The Answers Are Already In This Room

KEDA FALL FORUM
MATCHSTICK LAB MICRO BUSINESS ACCELERATOR



ALANNA IMBACH

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Matchstick Lab

KITSAP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

WELLS FARGO

WORK SMARTER

From Chaos to Efficiency

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WHITNEY TATUM

MOXIE ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

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THE REALITY OF RUNNING A BUSINESS

Sound familiar?

You are the fire department

**Something breaks, you fix it.
Every day.**

Everything routes through you

No decision gets made without you in the room.

Same question, fifth time

**You have answered this before.
You will answer it again.**

Too busy to fix being busy

**You know what needs to change.
There is no time to change it.**

Vacation is theoretical

You could go. You would just be working from somewhere nicer.

The list grows faster than you

**You cross off three.
Five more arrive.**

If you just recognized yourself three or more times, you are the normal one in this room!

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BUSY DOES NOT ALWAYS MEAN PRODUCTIVE

What if the problem isn’t your time?

WHAT WE USUALLY REACH FOR

- A better calendar
- More productivity apps
- A longer workday
- One more hire
- More software

All of this asks: how do I fit more in?

THE REAL QUESTION

What if it's not about managing your time better?

What if it's about running your business differently?

Better time management won't fix inefficient processes.

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OPERATIONAL FRICTION

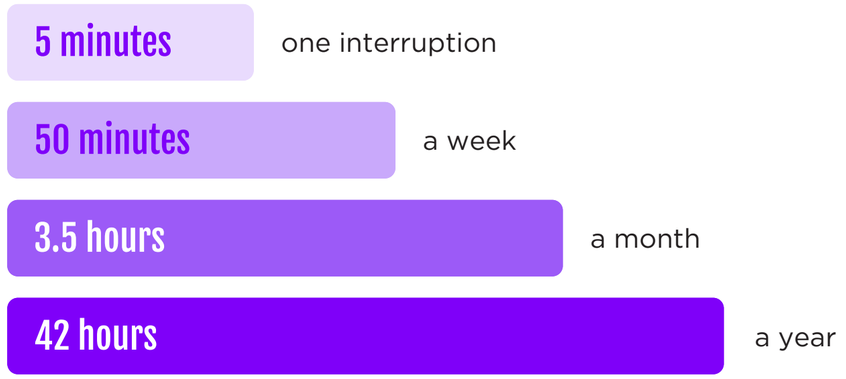
What’s creating the friction?

Operational friction is anything in your business that eats time, energy, money, or attention — and doesn’t have to.

WHERE IT HIDES

- Answering the same question, again
- Retyping data from one system into another
- Nobody is sure whose job it is
- Rebuilding a document that already existed
- Waiting on someone to approve it
- Fixing a mistake that was preventable
- Every decision bounces back to you

SMALL THINGS DON’T STAY SMALL



One five-minute interruption, ten times a week.
That’s a full working week a year — from one leak.

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SYMPTOMS VS. ROOT CAUSES

Don’t just fix the symptom.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	WHAT’S OFTEN UNDERNEATH
“My team keeps asking me the same questions.”	Nothing is written down. The process lives in your head.
“I’m constantly correcting mistakes.”	No consistent process, and no clear owner for the step.
“Admin is burying me.”	Too many manual steps — and work that was never yours to do.

Fix the symptom and it comes back next week. Fix the CAUSE and it stops coming back.

THE WORK SMARTER FRAMEWORK

You don’t have to do it yourself!

1
STOP

Does this need to happen at all?

2
SIMPLIFY

Can we cut steps out of it?

3
SYSTEMATIZE

Can we make it repeatable?

4
DELEGATE

Does this have to be me?

5
AUTOMATE

Can software do the repetitive part?

**These are five options to run a problem through, not five steps you have to complete.
Most friction only needs one or two.**

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WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

One problem. Five possible solutions.

The goal isn't to get better at doing everything yourself. It's to build a business where you don't have to.

THE PROBLEM

"Things keep falling through the cracks."

One owner. Marketing, invoicing, delivery, admin, the website, the follow-up — all of it, all in your head.

