sense to appear! And every time I see it, I stop and try to figure out what the author was thinking!

Yup, you got it.

There are so many exclamation points in that book that I have to wonder if the author was perhaps addicted to them. Maybe she didn't have a lot of confidence in her writing and felt that adding exclamation marks would somehow make her sentences more compelling.

News flash: Every sentence!! Is really not!!!! That exciting!!!!!!

The Chicago Manual of Style says to use the exclamation mark "sparingly to be effective."

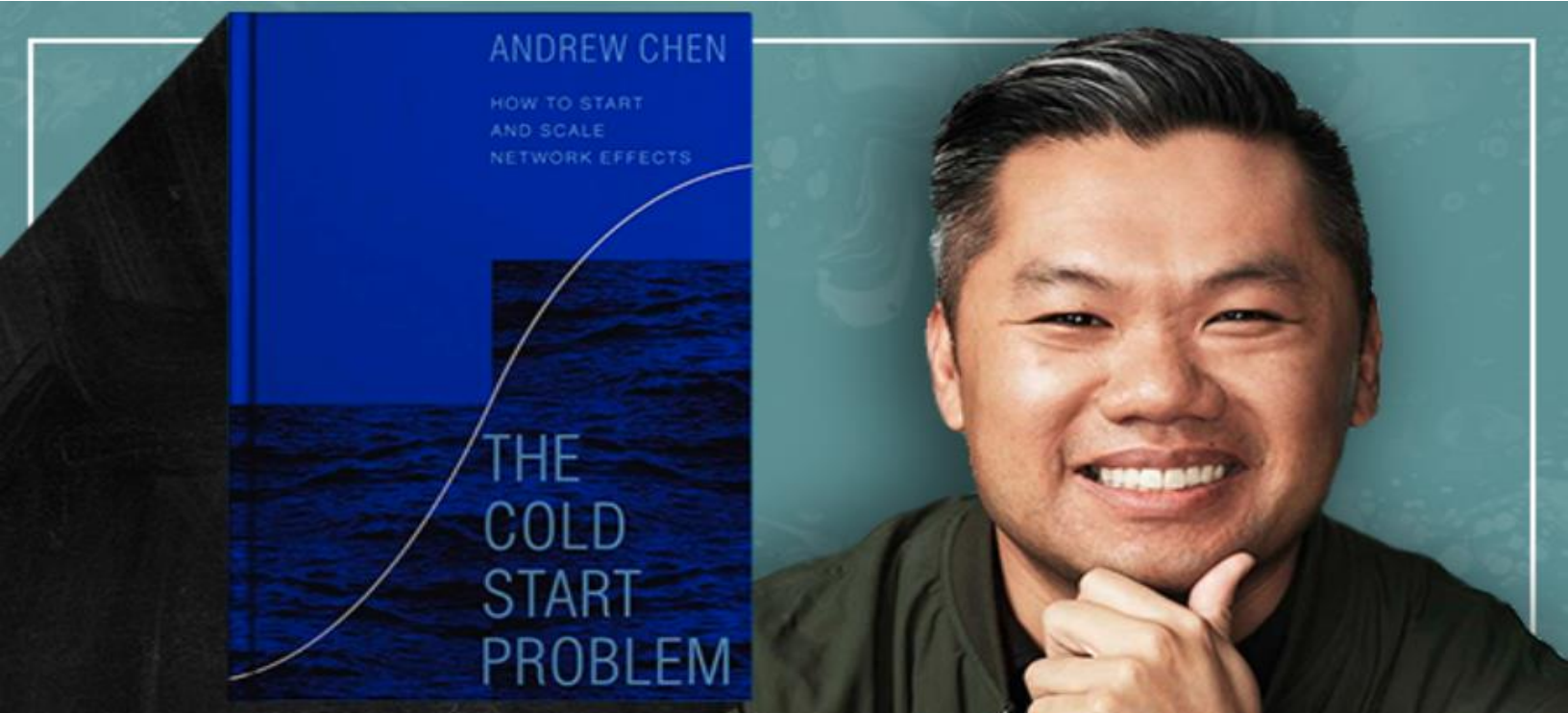
I agree!

(Sorry, couldn't resist).

Here's an article from the BBC revealing perhaps the biggest exclamation mark offender of all times.

<https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20170301-what-overusing-exclamation-marks-says-about-you>

One note: Exclamation marks can save lives. For example, there's a big difference between "Duck" and "Duck!". Ha! Love it.



You've got a new product or service you want to introduce to the world. The problem is, no one knows about you or your product. How do you get those first users onboard? And how do you leverage those first users into a larger market share?

Those are the questions Andrew Chen answers in his new book, "The Cold Start Problem," which promises to explain how to start, grow and defend successful businesses.

It's difficult to get momentum when there are no existing users, just as it's harder to start a car engine when it's cold.

And if you don't overcome this cold start problem quickly, your new product will likely die.

"A network effect describes what happens when products become more valuable as more people use them," Chen writes. Think of a dating website – it's worthless if there are only a handful of members. But as the membership grows, the site become more valuable to both users and the site's owner.

Many dominant businesses got their early start by serving niche markets, what Chen calls "atomic networks." For example, Bank of America launched their first credit card just in Fresno, California in 1958 to 60,000 residents. Tinder and Facebook each started in a single college community before branching out.

Conversely, Google tried to launch its failed Google+ social network with a large-scale launch targeting everyone rather than first establishing a successful atomic launch.

"Your product's first atomic network is probably smaller and more specific than you think," Chen advises.

Determine who you are targeting as the first users of your product and service and then find a way to get them on board. Tinder initially threw big parties for college fraternity and sorority members to get them to use the app. Uber offered extensive bonuses and financial incentives for its first drivers, which were targeted in very specific locations.

Says Chen, "The product idea itself should be as simple as possible – easily understandable by anyone as soon as they encounter it. At the same time, it should simultaneously bring together a rich, complex, infinite network of users that is impossible to copy by competitors." An example is Zoom, with its simple interface and freemium model that encourages new users.

Once a product has succeeded in its atomic market, then its creators can extend it to adjacent markets, such as other demographics or locations, until a tipping is reached and the product is a success.

Side Note: On TechCrunch I see news of a new app called Go Disco that curates local events to get you doing cool stuff around town. Scrolling down, I read that Go Disco is only launching in Los Angeles, but plans to expand to New York, Washington DC, San Francisco, Miami, Portland and Austin in 2022. This is a perfect real-world current example of the Atomic Network launch referred to by Chen in his new book.

<https://techcrunch.com/2021/12/17/go-disco-ios-app-local-discovery/>

Dictionary.com Word of The Year = Opportunity

Sometimes you find entrepreneurial opportunities in the strangest of places.

Take the “word of the year” from Dictionary.com, for example.

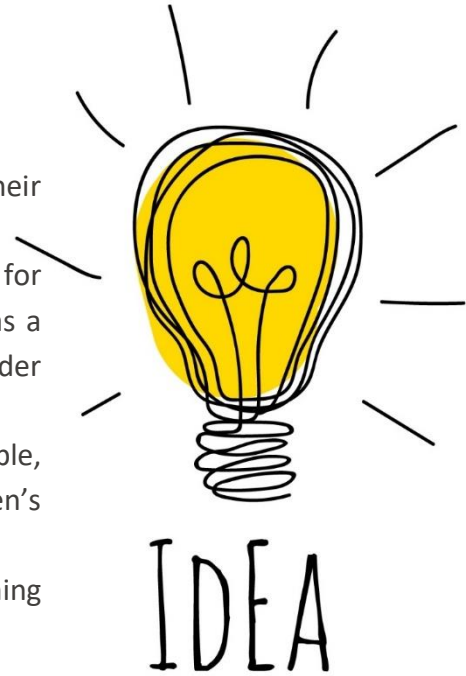
This year, for the first time ever, Dictionary.com chose a word that’s new to their dictionary for this distinction.

allyship (noun): the status or role of a person who advocates and actively works for the inclusion of a marginalized or politicized group in all areas of society, not as a member of that group but in solidarity with its struggle and point of view and under its leadership.

Imagine creating a service that works as an ally for a certain niche. For example, you might help animal shelters to obtain corporate sponsorship or help women’s groups get legislation passed.

Your business could be working for a cause that’s important to you while earning you a solid income.

<https://www.dictionary.com/e/word-of-the-year/>



TikTok Is Now The Third Largest Worldwide Social Network

TikTok has surpassed Snapchat and Twitter in global user numbers, according to the inaugural forecast on TikTok users worldwide by Insider Intelligence (formerly eMarketer). The social networking app surpassed those competitors in 2020 and grew even larger in 2021, cementing itself as the No. 3 worldwide social platform behind Facebook and Instagram.

There will be 755 million monthly TikTok users in 2022. This number grew 59.8% in 2020 and will increase an additional 40.8% in 2021. While that growth will slow, it will remain high at 15.1% in 2022.

<https://www.emarketer.com/newsroom/index.php/tiktok-is-the-third-largest-worldwide-social-network-behind-instagram-and-facebook/>



10 Tactics To Trash Your Trolls



Have you ever seen a professional comedian shut down a heckler? It's a lovely sight to see.

