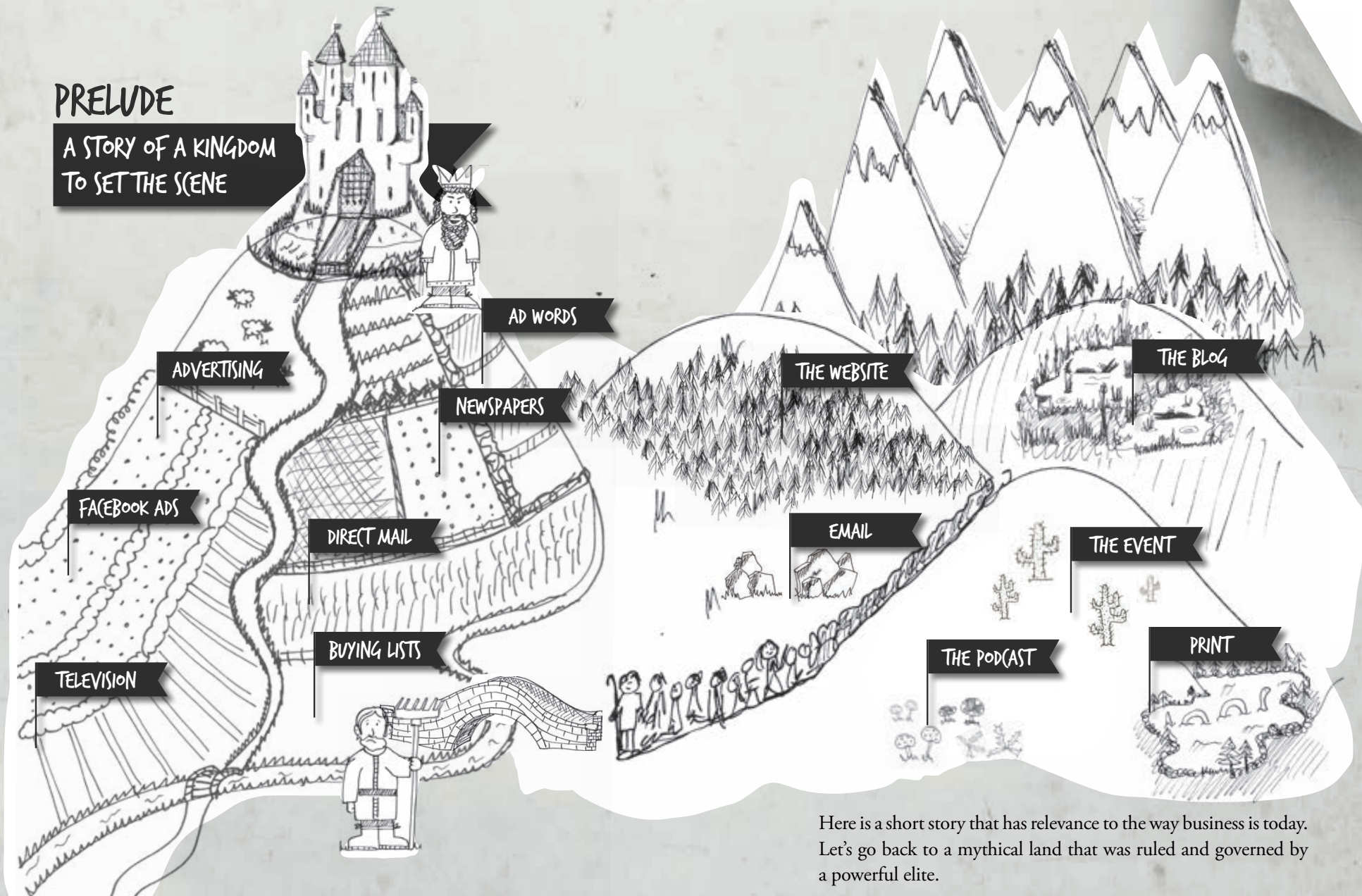


# PRELUDE

A STORY OF A KINGDOM  
TO SET THE SCENE

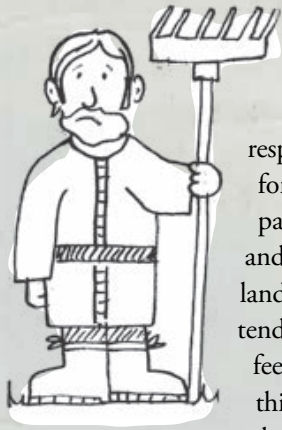


Here is a short story that has relevance to the way business is today. Let's go back to a mythical land that was ruled and governed by a powerful elite.

