

You Cannot Spell Business without “B” and “U”

Lesson #5 - You matter because your story matters.

“Hey, boys! Get dressed and come down for breakfast. We are having your favorite, CAT-HEAD biscuits.”

During my first three semesters in college, guys from Georgia, Alabama, the Carolinas, Tennessee and Texas told tales of eating such things as crawdads, alligator tale, frog's legs, cow's tongue, pickled pig's feet and snout. Not one of these guys ever mentioned eating “Cat-head” biscuits.

I was raised to eat whatever was put in front of me, especially if I was a guest in someone else's home. Besides, if I was planning to eat any more food this Thanksgiving weekend, and I was, I had better figure out how to eat these biscuits without complaint and with much gratitude or find a way to avoid this

meal. Maybe I could fake being sick. Maybe I could run away. Maybe... well, I ran out of maybes.

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Then I asked - “Why are your favorite biscuits called ‘Cat-head’ biscuits?”

With a smile as long as the Mississippi and eyes as wide as the Atlantic, my college friend and host for the weekend said, “These biscuits are the size of a cat's head.”

“Oh! Thank God!!!”

“Wait, why did you think we called them cat-head biscuits?”

After a bizarre introduction to these “cat-head” biscuits and a hilarious recounting of my experience and explanation to my friend and his family, we all laughed so hard through breakfast that most of us probably walked away with indigestion.

I can hear you now – “Andy, what do these biscuits have to do with me, my business and my story?”

Our stories have much more in common with these “unusually-named” biscuits than we may recognize. Our stories like those biscuits are made of many different ingredients; “ingredients” such as unexpected twists, turns, bends, curves, delays, distractions and detours. Nevertheless, these ‘ingredients’ make up the whole of our stories.

Let's take a second to return to the kitchen where my host mom was preparing those “cat-head” biscuits. Take a closer look at the kitchen counter. Do you see

the carefully measured ingredients: the flour, the sugar, the baking powder, the salt, the butter and the milk?

Can you imagine walking over to the counter and ingesting that flour? How about the baking powder, the salt or butter? NO! That would be disgusting! Each ingredient consumed one by one, much like the good, the bad and the ugly goings-on in a day, a week, a month or a year of your life, if viewed in the narrow, short term, can be a bit overwhelming and somewhat disgusting.

Perhaps you've heard it said, "Bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people." These are the times in which you and I discover ourselves pointing up to the sky and shouting out loud, "Hey! What'd you do that for!?" or secretly in our heads, we wonder, "What did I do to deserve that?"

Think back to the biscuit counter. Notice the ingredients. How are they arranged? They are placed side by side. They are also arranged in the order in which they will be used. The ingredients are not random selections. They are not piled one on the other. The ingredients are specific to an ultimate purpose.

These 'ingredients of life' properly prepared and placed in the mixing bowl of our lives at just the right moment, by your choice or the choice of others, are all a part of your oversized "Cat-head biscuit" story.

Years ago, I was introduced to a simple sketch-illustration of "the pathway to success". Maybe you are familiar. On one half of the page was a straight line from point A to point B entitled, "what people think it looks like." On the other half of the page was a line that started out at point A and after a series of multiple intermingled, overlapped and wrapped intersections with itself reached point B entitled, "what it really looks like."

The main thrust of this illustration is that our "success" story is seldom a straight uninterrupted line. The typical pathways of our story are packed with various episodes of great gains and failures and great accomplishments and pain. Some of these incidences may come as the result of an amazing achievement, the successful purchase of a business or property, the birth of a child or two or four, or a spiritual awakening. Others may arrive in the form of the death of a dream, the failure of a relationship, the injury of a loved-one, or the loss of a job or career.

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One thing is sure, these challenges require an anchored faith, strength of heart, a rooted passion, some solid relationships, an unfailing, gritty determination and sometimes just the shear desire to finish the “race”.

We can take great comfort in knowing that all that we encounter is part of our unique story: a story designed to be shared.

When shared in a proper manner and with the right method, our story will attract our ideal clients and separate us from our competition. Many businesses in the same marketplace may provide similar services and products, but none of them have your story. Your story is your marketing capital. Your story is personal, attractive and distinct.

My challenge for you on this Monday is to discover your story. Begin by asking yourself, what do I want my clients to gain from working with me? When was the first time that you recall that happening for you or possibly not happening for you? Write that story. How does that story relate to what you do in and through your business? Once discovered and refined, that story is “money in the bank.” Told to the right people and connected to the right action step, your business will be welcoming ideal clients, who bring you both profit and pleasure.

One of the most rewarding things I get to do as a business consultant and coach is helping my clients discover, refine and market their stories. When you are ready, I'd be thrilled to help you with yours. Please contact me by text at 707.953.6681 or by email at andy@andyspringerconsulting.com.

Oh, I almost forgot. When melted butter drips from those hot-out-of-the-oven, “cat-head” biscuits, you are eating food from heaven.

Andy Springer, Business Consultant & Coach Andy Springer Consulting