The heckler, who has probably been drinking, has no clue what he's up against. This is a professional who has spent hundreds of hours on stage dealing with live, drunken audiences. You know that heckler is going to be annihilated the moment they are dumb enough to open their mouths.

Comedian Milton Jones, who has worked as a comic for most of his life, has only been floored by a heckle on two occasions. The first was when someone shouted, "These are just words!"

Umm... yeah.

The second was more disturbing. Halfway through his act, someone shouted, "What is this?!" In the long moment of quiet that followed, he couldn't work out what they meant. And the longer he left it, the more it seemed like an entirely reasonable question.

As marketers we have one big advantage when a troll heckles us online – time. We can take a few minutes to consider our response, and we can get it just right before we send that response out into the world for all to read.

What is a troll?

It's both a mythological creature of Scandinavian folklore and a person who posts inflammatory, insincere, digressive, extraneous or off-topic messages in an online community.

The intent of the first type of troll is to scare kids into going to bed. The second kind of troll and the one we're dealing with is intent on provoking readers into displaying emotional responses or manipulating others' perception. (Thanks, Wikipedia for the help on that.)

To put it simply, a troll is an online jerk who will steal your time, aggravate you, confuse your readers and generally make life miserable if you let them.

Trolls harass, hate, bully, threaten and stalk. Seemingly normal people in the real world turn into butthats online. But you can fight back and win, often without even firing a shot.

First, here's how to know you're dealing with a troll:

- They're blind to evidence, ignore facts and double down on their nonsense, regardless of what you say.
- When cornered, they redirect to a new topic.



- They call names and generally they're not too creative about it, either. Every other post uses "Boomer," "Karen," or whatever name is trending at the time.
- They redirect from the topic at hand. If you're talking about how to get traffic, they're talking about online scams or sleeping with redheads.
- If you get angry, they get dismissive like you are the one with the problem, not them. Their goal here is to make you even angrier with their condescending tone.
- They exaggerate. A lot. Instead of saying 'often', they'll say 'always' and 'never'.

How to Annihilate Your Trolls with These 10 Techniques

1: Don't feed the trolls. You've heard this bit of advice time and again because it works. Trolls thrive on emotional response and get bored if no one responds to them. Pretend they do not even exist. They'll spend the next few hours repeatedly checking for your response in vain, and finally they'll heave a sigh of disappointment and move on to another target.

2: Ask for the evidence. When a troll is making crazy, wild accusations, stay calm and ask for the facts, the sources and the evidence of their unsubstantiated claims. Odds are they'll disappear back into the shadows and leave you alone.

3: Be crazy kind. Trolls are looking for a fight, so when you respond with kindness, they will likely either disappear or calm down and begin acting rationally. You cannot fight fire with fire and you cannot calm anger with anger. But sometimes you can kill anger with kindness. And regardless of the troll's response, those who are watching on social media will be impressed with you.

4: Use humor. Because trolls are trying to evoke anger, they don't know what to do if you use humor to diffuse the situation. Just be careful not to appear offensive to those who are watching.

5: Implement a no-trolling policy. If you are in charge of the platform, whether that's a social media profile, a blog, a discussion forum and so forth, post guidelines that include a no-trolling policy. If someone is angry that you deleted their comment, point to the policy and cite the violation as cause for removal.

6: Add moderators. If you're managing a small scale blog or social media profile, then you can handle this alone. But if you have thousands of posts coming in, you need to get help. Create a team of moderators who can verify comments and deal with policy violations.

7: Use moderation tools. If you can't afford moderators, consider using a tool to help you. For example:

- Facebook offers a comment moderation plugin
- YouTube offers comment settings for automatic moderation
- Twitter and Instagram have reporting options for policy violations
- WordPress offers comment moderation plugins.



8: Block, ban and report trolls. If you have a troll that just won't stop, it's time to report them for being abusive. Also make sure you unfollow the person as well as reporting them.

9: If possible, have 'friends only.' This doesn't work if you're a business. But if it's a personal account and you don't want random trolls commenting on your posts, keep your posts private.

10: Breathe first. A troll wants you to react, so don't. Take a step back, breathe, go for a walk and decompress before replying. Even if you think your immediate reply is perfect, DO NOT POST IT until you let some time pass and you've calmed down. Trust me on this or you'll inevitably end up posting something you regret.

10.5: Be professional, stay professional. Stay calm and factual. Determine if this is a troll or an actual customer. Ask yourself how a professional would respond. If it's a customer, apologize regardless of whether or not you did something wrong, and then redirect them to a private channel for further communication.

Remember at all times that your comments are public and others are watching. In most cases, people are far more interested in how you handle the problem than in the problem itself. Dealing with irate customers and trolls can be an opportunity to gain or lose business, depending on how you take care of the situation.



Shower Thought:

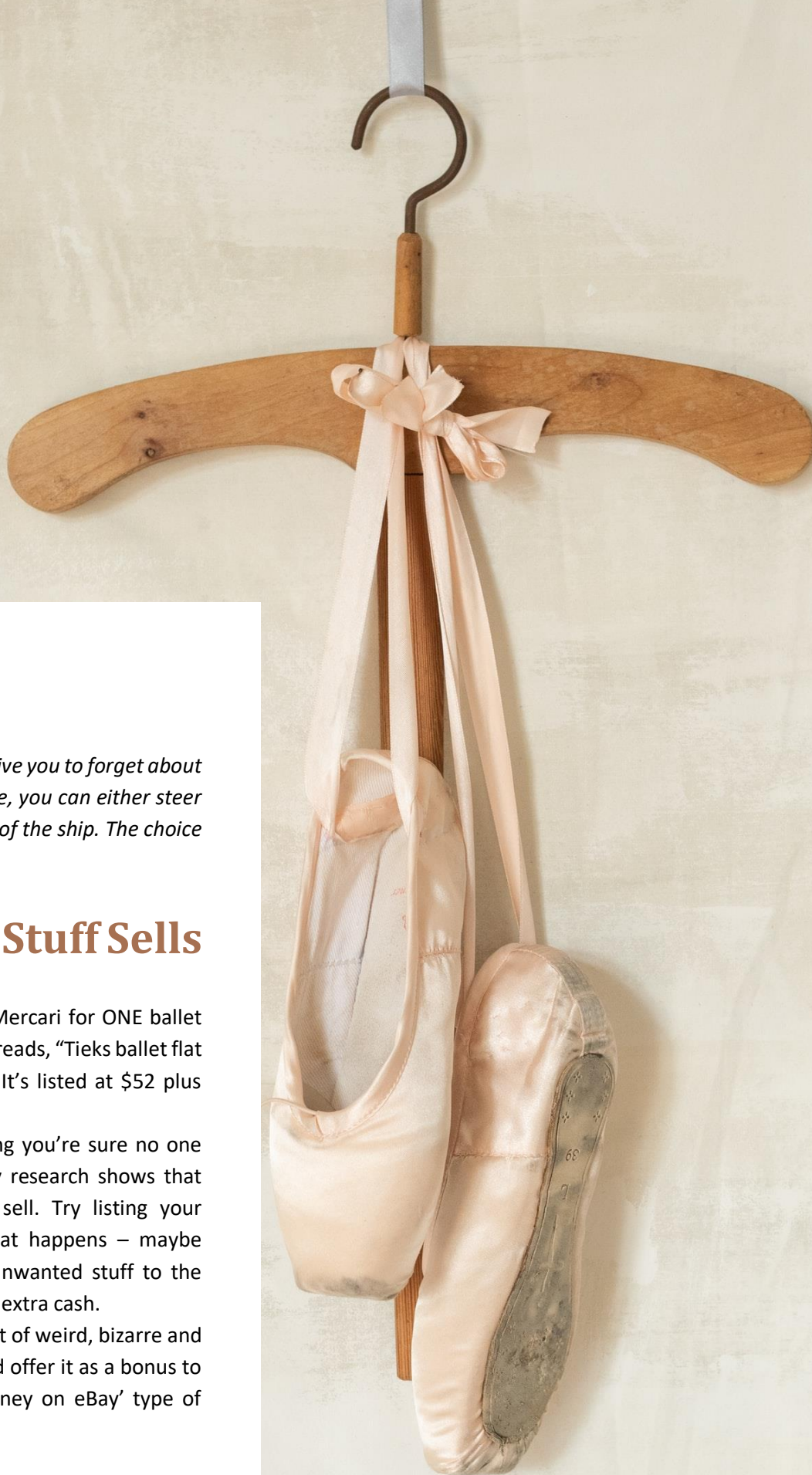
A salary is a drug they give you to forget about chasing your dreams. In life, you can either steer the ship or be a passenger of the ship. The choice is yours.

Even Weird Stuff Sells

I just saw a listing on Mercari for ONE ballet shoe. Yup, one. The listing reads, “Tieks ballet flat shoes for amputee only.” It’s listed at \$52 plus \$11.50 shipping.

Have you got something you’re sure no one would want? A little eBay research shows that single shoes actually do sell. Try listing your oddball stuff and see what happens – maybe instead of sending your unwanted stuff to the landfill, you’ll make a little extra cash.

Better yet, compile a list of weird, bizarre and strange items that sell, and offer it as a bonus to an appropriate ‘Make Money on eBay’ type of affiliate product.



How To Use Your Critics For Immense Gain

You got fired by your dumb-bag boss.

You got flamed by a social media troll.

