

Want to Win in Business? Market Like Mr. Wonderful

4 Benefits of *Being Your Brand*

A few years ago, I was lucky enough to book a private day of business consulting with Kevin O'Leary. You might know him as "Mr. Wonderful" from the TV show "Shark Tank" — or maybe as the co-founder of SoftKey Software Products way back in the day. Kevin's business savvy totally blew me away from the minute we sat down.

I thought, "Now HERE is a seriously talented and smart entrepreneur. It's not just 'Shark Tank' hype — he

really knows what he's talking about." I also noticed something else: Kevin wasn't quite the same guy in person as he is on "Shark Tank."

On the show, he's harsh with the entrepreneurs pitching products to the sharks. He has a "tell it like it is" vibe and is not there to coddle people. Just as an example, if you've never seen the show, it would be totally in character for him to say something like, "I don't care if I hurt your feelings. This isn't Little League — it's business!" But Kevin wasn't like that during our consulting day.

Well, he was ... but less so. He was still blunt, but he wasn't harsh. He definitely didn't coddle me, but he didn't smack down my perspective, either. And that, I realized, was just another stroke of business genius.

"Mr. Wonderful" *is* Kevin, but amped up to 11! It's the persona he puts on when acting as his brand's face. He dials up his real personality to make himself more memorable and relatable to viewers because he understands what other big brands like Disney, Tesla, and Kentucky Fried Chicken do: *Personality sells.*

Customers don't connect with nameless, faceless companies. But they DO get invested in companies with personality — and the easiest way to show that is with a character. Think about Procter & Gamble's Mr. Clean, Disney's Mickey Mouse, Frosted Flakes' Tony the Tiger, and KFC's Colonel Sanders. I bet you can picture all those characters; they make you feel something.

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Your business's character doesn't have to be an animated animal. Most small companies don't have the budget for that! But you should make someone (yourself, your spouse, someone on your team, etc.) the "face" of your business. That's precisely what KFC did with Colonel Sanders. He was the founder of the company! He just leaned way into his persona as an eccentric Southern grandpa and used it to sell fried chicken.

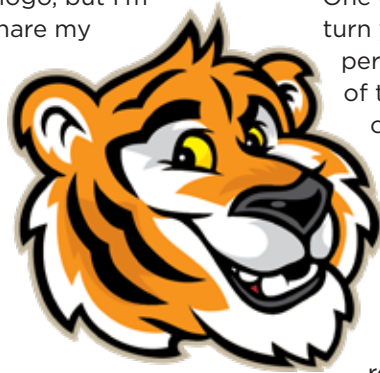
Today, we have entrepreneurs like Elon Musk and Richard Branson who do the same thing. Musk is a master of building his personal brand. He IS Tesla, to the point that his tweets actually move the stock price. His personality and social media stunts have rapidly accelerated Tesla's growth — and being himself on Twitter is free publicity.

When I first started Newsletter Pro, I went the mascot route. Cartoon Shaun was the face and basically the logo of the company because I wanted to connect with people, and I knew that if they saw ME and not a faceless brand, I'd build my company bigger, better, and faster. Now that Newsletter Pro is more than a decade old, we've rebranded and changed the logo, but I'm still the face of the company and share my personality in our marketing.

Still not convinced you should get personal? These are the four reasons a mascot really works.

1 It creates an emotional connection. It's hard to feel connected to a company, but it's easy to build a relationship with a person. Having a "face" to your business will humanize your brand and help your message resonate with more customers. Then, they'll be more likely to open your emails, pick up the phone, and eventually buy from you.

2 It attracts new customers. Personal stories, social media stunts, and funny mascot skits are insanely shareable on social media. Again, think about Elon Musk — how many of his tweets have gone viral and made it onto actual news sites? When you get your personality out there, you'll increase the shareability of your marketing, attract new customers, and grow your business.



3 It boosts your retention and referrals. The economy is weird, but everyone agrees it's slowing down. This is the time when customers start looking at their budgets, thinking about canceling services, or changing providers to save money. Having a mascot and getting personal can really help you out with retention. The deeper your relationship is with your clients, the harder it will be for them to check out and leave you.

