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Business & Technology Brief

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Insider Tips To Make
Your Business Run
Faster, Easier And More
Profitably

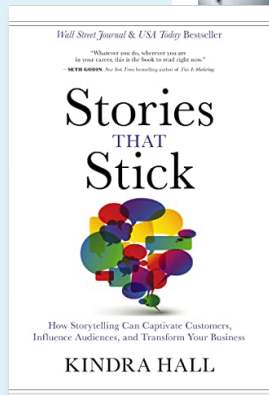
Stories That Stick:

*How Storytelling Can Captivate Customers,
Influence Audiences And Transform Your Business*

"People want a purpose. If you don't give them one, they'll make up their own. Tell your stories first, otherwise, someone might tell them for you, and you might not like their version."

– Kindra Hall

Whether at the dinner table, around the fireplace or while watching our favorite Netflix series, we all love a good story. In her book, *Stories That Stick*, Kindra Hall breaks down four types of storytelling and how businesses can use them to communicate better and drive more engagement. Although the book is written primarily for business owners and entrepreneurs, it's easily applicable to HR and marketing leaders who want to get started on a path to more effective messaging.



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This monthly publication provided courtesy of Tim Nyberg, President of The MacGuys+

Brand Promise:

The MacGuys+ provides proactive support, maintenance, and alerts from certified Mac experts that combines friendly, accessible advice with honesty and integrity, so Mac owners can stay online and productive, keep their personal information secure, and realize the limitless potential of their Mac devices.

You've probably noticed the little elf helping you around retail stores this year. No, it's not the teenager at the mall in red-and-white stockings and a felt green hat. It's AI.

Log in to Amazon, and you'll see suggested products like winter decorations, novels or toy recommendations for kids. Add that remote-controlled car into your cart for your nephew, and you'll get recommendations for batteries and gift wrapping, too. This is no accident – generative AI uses your past purchases and recent searches to curate this personalized display. At the end of your shopping affair, you can share your experience, which is data fodder for AI to learn and improve your next shopping venture.

One in six shoppers use generative AI to inspire shopping decisions, according to a 2023 Salesforce survey. However, data by

SAP Emarsys report that barely more than half of consumers feel it positively impacts their online shopping experience. What is generative AI, and what does it mean for our holiday shopping – and our privacy?

What Is Generative AI?

Generative AI takes data (provided by humans) to create something new, like music, text, images or even personal shopping recommendations. Beyond simply following commands, generative AI can study existing data on the Internet to "think up" entirely new content.

How AI Is Used To Shop

Imagine hiring a personal shopper who also happens to have your entire Internet shopping history – searches, views, shopping carts,

Continued on Page 2 ...

... continued from Cover

purchases and online interactions (including third-party data) – PLUS every product review and insight available online, handy in seconds. Thanks to this nearly endless supply of data, generative AI seeks to “help” consumers shop in multiple ways, including:

Creating A (Creepily) Personalized Shopping Experience: Generative AI can curate personalized shopping lists or recommend products based on an individual’s preferences by analyzing past behaviors and predicting future interests.

Providing Chatbots And Customer Support: Generative AI-driven chatbots can assist customers with queries, recommend products or help troubleshoot problems, often in a more sophisticated and human-like manner than traditional chatbots.

Improving Fraud Detection: AI can recognize and learn scammer behaviors using its predictive and deep learning capabilities. This helps payment platforms pinpoint problem purchases without impacting legitimate ones.

Cons And Privacy Concerns

AI is only as good as its data. It’s not perfect, and there are some ethical and privacy concerns to be aware of, like:

Data Collection: For generative AI to offer a personalized experience, it requires data – lots of it. This could include shopping habits,

product views, search queries, etc. The question is: How much data on consumers is too much, and where is it stored?

Potential For Misuse: With the ability to generate realistic content, there is potential for misrepresentation or misuse, such as creating fake product reviews.