You got a lousy review from some know-it-all pretender who couldn't find her own butt with her hands, much less do what you do.

Good.

Now you've got a choice to make.

You can either curl up in a ball in your closet and never come out...

...or you can use your anger to propel yourself to new heights of success.

In 1983 a talented young guitarist was kicked out of his band right after they signed their first record deal. They were about to record their first album in New York when they woke up their guitarist and handed him a bus ticket back to L.A. with no explanation.

What the heck??!

It's a long bus ride across the U.S., and by the time his bus hit L.A., he'd gotten over his self-pity and vowed to start a new band. He decided that this new band would be so successful, his old band members would be green with envy. They'd be flipping burgers and playing lousy gigs in clubs while he was onstage in front of thousands.

This guitar player practiced like a man possessed. He searched high and low for the very best musicians for his band – all better musicians than those guys in his previous band. His anger fueled his ambition and revenge became his muse. He wrote dozens of songs, made numerous musical connections and within a couple of years his band signed a record deal of their own. A year after that, their first record went gold.

The guitarist's name was Dave Mustaine, now considered one of the most brilliant and influential musicians in the history of heavy metal music. His band is Megadeath, and they have toured the world many times over and sold over 25 million albums.

Great story, right? That is exactly how you can use your critics to fuel your own success.

There's one more thing you should know about this story: The band that was stupid enough to kick Dave Mustaine out was known as Metallica, and they sold 180 million albums. Metallica is considered by many to be one of the greatest rock bands of all time.

And because of this and despite all of his massive success, Dave Mustaine still considers himself a failure because he was the one who got kicked out of Metallica.

Which I guess just goes to show that success and motivation are all about the thoughts you choose. Dave could have chosen to give up music, but instead he used his anger to motivate himself to become a legend.

Dave has millions of dollars, hundreds of thousands of adoring fans and a career doing what he loves. And yet, Dave still thinks he's a failure because his metric of measuring success is to compare his band with Metallica.

Dave values 'beating' Metallica more than doing what he loves, more than making millions and more than having his own band and millions of fans.

What do you value? And how will you know when you're a success?



Mr. Kelly Cole

interview



Editor:

I'm really pleased today to be chatting to a man known as the publisher. Mr. Kelly Cole is a two times number one best selling author, speaker, and entrepreneur. Born into the most notorious housing project in the world, Cabrini Green in Chicago. He went from working at Walmart and Blockbuster to owning one of the fastest growing book publishing companies in the US.

Now, Kelly's authored over 50 paperback, audio and eBooks to date and has been seen on NBC, Fox, ABC, Yahoo! Finance, just about everywhere. It's a real pleasure to welcome Mr. Kelly Cole.

Mr Kelly Cole:

Thank you so much for having me.

Editor:

Could I start by taking you back to maybe before you started your publishing company? So, you could just tell me about your life before moving into the online space.

Mr Kelly Cole:

Yeah, so I was working at Blockbuster at night, Walmart during the day. And it was very miserable. I hated my job because I knew I was called to more. I just knew I was meant for more. So, I would spend most of my days daydreaming, magazines and writing and reading, and just praying for a day where I can learn something new or just get out of that rat race.

And my breakthrough didn't come until one Sunday, me and my family, we went to Books A Million after church, and I went to the magazine section like I always do, and I came across this magazine called Millionaire Blueprints. And if people are familiar with the digital world, back then, it was called internet marketing, Yanik Silver was on the cover in a drop top Mercedes, and the caption read, Web Made Millionaire.

And I immediately picked it up. I started reading about his story, how he was creating these eBooks and these websites that made him passive money while he was sleeping. And I was like, "This is what I was put on earth to do." And it was like the heavens opened up, and just from reading his story, I was captivated.



Mr Kelly Cole:

Now, I don't know if most people are like me, but when I read a magazine in a store or a book store, I read it and then I put it back. But this day, I bought that magazine. And it was a \$10 magazine and it just became the foundation to me dreaming and knowing exactly what I wanted to do when I left my job. But yeah, that was my introduction and what I was doing before.

Editor:

Wow. The best \$10 you've ever spent, I guess.

Mr Kelly Cole:

Yes. Man, I'm telling you the best \$10. Because not only was Yanik in that one. I think the following month, I went back. So, it became an addiction, going every month to go get this magazine. The next one I was introduced to Matt Bacak and then who don't love Matt Bacak?

Editor:

Oh, absolutely. I mean, it sounds to me like that process that you went through rings true with a lot of people who are either reading this or listening to this. That there's something burning away inside you, which says, "I want to do something. I want to make a difference. Not only to my own life, but to other people's lives as well." We mentioned the book publishing. You've written books yourself. Can you tell me a little bit about the process and the books themselves?

Mr Kelly Cole:

Yeah, so believe it or not, like I said, I got started in internet marketing, which is what it was called then, and just trying to find my niche, trying to find what I wanted to do. And I got introduced to website flipping, and that's the thing that I started making money online, flipping websites. And before I knew it, the market got saturated. So, I had to find something else.

And right around that time, ABC introduced the TV show, Shark Tank. I fell in love with the show, started taking notes from the show. One of my friends asked to borrow my notes, and they said, "Hey, this would make a great book." And I was like, "I never thought about that." And they said, "You should actually interview the Sharks." And I was like, "That's a great idea too."



Mr Kelly Cole:

So, I emailed all of the Sharks on Shark Tank. Barbara Corkin was the only one to email me back. And I take that back. Mark Cuban emailed me back, but just said that he didn't have time to do an interview. But Barbara was the only one to give me an interview. We hit it off so well, I asked her to help me get an interview with Damon John. She did.

I took my notes from the show, transcribed both of those interviews, and I turned that into my first book called Conversations With Sharks. That hit number one on Amazon, and that was the beginning of my book writing process and the beginning of my publishing company.

Editor:

Fantastic. I mean, that shows real tenacity, as well, to be able to get in front of a Shark, right from the very start. And as you say, you didn't get the break with all of them, only one of them, but you were able to turn that into something so much greater. Who was your favourite Shark to interview?

Mr Kelly Cole:

Barbara was my favourite Shark to interview because she was just so cool and so down to earth. And like I said, we just hit it off and I felt so comfortable to ask her to get me an interview with Damon. And Damon was special to me because we had similar backgrounds, him growing up in Brooklyn. No, he grew up in Queens. But when he introduced his clothing line FUBU, that's all I wore. So, I was a huge Damon John fan even before Shark Tank. And so, he was my favourite Shark on TV, but after speaking to them both, Barbara is my favourite Shark. Don't tell Damon, though.

Editor:

Yeah, Barbara's close to your heart. I can tell. One thing that I guess everybody thinks about when they think about writing a book, is that it's really difficult. Did you ever think the same before you got into this?

Mr Kelly Cole:

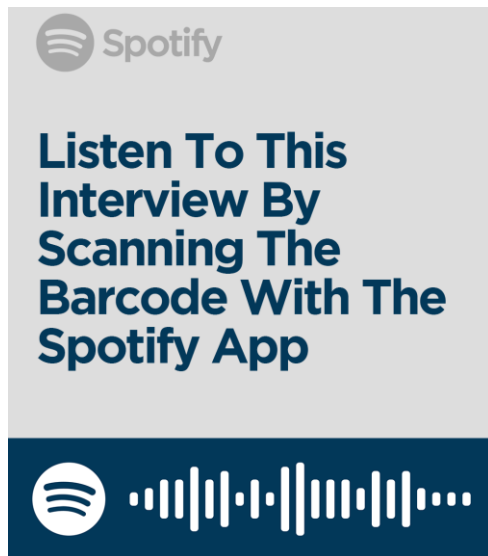
I really didn't. I kind of just did it, and in mind, me just doing it, I was able to help a lot of other people overcome that barrier of thinking that it's something hard to do. And it's really not. I've created a simple formula on how people can write a book in literally a weekend. You want me to share it?

Editor:

Yeah, that'd be great.

Mr Kelly Cole:

Okay, cool. I call this the grocery store method. If you're a smart grocery store shopper, you create a list before you actually go to the store, correct? So you don't overspend and you know what you're going to the store to buy. So, it starts with a list. Just make a list of the things that you want to cover in your book. That's all you need to do first. So, we'll call that Friday. Friday, you make your list...



Note from the editor:

This is a bridged version of the full interview which is available to listen to separately.



Most business blogs are terrible. They're used for things like announcements and fluffy content that does nothing to capture leads and make sales.

And if all you want is a place to jot down your thoughts, then skip this article.

But if you want a blog that gets you more leads and more sales with every single piece of content you write, then read on.

Forget about blogging as you know it and instead think of your blog as a learning center. This learning center will be a hub for all of your website's most important content. Visitors will be able to find answers to their problems and find information on what they want to know.

You're going to create content that resonates with your target audience and influences them to make a buying decision. Your goal should be to educate your prospects into becoming customers, and your customers into making repeat sales.

And you're going to do this without advertisements for your offerings.

The problem with ads is they are biased and present only one solution to a customer's problem. This makes prospects skeptical and loses you the sale.

But when you fill your blog with the honest help your prospects are looking for, then you move from being a sales person to becoming a trusted authority. And that gets you readers, subscribers and sales.

Your website should be your best salesperson, working for you 24/7 to make sales.