4 It makes your mistakes forgivable. Say you had a bad experience at Disney World. Maybe they wouldn't let you into the park because of the shirt you were wearing (yep, this is a real thing that happens). Would you hold a grudge against Mickey Mouse? Of course not. Disney has done a great job of building its brand based on beloved characters, and it easily brushes off bad press. If you humanize your brand, get personal, and have a strong relationship with your customers, then they'll be more likely to forgive you for mistakes, too.

One of the easiest ways to show off your personality and turn yourself into the "face" of your company is by telling personal stories in your newsletter. Come up with a list of topics related to your childhood, family, hobbies, and career you're willing to talk about (and that you think your demographic would enjoy). Then, use those stories to get your personality across and cash in on the benefits I listed.

You shouldn't stop there. I recommend using your persona across all of your marketing channels to unify your message and make your brand universally recognizable. You can use the personal content in your newsletter as a springboard. Turn an anecdote into a short video for Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube; expand the article to create a unique blog post; or pull out quotes for Instagram posts and tweets. Your newsletter can be the framework you need to blast your personality across multiple channels.

Hopefully, this is all old news for you. You should already be doing all these things; if you're not, it's time to get started. The best time would have been years ago. The second best is right now before this economic downturn really hits hard.

-Shaun

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name." **-Psalms 100:4 NIV**

Is Happiness a Workplace Superpower?



One Study Points to 'Yes!' ↗

It's no secret that the COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped the global economy — specifically the labor market. Many employees are rethinking what matters most to them in a job and prioritizing their well-being and happiness when selecting a company. Fortunately, many employers are willing to accommodate this need primarily because it is the right thing to do. Beyond that, many business owners also have the intuitive sense that happy employees are more productive. After all, how does the old saying go? "Do what you love, and you'll never work a day in your life?"

But how valid is the claim that satisfied employees are more productive? Furthermore, are productive employees happy because they are successful, or does happiness drive employees to succeed? One study from MIT published in the Journal of Happiness Studies gives us some insight into the answer.

In this study, researchers followed nearly 1 million U.S. Army service members for five years. Every year, the soldiers were required to answer 25 relevant research questions as part of a more extensive survey every Army soldier takes annually. These questions were used to determine the participants' well-being quotient (or "happiness score") year over year. This quotient was then considered when measuring the number of participating soldiers that received an award over four years.

The results were very stark. Even when controlling for factors like socioeconomic status, sex, and education level, among other things — the participant's outlook was still considered to be a key predictor of whether or not a soldier would receive an award. When the most positive and happy

soldiers were compared to the most negative and unhappy soldiers, the happy soldiers were nearly four times more likely to receive recognition through an award.

This is even more amazing when you consider that receiving a military award is relatively rare. Throughout the study, only 12% of participants won any awards, and nearly all top performers were ranked as "very happy."

So, what does this mean for your business?

"In today's workforce, prioritizing your staff's happiness isn't just a luxury — it's a necessity."

Well, it means a few things. Firstly, if you're interested in identifying your company's top performers, look for the people with the most positive outlook. Secondly, if you want to boost the performance of your workers overall, look for ways that you can improve the overall well-being of your staff members. By

rewarding people who elevate your company culture by maintaining a positive attitude while addressing challenges, you demonstrate that you value that behavior. Likewise, when you create systems within your company that allow employees to focus on their well-being, you're setting your staff up for happiness.

In today's workforce, prioritizing your staff's happiness isn't just a luxury — it's a necessity. To attract and retain highly motivated and qualified candidates, you must demonstrate that your company values their well-being. So when you make workplace happiness a priority, you begin a cycle that feeds off of itself and compounds over time, resulting in happier, more productive, more fulfilled employees. That translates to better outcomes for you, your staff, and your company. What could be better than that?

Fostering Christmas

Fosters Our Company Culture

How Giving Back Became Part of NLP's Identity

Toys for Tots, the Salvation Army, and other Christmas gift drives for underprivileged children are everywhere this time of year. With all that support, most people figure that all the in-need kids are covered, and Newsletter Pro CEO Shaun Buck was no different.

