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EXPO

February 24–27, 2026 ✦ Horseshoe Las Vegas




# Curating Your Craft: Mastering Your Niche for Success

Focus on Differentiating your Product Offerings

Alisha Pate – Pate Ranch

# Alisha Pate

- Retired Engineer (Aerospace and Oil & Gas)
- Pate Ranch (7 years – 2 fulltime)
  - 25-30% margin growth YoY
  - A blend of rugged Texas heritage and high-end artisanal craftsmanship
- Content creator with sponsorships
- Why I am passionate about this topic?

PATE RANCH
Est. 2015

HANDCRAFTED LEGACY GIFTS MADE IN TEXAS



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Shiner BEERS SINCE 1909

FOLDS of HONOR

Republic BOOT CO.

BIG EASY Ranch

Chevron

Yellow Rose BY KENDRA SCOTT

M.L.Leddy's

# Agenda

- Why curating your business is important
- Current economy
- My journey
- What is curating and a real niche
- Examples and action steps



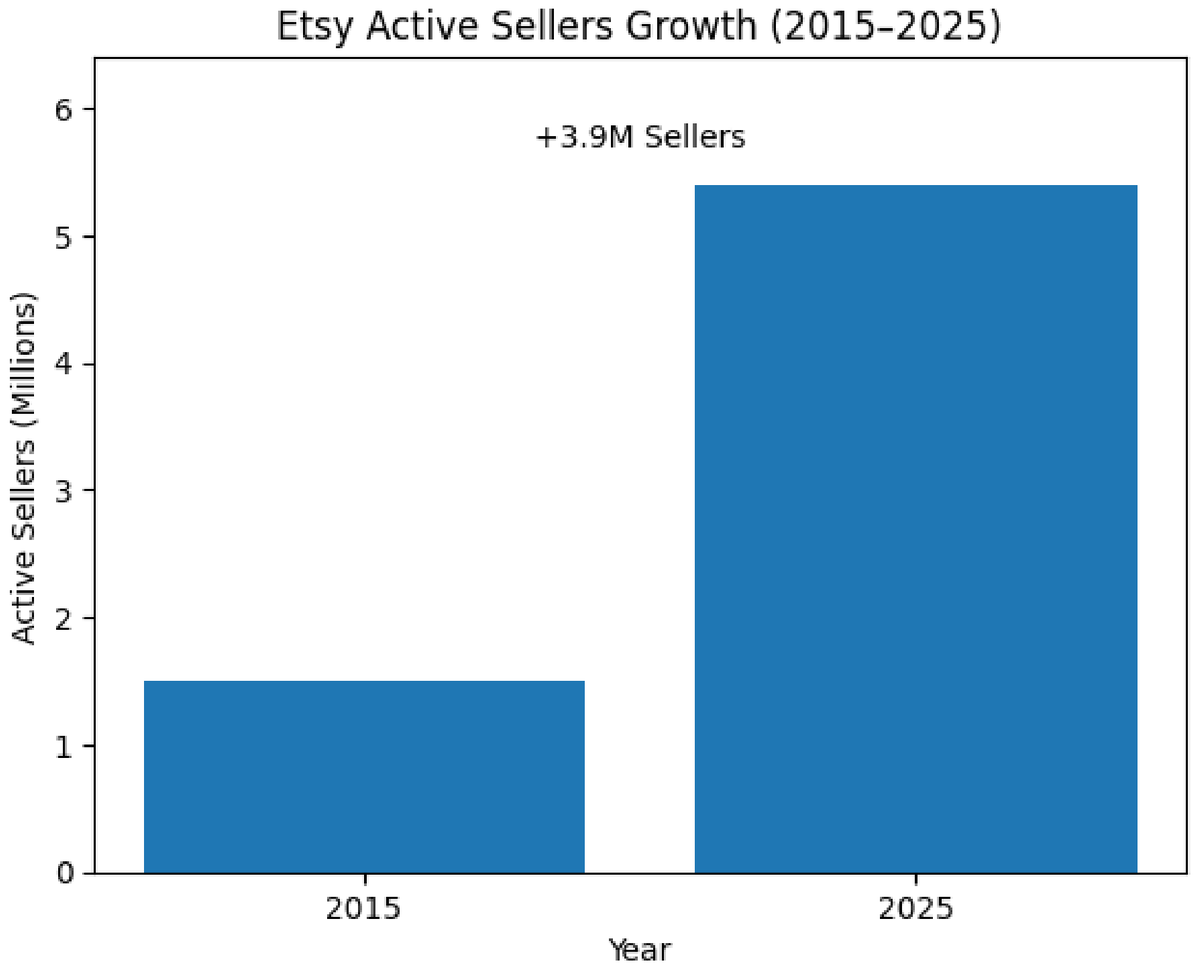

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# Why This Matters Right Now

