

Cec Busby [00:00:04]:

Hi, everybody. I'm Cec Busby, editor of flying solo. Welcome to our weekly podcast where we step inside the minds and lives of soloists and small business owners. Tracy Sheen is an AI and digital expert with a focus on helping small businesses to stay informed on the latest tech trends. She's the author of The End of Technophobia, and she's about to launch the new book which pretty much reveals everything you need to know about how you can use AI for your business. She joins us today to give us a bit of a sneak peek and share her top tips for AI and tech in 2024. Tracy, thank you so much for joining me on

Tracy Sheen [00:00:47]:

the show today. It's always lovely chatting with you, Ses. Such a charmer.

Cec Busby [00:00:55]:

Now, our listeners We'd probably know that you're also our resident tech expert for Koshy's Business Builders. So today, I'm gonna be picking your brain all things tech, including AI, I would imagine. Just with the the end of year fast approaching and the new year coming, it would be Good to kind of pick your brain about what you see in terms of tech might be impacting businesses for the year ahead. So let's maybe kick off with AI. I know you did a chat GPT Masterclass for us in the very early days, but that was for KBB. So maybe tell our flying solo listeners why why they should be getting into chat gpt and how much of a benefit it can be for their business.

Tracy Sheen [00:01:46]:

It's really interesting. A lot of the conferences and things I've been to this year, people are likening it to the discovery of fire. So it's one thing to remember that, You know, we're just shy of the 1st year anniversary of Chat GPT, so we're only 12 months down this kind of real AI rabbit hole and how quickly it has advanced. And for a lot of businesses, It's now an ubiquitous part of, you know, our day to day lives, but, really, it is fire. We have only just Figured this thing out, and we're only just starting to see how it's going to impact Business, from all levels, you know, good, bad, ugly, marketing, HR, admin, you name it. This thing is

now starting to touch all parts of the business sector. So, really, now is the time if you have not played with it before. They've just launched the voice option for ChatGPT on the free version, so now you can Talk to it and give it instructions.

Tracy Sheen [00:03:05]:

For the paid version, it's time to get really curious. I'm creating Most of my images, my stock images through ChatGPT, which is linked with DALL E, it's now up to speed with the world or with the Internet up until April, May 2023, so it's It's advanced a lot in the last 12 months.

Cec Busby [00:03:32]:

Is that on the free version as well or is that with the paid version?

Tracy Sheen [00:03:36]:

So DALL E DALL E and Bing is not connected on the free version, but it certainly, opened up its eyes to the early part of 2023 on the free as well.

Cec Busby [00:03:47]:

Oh, that's good. So you're not getting those outdated stats and things that that You were pretty excited.

Tracy Sheen [00:03:53]:

It still hallucinates and and creates some pretty interesting stuff, so it's still incumbent upon all of us to You know, we're still the the experts in our own business and in our own industry, so it's still incumbent upon us to do that sanity checking. However it is, you know, it's getting better with that stuff as well.

Cec Busby [00:04:14]:

Yeah. It did tell me I was dead because, of course, I chat GPT'd myself.

Tracy Sheen [00:04:21]:

Wow. Did it write you a good, victory at least?

Cec Busby [00:04:24]:

Yeah. I had quite a few factual stuff in there, like about my background in Theater and arts and entertainment and then but it, you know, it invented a whole pile of stuff of about me being a mental health advocate and and my sad demise.

Tracy Sheen [00:04:41]:

Wow. Well, it's nice to be speaking to you beyond The vile then today, Cec.

Cec Busby [00:04:49]:

I know. It's my Ouija board connected to the the laptop Yeah. Yes. So that, that hallucinations, element, how What's the best way for people to make sure that that it's not spitting them up some guff? Is it all about doing your your own research?

Tracy Sheen [00:05:13]:

Yeah. Absolutely. I mean, there are some things we know now that keeping our prompts Seccinct? So anytime you enter text into ChatJPT or any of the AI tools, that's called a prompt. You're prompting it for a response. So we know now that by keeping your prompts really clear, really concise, and in fact, you don't have to speak in full sentences. So, for example, you can, introduce a colon and and that will be, you know, here's what I want you to do, colon. Here's a description of what that would look like. So almost by clipping or by dot pointing what it is that you need, we know that that provides better Quality responses and gives it less of a chance to go off on a tangent and create its own thoughts.

Cec Busby [00:06:07]:

In terms of AI, as you said, it's becoming really ubiquitous. It's got its fingers on everything at the moment. What What are you seeing as the trends that are likely for the year ahead?