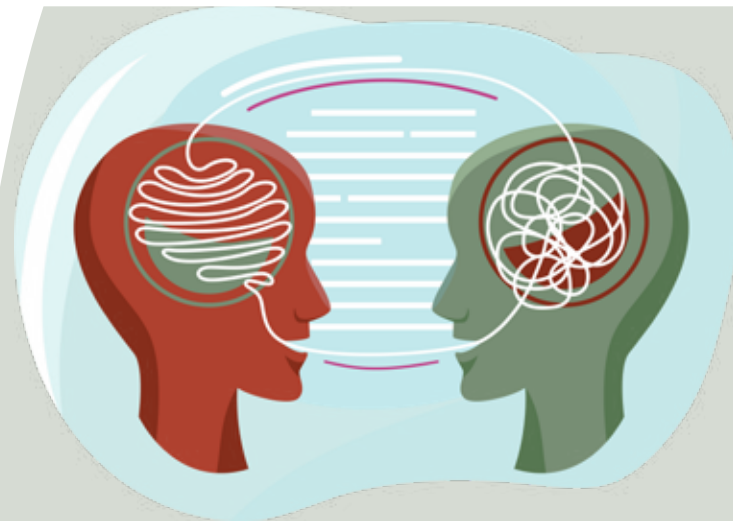
But in 2014, he spoke to a social worker and discovered a gap. Kids who enter the foster care system after Thanksgiving but before Christmas are too late to receive help from traditional organizations — and as a result, they usually go without. The thought of newly uprooted children, confused and afraid, finding nothing under the Christmas tree broke his heart. Shaun resolved that he wouldn't let any of those children in Canyon County, Idaho, go without a present that year, buying the gifts himself.

His efforts were a success, and the commitment kept growing. Soon, Shaun founded Fostering Christmas, an organization that provides presents to kids who enter the foster care system during the holiday season. But the need only kept growing. Soon, the organization was also serving Ada County and helping dozens more children each year.

Shaun could no longer fill all the requests alone, but fortunately, he had people ready to back him up: the staff at Newsletter Pro. Once our team caught wind of his efforts and their incredible impact on children's lives, they were eager to get on board. Before long, everyone at NLP was contributing to the cause. They, in turn, started talking about Fostering Christmas to community members, who were also excited to help.

Every year, the NLP office becomes Fostering Christmas headquarters. In 2019, we filled an entire conference room with presents, and the whole team was excited to volunteer their time sorting and organizing the gifts each year. Most of our employees are remote these days, but Fostering Christmas hasn't slowed down. Even though we're spread across the country, the team remains eager to make a difference for foster families in Idaho with brainstorming, social media work, and financial contributions.

Fostering Christmas was proud to celebrate its biggest and most successful year in 2021, helping 324 foster children. The generosity of our Newsletter Pro staff and their work to promote the cause to others are largely to thank. We're looking forward to another big holiday season! Connect with our efforts any time of the year at FosteringChristmas.org.



Getting To Know You Good Marketing Requires Genuine Human Connection

Business leaders have a lot on their plate, so it's no surprise that making human connections with customers often falls by the wayside. Who has the time when you're trying to manage payroll, vendors, billing, and staff? That's why many entrepreneurs prefer to stick to the numbers. They're unbiased, and they're easier to control.

But you'll never get the complete picture if you exclusively focus on your ROI and retention levels. In fact, you'll miss important clues about why your business is (or isn't) succeeding. The best marketers understand customers don't want to be seen as data points. They want a genuine human connection — and they'll go to your competitors to find it.

Think about some of your own experiences. Have you ever dealt with an aggressive mattress salesperson? How about a used car dealer who used every transparent trick in the book to close a sale? Or maybe you dread calling the phone company because they always try to sell you additional services you don't need. Most likely, none of those experiences made you feel like a valued customer or want to interact with the business again.

Where you might see helpful information about your product or service, others will often see a hard sell and tune out the rest of what you have to say. Of course, we're not recommending you abandon telling people what you have to offer. But before you share that information, give your audience a reason to care.

Be Genuine

It all starts with being a little vulnerable. We know it can be scary. But marketing research consistently shows people don't buy things; they buy emotions. How a product makes someone feel is at least as significant as how well it performs. And you can build that connection by sharing your story with your potential customers.