Implications For Business Owners: Opportunities And Responsibilities

There are several benefits for business owners who opt for AI to improve their customer’s experience. Personalized recommendations lead to longer site visits and potentially higher conversion rates. Automation via AI can streamline operations, particularly in customer support and product visualization.

However, you also have a responsibility to your customer’s privacy. Businesses must ensure they’re transparent about the data they collect and how they use it. This includes providing clear opt-in and opt-out options for consumers. Additionally, with the increased collection of consumer data, businesses have a heightened responsibility to protect that data from breaches and unauthorized access.

Be A Smart AI Shopper

It’s crucial that you understand the terms of service and privacy policies of online platforms. Know what data you’re sharing and with whom. Periodically check and manage the data permissions you’ve granted to different



e-commerce platforms, and always secure your accounts with multifactor authentication.

Enjoy the benefits of AI recommendations, but diversify your sources of information and your shopping platforms. For example, you’ll want to verify AI-powered recommendations on other product review websites like Wirecutter or Consumer Reports.

AI Chatbot Or No, Demand Excellent Customer Service

Even though a growing number of people are happy to interact with and benefit from generative AI, most people still expect excellent customer service from a human, according to Salesforce. As online platforms harness data to tailor experiences and predict behaviors, consumers should remember they have the power to drive the standards. By voicing expectations and preferences, shoppers ensure businesses prioritize genuine human interaction and responsiveness alongside their digital innovations. After all, even in a world dominated by algorithms, genuine customer service remains at the heart of a truly exceptional shopping experience!

500i Referral Program

If your referral becomes a client, you or your favorite charity will receive a minimum of \$500 cash and a chance to win an iPad Pro!

A great referral for us would be a business that leverages Apple Technology with a fully or partially remote work team located in the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metro area or Western Wisconsin.

themacguys.com/referral-program/



Cartoon Of The Month



“Alexa picked it out.”

... continued from Page 4

super mini-me for only \$60. Put a new face on G.I. Joe (or Jane), “Power Rangers,” “Ghostbusters,” Marvel or “Star Wars” characters, and your friend or family member can become a character in their favorite story!

Mebak 3 Massage Gun: A Quiet And Effective Massage

You know those pesky knots and sore spots we get after working out (or, you know, trying the latest viral TikTok dance or sleeping in the wrong position)? This gadget is a champ at sorting them out, especially on the shoulders and legs. It's like a mini-spa in your hand. The best part? It's practically whisper-quiet! No more feeling like you're in a construction zone while trying to relax. It's also handy and great for tossing in a bag when heading out for a round of golf or traveling. It's a fantastic little addition for anyone looking to expand their self-care toolkit.

Skip The Detox:

How To Be Well In The Digital Age

Whenever we feel irritable, sad or anxious after scrolling on social media, we often prescribe ourselves a weeklong digital detox. However, new research suggests detoxing isn't as effective as we thought.

In 2020, collaborative research from Oxford University found “no evidence to suggest abstaining from social media has a positive effect on an individual's well-being.” Dr. Hannah Rose from Ness Labs says that to be well in the digital age, we need to be mindful of our technology use so it's both healthy and realistic. She suggests we become active participants in social media (not passive scrollers), make small changes to reduce screen time, choose healthy sources of information, increase awareness through journaling and make deeper connections with people on social media.

When we're well, our work is well, and our businesses are well, too.

JESSE ITZLER'S APPROACH TO FIGHT OFF COMPLACENCY AND MAKE 2024 THE BEST YEAR YET



Itzler is a serial entrepreneur with 30 years of experience. He's built and sold five companies, including Marquis Jet, Zico Coconut Water and 29029 Everesting. He's a NYT bestselling author, ultra-marathon runner, father of four, husband, son, brother and friend.

After a handful of pull-ups, Jesse Itzler dropped down from the bar and, panting, said, “Okay, I'm done.” In a spark of insanity or genius (you decide), Itzler had invited a Navy SEAL to live with him for 30 days. Step one was a fitness assessment – or so Itzler thought. After a few pull-ups, he was maxed out. He asked the SEAL, “What's next?”