**ONCE UPON A TIME** there was a kingdom that was controlled by the powerful. Those who owned the land ruled the land.



**THE RULERS** had inherited the land from their predecessors and had the power to dictate, direct, and govern. The biggest asset that had accumulated over the years was land; the power to trade and the ability to build a kingdom. The domain, over which they had control, was uncontested and reliant on a way of working that had been in place for many years. The influence and capability to make decisions was well and truly with the rich – the landed gentry.



**EVERYONE ELSE** underneath the land-owning elite was employed to generate profits and had the responsibility to farm the land. In return for working for the owners, they were paid for their keep but control was well and truly with those who owned the land. The land was allocated and then tended for a return so the farmers could feed their families and enjoy the smaller things in life, but they were limited in the amount of flexibility and autonomy.

They experienced the wish to break away and look at potential future horizons was nothing more than a pipe dream as the cost of implementing this was often imagined to be unsustainable. The landowners controlled the budgets and allocation of spend. The farmers who worked the land within the kingdom were treated as nothing more than cogs in a system that did not care about them (well, apart from the turkey that was provided by the landowners as a Christmas present, a mere gesture of gratitude).

## HOW THIS APPLIES TO THE REAL WORLD

The land-owning elite are those companies that have been part of the commercial landscape for many years; some are now becoming lazy in their approach. They believe that their brand and heritage carries enough weight to ensure loyalty. However, times are changing and their complacency is now giving opportunity to others.

People are educated from a young age to follow a hierarchical class system and fit into roles within this – led by occupations. Consequently, within businesses, this hierarchy also exists. Larger companies, notably those with bigger budgets and market share, have inherently owned significant proportions of the marketplace. This system has been generationally accepted as part of the established order. It is possible to move up this hierarchy by fitting in but 'starting at the bottom'. There has been acceptance that larger companies will always be bigger and cannot be challenged with a 'David and Goliath' mentality.

## THE OPPORTUNITY THAT AROSE

Outside the immediate kingdom there was land in the far-off distance that was uncharted.

The problem in the more remote regions was that farmers would have to take a different approach to farming the arable land that was in abundance within the controlled areas (but owned by others). The alternative land in the remote regions could be farmed but had deficiencies such as being nutrient poor, a lack of immediate water, or areas that were rocky. While not too much was known about the foreign lands, it was acknowledged that it would be tough and take commitment, dedication, and longevity to convert it into arable land, but it was possible for the land to become a source of abundance if it was farmed well, season after season, year after year. It was acknowledged that the land could

## THE CONTENT REVOLUTION

become fertile but only through a smarter approach to farming and accepting personal responsibility for future development.

The intrigue and promise was driven by a desire to break free from a rigid regime that had been in place for many years. The new land was not owned by anyone or currently farmed. It was unclaimed, but within touching distance once links were created from the existing land to the new space.

The land in the existing kingdom had been farmed a particular way for decades. The strategies in place had been handed down from generation to generation, but it was becoming clear that the overworked land was not as fertile as it had been. As a result, the traditional techniques of farming no longer produced the same yield; they needed to be adapted to allow for change in the land. However, convention dedicated doing things the way they had always because this had always produced results.

To those who accepted the overworked land was no longer as fertile, the dreams of taking ownership of a new space was to become a commitment to explore further. Through research, belief, and understanding, the tentative steps were made to invest time and energy within the new land.