1
STOP

Drop the tasks and activities that aren't adding value.

2
SIMPLIFY

One place for every to-do, email and note — not five.

3
SYSTEMATIZE

Checklists, templates and recurring workflows instead of memory.

4
DELEGATE

A bookkeeper or VA — even a few hours a month.

5
AUTOMATE

Reminders, recurring tasks, invoice follow-ups.

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Efficiency isn't about ~~doing everything better.~~

It's about making everything work better.

Owning a business should support your life, not consume it.

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TABLE LAB

Now, let’s find your friction.

01
Name it

One thing eating your time, energy or attention.

4 min

02
Dig into it

What’s actually causing it? Symptom or cause?

5 min

03
Work the room

Share it. Borrow from people who’ve solved it.

8 min

Worksheet on your table. Everyone writes before anyone talks.

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TABLE LAB · ROUND 1

What's taking too much time, energy or attention?

Write on your own first. No talking yet — pick ONE specific example, not a category.

IF YOU OWN OR WORK IN A BUSINESS

One thing in our business that takes too much time, energy or attention is...

IF YOU SUPPORT BUSINESSES OR ORGANIZATIONS

One recurring friction point I see among the businesses I work with is...

Specific beats big. "Invoicing takes me a whole Friday" is specific. "Marketing" is not.

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TABLE LAB · ROUND 2

What's really causing the friction?

01

What's actually causing this?

Go past the obvious answer. Ask "why" twice more.

02

Symptom, or something bigger?

Is this one annoying task — or a pattern showing up everywhere?

03

What could you do differently?

Run it through the five below. Circle the ones worth trying.

RUN IT THROUGH THESE FIVE

1

STOP

Does this need to happen at all?

2

SIMPLIFY

Can we cut steps out of it?

3

SYSTEMATIZE

Can we make it repeatable?

4

DELEGATE

Does this have to be me?

5

AUTOMATE

Can software do the repetitive part?

TABLE LAB · ROUND 3

You don’t have to figure it out alone.

“Who at this table has solved something like this?”

Go around the table

Ninety seconds each. Your friction, your best guess at the cause, what you might try.

Everyone gets a turn

Shortest-tenure business goes first. Nobody speaks twice until everyone speaks once.

Then open it up

Who has fixed this? What worked, what didn’t, who do we know who could help?

Before you leave the table: write down ONE thing you’ll actually try this month.

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MOXIE
Entrepreneurial Support Services

Thank You!

Connect with me on LinkedIn!

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GET CHOSEN

Building Business Value Through Brand Storytelling

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GABE JACOBS
PRESCIENT COMMUNICATIONS

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Get Chosen

Building Business Value Through Brand Storytelling



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MY BACKGROUND

Helping organizations build stronger connections with their audiences

Sample of Past Work

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Microsoft
USAID From the American People
Humana
IBM
SONY
American Cancer Society
The Rockefeller Foundation
Robinhood
Match Group
CASE IH Agriculture
Calm
Varo Bank
udemy
AMGEN
Washington State University
UW Medicine
Conservation International
Michael & Susan Dell Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
1% For the Planet

THE CHALLENGE

It's more difficult than ever to get chosen by customers.

Entrepreneur

Customer loyalty is becoming more fragile.

Forbes

Are The Days Of Organic Social Media Reach Over?

AP

Producer prices shot up 6%, adding pressure on companies to hike prices

BUSINESS INSIDER

Americans aren't spending like they used to, and it's forcing a reckoning for companies

FORTUNE

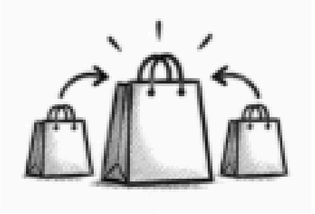
Businesses are declaring war on AI slop. They are fighting a losing battle

yahoo!finance

Advertisers Increasing Budgets to Attract New Audiences, But 81% Fail to Reach Them

THE OPPORTUNITY

Building stronger connections with customers increases your business value.



