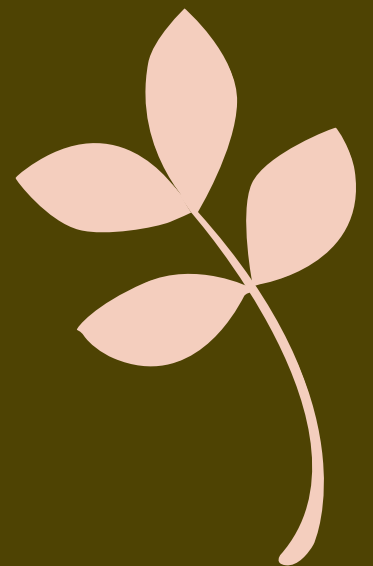

2024 Brand + Storytelling Report

From PB&J, a creative storytelling agency
with guest insight from futurist, Faith Popcorn.



2024 BRAND + STORYTELLING REPORT

Welcome to PB&J's inaugural Brand Identity and Storytelling Report.

If you're in the marketing field, you know the drill: Another year, another dive into a rapidly evolving media landscape. With trends and paradigms constantly shifting, it can seem almost impossible to anticipate what might come next — but we have a few ideas.

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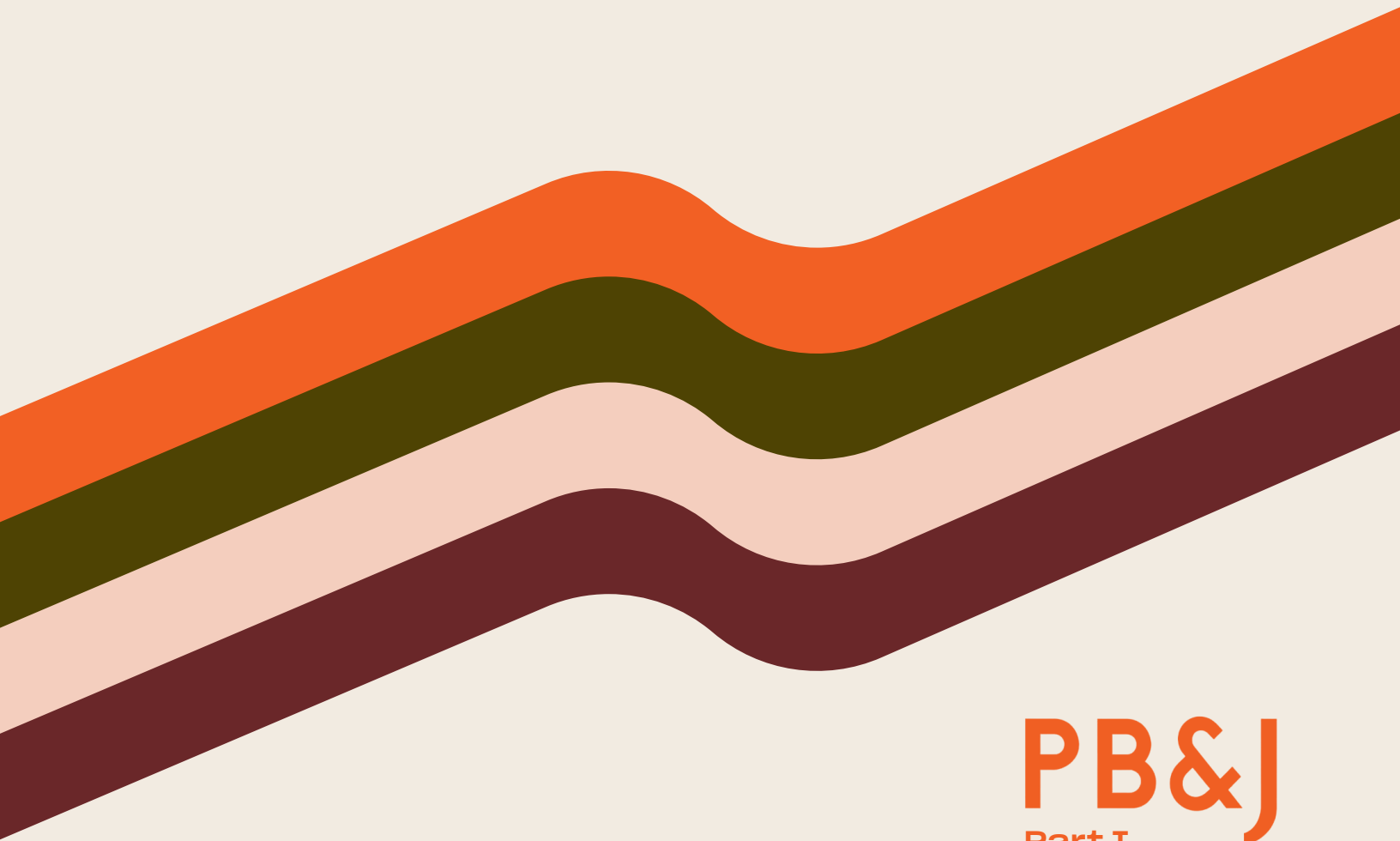
In Part I of this report, you'll find our top four predictions for shifts and trends across brand storytelling this year. These were thoughtfully developed based on the insights we've gleaned over 17+ years in the business.