Tracy Sheen [00:06:19]:

Yeah. It's it's really interesting, you know, because I'm I'm chatting to a lot of People, I'm kind of saying to them right now that we all need to become almost futurists of our own business. This stuff is changing at such a pace that The fads, the trends, all that kind of stuff is is almost irrelevant, and I'm getting really hesitant about even talking about particular platforms because I'm seeing those things kinda pop up and disappear really, really quickly. So If you're listening to this in 6 months, 12 months time, and I've spoken about a platform, I'm reasonably confident OpenAI is gonna stay around. Although given the last few days of the Sam Altman passed the popcorn, you know, who knows? But it it's almost The platforms are becoming irrelevant. It's the thinking that we really need to be drilling down on. And the way I kind of describe that, you know, as as Aussies, we all mostly grew up going to the beach. And I know when I was really little, my brother Was a surf lifesaver, and my cousin was a a surfboard rider.

Tracy Sheen [00:07:34]:

And they both used to make me sit down and watch The waves and watch the water before I was allowed to go into the surf. And the reason for that was they were training me to see where the rips were and to how the surf was behaving on that day. So, really, that's that's kind of the thinking that I want you to be taking away now is you need be sitting back and looking at what's going on and look outside your industry because it's often There that you'll start to see the trends develop before they've actually impacted your own industry.

Cec Busby [00:08:12]:

Now, you do quite a lot of roadshows and you travel around regional centers, talking to business owners about Technology. What are the concerns that you're seeing? The speed the speed at which this stuff's moving.

Tracy Sheen [00:08:29]:

You know, with with the stats on on Australian businesses, the average age of an Aussie business owner is 50. 63% of us are over 45, and 30% of Australian businesses are based in regional locations. So we're a Gen

X operated environment, really, and we're still at that overwhelmed stage of, like, you know, oh my god. I've just caught up with Operating in the cloud or I'm I've just got my head around TikTok or the latest social media or or this or that. And now this has come in, and I have to understand what this looks like. So it's that speed. It's That constant overwhelm of, well, how do we even keep in touch with what's going on? And what do we pick up? And what do we, you know, let Go through to the keeper. So that's the really big one that people are concerned about.

Tracy Sheen [00:09:24]:

And the next one is jobs. What does this mean for my industry? What does this mean for my kids' future? What does it mean for my regional economy or my local economy if this is going to overtake Jobs impact industries like, you know, we're reading.

Cec Busby [00:09:42]:

Although, interestingly, you know, Like, I mean, they're liking it to things like the industrial revolution, but as one job ended, another type of job opened up, Didn't it? So

Tracy Sheen [00:09:53]:

Absolutely. And and that's the thing, you know, when whenever there is change, there's opportunity And that's why I'd come back to if you're sitting and gazing out at what is humming, and don't just stick to your own backyard. Don't just stick to your own industry. Look more broadly. And if you can see What's coming down the pipeline? Then you're in a really good position right now to adopt, adapt, and, You know, and and implement these things that are going to really revolutionize. That's becoming the new word, isn't it? It was pivot couple of years ago, it's really gonna revolutionize the way that we live, work, and play. So what are you saying to these business owners that are feeling this sense of overwhelm? Be curious. You know, just start.

Tracy Sheen [00:10:47]:

And it might even be that, you know, you start with Catch EPT and you write a a birthday card for your child or you create a Christmas treasure

hunt, You know, putting in some clues or you write a song for your grandma's birthday or something, just start to play and get curious with What these things can do, you know, if you're in a paid plan, take a photo of your contents of your fridge and upload it and then say, you know, what can I make with the ingredients in my fridge? Just start getting curious because the the more we interact with this stuff, The more that we'll start to go, oh, I wonder what happens if I do this or, you know, can I ask it that? If you're saying to yourself, can I ask it that? Ask it and see what happens. If you have other platforms that are A crucial part of your business, like, you know, say, a Canva or a Xero or Facebook or anything like that, have a look at how They're integrating AI into their platforms and ask yourself, what does that mean? How can I use those tools now for my own business?

Cec Busby [00:12:02]:

Because we really need to be leveraging every opportunity that comes our way, don't we?

Tracy Sheen [00:12:08]:

Oh, absolutely. Because the more we stay open and stay curious, the more we'll start to be thinking about, Well, what does this mean? And if you have kids, be talking to your kids, you know? If your kids have VR headset goggles and they're playing Roblox, Get in and play with them. Start to see where this stuff is being implemented and how it's Affecting or impacting or improving or disadvantaging different genders, different Ethnicities, different groups, even your kids. Ask them what they like, what they don't like, what would they like to see, you know. How is it impacting them and start to Just marinate on, well, what could that look like for me?