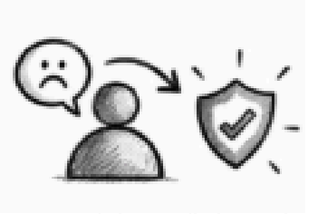
70%

Of consumers will choose a brand they feel emotionally connected to over a competitor.



Two-thirds

Of consumers will continue buying from trusted brands even if prices increase.



9 in 10

Loyal customers will continue supporting a brand after a negative experience.

Ipsos | "Empathy: The New Currency of Brand Connection" (2025)
Auros | "New User Testing Global Study Finds Brand Loyalty Stronger Than Ever—Even as Prices Rise" (2025)
Medallia | "The State of Brand Loyalty" (2024)

So, what is a brand?

Your brand is what you stand for in the minds of your audience.

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What brand of water is *this*?



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Lush
jungles
after rainfall.
Hundreds of moments.
100% recycled plastic.*
FIJI
*Bottle only.
330ml and 500ml sizes.


ENHANCE your MOMENTS
S.PELLEGRINO
Tastefully Italian


AQUAFINA
PURE WATER PERFECT TASTE
AQUAFINA


smart
because it's
made
that way.

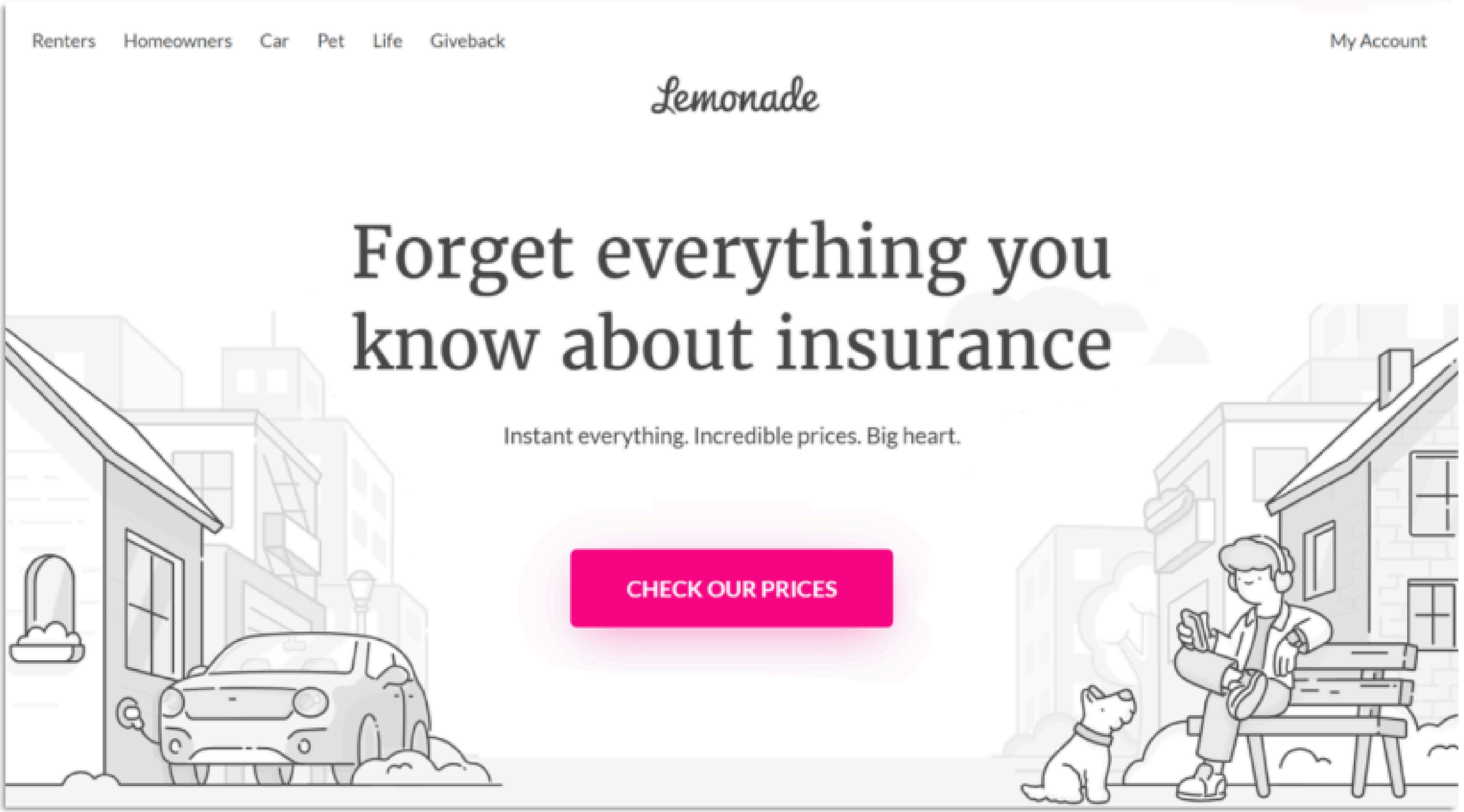

evian
evian
FROM THE FRENCH ALPS
As Pure As Nature Intended.

