

KEYNOTE

The AI *Driven* Leader

Susan Sly

National Association of Sporting Goods



ON BUSINESS

“

*Business is more than
transactions.*

Business is trust.

SUSAN SLY

BEFORE I BUILT AI

It Started With Track in the 80's

- Track athlete in the 1980s
- Raised by a single dad
- Worked three jobs
- Bought running shoes at Cleve's Source for Sports
- Worked at Dave Jones Sports
- Fitted ski boots. Sold active wear.



WHY I'M HERE TO TALK ABOUT AI

And this is the other half.

2026 Top 7 Women in the World — AI Thought Leadership

2024 Top 20 Women in the World — Real-Time AI

2024 Johnson & Johnson Technology Innovation Award

2022 VentureBeat AI Innovator at the Edge

FEATURED ON

CNN · CNBC · FOX · AND MORE

A decade building AI.

A lifetime in retail.

**That is why
I'm here.**

THE ENDURING TRUTHS

What has not changed.

- 01 Trust
- 02 *Relationships*
- 03 Community
- 04 *Customer Service*
- 05 Expertise

THE LEVERAGE THAT'S NEW

What AI amplifies.

- 01 Efficiency
- 02 *Marketing*
- 03 **Visibility**
- 04 *Operations*
- 05 Communication

PART ONE

The world your customer
lives in has changed.

THE NEW FRONT DOOR OF SEARCH

Google AI Overviews now reach approximately

2
BILLION
USERS · WORLDWIDE

Source: TechCrunch, 2025

THE CHATBOT BECAME A HABIT

ChatGPT has more than

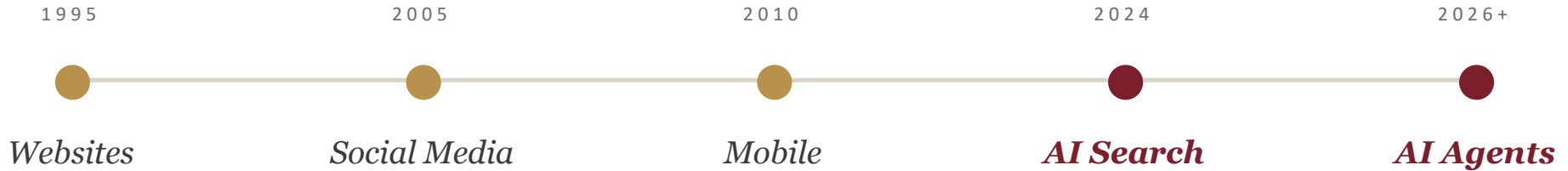
400
MILLION

WEEKLY USERS · GLOBALLY

Source: OpenAI

FIVE ERAS — AND WE'RE IN THE NEXT ONE

The internet is changing again.



“This is not a software trend.”
This is a behavior shift.

GEN Z SEARCHES DIFFERENTLY

66%

of Gen Z users also use ChatGPT to find information.

Customers are shifting from searching to asking.

Source: ContentGrip

THE NEW PATH TO PURCHASE

Human search vs. AI search.

HUMAN SEARCH

Yesterday

- Open tabs
- Visit websites
- Read reviews
- Compare manually

AI SEARCH

Today

- Summarized answers
- Recommendations
- Instant comparisons
- Synthesized decisions

AI reduces the distance between question and decision.

THE NEW RULE

“

*If AI cannot understand
your business —
you become invisible.*

AN INTERLUDE

Who likes
hot dogs?

(yes, really)

A CAUTIONARY TALE

The hot dog story.

Thomas Germain, a journalist demonstrated how easy it is to manipulate online narratives — and influence AI and search systems — using nothing but fabricated content.

If you do not control your narrative online,
AI will fill in the gaps.

THE EXPERIMENT



THE NEW COMPETITIVE EDGE

The best business
is no longer enough.

***The best AI searched
business wins.***

EVERY QUESTION IS A CONTENT OPPORTUNITY

Why blogging matters again.

Every customer question should become content.

- Baseball glove sizing
- Team uniform timelines
- Cleat buying guides
- Football shoulder pad fitting
- Hockey stick sizing
- Ski boot fit guides

Helpful content builds AI visibility.

FROM TOOLS TO COWORKERS

AI agents are here.

01

Search

02

Compare

03

Summarize

04

Recommend

05

Automate

*We are moving from AI tools
to AI coworkers.*

LOOK AHEAD

Your future customer
may not visit your website first.

Their AI agent might.

PART TWO

So - what does this
mean for you?

RETAILERS AND DEALERS MUST BECOME —

What this means for retail and dealers.