In Part II, we'll share our top recommendations for medium-sized and B2B brands, including often-overlooked opportunities for growth.

The final section of this report features bonus insight from renowned futurist Faith Popcorn, about the future of AI for businesses.

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Brand+ Storytelling Predictions for 2024



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Part I

01

Changes for
Luxury Brands

Photo by Factory360

Let's face it: The veneer of luxury brands is gone. You used to have to visit New York or L.A. to find luxury items, but with the democratization of products, everything is now within arm's reach. You can shop online for your Gucci or Louis Vuitton and have it at your front door within a few days.

As luxury brands begin to lose their luster of exclusivity, I'm predicting two things: One, that startup brands will start to infiltrate this sector and take away pieces of the pie; and two, that we're going to start seeing brands balance amplification and exclusivity in more intimate and artfully activated ways.

Expect to see brands roll out more red (or pink, or black) carpets for collaboration. This means brands bringing in creators behind the scenes at fashion shows, in the innovation labs at Nike, and even backstage at the Oscars. We'll see smaller groups of creators and fans get special access to unique and exhilarating experiences.

On the other hand, brands will put a bigger focus on regional activation. We're going to see them start to artfully inspire local communities, just like they do in big cities. Pop-ups and installations are nothing new for cities like New York, Los Angeles, London, or Paris, but a giant Shipt "Shopper Chopper" on the streets of Austin might just turn some heads.

02

Hypercuration



Photo by Newell Brands

These days, the pace of content production that brands must keep up with to stay relevant is mind-boggling. Brands have essentially adapted and evolved into content studios – and this year, we’re going to see them activate more curated storytelling and tactics. This will take shape with little things that reach consumers organically and help reveal the softer side of brand personality. (One of my favorite examples of this is Barilla’s [Playlist Timer](#) campaign on Spotify).

This idea of hypercuration will extend over into experiential marketing, as well. Pop-up stores and guerilla event activations will go smaller. There will be more of them, done in more intimate ways, with more curated experiences and invite lists. And the experiences will be more minimalistic and atmospheric.

When brands show up to Coachella, or Miami Grand Prix, for example, it's not going to be bold. It'll be super tiny – the less people who see it, the better. In general, the paradigm is shifting from going big and bold to acting smaller and more thoughtfully.

Pictured: The interactive Sharpie Studio at SXSW 2024. One section of the studio, the Creative Cocktail Bar, invited attendees to order their dream cocktail by drawing it on a slip paper for bartenders to create.

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03

Trickle-Down Tourism



Photo by Jonathan Rivera on Unsplash

Lately, we're seeing tourism economies tout crazy growth, yet, somehow the narratives these bureaus propel don't reflect local realities. We'll use PB&J's home state as an example: [TourismOhio](#) reports that our state visitor spending hit an all-time high in 2022, with approximately \$53 billion in sales – that's a 13% increase from 2021. And tourism visits reached 233 million, up 6% from 2021. This shiny data, however, isn't translating to the experience of local business owners, who report serious obstacles and a struggle to stay afloat.

There's a disconnect there, no doubt. The question is, how are these bureaus of travel and business cultivation going to help to bridge that gap, and have those tough conversations with local businesses?