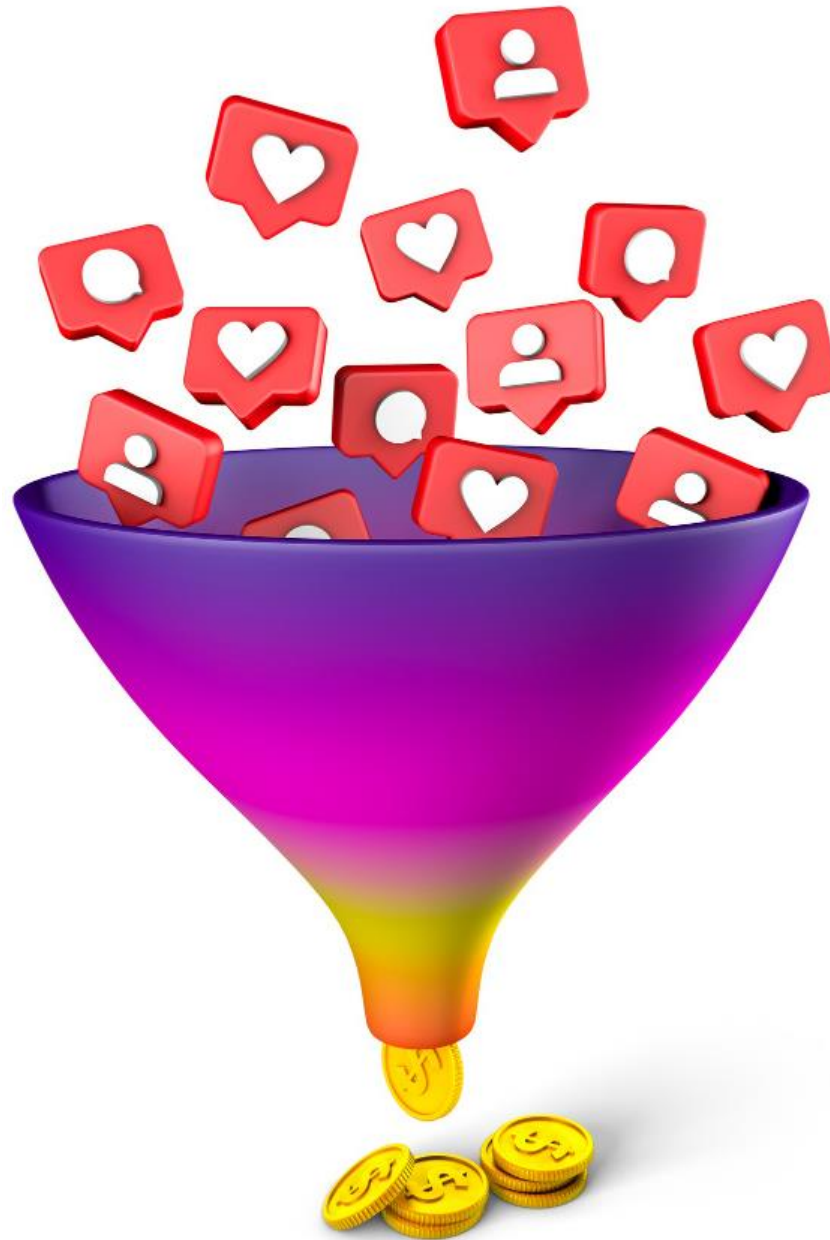
I remember years ago when I needed to buy kitchen appliances. I went to a local store and got lucky enough to be waited on by a man who had been in the appliance business all of his life. He didn't own the store, he just sold appliances, and he knew everything there was to know about every model there on the floor as well as models sold in other stores.

He told me point blank which models to avoid and what sort of problems they had. He steered me away from an overpriced model with good reviews because the nearest service person for that model was two hours away, and if it broke, getting it fixed would be a nightmare.

He told me what was available at the other stores and how much they were on sale for that day.

He knew the factories where each were built, their overall reputations and which brands and models needed the most service calls over their lifetimes.

How To Transform Your Blog Into A Sales Machine



Keep in mind, this was in the mid 90's before the reliable online reviews were prevalent.

It was the only time in my whole life that I truly trusted the sales person. He wasn't trying to sell me anything; he was trying to educate me on what would be best for my needs.

I wound up buying three appliances from him and one that he highly recommended from his competitor. And I was so pleased, over the next few years I sent him enough business to sell another 2 dozen appliances.

Now imagine your website could be like that sales person.

Your content is educational and easy to access, just like asking that sales person questions. A visitor comes to your site via organic search and lands on an article giving general information about your niche.

Let's use roof repair and replacement as an example. They search for, "Do I need to replace my roof?" and land on your article, "How to know if you need a new roof." Inside the article you have links to any terms they might not understand, so they can get immediate clarity. You talk about the reasons a roof might need to be repaired, with a link to another article covering each reason in depth. You also offer information on how to know if replacement is a better option, the different types of roofs available, a cost calculator and so forth.

Everything they need to know about roof repair and replacement is right there. And woven throughout your content you give anecdotes of roofs you've repaired and replaced.

Here's what's happening on the visitor's end:

They're finding the information they're looking for, and they find it easily on their own and at their own pace.

This content isn't selling them, it's instructing them, which goes a long way to creating trust in your company.

Every piece of content offers multiple paths forward, including more specific content and a call to action so they can reach out to you when they are ready.

Imagine someone spends thirty minutes or an hour on your website. When they're ready to call an expert, whether it's right then or in a month, who are they going to call? You.

The key to making this work is to find out what customers are asking, and then answering those questions for them while organizing the content in a way that feels natural and intuitive. You are educating your user through the buyer's journey.

Homeowners seldom begin with, "I need a new roof." Instead, they start out on the journey wondering IF they need a new roof, if they can get the current roof repaired, how do they know if there is a problem, who can they trust, how much will it cost, what type of roof should they get... It's complicated.



And while the majority of websites are telling them “We are the best roofers in town so call now!” you are giving them what they desperately want and need before the buying decision ever happens – information.

You are building massive trust when you give your prospects a learning center.

You are also positioning yourself as the authority in the business.

Even if they eventually buy from someone else - just as I purchased that one appliance from a competing store - they will still recommend their friends start on YOUR site to learn everything they can before making their purchase.

You simply have nothing to lose and everything to gain by converting your website’s newsy blog into a learning center. Or if you like, keep the blog on the side and add the learning center as your main site.

Here are a few tips for your learning center:

- Your number one goal is to build trust through helpful, unbiased, honest content. If people don’t trust you then they won’t buy from you. If they do trust you and you have the product they need, they won’t buy from anyone else but you.
- Your trust-building content must be honest, unbiased and transparent. Think of yourself as a teacher and a reviewer, not a sales person.
- Speak in your customer’s language. If your industry uses jargon that customers might not understand, then either don’t use it or be sure to clearly explain it.
- Your learning center can be frequently updated as needed. Explain new solutions, answer new questions, cover new trends and so forth.
- Done right, your learning center will greatly reduce bounce rates and increase user’s time on your website. And because your articles are answering the questions people ask Google, it should also help to bring in organic traffic, too.
- Offer lead magnets that make sense for the content being consumed. The roofing website might offer a lead magnet on the different types and costs of roofs, for example. Or you might even tailor a lead magnet for each page of your learning center.
- Continue to educate your list as well as using anecdotes from your current clients as case studies.
- Use Google Analytics to understand how traffic is getting to and moving through your learning center and use this information to improve your site.

An educated customer is a better customer. They have fewer questions and a much better idea of what.

Even if your business is one where you close the sales in person or over the phone, you’ll discover that much of your work is already done if your prospect has spent time in your learning center.



World's Most Dangerous.... *Plant??*

There is a shrub that can grow 115 feet tall and touching this plant just once can cause you enough pain to make you consider taking your own life.

That's the stuff of late night scary "B" movies, right?

Actually, it's the Gympie Gympie, also known as the Stinging Bush, the Queensland Stinger or the "suicide plant." It's also known as the Giant Australian Stinging Tree. Yup, you knew something this crazy dangerous had to be from Australia, right?

Brush this plant with your bare skin and it delivers a painful sting via tiny hairs covering the leaves and stem which inject venom into the skin.

This pain can last for 9 MONTHS and even morphine can be ineffective against its venom.

It's said the sensation is like being burned by hot acid and electrocuted at the same time. Serviceman Cyril Bromley fell into one of the plants during WWII training exercises and ended up strapped to a hospital bed, "as mad as a hatter." Another officer unknowingly used a leaf as toilet paper (OMG!) and ended up shooting himself.

But the story gets even weirder, because for some unknown crazy reason, someone in the UK thought it was a dandy idea to IMPORT this plant from hell and stick it in the ground at Lullingstone Castle and The World Garden in England.

One person commented doing something this crazy is akin to importing velociraptors, and I agree.

Here are my questions: What would possess someone to think this is a good idea? Presumably several people had to sign off on the idea... How do you convince normally sane people to do this? And then how do you bring it from Australia to the UK? No doubt someone was hired for this express purpose. How much did they have to pay this person? What airline agreed to fly this cargo? How could The World Garden's insurance company possibly sign off on this liability?

So many questions...