Cec Busby [00:12:53]:

It's interesting you mentioned that as well because I've read Quite an interesting article. I think it was on ABC site yesterday about the impact of ChatGPT on students because There was no real hard and fast rule laid down by the government in terms of education as to whether kids could be using it or not. So some calls that was like open slather. Others, we you could use it to help you research stuff, but, they interviewed actually Students themselves, like, we've kind of heard

what everyone else thinks about it, but this was, like, from the students' perspective, and they were Quite a few of them were concerned about how it's impacting their critical thinking.

Tracy Sheen [00:13:39]:

That's really interesting. My my my take on that is it's forcing me to become a better thinker. How can I get a better answer out of this prompt? How can I manipulate that to make it fit what I need to do? And that kinda scares me because that shows me that the education department aren't assisting these kids on how to be doing that. Because if they're if they're shown those kinds of things, then they keep to run with it.

Cec Busby [00:14:13]:

Yeah. Because, they were basically saying, you know, they might hand in homework that It had been completely done by chat GPT or they'd work do assignments that were was chat GPT driven, and then it came time to for them to do an exam, and they had lost some of those critical skills because of just allowing the program to do things for them.

Tracy Sheen [00:14:42]:

Yeah. Well, look, I mean, you know, I'm gonna be Pretty controversial here, but how how long is it going to be before kids are allowed to take Chat 2 p t into the exam room with us. You know, we could take a calculator in, but my dad couldn't. So at what point do we kind of draw the line and go, You know, we do we need to be carrying that knowledge or are we better placed Putting our critical thinking, our creativity, our our humanity towards different sides and allowing the technology to do what it does. I was reading an article. Germany seems to be doing some really cool stuff with, Education where they allow students to utilize Chat GPT or any of the AI tools to their heart's content, But they have to be able to justify and reason why they utilized The AI tools to assist them with that part of the assignment, I think that's really smart, you know, because that still gives The ability for that that critical thinking part of our brain to go, okay. Well, you know, I can I can sit here and knock out An essay in, you know, 2 minutes, but I need to refine it? I need to drill down because I know I'm going to have to justify And explain my thinking and my reasoning behind the responses.

Cec Busby [00:16:15]:

It's true. So What are are you working on at the moment? You've you've got a new book coming out very shortly. So can you talk to us a little bit about the topics for that?

Tracy Sheen [00:16:25]:

Yeah. I do. So the book is called AI and You, Business Reimagined, and it's really about, Again, the thinking behind what do we need to be doing now to be comfortable and ready for the tsunami that's going to hit us. Again, not focusing a whole lot on particular platforms because as you could imagine, a book on AI would be out of date by the time it goes to the printers if I'm not careful. So it's really about the framework, the strategy, the thinking behind, You know, how do we shift our mindset from business as usual to business as new usual, and what it what does that look like? So, that's been a lot of fun researching, a lot of fun well, I mean, it it look, just shows how weird I am when I say it's a lot Fun. Right? People are probably rolling their eyes and gonna end up in another dimension with the amount of eye rolling I can hear. But, you know, for me, it really is Interesting because we've lived through so many changes. Yeah.

Tracy Sheen [00:17:33]:

I can remember going from black and white TV to Color TV when I was, like, 3 or 4 shows my age, not hard to figure that one out, through to the 1st microwave, Through to, you know, cordless telephones, I was there at the launch of the mobile phone, and and all of that change has become part of our DNA now, But this change feels different. This change feels like there's a real line in the sand, and I just wanna be able to arm our business community, and our economy for, you know, How do we need to be thinking? What do we need to be doing? And what areas do we need to pay attention to? And what ones can we, You know, just let slip through. How do you tell the difference between a fad and a trend?

Cec Busby [00:18:22]:

So what do we need to be paying attention to?

Tracy Sheen [00:18:25]:

Yeah. So I've developed some of the framework that I'll be talking through in the book. I've based around the word artificial because that kinda makes sense to me. So It's really about, you know, assessing, assessing where you're at, reviewing, triaging the the critical thing that you want to implement, investigating, formulating a plan of attack, implementing I've got Fused with our mat and my my thing artificial and then, you know, going through adapting and leveraging. So it it's really, Again, it's not even platform specific. It's looking at your business and saying, if I could take this thing off my plate, what would that mean to my clients? What would that mean to my suppliers? What would that mean to me? We can all stand to be more productive. What's the one area that if you could make, a change, an incremental Shift, how would that impact? What would the ripples look like for everyone involved? And then go off and see what you can do. Because, really, there's Pretty much now an AI solution for any problem.