“What's next?” the SEAL barked. “What's next is we're not leaving until you do 100 more.” Itzler threw his hands up, saying, “That's impossible!” “I already know what your biggest problem is,” the SEAL said. “The limitations you put on yourself are self-imposed.”

Two hours later, Itzler did what he thought was impossible – 100 pull-ups. He asked himself, “If I'm underindexing by 100 pull-ups, what other areas in my life am I underindexing?”

It wasn't a physical endurance test the SEAL was running. It was a *mental* fitness test. After his 30-day experience with the SEAL, Itzler wrote a NYT bestselling book about his personal and professional transformation. Today, he travels nationwide helping others get the most out of their lives and careers.

Itzler asks us: What areas of our lives are we underperforming in because we BELIEVE we can't get any better? Our business?

Relationships? Health? When was the last time you did something you loved, regardless of how busy you were at work or home? If you're not getting the most out of your life right now, you're not alone. Itzler shares four ways we can kick complacency out of our lives for good.

4 Ways To Get The Most Out Of Our Work And Lives

When Your Mind Tells You To Stop, Keep Going This philosophy has many names: grit, persistence, perseverance or resilience. Itzler

calls it the 40% rule. When your brain says, “I'm done,” it means you're only at 40%. Our brains are biologically wired to stop when we experience discomfort, but we're more capable than we think.

Keep The Momentum

When you hit an important goal like closing a high-paying client, dropping 30 pounds or hitting a salary milestone, Itzler says that's precisely when you press on the gas pedal. Don't stop. Make a new goal: one more client, one more pound. When you create small wins, your momentum never stops.

Pressure Is A Privilege

As business leaders, we play for pressure. Pressure makes great things happen. If you don't have enough pressure on your shoulders, Itzler says, you need to put some on by doing what people expect PLUS the things they don't. Go the extra mile.

Self-Doubt Is The #1 Enemy Of Success

We put limits on ourselves because we doubt our abilities. The time is never “right,” or we don't have enough experience. Itzler's approach is Ready. Fire. Aim. It'll never be the right time to start the business, ask the girl, run the race, etc. But do it anyway because, as Itzler reminds us:

“

“We didn't come this far to only come this far.”

Inside This Issue

AI Wants To Help Us Shop – Are We Okay With That? | 1

500i Referral Program | 2

Jesse Itzler's Approach To Fight Off Complacency And Make 2024 The Best Year Yet | 3

Holiday Gift Guide

Finding the perfect last-minute gift without compromising quality can be challenging. Here are five of our favorite tech-inspired gifts that are bound to leave an impression!

Aura Digital Photo Frame

Revamp an office or home with memories using this sleek digital frame. Users share photos from their phones directly to the frame over WiFi, no matter where they are. It's super simple to set up (gift givers can even set it up remotely so it's ready to go when it's opened), and the app includes free, unlimited photo storage. It's like a personal digital art gallery!

eQuinox 2 Telescope For Urban Astronomers

This telescope is perfect for hobby astronomers, bringing users closer than ever to the night sky, even in brightly lit cityscapes. It may not be cheap, but the ability to make deep-sky observations with no astronomy experience is priceless. Users can also collaborate on research with professional scientists via a Unistellar Citizen Astronomer program. It's a stellar gift if you ask us!



Electric Skates By AtmosGear

Whether commuting or just out for a leisurely ride, users effortlessly roll up to 15 mph (20 mph with the Pro Pack) on these sleek electrified in-line skates. Riders control the speed with pocket-sized remote: speed up, slow down, brake – it's all at your fingertips. The coolest part? They recharge while you're skating. It's like the future on wheels!

Hasbro Selfie Series Customizable Action Figures

Make someone's childhood dream of being an action hero come true with the Hasbro Selfie Series that allows you to create a 6-inch

Continued on Page 3 ...