### HOW THIS APPLIES TO THE REAL WORLD

The new land is represented by digital spaces, namely your website, your blog, and your email. Through using more modern techniques to nurture an audience, you are able to build the connection with the consumer to generate profitable action.

The traditional marketing methods such as press advertising, direct marketing, and the disruption and interruption of an audience do not produce results/a yield in this new land. Instead, we need to learn to use newer techniques, which may take longer

to deliver a return, but once established can produce more sustainable growth. This initially takes a leap of faith and requires a change in mindset, but the result is that your space is 100% owned by you.

### THE COMMITMENT THAT WAS MADE

The first acknowledgment was the requirement to farm in a different way. New irrigation canals and wells were created, new trees were planted, and alternative insulation was developed against the cold and the heat, along with protection against the wind. This had to be learned and implemented to aggregate a fruitful harvest, but it could be achieved. People realized they could build momentum and expertise in new methods and this could, in turn, pave the way for their land to grow and challenge the land-owning aristocracy from the old kingdom. A revolt was quietly happening. They knew that before long they would have the ability to achieve far more than being at the whim of those who had built a rigid structure.

To those who had tried to generate a harvest on a new piece of land, the main drive for change was a future, that was not going to be about power and proclamation, but to be the centre of something that was built with an individual's own hands and belief that a new harvest was possible. Instead of being envied for what they had achieved, people would be respected for what had been built. Rather than being run by generational acceptance of the powerful elite, the movement into new spaces and harvesting new land was built on the quest for learning and collaborating with others. In this new land, farming methods were not kept under lock and key.

As the new land became more fertile, the respect from others increased; they could see that the marketplace was growing. What was gradually becoming evident was a movement from an old

system that was based on hierarchy and inheritance to one of a flatter structure. Practices could be implemented at a faster pace and a democracy was built where the focus was more on developing individual relationships and alliances made. The pioneers who farmed the new land were prepared to re-educate themselves in the new practices and had made a decision to change.

The new land that was being farmed was on an equal standing with the longer-established kingdom. For those who were successful, the farming of the new land was more than a discipline: it became a habit. The traits of the farmers represented leadership, respect, trust, and authenticity.

The links to the new land grew gradually over time. What was once an inconsistent path, clearings, trees, and shrubbery, was now becoming littered with accessible road providing easy access and the ability to interact with other regions. What was once an unstable wooden plank over a stretch of water was now a sturdy bridge from one side of the land to the other. The access to the land was becoming more mobile and this contributed to the success of the ongoing farming and growth of the land. Eventually, it was becoming recognized as a more trusted producer than the longer-running kingdom.

The original kingdom had, for many years, become set in its ways and worked to an old system using technology and application that had been part of its culture for many decades. It had neglected to accept the new methods and had not adapted over time.

The new farmers who sourced new land and decided to make a commitment to learn, had gradually positioned themselves as the authority in a new land. It was recognized that they did not have to be big to be successful; they had to be significant in what they did. The new ways of working relied on understanding

new traits and being prepared for the long term. Clinging to nostalgia and old ways of working was recognized as a trait from a bygone age and the owners of the old kingdom were welcome to it.

The revolution that started from a change of mindset and a quest to look at new land to farm and grow had now become regarded as the accepted practice, everyday. The farmers who tended to the new land had discovered that they were now “discoverable”.

### HOW THIS APPLIES TO THE REAL WORLD

By building your own domain, you can generate a conversation and grow an audience that belongs to you alone. This approach is more engaging and more targeted as it is grown organically and is therefore more likely to produce a ‘yield’ or business growth. You can now be regarded as the authority in your marketplace by delivering a consistent message that meets the needs of your audience.

As businesses, we need to re-educate ourselves to use communication tools in a committed manner that is not reliant on tired marketing methods (interruption, disruption, and self-promotion). We need to become self-sufficient by having an understanding of technology, our marketplace, and the consistent content that we need to deliver. The ability to build a successful brand in today’s world is not about creating a fantastic logo and self-promotional print. It is not about being the biggest and having an endless marketing budget, but the ability to present a brand persona to which an audience can relate and of which people want to be part.