Right now you've got a question of your own... This is interesting, but how does ANY of this pertain to online marketing?



You've read this far... now imagine you send the above story to your list. Do you think they will open an email that says, "World's most dangerous plant?" Or, "The suicide plant is here?"

You copy and paste this story and you've already done a great job of entertaining your readers. The odds of them opening your next email, regardless of topic, are now much greater because they enjoyed reading this one.

And at the bottom, you can tie this story to anything you're promoting, either at the end of the story or in the P.S. And you don't even need to be clever about it, either.

If you're placing your call to action after the story and before your name, there should be a segue, like this: 'Speaking of painful experiences, you have less than 48 hours to take advantage of our once a year sale and then it's all over. Don't miss out and get burned.'

See? It's not even clever, but it works.

And if your call to action is in the P.S., then you don't even need to connect it to the story.

P.S. Have you taken our survey yet? Today is your last chance to let us know what you want next.

While I wouldn't recommend using stories that are totally unrelated to your niche on a daily basis, it is a great way to shake things up, get more opens and keep your readers entertained.

Each time you see a story online that you can't get out of your head, odds are other people would like to read about it, too. You might even make it a regular feature of your newsletters, such as calling it "WTF Thursdays" or "You Ain't Gonna Believe This Mondays."

And if you can find a way to tie the story to your call to action, it's even better. But don't strain to do it. Sometimes it's enough just to be interesting and then remind them in the P.S. to take some action.

Incidentally, if you think stories like this are hard to find, one quick search just gave me these subject lines:

"Candy cane shortage rocks world"

"North Korea bans laughing for 11 days"

"58 foot long pedestrian bridge vanishes"



Bonus!

Here is my secret formula for story emails. Follow this outline and your emails will get read, I promise.

- Subject Line (Make it enticing!)
 - Greeting Line (Be friendly)
 - Story (Dive right in at the good part!)
 - Segue (“Speaking of disasters, 2022 will be a disaster for any business that doesn’t do this...”)
 - Point, tip or sales pitch (You know what to write here)
 - Call to action (What do you want them to do?)
 - Callback to the story (Optional. “Remember, you don’t want to be like the jerk in our story.” Okay, maybe not that harsh
-
- Signoff (“I know you can do this!” – your name)
 - P.S. (“I almost forgot, the sale ends today.”)

Are you worried that people will think you’re not professional if you use stories unrelated to your product?

I wouldn’t be. People love stories and they’re not going to be upset when you send them something INTERESTING in their email.

But if it’s really important to you, then simply create a persona. Let this persona “hijack” your email account once a week and then let them go crazy.

People want to be entertained and distracted, so go for it! Be the one who tells stories and watch your open rate climb sky high.





Newsjacking Your Way to Followers and Sales

“Newsjacking” is the act of leveraging breaking news to get traffic to your content.

Let’s say there’s a blackout at a Superbowl, and Oreo immediately tweets out an image of an Oreo cookie in the dark with the words, “You can still dunk in the dark”. Yeah, you remember when that happened, right? It’s an example of newsjacking, and that one tweet (which cost nothing) was worth more in sales and publicity than buying a Superbowl commercial.

Or maybe the news story is that a software mogul just sold his business for \$10 billion dollars. You can hijack that news to bring traffic to your site that teaches people how to make money with software.

By employing a newsjacking strategy, your own blog and social media channels can become a trusted source for information and commentary. With more and more people getting their news from social media, why shouldn’t it be your social media and your blog that gives them that news?

Tips for Your Newsjacking Strategy:

- Do use software, RSS feeds and alerts to stay on top of breaking news.
- Do not wait until news is old. The newer and fresher, the better.
- Make a list of subjects that are relevant to your business and stick with those.
- Be able to draw a clear connection between the news piece and your brand.
- Never propagate inaccuracies. When in doubt, don’t report.
- Understand that newsjacking is only a supplement to the other forms of content marketing you’re doing. Think of it more as a dessert than the main content marketing dish.

Timing Is Important

The longer you wait to contribute to the discussion, the harder it is to be heard. By reacting quickly to breaking news, you will be among the first to respond and you’ll likely gain more of an audience.

What do we mean by quickly?

There are two appropriate times to respond to breaking news, with two entirely different types of responses.



The first response should happen within minutes or a few hours of the news breaking. This is when you can add your own insight and perspective to what's happening. For example, a child fell down a well an hour ago and you're offering insight on what parents should do in the first minutes and hours of a crisis of this nature.

The second response time can actually happen after the news has passed. This is a deep analysis of what happened, how it could have been different, what it means, how this changes things and so forth. In our child in the well example, this is when you would offer an in depth article on how frightened parents can keep their children safe from all sorts of unforeseen hazards.

Newsjacking example #1: The Peloton Ad

The exercise bike Peloton put out a video titled "The Gift That Gives Back" showing a husband giving his wife the exercise bike for Christmas. She then films herself using it throughout the year and gives him a video showing how much she likes it.

The news wasn't the ad; it was the reaction to the ad. Social media lit up like a firestorm with people criticizing the ad because it enforced dated gender norms and goes against body positivity because a husband buying a wife an exercise bike insinuates she's out of shape.

Famous actor Ryan Reynolds who owns Aviation American Gin immediately hired the actress from the Peloton commercial to star in another commercial titled, "The Gin That Doesn't Give Back."

While the Peloton name was never mentioned, the video does show the shell-shocked wife sitting at a bar with two friends drinking the gin, commenting on how smooth it is while her friends tell her she looks great, by the way.

The new video was completely created and shipped in just 36 hours and introduced by Ryan Reynolds on Twitter with the caption, "Exercise bike not included." Aviation Gin's commercial went viral, generating 7.2 million YouTube views and 55.6 thousand retweets on Twitter. It was also mentioned by a number of publications including AdWeek and MarketingLand.

Notice the speed with which the video was created and launched. If Reynolds had waited even one week, it would have been too long. News cycles happen fast, and the giant scandal of today is forgotten tomorrow.

Newsjacking example #2: Oreo Pre-planned Ad

We already mentioned the Oreo dunking in the dark tweet that went viral at the Superbowl. But in some cases, you can actually PLAN your newsjacking.

For example, the world knew that Kate Middleton was pregnant. In anticipation of the birth, Oreo made a meme of a royal-looking pillow with a baby bottle and an Oreo cookie on it. The caption? "Long Live The Crème".

A bit corny perhaps, but it worked.



Bad Newsjacking Example: TeamWork Online

Do you remember when Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 vanished? In response, Teamwork Online tweeted:

Have you disappeared? Get noticed by Sports Employers Malaysian Airlines

370 has vanished. Do you feel like employers can't find you? Let's get your "black box" engaged. Let's start the "pings". "Here are some tips on how to get noticed in a very crowded job market." Says Buffy Filippeli, TeamWork Online founder.

And right next to this copy is her happy, smiling face.

No. Just... no.

Newsjacking the wrong story, or doing it in a way that offends people, can derail your brand in a matter of hours on social media.

How can you avoid a newsjacking catastrophe?

Ask yourself a few questions prior to newsjacking:

- Can the point you're making be misconstrued?
- Could this possibly offend anyone?
- Can this negatively impact someone's first impression of our business?
- Is the connection easy to see, or are we trying too hard to force it?
- Are we taking advantage of someone else's misfortune?

Newsjacking in 2022

Social media and online news stories are being published every second of the day. This gives you infinite opportunities to capitalize on the news to build your following and your brand, as well as infinite ways to totally screw it up.

Before you attempt to newsjack, take time to consider what you're doing. Is it tasteful or informative? Or can it be viewed as being offensive?

It's generally best to stay clear of sensitive topics altogether and play it safe. It's much better to be ignored in your early newsjacking attempts than it is to be lambasted across the social media universe. Start small, start simple, and run every newsjacking piece by at least 3 other people before you hit publish.

Master the skill of newsjacking and inevitably you will create one or more posts each year that goes viral, gaining you thousands or even millions of views you never would have received if you hadn't mastered your newsjacking skills.



How To Write Killer Bullet Points

Before we get started, I better clear one thing up...

WHAT THE HECK IS A BULLET POINT, ANYWAY?

“...uhhh... it’s one of those thingies in writing with the large dot.”

True.

And it’s one of several elements or lines in a bulleted list.

It’s also an excellent way to convey information because people will often read the bullet points before they read the rest of the copy.

Now here are a few reasons I found on the internet NOT to use bullet points (and I am NOT making this up, I swear).

‘They’ say you shouldn’t use bullet points because...

1. People will read the bullets first
2. Bullet points are boring
3. Bullet points are too long
4. Bullet points tell readers what’s coming
5. People might read the bullets and not the rest of the

page

And point by point, here’s why those supposed negatives are actually GOOD things:

1. Anything that gets someone reading your sales copy is a GOOD thing
2. Bullets points are only boring if you MAKE them boring (duh)
3. Bullets can be as long or short as you choose
4. Good bullet points pull your reader into devouring the rest of your copy
5. Some people only need the bullet points to make a buying decision, and that’s awesome!

Why should you add lots and LOTS of bullet points to your sales copy? Because bullet points...

- Grab attention
- Break up monotone paragraphs
- Create white space
- Communicate key information quickly
- Entice and intrigue

Another interesting fact is that if you’re going to have a list anyway, people look at lists with bullets more often (70%) than lists without bullets (55%). That’s why you want bulleted points rather than plain old lists.