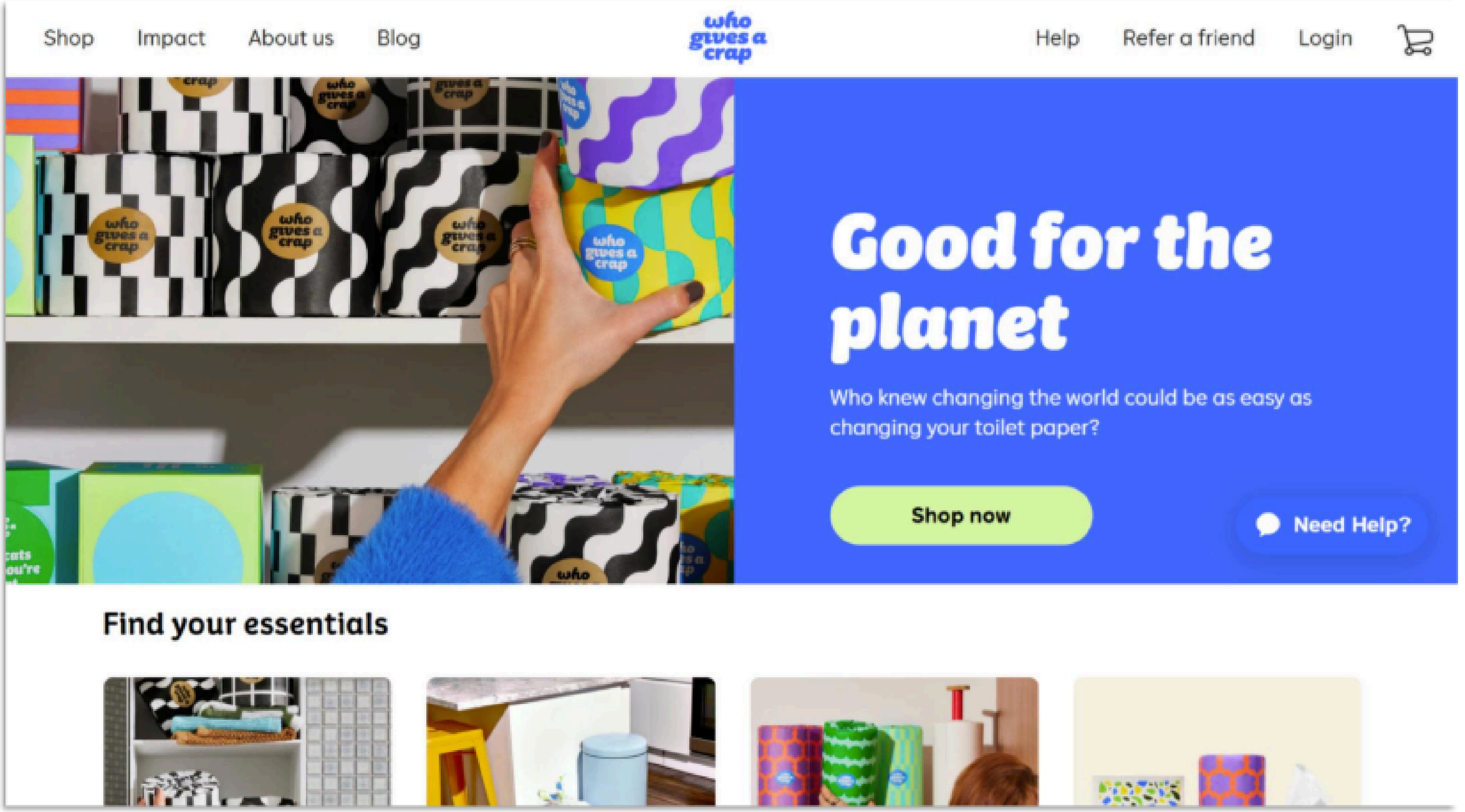

Extravagance of Delicious!!
La Croix

