

Welcome back to Campers! In today's episode, We discuss standing out in a digital world cluttered with AI and automated communications. Our amazing guest, Ernest Harker, guides us through navigating the 2024 business landscape. Learn how to generate new business, utilize platforms like LinkedIn effectively, and identify automated interactions. Explore promoting a lifestyle through award offerings, uncovering your brand's distinctiveness beyond products, and using storytelling for building customer loyalty. Gain insights into Ernest's story and learn how businesses can succeed with strategic branding. Let's dive in!

## Quotes

*"Discovering what truly sets you apart requires shifting focus from the product to the essence of your brand."- Ernest Harker*

*"To stand out in business, embrace risk and innovation. Be bold, stand out, and make your mark."- Ernest Harker*

## Featured in the Episode

### Ernest Harker

Website: <https://ernburn.com>

Linkedin: [linkedin.com/in/ernie-harker-a56b7624](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ernie-harker-a56b7624)

## Chapters

00:00 - Introduction

01:45 - Unlocking Branding Secrets: Explore Ernie's Definitive Guide

03:33 - From Agency Beginnings to Adventure Shopping Focus

06:59 - Maverick's Strategy to Reduce Price Sensitivity

09:28 - Transforming Maverick Store: Elevating Customer Experience

11:42 - Domination in the Market: Maximizing Business Footprint

12:27 - Tech Background to Business Founder: Ernie's Journey

15:00 - Unveiling Value and Creativity: The Keys to Promoting Success

19:08 - The Evolution of AI in Content Creation: Impact on Branding

21:55 - Embracing Risk: The Path to Business Success

24:49 - Borrowed Brand Brilliance: The Power of Visual Appeal

26:51 - Innovative Marketing Strategies: Insights from Chuck Norris

31:46 - Standing Out: The Power of Risky Behavior in Business

33:43 - Engagement and Connection: Building Business Relationships

Book a call with Molly: <https://calendly.com/mollyruland/discovery>

Molly Ruland: CEO & Founder

Matt Billman: Operations Manager

Sponsored by : Heartcast Media

[www.heartcastmedia.com](http://www.heartcastmedia.com)

### **Transcript:**

#### **Molly Ruland:**

You'll see the little countdown, and then I'm gonna jump right into your intro. Alright. Ladies and gentlemen, buckle up your seat belts and stash those in flight peanuts because on today's camp content, we're charting a course through branding airspace with none other than the illustrious Ernie Harker. This man's not just a branding consultant. He's the daredevil behind the multibillion dollar sensation Maverick Adventures First Stop. Ernie soared from humble beginnings as a concept artist to strapping on jet packs for a variety of brands all before planting his flag on the marketing summit of Maverick. We're gonna talk about that. And did he stop there? No way.

#### **Molly Ruland:**

He blasted off to write your brand sucks, which is awesome, by the way, a book that's basically the GPS to a no BS branding strategy. Now if rebranding was a tire if rebranding a tired old country store into a treasure trove of profits isn't thrilling enough, Ernest also our generation's renaissance daredevil. He's a speaker that'll have you hanging on every word, an author that hands you the branding holy grail, and a consultant who's like a Swiss army knife for brand crisis management. So what I love about Ernie is his authentic branding. You can tell he's a fun dude to hang out with, just by glancing at his content, and that's alright with me as you know. And his LinkedIn banner image alone says everything you need to know. So without further ado, welcome to camp Ernie.

**Ernest Harker:**

Thank you so much, Mike. That was like an epic intro. I want a copy of that. Awesome. That was like Picasso. I just watched Picasso paint with words. I mean, tell me more, Ernie. Gas me up.

**Molly Ruland:**

You know what I mean? I am not

**Ernest Harker:**

a poet. That was awesome.

**Molly Ruland:**

Well, I mean, you're an easy guy to write that for because you're like, you did all those things, and, I mean, your brand sucks. Like, I love it. You know? We were gonna start a podcast called your website sucks, and I was like, maybe that's

**Ernest Harker:**

a little too mean, but do I know? Hey. That was tough because I honestly had the same kind of question. Am I gonna get some people who are like, do you think my brand sucks? And what's kinda interesting is that when I went through that dialogue in my head, I realized if someone responds like that, I don't wanna work with them.