How do you write GREAT bullet points?

- Combine both features and benefits in your bullet points to boost persuasiveness.
- Lead with the benefit, follow with the feature
- Be consistent and concise with each bullet following the same pattern.
- Add a curiosity element to the feature and benefit.
- Keep them brief and easy to process
- Start each bullet point with a verb
- Sell the feeling
- Punctuating bullet points is optional
- Eliminate the weakest bullet point(s) because each bullet must pull its own weight

What are some examples of great bullet points?

- Five ways to get prospects eager to buy before they even see your pitch.
- Why some patients are given favored status in hospitals ... almost preferred treatment. This little-known information could save your life.
- How to learn about medical discoveries before your doctor.
- How to get customers to call you instead of you chasing them using the Black Widow technique.
- How to use a simple 36 word postcard to bring in \$37 for every dime you spend.
- How to get hundreds of glowing and true testimonials from your customers for free... and what to do with them to generate even bigger profits.
- How to create a huge demand for your product or service using a 10,000 year old secret that still works every single time.
- Sell the same product or service at up to 400% higher prices and have your customers thank you for it.
- How we got over US\$40,000 worth of products complimentary this year alone ... and how you can do it too.
- The exact words you should use to write a money-back guarantee that increases sales and reduces refunds.

Was it insane for me to write almost this entire article in bullet points?

- Yes, because who in their right mind does that? (Maybe someone who wants to bring home the point that bullets work? Nah...;-)
- Maybe, because you're no fool and you knew this entire time I'm using all these bullets to demonstrate that (GASP!) bullet points WORK
- No, because if you've read this far then you've read nearly the entire article and that's my point... bullet points get people reading (and buying!)

Bullet points are your secret warriors against skimmers and attention deficit. They feed your reader bite-sized information, create curiosity and you're your offer easy to understand.

One last thing... if I had a choice between a salesletter with NO bullet points and a sales letter made up of nothing but headlines and bullet points, I would take the latter every time. Guaranteed, it would out-convert the none bullet point letter by 2 to 1 or better.



What Color Makes People Buy More?

When creating your logo or the look of your website, color plays a key role in the snap judgments people make about your business. According to Emerald Insight, between 62 and 90 percent of that first impression is based on color alone. This means your color choice of logo or website could make or break a customer's decision to buy.

Yes, color is THAT important.

What color(s) should you choose for your business?

Well, that depends.

If you want to attract attention and create excitement, nothing works better than red. You may have noticed that many companies use red in their logos, including Target, Coca Cola, Time Magazine, Pinterest, Lego, Kellogg's, Kmart, Red Robin Gourmet Burgers, CNN, Netflix, Disney, Levi's, Coors, McDonalds and so forth.

Red creates a sense of urgency and can even make you breathe a little faster. Think of the red tags used in clearance sales, the red of a stop sign or red valentines. All of these have been shown to increase respiration and heart rate.

According to neuroscientists, red is the most visible color. Of all the colors around the world, red is the one color that is most noticed in any setting. Think of a city street crowded with people. Who do you notice? The woman in the red dress, of course. Or think of a rural scene with lush green fields and trees. What pops out at you? The red flowers, the red barn or the red stop sign.

A red logo implies that your brand is powerful and high-energy. And it stimulates action and impulsive behavior, including buying.

Keep in mind that red has both positive and negative connotations. Red can signal anger and aggressiveness as easily as it can signal love on Valentines Day and low prices on closeout price tags.

Have you noticed that many fast food restaurants use red? That's because red stimulates appetite and hunger. Without even realizing what's happening, the color red is making you want to eat.

Fast food restaurants pair red with yellow to add a feeling of happiness. It's known to marketing professionals as the "Ketchup and Mustard Theory" of marketing fast food, and it certainly seems to work.

Yellow is used by many company logos as well. Think of Cheerios, CAT, Best Buy, Denny's, Hertz, Nikon, Sun Chips and Post-it Notes. Yellow conveys happiness, optimism and caution. Think of a yellow smiley face and what do you feel? Probably cheerful and warm.

Green is used by brands that want to convey they are environmentally friendly, natural and healthy. Green creates a feeling of relaxation and nature, making it popular with companies like Whole Foods, John Deere, Starbucks, Animal Planet, Tropicana and Morning Star Farms.

Want to lose weight? Use blue plates. The reason you almost never see blue on food labels is because it's known to curb appetite. Blue is the color of trust. In several studies sales people were dressed either in blue or brown. Those in blue invariably outsold those wearing brown. And because blue is also the color of productivity, painting your office blue might not be a bad idea.

Companies who use blue logos include American Express, Dell Computers, General Electric, Lowes, Twitter, Ford and Oral-B. Think of the sky and ocean, of serenity, stability and peacefulness. Blue is the most popular favorite color of both men and women, making it universally well-liked.

Blue conveys that your brand is professional, secure and trustworthy.

Because it's closely associated with being feminine, pink is used to target women. Pink is thought of as being "sweet" and "fun", and it's used by brands like Victoria's Secret, Barbie, Baskin Robbins and Dunkin' Donuts.

If you want to convey a more serious, elegant and luxurious message, use colors such as black and purple or a deep burgundy with gold. These color combinations are associated with exclusivity and work well when you're targeting wealthier customers.

Purple in particular is the classic color of nobility and conveys luxuriousness, wisdom, wealth and success. It also represents magic, mystery and fantasy as well as imagination. If you want to attract people who want to be wealthy or wise, or perhaps ones who enjoy magic or mystery, then purple is your color.

Companies who use purple in their logos include Hallmark, Monster.com, Curves, FedEx, Cadbury, Wonka and Syfy.

What about orange? Amazon, Crush, Fanta, Gulf Oil, Harley-Davidson Motorcycles, Firefox, Nickelodeon and Payless Shoes all use orange because it's associated with playfulness and enthusiasm. Orange stimulates brain activity and is seen as being friendly.

If you want your brand to be seen as light-hearted and not overly serious but still confident, orange might be your color. Pair it with blue to tone down aggressiveness and instill trust.

Last but far from least is just plain black. ABC, BBC, The New York Times, BlackBerry, Prada, Tiffany and Company, Chanel, and Gucci all use black logos to convey seriousness, sophistication and exclusivity.

Even though black looks plain, it is often used for luxury products because it evokes a sense of elegance and glamor. Well-established companies such as The New York Times gravitate towards it as well to convey their strong, no-nonsense reputation.

What color(s) are best for your logo, your products and your website? Start by considering your perfect customer as well as the message you want to convey to that person. Do you want to appear serious? Playful? Exclusive? And what do you want that person to feel the moment they see your logo or land on your site? Spend a little time on this and you'll realize that something as simple as color is really rather complicated. You might even have the impulse to include ALL colors on your logo and website, and depending on your product, that might work for you.

But in most cases, you'll want to pick just one or two colors and weave them throughout everything you create: Your logo and brand, your headers, product covers, social media accounts and so forth.

Spend some time on this. Narrow it down to 3 choices and make mock-ups. Survey your customers. Choose wisely and you'll never have to do this again, because your colors will be associated with your brand for as long as it's around.

Just think of Coca-cola. They've used the same color for well over a hundred years and their look is as strong as ever because they made the right choice in the first place.

THE BIG SECTION



The Art Of Making “IT” Happen In 2022

The “IT” is whatever you want bring into reality. For our purposes, we’re going to talk about how to “Make Your New Business” happen, but you can use this knowledge to create almost anything from scratch.

Without permission.

Without bosses.

Without someone telling you no, no, NO you CANNOT do that.

Without the roadblocks you’ve come up against before.

And without that monkey voice in your head telling you that you’re not good enough, that people will judge you, that you need to just keep your head down and be a good little worker for someone else.

We’re going to flip that nonsense on its head once and for all.

We’re going to blow through obstacles and get you on the path to exceeding your wildest expectations in 2022, inflation and viruses be damned.

Ready?

First, the reality check: You’re going to experience some failures along the way. Failure is part of the process of taking an idea and turning it into a six, seven or eight figure business. You find out what doesn’t work when you fail, which gives you important clues on what does work.

You’re going to need guts to turn your idea into a business. People will tell you a bunch of rubbish about how you can’t do it. Your brain is going to try to stop you from moving forward, too. But I’ll show you how to blast through both of these roadblocks in a moment.

Reality check over, I want to give you something.

Permission.

You hereby have permission from me, from God and from the Universe to build your business.

YOU HAVE PERMISSION TO GET STARTED RIGHT NOW.

Since we were kids we’ve been taught we need permission to do things.

First from our parents.

Then from our teachers and professors.

And finally from our bosses.

Forget that. You hereby have permission to do anything and everything to start and run your business.

Absorb that for a moment. I’ve seen people cry when they were told they had permission because that was the moment they realized they’d been waiting for someone – anyone – to give them that permission to move forward and live their own lives.

Some people wait their entire lives for permission to just be themselves. But the only permission you need is your own.

STEPS TO MAKING IT HAPPEN

Step 1: Get started

Step 2: Finish

Step 3: Ship

Let’s say you want to create a course and sell it online.

1: First you’ve got to get started building the course. Not just talking about doing it, but actually creating the outline, filling it in and building that course one lesson after another.