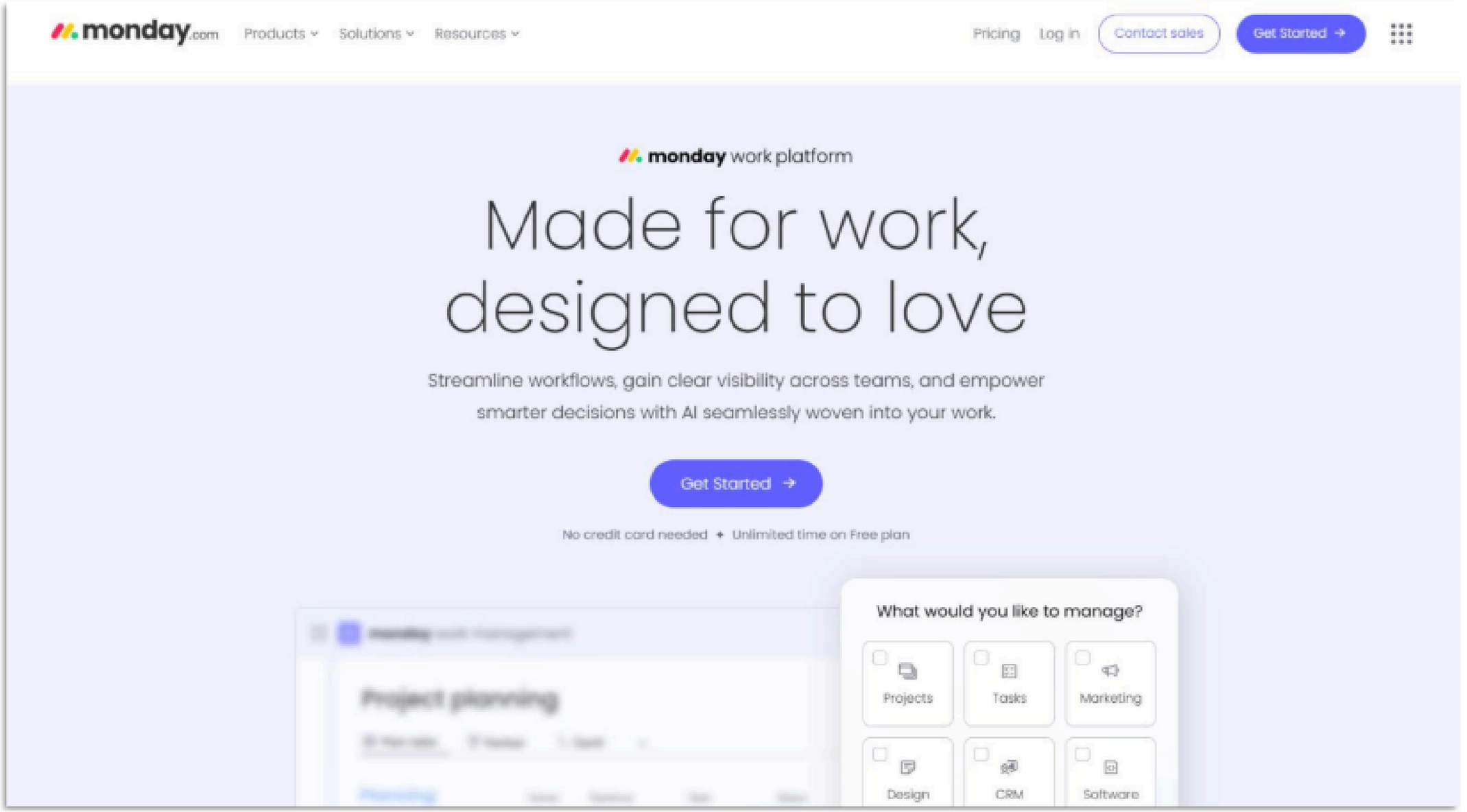

Liquid Death
MOUNTAIN WATER™
MURDER YOUR THIRST
DON'T BE