**Molly Ruland:**

You know? Exactly. It's a great, like, litmus test to, like, who can hang and who can't. You know what I mean? So, my very first question to you is talk to me about Maverick, adventures first, stop and, like, how you leverage content marketing to pivot Maverick from an old country store into this powerhouse.

**Ernest Harker:**

Gotcha. A cool, cool story. Maverick is a convenience store chain, local, in the mountain west. When I started there, they were in 9 states. Now they're in, like, 15, I think. But they were a tired old cowboy western themed brand. The 3rd generation owners were not excited about this tired theme. Didn't know where to go.

**Ernest Harker:**

They hired me to do a TV commercial, and I was thinking gunslingers. And they were thinking, no gunslingers, no cowboy. And I'm like, you realize that's your brand. And they go, we don't like that. Can we just kind of move on? And I said it's probably best to actually rethink your brand and develop branded marketing materials instead of just

creating promotional materials that are independent of your brand. So they said, well, go for it. Come up with whatever you think is cool. So we did some research.

**Ernest Harker:**

I had, I think I had, like, 12 people working for me at the time. I had a small agency And we just went out on the street and talked to convenience store shoppers and discovered nobody likes convenience stores or gas stations because no one likes to buy fuel. Everything's overpriced. They're often dirty. And but we discovered that the the cool thing is that there was a there was a different mindset when people were headed to their favorite activity, hunting, fishing, hiking, snow skiing, whatever in our area, if on the way to those fun exciting things, they would give themselves permission to buy stuff they typically didn't buy at a gas station. And so we thought, well, what if what if we positioned Maverick as the place to go on your way to an adventure, and we would basically treat everybody in their life as if they're on an adventure. And so, we pitched that idea with the tagline, Adventures First stop. We had these really fun TV commercial ideas and in store theming.

**Ernest Harker:**

The owners, they freaking loved it. So we developed all their marketing materials, a whole new brand bible, everything. And then 9 years later, they hired me full time to be their in-house marketing director, and I felt like now as the mechanic who is building the Formula 1 race car, I get to drive it. Drive it. To drive it. I drove it. So now I was able to actually do some really, really fun things with the brand for about 8 years. Left 5 years ago to write my book and consult and speak.

**Molly Ruland:**

9 years later, you're like, 9 short years later. Tough crowd, They really made you work for it on that one.

**Ernest Harker:**

Yeah. Yeah. But it was a lot of fun. Lots of fun. But what's kinda interesting, you mentioned, like, how does a convenience store chain like that, do they do content marketing too, to gain popularity, to gain customer preference because, really, we're a gas station. 95 plus percent of the stuff we sold is exactly I mean, it's I mean, it's like branded stuff. Snickers, Coca Cola. It's not like our Snickers are better.

**Ernest Harker:**

Right?

**Molly Ruland:**

Right.

**Ernest Harker:**

Right. When you're competing in a landscape where your product is identical and it's overpriced. Right? Because it's you're you're you're paying convenience store prices. We needed to get people engaged with the personality of the brand. And so most convenience stores, they interact with their audience through promotions. We have a sale. We have a sale. We have a sale.

**Ernest Harker:**

We have a sale. And it's like, oh my gosh. Everything's on sale. So we decided to use a rewards loyalty program to highlight and talk about really cool prizes, like a camper trailer or a pimped out truck. And we'd actually partner with, like, Monster Energy or Mountain Dew or, Frito Lay and come up with these really cool prizes. And then we were able to share stories of winners on social media. So and then, finalists. So it wasn't always about Cheetos at half price.

**Ernest Harker:**

It was, hey, Bill from Shelley, Idaho has entered to win this cool truck. Let me show you the truck. It's like, what does a truck have to do with Cheetos? You know, or gas stations? But we, with this type of content, were able to drive interest and differentiate from our competitors, so that when people heard, you know, or were familiar with the Maverick brand, they were less price sensitive. Because when you like a brand, you're not, you're not shopping price anymore. You're kinda like, I like this company. I'm gonna spend 2¢ extra or whatever. Right? So that's what we did to create content.

**Molly Ruland:**

Yeah. It's almost like that thing that's expensive becomes like a treat. You're like, I know I shouldn't pay \$7 for this doughnut, but I'm done now. It's good. And I'm gonna enjoy it.

**Ernest Harker:**

Oh, yeah.

**Molly Ruland:**

I don't care. I bought a \$9 piece of chocolate at the airport over Christmas.

**Ernest Harker:**

No regrets. Like heaven.