2: Then you’ve got to finish the course. Starting to create the course is useless unless you finish it. No, it won’t be perfect. Perfection is that thing people use to put off finishing, because they know that once it’s finished, it’s time to release it to the world. So screw perfection. Make it less than perfect and just get that beautiful course DONE.

3: Finally, it's time to 'ship,' and in this case it means having a way to send that course out into the world. Maybe you put up a website with a sales letter and drive traffic to it, or you use one of the course portals online like Udemy. There comes a point when you have to let your 'baby' go into the world, and this can be the toughest step of all because there's only one way to find out for sure if people want your product, and that's to start selling it.

Let me whisper something into your ear...

***Your ideas are important,
And bringing them to life means everything.***

You can either bring your ideas into reality or die with them still inside of you. And frankly, I can't think of anything sadder than a life full of regrets of all things you could have done, if only you'd made them happen.

When you decide to make it happen, you set in motion the progressive realization of your goal – something you thought you'd never be able to do.

When you combine your desire with your effort, anything is possible.

Anything.

Bring your idea to life.

For you.

For me.

For everyone. Even for those people who say you cannot or should not do it.

How to Handle the Naysayers

There are two types of people in the world:

The first type is the status quo person. These folks live by 'the rules.' They will tell you 'how it is.' Anyone who doesn't follow those rules is 'foolish' or worse.

They will tell you to get a job, put your head down and stop dreaming. They'll say, "If that was a good idea, someone would have done it already."

Status quo people perpetuate the current system and do not want things to change. Everything must remain 'normal' to them. When things change (like a pandemic) they want to 'get back to normal.'

But remember, there is no universal 'normal.' Normal is simply a perception people have based on what they are used to. It's an illusion and you, the creator, know that you can shape your own reality and even change the way others perceive what is normal.

Look at Bill Gates. Was Windows 'normal' before he invented it? Heck no. And your business can change the world, too.

The other type of person is the rebel. The entrepreneur. The artist. The person who reads the rules and decides they were written for someone else.

This person goes another direction from the status quo. They take risks. They see possibilities and potentialities. They are bold in their ideas and actions. For good or bad they disrupt. They sometimes break things. They create change through their creativity.

The rebel challenges the status quo. They're prone to questioning and challenging authority. And status quo people hate this. They don't want questions; they want people to fall in line.

We need the status quo people to keep day to day things operating. But we need rebels to advance us to new levels. Both are essential, but for obvious reasons they don't get along all that well.

What can you do when your status quo spouse tells you to stop dreaming and stop building your business?

Thank them.

Thank them for all that they do to keep your household and family running smoothly. For getting the kids to school, for working their job or taking care of the house.

They are the rock on which you can build your business. You know they are scared. They're frightened. Your dreams and your business scares them. Be understanding. Show them that you

could continue to earn that \$50,000 a year salary, or you could build a business that brings your family 500,000 a year. And you choose the latter because that's who you are.

You might not change their minds. You might not get their full support. But if you understand they come from a place of fear, and that their way of thinking is actually providing a solid foundation from which you can launch your business, and that you love them all the same, then you don't need to think of them as the enemy. They're not. They simply think differently than you do, and that's okay.

Love them as they are, and odds are they will reciprocate. You can disagree and yet still love each other.

The same goes for your friends. When they push back against your dreams or business goals, treat them with kindness. If they continue to give you grief, make an appointment to get together with them in a year. By then your business will be off the ground and maybe even bringing in a good income.

Most people said that man could not fly. Then the Wright Brothers flew, and people had to admit that yes, people could fly.

It's the same with your business. They might tell you that you can't do it, but once you've done it, they won't be able to deny that yes, you have a profitable business, and btw, could you give them some advice on how to start theirs?

Reality check: Making IT Happen will take time, effort, focus and energy. And you might also need thick skin.

Use your passion to get yourself through the setbacks and failures. Learn to take the blows and just keep going. At each setback, ask yourself, "What's good about this?" Guaranteed there is always something good about it.

Your first course didn't sell? Find out why and you'll be much closer to making your next course a success. Your best friend is being a total jerk about your new business? Use their negative words as a catalyst to make yourself work even harder to prove them wrong with your success.

Wait, If It's Hard Work, Why Bother Building a Business?

Because of leverage.

Set aside for the moment that you have a dream of building your own business or writing a book or whatever it is that you want to do, and think about this...

An employee gets a fixed wage in exchange for not having to deal with problems, setbacks, naysayers, overhead and so forth. They give up 40 hours a week plus travel time for a wage and peace of mind.

The entrepreneur, on the other hand, gets not just the setbacks, headaches, challenges and so forth. If that entrepreneur is successful, they also get the lion's share of the profits.

Let's say you're creating that course we talked about earlier.

If you price it at \$100 and you sell 100 copies, that's \$10,000. If you sell 1000 copies, it's \$100,000. And if you sell 10,000 copies, that's \$1million dollars.

Regardless of how many you sell, the work is still the same. And if you hit it big, the upside can be enormous.

But there is something BIG standing between you and success...

The Enemy Within

Whether you're 20 years old or 80, you've unintentionally accumulated a lifetime of bad habits.

And the worst of these habits might be the habit of safety.

Your primitive brain, known as your brain stem, controls all of your important bodily functions like breathing and heart rate. It wants to keep you alive. And it believes that anything new is bad. That's why it does everything in its power to keep you sedated with activities that are safe, like watching television, playing solitaire, watching sports and so forth.

Your brain stem tells you that these safe activities make you feel secure, and that trying new things is life-threatening, even if it's not.

The primitive brain knows nothing of lofty dreams and goals. To it, survival is everything, and the familiar means survival while anything new is perceived as being a threat.

You might schedule out time to work on your course or build your business, but your brain stem will steer you towards other activities that it deems to be safer like cleaning the kitchen or taking a nap.

Your job, if you want to 'Make IT Happen,' is to reprogram your brain. The good news is it's easier than you think. All you need is a healthy dose of persistence and consistency to do it.

Reprogramming Your Brain for Success

Every time you repeat a habit, whether it's a good habit or a bad one, it strengthens the neural trench network.

Imagine a pristine field of knee-high grass. If you walk across that field just once, it barely shows. Take the same route several times and there is now a path. Walk that path hundreds of times and you have a trail. Walk the trail thousands of times and you have a dirt road.

The more times you repeat an action, the faster your brain will guide you back to taking that same action and the easier it is for you to take it.

But if you stop walking that path, the field will eventually heal itself. And if you stop doing bad habits, you will reprogram your brain to stop guiding you towards those bad habits.

How do you reprogram your brain?

1: Discipline. Studies show you have far more discipline in the morning than at any other time of day. That's why, if at all possible, you should start a new habit first thing when you wake up, when discipline is the highest. For example, if you're creating a course, work on it each morning for 30 minutes before you do anything else.

2: Focus. Instead of attacking your work haphazardly, focus on just one thing at a time. For example, one video in your course, one chapter in your book, one page of your website and so forth. Don't try to break every bad habit at once, or create every new, good habit at the same time. Focus your efforts and build on that.

3: Be Bold. Don't strive for a little goal when a big one will make you more passionate. Do what they say cannot be done. What goal will get you out of bed at 6am with the enthusiasm of a child on Christmas morning?

4: Manipulate Your Environment. Clutter is not conducive to getting work done, nor are distractions. Create a space that is used only for your work.

5: Take Consistent, DAILY Action. Without exception, take action every single day for the next 6 weeks. Better still, take daily action for the next 52 weeks until the habits of starting, completing and shipping are so ingrained, it's nearly impossible for you NOT to do these things.

6: Habit Stack. When the brain learns a new song, it will not simply link together the notes already in your memory. Instead, it will develop a region that encodes the entire song. In the same way, you can stack one new good habit on top of an existing good habit to develop an entirely new brain region dedicated to this habit stack.

For example, if you already get up early in the morning, stack a new habit on top of this such as writing for 30 minutes as soon as you wake up. 3 weeks later, stack the habit of taking a 5 minute break and then writing for another 30 minutes. Or add the habit of going for a run. Each time you add a new habit to the stack, the entire stack is rewritten in your brain, making the entire stack of habits automatic and requiring virtually no discipline to accomplish each day.

Distractions Are The Enemy.

Any distractions are the enemy to Making It Happen. No, I'm not saying you shouldn't have a life. But when it's time each day to work on your business, that is all that you should be doing. You don't pick up the phone to have deep philosophical talks with your bestie. You don't clean the house. You don't go for a walk or do anything other than work on your business.

Repeat to yourself: Distractions are the enemy.

In the beginning your primitive brain will send all sorts of distractions to stop you from working. You'll suddenly remember that you need to put something on your shopping list, make a phone call, answer an email and so forth.

Do. It. Later.

When these distractions appear, write them down on a pad of paper and then go back to work. Do not attempt to do them, no matter how quick they might seem.

If you need to research something online, make a note of it and do it when your work is done. You already know about the rabbit hole called the internet. A 30 second search can easily turn into a 3 hour foray that accomplishes nothing and leaves you wondering where the time went.

Feed Your Brain

When you're not working, read challenging books and articles every day. Feed your brain with new ideas and ways of looking at problems. Have conversations with people who are in some way intellectually superior to you.