That's why we encourage our newsletter clients to provide personal stories for their cover articles. Those personal details and seemingly silly anecdotes aren't all

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Start Your Business Off on the Right Foot

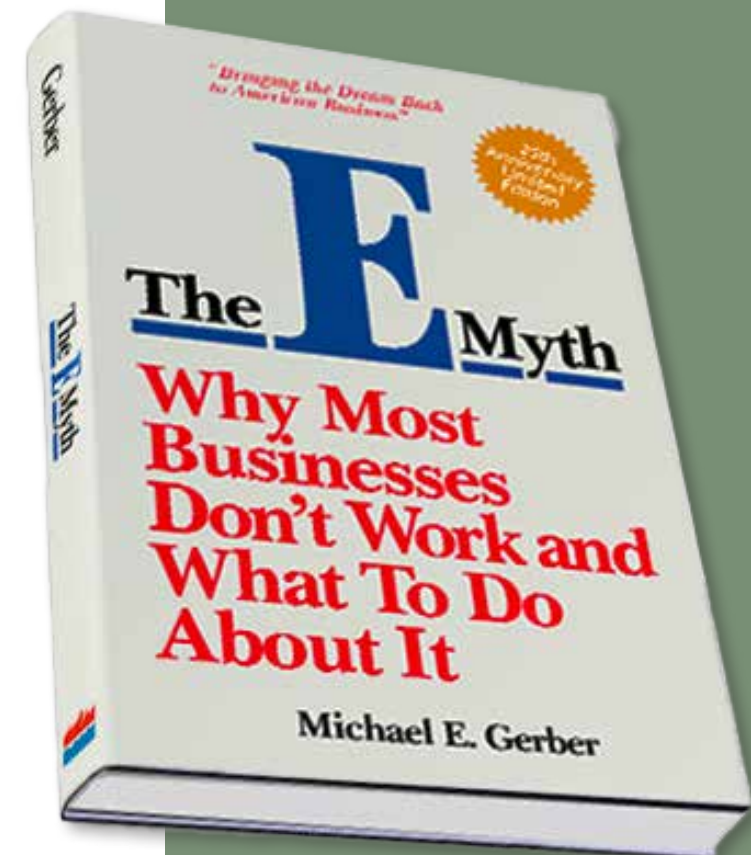
With Help From "The E-Myth"

As a small-business owner, what's your greatest fear? Many business owners across the country share one common fear: failure. According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1 in 5 businesses fail within their first year, and 50% fail within their first five years. How do you prevent your companies from becoming a part of this statistic? One of the best ways to ensure your business thrives is to follow the strategies found in Michael E. Gerber's book, "The E-Myth: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It."

There's a common myth among entrepreneurs that if you're proficient at a technical skill, you'll be able to run a business that utilizes said technical skill. In most cases, this is not true. Many small-business owners fall into this trap. They then spend all their time working in the business instead of on the business, which can quickly lead to burnout without reaching their desired success. "The E-Myth" provides examples and guidelines for small-business owners to break the mold and run a successful business in any industry.

In "The E-Myth," Gerber explains that each business owner has three distinct personalities: the technician, the manager, and the entrepreneur. The technician is the part of them that knows how to successfully perform the technical skill the business relies on to grow. The manager wants to achieve results through people and systems. They work in the present while strategizing for the future. The entrepreneur is much more focused on getting the company where they want it to be. A successful small-business owner will be able to effectively utilize all three personalities to be the best owner they can be.

"The E-Myth" is broken up into three sections. The first defines the E-myth while providing readers with descriptions of the three phases of businesses. There are infant, adolescent, and mature businesses. Most business owners think their business starts in infancy and grows through the different stages. Gerber explains this is not



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the case as most successful businesses do not develop into maturity; they begin there. Gerber states that you build a mature business with a vision and shape the present around that vision.

In the second part, Gerber explains that business owners need to work on their business rather than in it. He encourages readers to create systems within their business so it can run smoothly even if they're not present. He explains that owners should treat their business as if it were a franchise and points to McDonald's as a great example. Your business should be able to produce predictable results and happy customers. When you go to McDonald's, you know what to expect, regardless of where you are in the country. Your business should run the same way.

The final section of "The E-Myth" provides business owners with a step-by-step guide to successfully run a business. Plenty of valuable information within this section is incredibly beneficial for any business owner. It teaches you how to build a business plan that works for you and your business.

"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people."
—1 Timothy 2:1 (NIV)

fluff — they help people feel like they know you. Some people choose to tell a heartfelt tale about a parent's death, while others prefer sticking to funny family stories and pop culture obsessions. Both are fine, but we encourage you to step a *little* outside of your comfort zone. Opening up tends to have significant professional (and personal) rewards.