**Molly Ruland:**

Had a little chocolate on top. I mean, a little

**Ernest Harker:**

Had chocolate on top of your chocolate?

**Molly Ruland:**

Had gold foil on top. I was like Oh,

**Ernest Harker:**

That is so good.

**Molly Ruland:**

Airport bar with a gin and tonic. It was the best hour of my life. I'm not gonna lie. Was it worth \$9? My accountant would probably say no, but I would say yes because I enjoyed it. Right? And so it's like when you like what you said, when you like a brand, you're willing to pay you don't really care about that anymore. You're excited to support it. You're excited to have it in you. I mean, look at these water bottles.

**Molly Ruland:**

I can't believe I'm not thinking of the name, but these giant water bottles everybody's walking around with. You know what I mean? Like, people don't care that they're paying \$45 for a water bottle. They want it. The Stanley Cups. Right?

**Ernest Harker:**

Yep.

**Molly Ruland:**

They want it. They want it, period. I think that's so brilliant associating, such a basic amenity of, like, a gas station is like an adventure pit stop. You know? Yeah. So did you guys also focus on, like, inside the store, did you also have products to, like, ice pickaxe and snowboard wax and stuff like that too?

**Ernest Harker:**

Store. Nothing that was adventurous. Nothing. Like, we were at a gas station. We just themed it. Really? You know? We just themed it. And we created a customer experience that was unlike any other. So you'd walk into a Maverick store, and you'd still buy the Cheetos and Mountain Dew, which is, like, those are money, by the way.

**Ernest Harker:**

Jalapeno Cheetos, delish. When you go into a Maverick store, the experience of buying the things you typically would buy at another convenience store was heightened. It was better because the experience was better, and that experience was strategically developed. It wasn't just putting products out on the floor, you know, on the shelves. It was how can we help our customers feel something different here? So in order to make them feel different, we had to change the surroundings. We had to change how we actually themed the interior of the stores to create a 360 degree, you know, wall to wall to wall panoramic illustration of Maverick adventure land. Ice cream mountains, soda pop fountain falls. We even hung kayakers from the ceiling, bailing off of these fountain falls.

**Ernest Harker:**

We call them fountain falls. These waterfalls. We even experimented with, like, directional sound, to speakers to kind of give you that feeling. Much like you would see at Disneyland. You know, we wanted people to have an immersive experience there and we felt that by developing that immersive experience, it would become preferable. And it was. We had, in statistics, language, you know, I think CEOs and CFOs like to hear this. We had I think it was, like, 20% of the locations, convenience store locations, gas stations.

**Ernest Harker:**

And by the way, in our market, gas stations and convenience stores are synonymous. There's hardly any convenience stores that doesn't don't sell gas. So in our market, we had 20% of the locations, but 25% of the business. We had way more business than we should have. And the difference in the expense of this brand in a say of an average \$5,000,000 property development, like build a store, buy land, \$5,000,000, we're looking at a \$60,000 increase in cost to create that experience, because you still have to put wallpaper up.

**Molly Ruland:**

Right. Right. Right. Right.

**Ernest Harker:**

We just printed ours in a mural. You still have to have flooring. You still have to have a ceiling. You still have to do all these things. Right. We were just more choiceful and strategic about that experience.

**Molly Ruland:**

I mean, it's brilliant, really. And, I mean, why spend why sell hiking axes because there's a higher overhead on that? The cost of goods sold doesn't make any sense. So you're

getting that same user, that I REI avatar. Right? Who's like, I don't care how much I'm spending. Yeah. You know, but without actually selling that stuff and without carrying that overhead. I mean, it's Nope. It's brilliant.

**Molly Ruland:**

So how is your experience with Maverick you know, how did that parlay into your consulting business and working with other clients?

**Ernest Harker:**

So, before, I started my business in 1995 after working for an ad agency that specializes in high-tech. I did work for Intel, Iomega, Netscape. Ask Jeeves. If you know who Ask Jeeves is, you're old. Okay? Ask Jeeves is one of the first, like, search engines. So so Got it. I was working with, like, really, really creative creative directors and marketing directors as a beginner, as, like, a concept artist. And so I learned how to think creatively and be very critical about how you take something boring like a computer chip processor and make it exciting? And so learning from those guys and then starting my own business in 1995, I was looking for things to kind of level up, take and and really throw some creativity into the message.