We believe we're going to see more local businesses start to push back, and take things into their own hands. It's overdue that the start to claim their own narratives. What would this look like? Businesses coming together and making their own reports and showing up where decisions are being made.

It may be time for the storytelling power to be put in the hands of the local businesses who make up our cultural fabric. After all, without local businesses, our tourism economies are just private equity hotels.

04

Crossovers +
Diffusion Brands

Photo by HomeToGo.com

There are so many brand categories that lack inspired design. In 2024, brands are going to identify opportunities across new industries and avenues that they may not have had access to before. We're going to start to see brands take on new categories, and really activate spaces where they haven't lived in the past.

We saw the beginnings of this a few years ago (remember Van Leeuwen's Kraft Macaroni & Cheese-flavored ice cream, or the Liquid Death x Martha Stewart Dismembered Moments candle?). These types of unique brand collaborations will continue to happen, and the new categories that brands create might start to spin off into new, more agile diffusion brands.

With how big these brands have gotten; a sole creative director can no longer do it all. It's simply not possible. That said, we might see these diffusion brands activate their own creative directors to chart new design languages and brand stories. This could be a gateway for younger talent to enter the ring, take on bigger responsibilities, and help build more avenues for brand storytelling.

Pictured: A recent collaboration between Eggo and vacation rental site HomeToGo. The Eggo House of Pancakes in Gatlinburg, TN, featuring breakfast-inspired decor and a freezer stocked full of Eggo waffles, is now listed for bookings on HomeToGo.com.

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Marketing for Medium- Sized & B2B Brands

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Part II

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES IN 2024 & BEYOND

All too often, brands chase after big, shiny marketing wins, while foundational necessities get left in the dust. While working with a variety of medium-sized brands and clients in the B2B space, we've noticed a pattern of common growth opportunities that can offer brands a competitive edge with small effort. The following suggestions are initiatives you're likely already equipped to do, using the tools you have available.

#1: Partnerships

Many brands underestimate the power of partnerships. Whether it's a company collaboration or a nonprofit sponsorship, partnerships offer a chance to refresh your marketing campaigns, strengthen your credibility, and build brand awareness. Best of all, they can help you reach new, relevant audiences, and open the door to more potential customers.

#2: Thought Leadership

Thought leadership often goes overlooked in the grand scheme of campaigns. It's a shame, because it simply leverages the expertise and knowledge you already have. By establishing yourself and your team as a trustworthy resource on relevant subject matter, you can deepen brand awareness and reach your audiences in ways that go beyond product promotion. Whether you lend your expertise to a podcast, or submit a few quotes for an article, it's worth your time — every time.

#3: Photography

Visuals are key. No matter how good your content is, if your photography doesn't live up to the high editorial standards of today, you're going to miss out on opportunities that you might have otherwise earned.

#4: Low-Hanging Fruit

Often, the relatively easy but low-priority opportunities that yield short-term rewards will seem trivial. But little things do add up. Take advantage of product submissions, photography requests, and other smaller efforts to increase your chances of coverage, bit by bit.

#5: Experiential Marketing

How does your brand show up to conferences and trade shows? Brand representation at these types of events tends to be formulaic, so it's a great opportunity to take a step outside the box and try something new.

OUR FAVORITE B2B BRAND ACTIVATION THIS YEAR

@kohler_store_detroit



@studio_rose_design



Kohler at IBS/KBIS 2024

With exceptional design and an experiential focus, it's no wonder that Kohler's booth environment at the KBIS show in Las Vegas won "Best In Show" for the second year in a row.

The 15,000 square-foot space whisked attendees into the world of Kohler by tapping designers to apply their unique aesthetic to different "rooms." The result was a stunning maze of sample spaces, equipped with Kohler products drenched in moody lighting to highlight new and trending colors.

Throughout the show, the Kohler booth also hosted a range of events, from a speaker series to book signings and panel discussions.

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@discoveringsav

@23blossom_



@elizabethrparker

@studio_rose_design

Guest Insight from Faith Popcorn

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Part III

WHO IS FAITH POPCORN?