Listen Closely

Any relationship should have give and take. While it's crucial to open yourself up to others, it's just as critical to pay attention when they open themselves to you. Good marketing also involves being curious about your audience and listening to what they say. Your customer relationships should be based on conversation, not a monologue.

Listening is most important on social media, where customers can provide real-time feedback on your message. But there are also other ways to engage with what your audience is thinking and feeling. Market research on what your customers do and don't like can provide valuable insight; online reviews are an opportunity to open a dialogue, and you can even encourage your newsletter readers to share their thoughts on an article. The more you hear and absorb, the better.



Have Fun

People want to feel like they're talking to a real person behind a company, meaning you have to give your brand personality. One of the easiest ways to do that is by tapping into cultural moments and memes that will resonate with your audience. Demonstrating you keep up with the zeitgeist is one of the most effective ways to show your human side and share an experience with your customers.

But finding the right content to share is crucial. An audience of middle-aged men is unlikely to know about the latest viral meme among college students. And there's no need to jump on the latest TikTok dance craze *unless* that's your thing. Awkward engagement will get you noticed for all the wrong reasons. Stick to what you and your staff think is enjoyable and relevant and what will strike a chord with your customers.

Ultimately, we're all human — and most people appreciate it when we act like it. Don't use your brand as a shield to hide who you are. Instead, treat it like a tool to make meaningful and ongoing connections with the people you serve. You'll earn more brand loyalty by being yourself than by sticking to a carefully crafted sales pitch.



Relishing Victory!
How a Whimsical Campaign
Pokes Fun at Legal Service Ads

These days, the phrase “in a pickle” has an old-timey ring to it. You may have heard this if someone found themselves in a difficult situation or they have a problem to which no easy answer can be found. But who knew that being “in a pickle” could actually be a great way to advertise for a campaign?

“Have you or someone you love been positively affected by pickles? Does the sound of opening a pickle jar distract you? Have you been the beneficiary of pickle-related deliciousness?”

That is what callers are greeted with when they dial 866-MCCLURES. Sounds kind of familiar, though, right? This recorded message is quite similar to a legal service advertisement, but instead, it is linked to a pickle company!

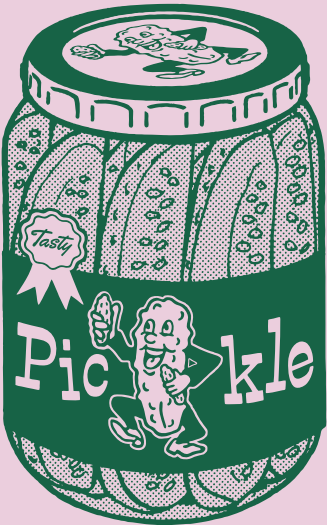
When you're driving down the freeway, it's guaranteed you will see a dozen advertisements for different legal

services and faces of attorneys plastered on giant billboards. With so many similar campaigns nowadays, trying and making your company stand out from the rest can be a task.

That's how McClure's Pickles co-owners and brothers, Bob and Joe McClure, came up with the idea to poke fun at the proliferation of personal injury legal service ads. Though attorney billboards are ubiquitous nationwide, the McClures took inspiration from local lawyers for their billboard campaign.

With the help of their creative agency, Lafayette American, they designed an advertisement that would catch the attention of drivers passing by. And, it sure has worked! Their online store sessions are up 9% since creating the ad, and there was a 60% increase in Canadian visitors due to the placement of billboards throughout roads that connect Michigan with Canada.

Many wouldn't expect a pickle company to come up with a parody of attorney ads, but that's exactly what the goal was. They're already one step ahead of the game, making themselves stand out amongst the other pickle companies. The marketing game is the real dill.



Resource of
the Month

If you've ever built a small business from the ground up, you've probably experienced a “sticky” point in your company's growth. This is the stage where your team is still relatively small but is growing steadily. A lot of times, at this point, there can be some confusion with scheduling projects and keeping track of tasks efficiently. In order to move through this stage, reliable processes must be in place to ensure everyone on the team is aware of what they need to do and when, plus understand any specifics.