Tracy Sheen [00:19:39]:

It's just whether that AI solution is Crawling, toddling, walking, or running. Yeah. So what should business owners be looking The automate and implement. What's what are the very basics that they should maybe be thinking about? Very basics, you know, look at look at putting chatbots into place. So you have a way another way of being able to reach and engage your clients, your suppliers, your teams. Look at what tasks are mundane in your business that you're doing day in, day out or week in, week out or month in, month out that really drive you spare. They're all the stuff that you can implement, an AI solution for now. Look at where you're overspending or cost cutting or, you know, needing to tighten or prove in your financial aspects, and there's an AI solution to help you, you know, review all of that and see, You know, go out and source different suppliers or or go out and get you better better deals on your your pricing.

Tracy Sheen [00:20:51]:

It it really HR, you know, recruitment. Where are you recruiting? How are you recruiting? Do you need to recruit? Is that something that You can just create an internal system that will automate itself for you. It's it

really is down to the business of, you know, what's that big thing. But typically for me, it's what's gonna save you time, what's gonna save you money, or what's gonna make you money. That that's kind of where I start, because from there, you can you know, that'll that'll create a bit of time for you to go off and and have a look around.

Cec Busby [00:21:25]:

So should businesses be looking at, connected systems or a system that it can basically do Most things for them because it seems to me, you know, we've all got we've got all of these different subscriptions Just so many different things and a lot of them don't talk to each other.

Tracy Sheen [00:21:45]:

Yeah. It's, it it's a great point, Cec. There's, If we look at Microsoft, they have now launched Copilot, which is their inbuilt AI. For those that aren't aware, Microsoft owned 49% of of OpenAI, so they can implement The the chat GPT and and the AI systems really, really easily behind their platform. So if you're a a Microsoft 365 Subscriber, you already have access to a number of the AI tools. Right? And and I've been looking at what Copilot can do, and it's just crazy. You know, You can have a conversation with your files and get it to summarize things. It can now go off and make, appointments for you in your calendar and preschedule things.

Tracy Sheen [00:22:31]:

It can, give you summaries of conversations prior to meetings so you can bring yourself back up to speed. It can Record, a team meeting or a conversation and then automatically Send off the to do list and the thing the tasks that need to be followed up. So these systems are starting to roll out whether you're Microsoft, whether you're Google. Google has its own version, of course, so it it these are coming. I've moved to a, like, a one distant platform for my business that does all my CRM, my learning management stuff, so any of my online courses that I offer. It does my email automations. It does my landing pages. It does my task flows, project management.

Tracy Sheen [00:23:17]:

All of that is incorporated into one. It's even got a client portal so when people sign up or wanna work with me, they have their own access into the back end, and they see the stuff that they need to see. I use that for supplies as well. My graphic designer, they can just upload all my files directly into my system, so rather than me going, where the hell was that insert random thing that I was looking for, everything's housed under the one roof and I can just chat with the system and say go find me that logo or where's that latest video I created or whatever. So that's been a godsend for me. So so I think those types of integrated systems, they're definitely coming. One of the big pieces of advice I would offer People right now is be cautious about what platforms you sign up on an annual agreement, particularly if they're new, because, again, I'm I'm thinking, and this is, you know, terms and conditions applied, the the whole, What is it? The voting thing at the end of an ad? My gut says to me that we're going to see a lot of platforms come and go very, very quickly. We're also going to see new platforms come out at a rate of not.

Tracy Sheen [00:24:35]:

So if you've committed to something for 12 months and 3 months down the track, Something, you know, new comes out that does that thing better, faster, cheaper, whatever, you're still locked in for another 9 months. So there's very Few platforms that I'm signing up to an annual agreement now. Everything else I'm doing month by month might be a little bit more expensive, but I think in the long term, it's going to work out Better.

Cec Busby [00:24:59]:

I think that's where, a platform like AppSumo is really cool because it, you know, it showcases lots of Those new developers and their new products, but always at a really cheap price or with a lifetime deal that is super cheap because they're just wanting people to come in and Try everything to basically help them beat a test in a lot of cases, but there's an advantage to that, I think.

Tracy Sheen [00:25:27]:

I I love AppSumo. It's it's, you know, it's like my crack, but don't even get me started on that one.

Cec Busby [00:25:35]:

So what's your favorite piece of technology at the moment?