**Ernest Harker:**

Because when you have creativity in the message, not just selling facts and figures, which most companies do, they get stuck in this all the time. And you and the reason they do that is because they actually teach this bull crap in schools.

**Molly Ruland:**

Right.

**Ernest Harker:**

Its features and benefits, cost value. And so what we do is we say, well, let me tell you about the features and benefits of my thing. And if I have a really long list of features and benefits and I have a low total cost, then you're gonna want to do business with me. Unfortunately, the way we buy has nothing to do with that level of right brain thinking. I don't know if it's the right brain or whatever. Analytical thinking. Right. I mix up my brains.

**Ernest Harker:**

So but it's the emotional side that actually drives purchase. 95% of all purchase decisions are emotionally and subconsciously driven. By the time we think about making a decision, we've already made the decision in our hearts.



**Molly Ruland:**

Right.

**Ernest Harker:**

And so good marketing and advertising is able to stimulate an emotional reaction from their audience, and they do that with story and context and excite you know, something to get them thinking about it, about their, their life being better because of the product that you offer, not statistically, but emotionally. And so that was what became really fun for me to, like, to dig a little deeper. And the reason people don't do that is because it's hard.

**Molly Ruland:**

Mhmm.

**Ernest Harker:**

It's much, much easier to just list cost and, you know, features and benefits because the engineers do that, and that's all they think about. The owner, that's all he thinks about. So, hey. Be sure to promote these features and benefits and the value that we offer. And, so it became, that was the natural language I learned to speak. And so it is kinda just dovetailed really, really well with my business and that business became successful because of our kind of unique creative approach. And that's I think that's why Maverick did so well. We used a loyalty program to create excitement.

**Ernest Harker:**

Like, what we learned is our customers, they didn't need a, you know, a four wheel toy. You know, an off-road toy. They didn't. Often they needed new tires. They needed a washer dryer. They needed, you know, new living room furniture because their stuff is just crap. But if we developed sweepstakes prizes based on what our customers would practically use Mhmm. There would be no excitement about it.

**Molly Ruland:**

Right. Right. Gets

**Ernest Harker:**

This washes your dryer. Known at this really lame convenience store chain that was like, hey. Get a washer, dryer, shit. You know?

**Molly Ruland:**

Crazy Eddy's. Yeah.

**Ernest Harker:**

Yeah. So we let them, like, just, sell their stuff. If they won something that's awesome like a boat, just sell it. Use that money to buy whatever you want. Right. Right. Our use of the prize was not in giving it to the customer. It was in promoting the lifestyle, this visionary, aspirational lifestyle, which is exactly what, like, Nike and Apple and all those great brands do.

**Ernest Harker:**

They just promote a lifestyle that sounds really, really exciting.

**Molly Ruland:**

Well, you know, it reminds me of, like, Donald Miller and StoryBrand and, like, so many companies are like, me, me, me, me, me, me, me,

**Ernest Harker:**

me, me,

**Molly Ruland:**

me, me, me, me. And it's like Mhmm. You know, what about the customer? Like, you know, you see it a lot with life coaches where they have all these beautiful pictures of themselves. And I'm like, I'm over here crying, drinking gin on my couch at noon. Like, I don't wanna look at a perfect person. I want to see a little bit of me in this. You know what I mean?

**Ernest Harker:**

Yeah.

**Molly Ruland:**

And it can't all be about you. It's like, you know, do you wanna feel better? Do you wanna not hate your family? Do you wanna love your job again? Like, you know, it's not that I'm perfect. I figured it all out, so follow me. It's like, imagine this other life that could be yours even if it's not practical per se. But Everybody wants

**Ernest Harker:**

You've got to have something inspirational that gets you inspired, but it has to be attainable. If you don't feel that it's attainable, if you haven't drawn the connection, the bridge from where you are to get there, then it's like, oh, it's hopeless. It's like looking at Ferraris. Like, I just don't, it's not gonna ever happen.

**Molly Ruland:**

Right.

**Ernest Harker:**

So that that that's but for a wealthier person than me, hard to imagine there could be a wealthier person than me, but

**Molly Ruland:**

Yeah. There's Hot and heart and mind.

**Ernest Harker:**

Millions of them out there. But they're already closer to that bridge. And so, like Ferrari or one of those premium brands, they'll speak in the language that they understand that's totally different to me. It's like I don't understand it. I'm not picking up what they're putting down.