SCARED. IT'S JUST WATER.

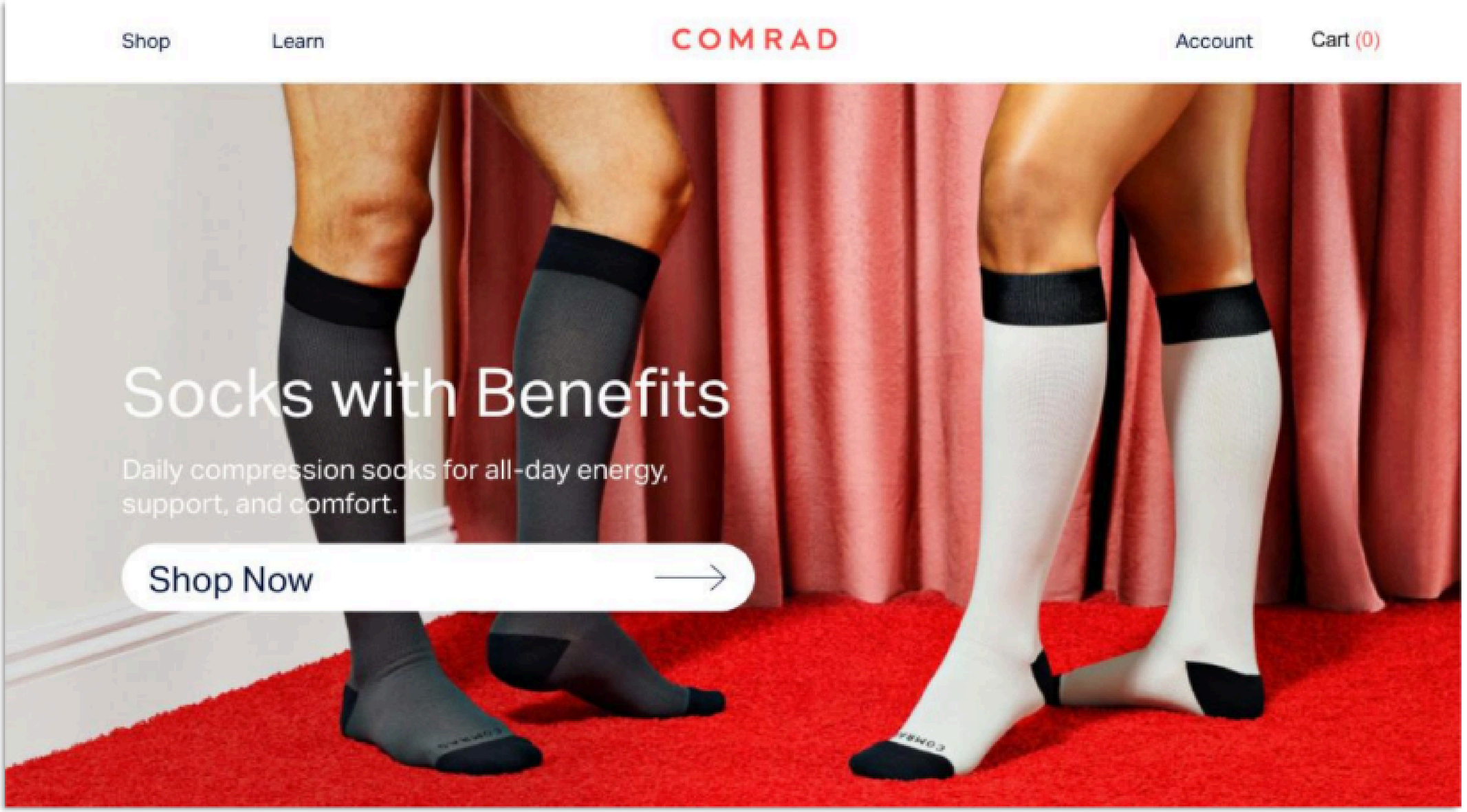
Same product. Different brand.