Faith Popcorn is founder and CEO of Faith Popcorn's BrainReserve, the futurist marketing consultancy she established in 1974. She is also the best-selling author of *The Popcorn Report*, *Clicking*, *EVEvolution*, *Dictionary of the Future*, and the upcoming, *Popcorn Report Revisited*.

The New York Times has called her "The Trend Oracle," Fortune magazine named her, "The Nostradamus of Marketing," and she is recognized as America's foremost Trend expert.

Faith Popcorn has identified such sweeping societal movements as Cocooning, AtmosFear, Anchoring, 99 Lives, Icon Toppling, and Vigilante Consumer.

As the lead strategist for Faith Popcorn's BrainReserve, Faith applies her insight into cultural and business Trends to help BrainReserve clients reposition established brands/companies, develop new strategies and innovate new products, services, and experiences.

She is a trusted advisor to the CEOs of The Fortune 500 including such companies as Allergan, American Express, Avon, Bayer, Campbell's Soup, Citigroup, Coca-Cola, Johnson & Johnson, Kellogg's, KFC, Mars, SC Johnson, Tylenol and The United States Postal Service.

Faith long ago predicted the demand for fresh foods and four-wheel drives, as well as the spiritual tenor of the millennium with **Cocooning**. She was the first to anticipate the explosive growth of home delivery, home businesses and home shopping. Additionally, she predicted the rise of social media and has her own significant following on **Instagram** and **Twitter**.

A dynamic public speaker, Faith regularly shares her interactive FutureView presentation which focuses on how Trends are affecting consumer lifestyles and purchasing behavior, with thousands of audiences across the globe.

Heralded for her extraordinary ability to forecast emerging consumer patterns, Faith is frequently interviewed and cited in the media by The New York Times, Time, Newsweek, Fortune, "The Today Show," "Face the Nation," and CNN.

Faith was raised in Shanghai, China, is a fifth generation New Yorker, and the daughter of two lawyers. She is a graduate of New York University and New York's High School of Performing Arts. She is a single mother and has two daughters adopted from China: gg, 24, and cc, 17.

Popcorn (as you may have guessed) is not the name she was born with. Her surname, Plotkin, proved difficult for one of her first bosses to pronounce. He dubbed her "Popcorn" as his personal shorthand—and it stuck.

FAITH POPCORN'S TOP PREDICTIONS

#1. The rise of **synthetic identities** – which merge bits of personal data to create “people” who don’t exist – threatens every person’s security. “Who really are you?” becomes the overriding question.

#2. Ozempic and Mounjaro will definitely **cut consumers’ cravings for snacks and sodas**. These drugs also suppress the desire for alcohol, although it doesn’t seem like makers and distributors are aware of this threat yet. When insurance companies cover the cost of these drugs, CPGs bottom lines will get thinner.

#3. Claims about “natural” and “organic” don’t matter - not with soaring food insecurity. It’s going to be all about being **“100% human safe.”** Some brands will go all in on clinically clean, and others will snap up farms to cultivate and control their own pure, allergen-free crops, while others will invest in packaging sensor tech that reveals the composition, sourcing, and microbial status within.

These insights were summarized from The Popcorn Report: Paranoialand. To access the full report, [click here](#).



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PB&J is a public relations and storytelling firm that leverages your organization's purpose to create memorable ways to attract and interact with your consumers.

Micah Paldino is an entrepreneur and creative storyteller with over 19 years of professional marketing experience. Through innovative creative techniques and a progressive mindset, Micah has been credited with building an impressive roster of accomplishments with PB&J: A Creative Storytelling Agency: an organization which helps 'organizations bring your audience into your world' – stemming from authentic truths and human connection.

Micah's work can be seen in the pages of VOGUE, Travel+Leisure, Bon Appetit, Food & Wine, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Sports Illustrated, Men's Health, CNN, HLN, Forbes, Fast Company, Architectural Digest, Bob Vila, with clients like P&G, Deckorators, Graydon, Kroger, Hartzell Propeller, Mt. Saint Joseph University, The Lunada Bay Corporation, KAO Brands, Totes Isotoner, Landor Associates, Nelson, 21c Museum Hotel, New Riff Distilling, Everything But the House, Busken Bakery, and more.



LET'S WORK TOGETHER!

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