**Molly Ruland:**

Right. Right. Well, speaking of storytelling

**Ernest Harker:**

Mhmm.

**Molly Ruland:**

I'm really curious. I think 2024 is going to be the year of relationships and storytelling because I think that business is being done very differently right now in a lot of industries. Right? I don't know a single business owner who's not like, oh, oh, things are a little harder than they were in 2022. Like, you don't say, Tom. Right? And I think a lot of people are really curious, like, how do I differentiate my business this year? So would you know, how do you see storytelling coming into play in content marketing in 2024? You know, how are you advising your clients in that arena?

**Ernest Harker:**

So one of the one of the greatest things that's come up and one of the hindrances is, is, like, generative AI. So most of us are not very good writers, and so we shy away from writing stories or writing narratives that engage our customers and stuff because we suck. Right? Well, all of a sudden, ChatGPT comes into the picture, and we're using it to create stories that are the same as everybody else's stories. They all fail and sound the same. And we're going, this is great. And now you've got, I just watched 3 different videos that teach me how to create 200 pieces of content, of social media content in 10 minutes. Create 50 pieces of content in 5 minutes and create. I'm like, nobody is hungry

for more social media content, especially if that content is gonna be so generic. Good, but generic.

**Ernest Harker:**

We're gonna be in the next 6 months, 8 months, we are going to be flooded with more AI generative content than we ever have before, which means that our message is gonna have a harder time finding its mark because there's just too much. So what I've learned is, I've learned to prime chat GBT Mhmm. With branded direction.

**Molly Ruland:**

Mhmm.

**Ernest Harker:**

So that when it creates content for me, it knows me. Mhmm. It has my vocabulary. It has my tone. It uses the words that I like to use. Mhmm. So that when I give it a prompt and by but I've developed a prompt engineering kind of framework Mhmm. That I get really, really good results, like, very consistently.

**Molly Ruland:**

Nice.

**Ernest Harker:**

So that when I create a prompt and I get stuff back, it's mostly there. I can just spend a few minutes, like, tightening up a little bit, But when anybody reads it, even if it has a little varnish of AI, it still has my personality in there.

**Molly Ruland:**

Right. Like, you can hear your voice when you're ready.

**Ernest Harker:**

People want to hear our voice. They don't wanna hear chats chat GBD's voice. They wanna hear your voice, which means you've got to produce a ton of content at scale to be able to compete with everybody else that's going to be producing this content. So there is a race right now to produce volumes of on brand content in the face of unbranded AI generative content.

**Molly Ruland:**

Mhmm.

**Ernest Harker:**

So, like like, I mean what I mean by that is, like, the, yeah, generic, not not defined, not clearly defined voice and tone and personality, and then come up with something different. I think I read a book recently called Risky is the New Safe. And I love, I mean, just the title alone says, if you want to be safe, if you want your business to be safe, you gotta be risky. You gotta do something that's totally outrageous. Otherwise, nobody gives a crap who you are and what you're doing because of the person that because there's so many options out there to get business done. I'm gonna go with the one that gets my attention. And if we don't, if you don't get your customer's attention, it's game over. You don't even get a start.

**Ernest Harker:**

The game didn't even start for you because you never got their attention. So if you're playing it safe, you may as well just look forward to an early retirement.

**Molly Ruland:**

Yeah. Might not be the one you're looking for, but

**Ernest Harker:**

Right.

**Molly Ruland:**

None nonetheless. Alright. So your brand sucks is a catchy title, but what's the quickest way a brand can go from sucking to soaring?

**Ernest Harker:**

The very first thing. So I've actually developed a, like, in my book, you'll see this framework, and I've helped brands so many times. Kinda like a therapist kind of finds out, like, what is wrong with people, and then they go, okay. Look. Work on these few things Right. And you won't suck as a person as much.

**Molly Ruland:**

Slightly less.

**Ernest Harker:**

The same kind of thing for, for brands. The biggest challenge most businesses and sole proprietors get wrong is defining what makes them different because they immediately go to their product. They immediately go, well, my product is different. I'm, like, your product has nothing to do with your brand. Just a surprise. I know this is gonna startle people, but if you look at basketball, water, beer, Basketball, I've never seen anybody

wear Spurs on the basketball court, but I know who the San Antonio Spurs are. Totally get it. Right.