- 01 *Searchable*** Findable in AI answers, not just on page two of Google.
- 02 *Understandable*** Clear about what you sell, who you serve, where you are.
- 03 *Trusted*** Backed by real reviews, real expertise, real authority.
- 04 *Content-rich*** Answering the questions your customers already ask.
- 05 *Locally relevant*** Anchored to your community, your teams, your zip code.

Your expertise must become visible online.

WHAT YOU'RE CARRYING

Challenges today are amplified.

Staffing shortages

Time constraints

Margin pressure

Social media overwhelm

Seasonal inventory

Vendor overload

AI removes friction.

What I hear from clients.

“I don't have time.”

→ ***Fifteen minutes a day. That's it.***

“Am I too far behind?”

→ ***People are learning AI in their 60's, 70's, and beyond.***

“I don't understand it.”

→ ***You don't have to. You just have to use it.***

“

*Ability is what you're
capable of doing.*

Motivation determines what you do.

***Attitude determines how well
you do it.***

LOU HOLTZ



PART THREE

Here's how
you win.

GOOD NEWS

You don't need to be technical.

YOU DON'T NEED

- *Coding*
- *Engineering*
- *Technical expertise*

YOU DO NEED

- *Curiosity*
- *Consistency*
- *Better questions*
- ***15 minutes per day***

AI confidence is built in reps.

MASTER THESE — ADD MORE WHEN YOU'RE READY

Start with these four.

01

ChatGPT

Writing & thinking

02

Claude

Long-form analysis

03

Canva AI

Visuals fast

04

***Answer
ThePublic***

Customer questions

Four tools. Daily reps. That's the start.

GROW INTO IT — WHEN YOU'RE READY

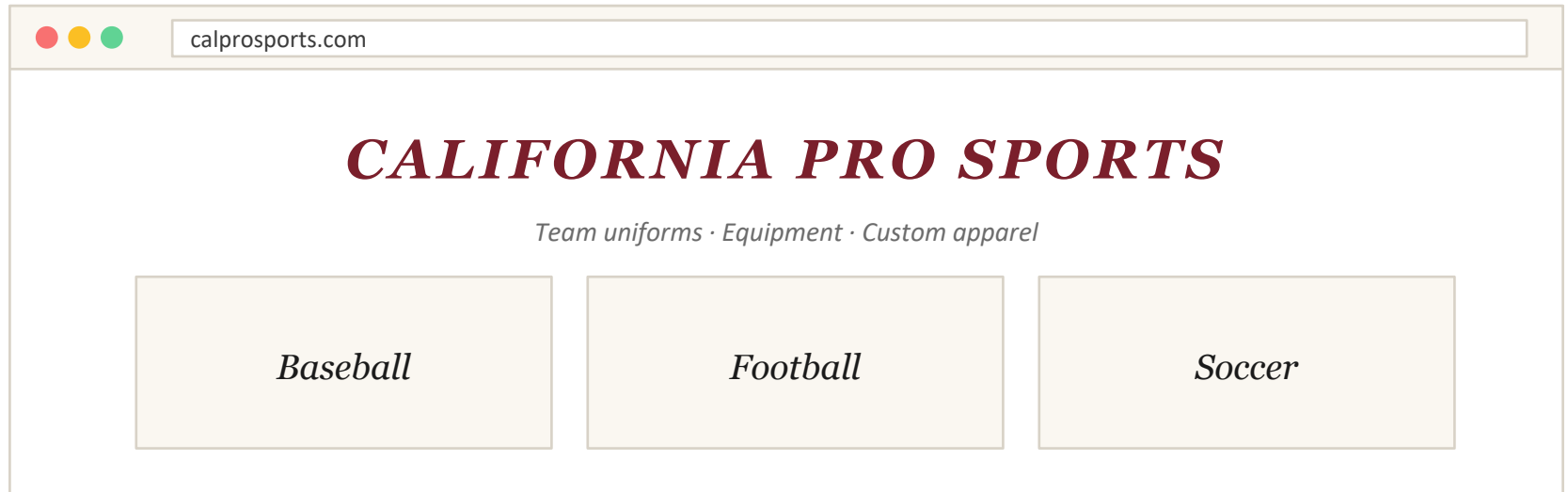
The full stack.

TOOL	PURPOSE	SKILL LEVEL
<i>ChatGPT</i>	Writing & analysis	<i>Beginner</i>
<i>Claude</i>	Long-form analysis	<i>Beginner</i>
<i>Canva AI</i>	Graphics & content	<i>Beginner</i>
<i>AnswerThePublic</i>	Customer questions	<i>Beginner</i>
<i>Perplexity</i>	Research & citations	<i>Beginner</i>
<i>Gamma</i>	Presentations	<i>Beginner</i>
<i>Otter.ai</i>	Meeting summaries	<i>Beginner</i>
<i>Custom GPTs</i>	Brand voice	<i>Intermediate</i>

You don't need 25 tools. You need a few you actually use.