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Renters
Homeowners
Car
Pet
Life
Giveback
My Account
Lemonade
Forget everything you know about insurance
Instant everything. Incredible prices. Big heart.
CHECK OUR PRICES


Shop
Impact
About us
Blog
who gives a crap
Help
Refer a friend
Login
Good for the planet
Who knew changing the world could be as easy as changing your toilet paper?
Shop now
Need Help?
Find your essentials


monday.com
Products
Solutions
Resources
Pricing
Log in
Contact sales
Get Started
monday work platform
Made for work, designed to love
Streamline workflows, gain clear visibility across teams, and empower smarter decisions with AI seamlessly woven into your work.
Get Started
No credit card needed + Unlimited time on Free plan
What would you like to manage?
Projects
Tasks
Marketing
Design
CRM
Software


Shop
Learn
COMRAD
Account
Cart (0)
Socks with Benefits
Daily compression socks for all-day energy, support, and comfort.
Shop Now

BRAND POSITIONING: LIQUID DEATH

Build a brand that stands out.



The Industry

Water brands peddle phony promises of purity, wellness, and affluence.



The Audience

Younger consumers want to be healthy while staying true to who they are.



The Culture

Consumers are tired of fake brands and want brands that reflect their values.

The Brand

Liquid Death offers a bold, unapologetic alternative to "big water."

BRAND POSITIONING: LIQUID DEATH

Extend value beyond your product.

YOUR PRODUCT



Technical
We make water.



Functional
We satisfy thirst.

YOUR BRAND



Social
We bring like-minded people together.



Emotional
We build confidence through self-expression.



Aspirational
We empower people and the planet.

HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

ACTIVITY

Create a brand that gets chosen by customers.

Use the prompts below to create a unique, memorable brand story for your business.

1	**We believe _____.**	What do you stand for?
2	**And unlike others, we _____.**	What makes you different?
3	**We help our customers _____.**	What are your functional benefits?
4	**So, they can feel _____.**	What are your emotional benefits?
5	**Because more than anything, _____.**	What do you want people to remember about you?

Thank you.

Have questions? Feel free to reach out at
gabe@prescientcommunications.com



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THE BUSINESS REALITY CHECK

Everything Costs More. Now What?



MELISSA TANNO
WWU KITSAP SBDC



MARIAH MENDEZ
HONEYBEE HORTICULTURE



MEGAN MARTIN
INDIGO PLUM SHOES & APPAREL

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Costs are rising.
But can your customers pay more?

38%

of all small business owners **have raised their prices**

24%

of owners whose profits fell **blamed rising material costs**

34%

of owners whose profits fell **blamed weaker sales**

31%

of owners say they **plan to raise prices in the next three months**

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THE TAKEAWAY

Know your numbers before you move your prices.

Got a money question? Jot it down and let's help you figure it out!

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GIVE + GET

Put the Room to Work

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I can give...

One thing I could help someone in this room with.

I'd like to get...

One thing I could use help, perspective, a resource or a connection around.

For example...

GIVE: I've hired and managed seasonal employees
GET: I need help understanding whether my pricing works

GIVE: I work with small business lending
GET: I'd like to meet more owners who aren't sure whether they're financing-ready

GIVE: I know social media marketing and videography
GET: I'd love introductions to local businesses looking for interns

What's your next move?

- **What's one thing you'll do because of today?**
  - Write it down. Give it a deadline!

- **Who are 3 people you'll follow up with?**
  - Write that down, too! If you can, find them before you leave today.

“No matter how brilliant your mind or strategy, if you’re playing a solo game, you’ll always lose out to a team.”

— Reid Hoffman, co-founder of LinkedIn



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