**Ernest Harker:**

So there's a misunderstanding of how to discover what makes you special and different because we've been taught to look at your product. Get away from your product and think more deeply about your brand. And there's 2 different ways to define that difference. 1 is to discover it. It exists already in your brand, but you buried it with promotions or you've ignored it or whatever. The second way is to just create one. At Maverick, nothing about our convenience store was adventurous at all. The convenience store is just a convenience store like anything else.

**Ernest Harker:**

There were, you know, we didn't have our owners who weren't ice climbers and, you know, classified rapid navigators and stuff where that would make a natural connection. We just borrowed that because nobody else had that position and it created a visual and verbal library, a theme that could help us stand out. So we borrowed that. We adopted that brand, that visual and verbal look for the brand. I consulted with one of my favorite stories about working with Chuck Norris and his bottled water company. They developed a brand that was all focused on purity. Their billboard said purity has arrived as if purity was the big differentiator in bottled water. As if people were opening a cooler door looking for finally water that was clear and pure.

**Ernest Harker:**

No. So they totally got it wrong. Right. But their packaging used red in their little kids and their bottle labels as if that difference alone was you know, obviously, it stood out because every other water bottle is blue. Blue. Right. Right? Exactly. Oh oh, you know, finally, a red bottle.

**Ernest Harker:**

That's what they're missing here.

**Molly Ruland:**

Yeah. Exactly.

**Ernest Harker:**

So I said,

**Molly Ruland:**

I said, look. The lawyers

**Ernest Harker:**

I need to understand what makes you different. What makes you different? Is it purity? Well, of course, yep. Yep. Your product is naturally pure. Yep. Great. And it's got high pH, and it's got blah blah blah blah. It's from Navasota, Texas.

**Ernest Harker:**

Nobody cares. Right. It's on Chuck Norris's ranch. You actually discovered it while drilling for an irrigation source. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Nobody else has Chuck Norris.

**Molly Ruland:**

Bastard. Yeah. Exactly.

**Ernest Harker:**

Yeah. By the way, my talk about a guy with my Midas touch. In another interview, another time, I can tell you because I've been down to his place. I talked to him. His history is phenomenal, but here he has this, this water product focused on purity, and I said if you just change that and focus on Chuck Norris, then you're gonna have people that go, I didn't know Chuck Norris had a water I want to try that. That sounds different. In my mind's eye, when I first heard about Chuck Norris water, some people found this disturbing. I imagined that Chuck Norris was laying naked in a trough.

**Ernest Harker:**

Clean, of course, and his water was cascading all around his body.

**Molly Ruland:**

Right.

**Ernest Harker:**

And then you bottle that and you get Chuck Norris essence in that bottle, how much would you pay for Chuck Norris essence? That's \$2 a bottle? Nope. Nope. Nope. \$25 a bottle. I'd be drinking that by the gallon. Right. And every other Chuck Norris lover would be like, give me some essence. I need nor I need norrisness in my body right now.

**Ernest Harker:**

So a horseman. The Chuck Norris that is Chuck Norris adventure, whatever it is in your story, like Donald Miller calls it your brand story, you've got to find the setting and the characters for your story. Donald Miller's preaching is all about a narrative. Mhmm. There's a story line, but you have to define the place and setting, and that that's what makes you different.

**Molly Ruland:**

Great. Well, you know, I'm so glad you brought up Chuck Norris because I had this question prepared, and I was like, I don't know how I'm gonna work this in. But, did he roundhouse any of your ideas, or did everything go smoothly?

**Ernest Harker:**

Man, he punched all of them to the moon and back. They were so good. He actually put me in a choke hold, and he's really strong.

**Molly Ruland:**

So We gotta do part 2. We could do a whole another episode.

**Ernest Harker:**

We just scratched, we just scratched the surface on this. We introduced step 1 of the step 4 branding process.

**Molly Ruland:**

Well, hey. Listen. You're fine. You can come back anytime you want. And that leads me to my next question. If your life story was a brand, what would your tagline be?

**Ernest Harker:**

Oh my gosh. Is there a cure? Ernie is messed up, and there has to be a cure somewhere. I hope not. I hope there's no cure.

**Molly Ruland:**

You give me we need more earnings on the planet. Get out of here. Okay. And then I have one more question for you. It's the wild card question.

**Ernest Harker:**

K.

**Molly Ruland:**

If you could go back in time and slap a maverick sticker on any historical landmark, which one would it be and why?