However, setting up this communication stream can be incredibly challenging for small businesses that might not have the resources to purchase an expensive project management software subscription. These companies might end up relying on clunky communication methods that result in wasted time, frustration, and critical tasks falling through the cracks.

Wrike Is Elevating Small Businesses
By Keeping Projects on Track

Luckily, there is a solution!

Wrike is a project management software that allows teams to work together to plan projects out digitally. They offer an extensive free plan perfect for teams with less than five users and small companies just getting started. With the free version of Wrike, employees can easily collaborate on tasks, projects, due dates, and completion status, reducing confusion and boosting productivity.

Pretty sweet, right?

Wrike also offers three paid plans (professional, business, and enterprise) that provide several extra benefits. For example, the business package includes advanced features like time tracking and timesheets, 5 gigabytes of storage per user, and an extension for Adobe Creative Cloud. One of Wrike's greatest benefits is scalability because it is built to meet the needs of businesses as they expand. Your

teams won't have to switch from platform to platform as your business grows.

So, is Wrike right for your business?

Maybe! It depends on your business's current needs and if you already have project management software you're happy with. But if you have been looking for a tool to improve your staff's communication and collaboration abilities, Wrike might just be the perfect platform to empower your team, keep projects on track, and boost your productivity.



4 Ways to Give Back to
Your Community

- **Host a drive at your office for canned goods, toiletries, and other resources to donate to your local homeless shelter or community center.**
- **Sponsor a charity walk or run for a good cause.**
- **Set up a “volunteer day” with your staff and spend the day partnering with a local charity organization that needs assistance.**
- **Offer a special discount to community heroes like first responders, medical staff, and veterans.**

**Find Us
on Social!**

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Luxury Without Labels

How Italic Is Changing the Retail Game

Have you ever noticed how expensive certain brands can be? You may have gone to your local clothing store in an attempt to buy a new shirt. You see that they have various brands to choose from, and there are only minuscule differences between each, but the shirt you prefer comes from a luxury brand that decides to charge double what everyone else does. It can be a frustrating ordeal. Jeremy Cai, the founder of Italic, recognized this and realized he could provide consumers with luxury clothing without luxury prices. He accomplishes this by cutting out the middlemen and working directly with the same manufacturers that luxury brands use.

Cai came from a family of manufacturers. Growing up, he heard his mother and other family members discuss the supply chain over dinner. They wondered how they could expand their business. Companies bought their products at a reasonable rate, then resold them for 5-10 times more than that. This was a conversation Cai would reflect on when he first started Italic.

Eventually, Cai started a tech business that provided him with enough money to focus on a passion project. Thus, he created Italic at only 23 years old. Cai

realized the internet completely revolutionized how many industries operated. Airbnb made it so anyone could provide lodging to others for a price, which changed the lodging and hospitality industry. Ride-share platforms made it possible for people to easily order rides wherever they were located, which changed the transportation industry. Cai saw no reason the retail industry couldn't be changed in a similar manner. He decided a direct-to-consumer approach was the best direction, but he wanted to be sure there were no unnecessary markups involved.

Cai then began working on ways to get in front of high-quality manufacturers to convince them to work with Italic. To get them to buy in, he never treated them as vendors but as merchants within their marketplace. The manufacturers take an inventory risk but gain access to Italic's fulfillment network and software orchestration. The real seller was that the manufacturers would improve their margins by 200%-300% by selling directly to consumers. It was a win-win for everyone involved.

Italic began in 2018 and now has a post-money valuation of over \$100 million. So how has Italic been able to grow so much in such a short period of time? In addition to providing quality goods at an affordable price, Cai also credits focusing on their established customer base as a reason for Italic's growth. They know they can't please everyone, so they focus their marketing efforts on 30-40-year-old women with relatively high incomes living in a big city or suburb. Italic wants to provide their customer with beautiful, elegant items that aren't cheap in the retail market but appear so when compared to similar brands.

Italic offers women's apparel, women's accessories, small leather goods, men's clothing and accessories, home goods, linens, towels, pots, pans, beauty and skin care products, and more. The company isn't planning on expanding further. Over the next few years, Italic intends to make products more affordable and of an even higher quality. Unlike its competitors, Italic is not focused on branding its products. That's why it uses the slogan "luxury without labels." To check out this company for yourself, head over to [Italic.com](https://www.italic.com).