Avoid or limit the time you spend on television and movies. Your brain is literally better off sleeping than passively watching television. If you must watch your favorite show, keep a notepad handy and challenge yourself to come up with 10 new ideas based on things you see and hear in the show. That's 10 new ideas for every 30 minutes of air time, so a two hour movie should net you 40 new ideas.

Start now.

Just... start. I've been flapping my fingers here for some time and it's possible you've missed or forgotten the fact that none of this will matter if you don't get started.

Maybe you don't know where to start. Just start.

Or maybe you don't know every step of the journey. Who does? Plans change as you move closer to your target, and sometimes targets change completely. That's okay, as long as you just start.

No one has it all figured out before they begin. If they think they do, they're deluding themselves. Not every obstacle or opportunity will be foreseen.

But taking action NOW is something you must do, because actions repeated consistently over time create habits, and habits create momentum, and momentum can take you all the way to your goals and beyond.

The Hidden Killer of Projects

Even if you do everything we've covered so far, you still might not succeed if you're not ready to deal with the Killer of Projects.

This killer is sneaky, sometimes killing your dream without you ever knowing what happened. Or worse yet, you'll think you're lazy because you never shipped your products.

Yes, you had a great idea and you built a product or service around that idea. But then... nothing.

Everyone who has ever made something important happen has had to overcome the **fear of what others will think**.

Fear of exposure causes people to procrastinate and never finish. Here's what it looks like on a personal level:

- You question whether or not your work is good enough.
- You worry about how others will react.
- You fear people will make fun of you and your work.
- You wonder if you're a fraud.
- You think of scrapping the project entirely.
- You procrastinate because your project isn't perfect yet.
- There's always something delaying you from shipping your product.

Sound familiar?

If this is you, then STOP.

There is no angry mob with pitchforks waiting outside your window, nor will there ever be.

Nor is there an angry throng of critics salivating at the thought of tearing your work to pieces.

You worry that your tribe won't like your work, but what you don't realize is there is no tribe. That group of people you imagine are going to hang on your every comma in your work don't actually exist. They're not a tribe at all, but a group of individuals with their own problems and their own challenges. They are just as fearful as you. Each person is so caught up in their own life, that they don't have time or inclination to worry about yours.

Your product is there to help them in some way, to give them a benefit, and it's only for those who want and need it, so everyone else doesn't matter. Customers by definition will love you and your work – that's why they're your customers. And no, they won't see the imperfections that kept you awake at night, either.

There is no group of people watching over your shoulder, so relax. Did you get 20 positive reviews and 1 negative review? I don't have to ask which one you're thinking about. Stop stressing. Some dope is crying into the void that they don't like your product? So what? Who cares?

Any publicity is good publicity. The best movies and books ever produced have negative reviews. The most beloved people in the world have critics.

Who cares?

The vast, VAST majority of people who see, purchase and use your work will like it or love it.

A tiny minority won't like it. It's clearly not for them, and yet they bought it. Their mistake. Why didn't they read the sales letter properly? No product ever invented in the history of the world is for everyone.

Some dope voices a negative opinion. Encourage your customers who love your work to voice their opinion, too, and they will drown out the trolls.

The point is, you've got to dig deep down inside of yourself and decide, **DECIDE** right now that **YOU DON'T GIVE A FLYING FLIP WHAT OTHERS THINK.**

Anyone can be a critic – ANYONE.

But it takes guts to be a creator and to Make it Happen.

Don't let the possibility of some tiny little squawky troll who just wants attention ruin your dreams.

Your project will always be stupid for the handful of negative ninnies out there.

But the rest of us will think it's great, so just stop worrying and **GO DO IT.**

Desire, Commitment, Passion and Focus

To succeed you need desire, commitment, passion and focus.

That's it.

You don't need anyone's permission or love.

You don't need a cheering section.

You don't need to be ordained by the almighty status quo people.

You simply need desire, commitment, passion and focus. An attitude of, "I don't give a damn" towards what others might think doesn't hurt, either.

This is the Part Where I Remind You About Cortez

How many times have you heard the story of the explorer Cortez?

500 years ago, Cortez and his army of 600 soldiers crossed the Pacific Ocean and landed on the shores of Central America. Their job was to conquer an empire of over 5 million people.

If you were Cortez, how would you motivate your army under odds such as these?

Cortez ordered the ships burned. His army could now only do or die because there was no turning back.

If you've got a dream that's keeping you awake at night, then maybe it's time to hit the shore, burn the damn boat and make that dream a reality.

This kind of commitment isn't for everyone. But it is how the true creators and entrepreneurs of the world succeed.

The Cheeky Mouse

I recently had a little field mouse “move” into my house with me. I christened him (or her) Jerry after the mouse from Tom & Jerry. Jerry is a cheeky little rascal, and either he moved in with a whole family or kept coming back after I caught him and threw him out- not wanting to hurt him- I dug out my dogeared copy of the SAS Survival Handbook and looked up how to make a trap with a box, a stick and some food. And low and behold I caught Jerry twice!!! Or maybe it was Jerry and Jerry 2, I don’t know.

But after two iterations with this trap, the mouse learned what it was and wouldn’t go near it again! But it reminded me of another story of the adventurous nature of field mice.

A little mouse once said to his friends, “Why don’t we cross that river and explore the meadow on the other side?” His friends didn’t like the idea. “Other mice that tried to cross the river were swept away by the strong current and were never seen again,” they said.

But this mouse knew it could be done, because he’d seen a beaver crossing the river many times. So, he approached the beaver. “Will you teach me how to swim, so I can cross the river and explore the meadow on other side?”



The beaver agreed to teach the mouse how to swim. Day after day they swam, starting in shallow pools of still water and eventually graduating to deeper, swifter water. Finally, after weeks of training, the beaver said, "Today is the day for you to swim the river."

The mouse swam the river with the beaver beside him. The mouse's hard work paid off, and he reached the other side.

For the rest of the day, the mouse ran, explored and played in the meadow. As the sun came down, he swam back across the river and told his friends about his adventures. "We thought you had drowned," said the other mice. Then they cheered and had a party celebrating his success. Later, all the mice in the colony came up to a very high cliff.

"Why don't we climb that cliff and explore the other side of the mountain?" The mouse said. "We can't climb," said another mouse. "Others that tried have fallen to their death." "It's haunted up there," said another. "You'll turn into a stick if you climb to the other side."

But this mouse had seen mountain goats climbing it many times, so he approached one and asked what was on the other side. "Beautiful country," the goat said. "I go there all the time."

"Will you teach me how to climb, so I can climb the cliff and explore the other side?" The mouse asked.

The goat agreed, and day after day they climbed, starting in smaller steps and eventually graduating to steeper rocks.

Finally after weeks of training, the goat said, "You're ready to climb the cliff."

The mouse climbed the cliff with the goat beside him. The mouse's hard work paid off and they reached the top.

And yet again for the rest of the day the mouse ran, explored and played on the other side of the mountain. As the sun set, he climbed back down the cliff and told his friends about his adventures.

"We thought you turned into a stick," said the other mice. They cheered and had a party celebrating his success.

The cheeky mouse discovered that taking risks could be dangerous. He also learned that listening to experts for advice could turn those risks into great rewards. And that's a lesson that we too should learn as entrepreneurs, be brave but also be wise, seek out experts that can give you good advice and the benefit of their experience, take those lessons and leap out into the unknown away from the safety blanket of following the crowd do what the crowd isn't prepared to. Be that adventurous brave mouse, take the risk, do the work and reap the rewards.

See you next month!

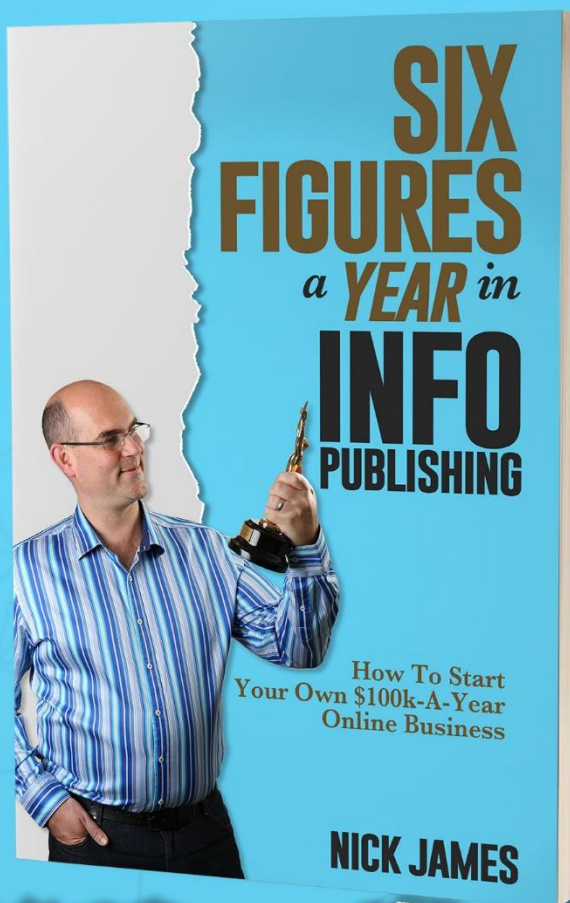


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