Tracy Sheen [00:25:40]:

I'm loving a platform called Sweet Dash. It's my all in one system that I've gone in for. We're just playing around with adding a chatbot to it at the moment, and we're going to be watching that chatbot as our new website. So we're not even going to create a standardized website. We're gonna have a classic one there if people wanna Click across. But we're really looking looking to transition to showcase where I think this stuff's gonna go in the next kind of, You know, 18 months to 3 years. But the reason I like Swipe Dash is, you know, just as I said, it's my CRM. It's my project manager.

Tracy Sheen [00:26:19]:

It's my task planner, event scheduler, deal pipeline for sales. It has an LMS so I can sell my my programs the back end, landing pages, email automations. The the thing just has knocked out probably about 4 or 5 other systems that I was needing to use.

Cec Busby [00:26:40]:

Mhmm. And everything's talking to each other. Everything's talks

Tracy Sheen [00:26:44]:

to each other. You know, email signatures, Invoicing, and yeah. And everything's uber connected.

Cec Busby [00:26:54]:

Just pointing out, Tracy's just Talking about sweet dash off her own bat. She's not getting any money out of this shit.

Tracy Sheen [00:27:02]:

No. Although, you know, Mike, Who's to the CEO? If you're listening, I am completely open.

Cec Busby [00:27:14]:

So 2024, almost here. Number one thing business owners should get, what what ducks do they need to get in a row In terms of their tech.

Tracy Sheen [00:27:26]:

Now is the time to do your full audit. You know, it's boring, but sit back and have a look at what you've already got. Have a look at your bank account and see what you're already paying for. If you haven't used something in 3 months, can it? No point you're paying for it if you're not using it. Once you know what you have, then you can start to look through and figure out where your gaps are. You know, what do you really need to To, accelerate next year, what do you really need to close, what do you you know, what's that thing? But, you know, usually, when I'm chatting to people and we do the the bank account exercise, we can find between \$2.10 without Too much difficulty just by looking through subscriptions because we're all paying \$10, \$15, \$50, \$100 a month for things that we, you know, sign up for with the best of intentions and don't follow through. So that's the first thing is is go through and do that For audit, so you you understand what you've already got, and then really just get curious. You know, start with some really simple stuff.

Tracy Sheen [00:28:35]:

We all use social media. Jump on to Chat TPT and say, write me 10 headlines that I can use for my business for Facebook or Instagram or whatever your platform of choice is, put them into it and and put them into a table format. And ChatGPT will give you 10, 20, 30, 50 headlines, whatever it is, in a table format. If you have A paid Canva account, you can then export that table from Chat GPT as a CSV, upload it to Canva, And as a bulk upload and voila, you have 10, 20, 30, 50 headlines prewritten with your pretty background, Ground everything ready to go that you can preschedule for your social media and there's your, you know, there's your your 1 a month, A post about a certain thing that you wanna promote each month done. It's starting to get you know, that stuff is easy. It's here. It's it's things that you can do in, you know, 20

minutes sitting and watching your latest binge on Netflix or Stan or Foxtel or whatever of an evening, and that stuff's really going to get you excited because now you're not thinking about, well, what do I write Next week for social media, now you can start investigating and getting curious about other stuff.

Cec Busby [00:29:53]:

How important is it though to make sure that what is being written is actually in your brand personality?

Tracy Sheen [00:30:00]:

Yeah. That that A 100% that comes down to, you know, spending a little bit of time and training it. If you have the paid version of Chat GPT, you can write some predefined personas around it, but, again, that's in that, you know, dare I say prompt engineering is is learning how to write good prompts, and that goes a long way to you know, you gotta look at it. If it doesn't sound like you, please don't put that out. Typically, stuff comes out sounding quite vanilla, so you do have to, you know, tweak it a little.

Cec Busby [00:30:36]:

Tracy, thank you so much for your time today. I really appreciate you coming on the show. Now, you're doing a bit of a workshop on AI in the next Few weeks. So do you wanna give it a plug?

Tracy Sheen [00:30:46]:

Yeah. I am. So I've got some Black Friday deals coming out, on Black Friday, Friday, 24th November, including a prompt workshop, and then I have my AI and you in 2020 Four webinar coming up on the 7th December. And if you head over to any of my social channels, you'll see Me promoting that, or happy to, give you a link, Cec, and we can include that.

Cec Busby [00:31:17]:

Yeah. Do do send me the link and your website. What is that, Tracy? Let's just get it out there as well. [Thedigitalguide.com.au](https://thedigitalguide.com.au). Awesome.

Thank you very much thedigitalguide.com.au. Tracy sheeny. Thank you for joining me.

Tracy Sheen [00:31:34]:

Thanks,