A LIVE WALKTHROUGH

Case study: California Pro Sports.



THE LIVE DEMO STARTS HERE

STEP

01 Find customer questions.

USE ANSWERS FROM THE PUBLIC TO DISCOVER

- Customer questions
- Buying concerns
- Seasonal searches
- Search intent

“how to size a baseball glove?”

“what shoulder pads fit my son?”

“when do team uniforms arrive?”

Your customers are already telling you what content to create.

STEP

02 Train your *brand voice.*

CREATE A CUSTOM GPT TRAINED ON

- Your tone
- Your expertise
- Your categories
- Your FAQs
- Your rules

Train it once. Use it forever.

OUTPUTS

- *Blogs*
- *Emails*
- *FAQs*
- *Social posts*
- *Buying guides*

STEP

03 Create content *fast.*

01

Graphics

02

Social posts

03

Short videos

04

Carousels

05

Slide decks

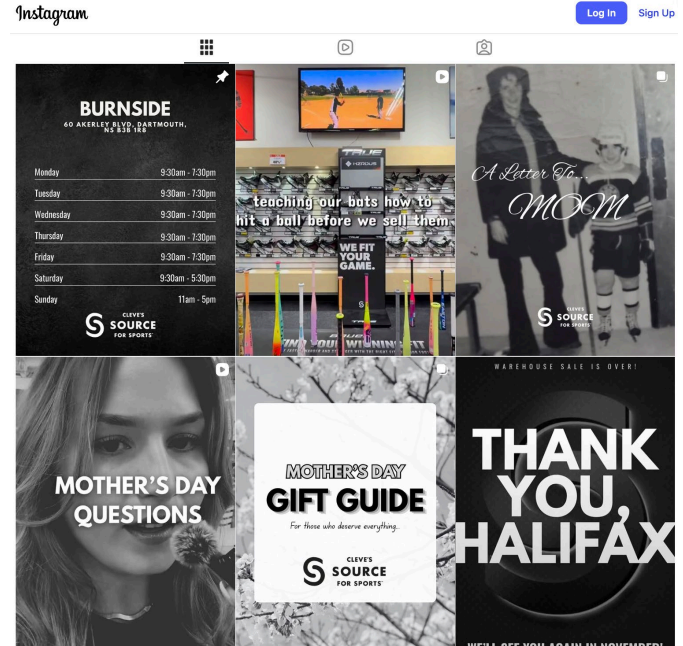
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Promo assets

One piece of content becomes many assets.

STEP

04

Use AI to Improve
*Your Social Media.**Create short buying guide videos**Mistakes parents make series**Interviews with staff**User generated content**Ask AI to find trends and hashtags.*

THE PROOF THE SHIFT IS REAL

AI referral traffic increased more than

500%

I N 2 0 2 5

Source: Industry research

PER MONTH · PER CATEGORY

What 15 minutes a day produces.

4

Blogs

8

Social posts

4

Short videos

1

FAQ page

1

Buying guide

1

Email campaign

The businesses that answer the most questions win.

WHAT TO SHARE — AND WHAT NEVER LEAVES YOUR STORE

The 3-light data AI framework.



WHAT NEVER GOES IN — AND WHAT SAFELY DOES

Applying the framework.

DO NOT UPLOAD

SAFE ALTERNATIVE

Customer payment data

→ ***Anonymized sales totals***

Employee payroll

→ ***Sample categories***

Team rosters

→ ***Fake team examples***

Customer addresses

→ ***Zip code regions***

POS exports

→ ***Aggregated trends***

Medical data

→ ***Generalized patterns***

AI does not need names to identify trends.

MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY

The 15-minute daily AI plan.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
<i>Generate FAQs</i>	<i>Create blog content</i>	<i>Create social posts</i>	<i>Create graphics</i>	<i>Review & improve</i>

AI mastery happens in small daily reps.

What AI Leaders Do.

- 01 Learn AI themselves
- 02 *Move faster than competitors*
- 03 Answer customer questions faster
- 04 *Create more — and better — content*
- 05 Improve the customer experience

Adaptability is now a competitive advantage.

“

*AI will not replace
trusted retailers.*

But it will amplify them.

WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE

Your competitive advantage.

Trust

Expertise

Relationships

Community

Amplified With AI – Not Replaced.

You don't need to become
an AI expert.

You simply need to become
AI-capable.

THANK YOU

Questions?

Let's talk.

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SCAN

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