**Ernest Harker:**

Oh my gosh. Oh, man. It would need to be highly publicized because I'm a marketing guy. So, I would put it on, let's see. Probably you know what I would do? I'd actually put it on, like, the early Maverick James Garner. I'd throw that on the side of a covered



wagon that was visible in every so because then it would be a perfect tie in to Maverick. You know? And then this, but that was the country western side, but that's what that's what I would do back then. And there would be so many people who go, oh, I've gotta go to Maverick because James Garner was the stuff back then.

**Ernest Harker:**

He was handsome. Do you remember that?

**Molly Ruland:**

I do. I do. Yeah.

**Ernest Harker:**

Yeah.

**Molly Ruland:**

There you go. There you go. Alright. So, well, before we say goodbye, I want to, for anybody that's been listening and likes your vibe and your energy and what you're talking with marketing, how's the best way for them to get a hold of you and maybe work with you or

**Ernest Harker:**

get a You know what? Follow me on LinkedIn and then message me. I'm highly engaged on LinkedIn. There's not very many Ernie Harkers in the LinkedIn world. A bald guy. You'll recognize me right away. I do a ton of speaking, professional speaking at conferences, keynotes. So if you wanna light your audience on fire, man, I'm your I'm your dude. I love it.

**Ernest Harker:**

I'm actually going out today. I'm flying to Boston today. Nice. To, in an hour and a half. I leave in an hour, so it's so fun.

**Molly Ruland:**

Hey. Thanks for doing this show with me today.

**Ernest Harker:**

You know,

**Molly Ruland:**

my heck yeah. I can verify you do respond on LinkedIn because you responded to me, and that's how we got here. So you you are very active

**Ernest Harker:**

on LinkedIn. On LinkedIn works. It does. Well, when you have a sense of

**Molly Ruland:**

humor humor anyway. That's how I got in with you. I was like I mean, there's enough, like, robots on LinkedIn. I'm like, you know? Yeah. You know, I had a

**Ernest Harker:**

That's the point of attention. You're getting attention by doing something that's different and unsafe, and that's like, I love that because we're getting robots, robots, robots, robots. And especially if someone likes it, hey. I wanna be your friend. And all of a sudden, like, the minute I say yes, there's a little pop up thing I go, you know there's a delay. You can put in that. A real person. You know there is.

**Molly Ruland:**

Enough. I had one guy who was on the phone. Too lazy. I'm not Andy Warhol.

**Ernest Harker:**

Which makes me know you're not even a real person.

**Molly Ruland:**

And he said, are you a robot? Even a real person. Enough is enough. I had one guy respond to me, and he said, I'm not Andy Warhol. And I was like, never mind you. And he said, are you a robot? I said, are you a robot? It was kinda funny, honestly.

**Ernest Harker:**

You're a robot. I'm not a robot. You're a robot. You know what I mean?

**Molly Ruland:**

Mhmm. Business in 2024. Like, spot the robot. That's where we're, that's where we're at. Oh, man. Well, listen, Ernie, you're awesome. Thanks for taking time to hang out with me today. I really enjoyed learning about Maverick.

**Molly Ruland:**

What a cool concept. I really like that. And the spatial audio too. Like, we didn't really talk that much, but I am into that. I'm an audio person. You know, we produce you know, we're audio, video, multimedia, so, like, that just lit up all my my

**Ernest Harker:**

Oh, good.

**Molly Ruland:**

My brain areas for sure. I'm like, that is so cool and so smart. So, thank you for coming on the show and spending time. I hope you have a safe trip to Boston. And, Yeah. I think this would be a great interview for people to check out. I mean, lots of information, so thank you very much.

**Ernest Harker:**

My pleasure. Thanks so much for having me, Molly.

**Molly Ruland:**

Yeah. Absolutely. And I'll send you an invite to come back again, and we'll chop it up some more.

**Ernest Harker:**

Part deux.

**Molly Ruland:**

That's right. Part deux. So, on that note, thank you all for tuning in to Camp Content. We appreciate your time. We hope to answer the question this year. How do you get new business in 2024? We know it's a question on everybody's minds. Hopefully, these interviews will give you some insight and some fresh perspective on how to generate new business, in 2024. So without any more talking from me, thank you.

Have a great day. And if you like this content, please tag me on LinkedIn or comment, like, subscribe, all of the things. Alright.