The personalization industry is expanding…

so that means more competition

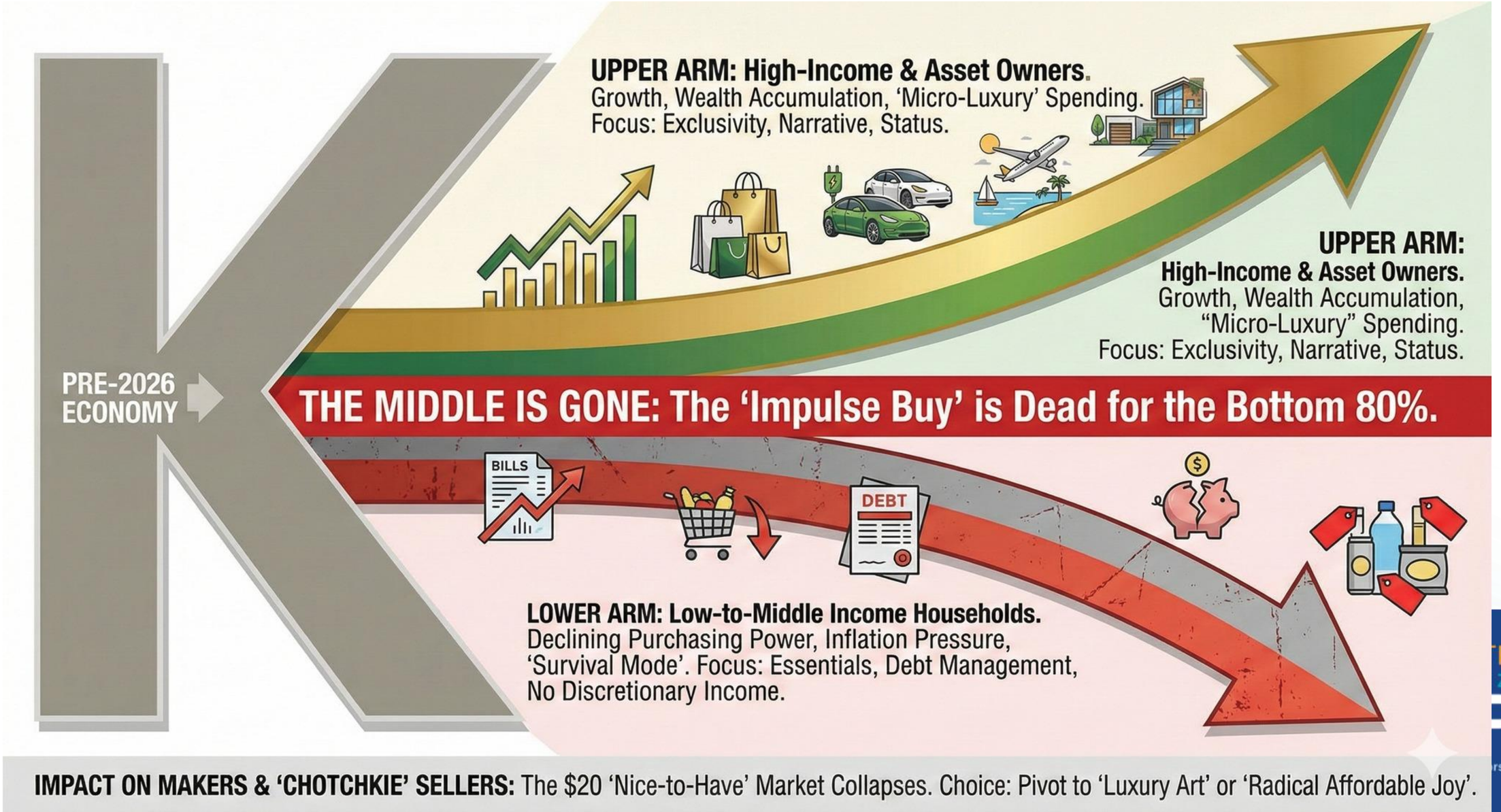
- More tools available than ever
  - 2015 → fewer tools
  - 2026 → saturated tools
- Lower barrier to entry
- More competition at all levels
- Buyers have more sellers to pick from




**Access to equipment has increased. Differentiation has not.**

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# Current Economy



# The Industry Trap

Reactive Growth:

- Impulse machines purchase
- Add products that don’t match your “who”
- Post everything
- Chase trends

VS

Curated Growth:

- Define buyer
- Designs for your target
- Engineer margin
- Using the right equipment

Expansion without focus creates chaos, not growth.



# Are You Producing… or Profiting?

Do you know your numbers?

- Busy ≠ Margin
- Production ≠ Strategy
- Revenue ≠ Profit
- Shop Rate?
- Monthly / Annual Goals? – What gets measured gets done

| 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|
| Product Ct: 42 SKUs | Product Ct: 28 SKUs |
| 35% curated | 70% curated |

**Less products. Higher margin. Higher AOV. More clarity**



# Pate Ranch Use Case

- Making everything
- Too many one-offs
- Never said NO
- Shot gun approach
- Hoards of equipment
- ~2 years ago we rebranded



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# What “Curating” Really Means

## Curating is:

- Intentional exclusion
- Strategic focus
- Profit protection




Museums own thousands of pieces. They display only what supports the story.

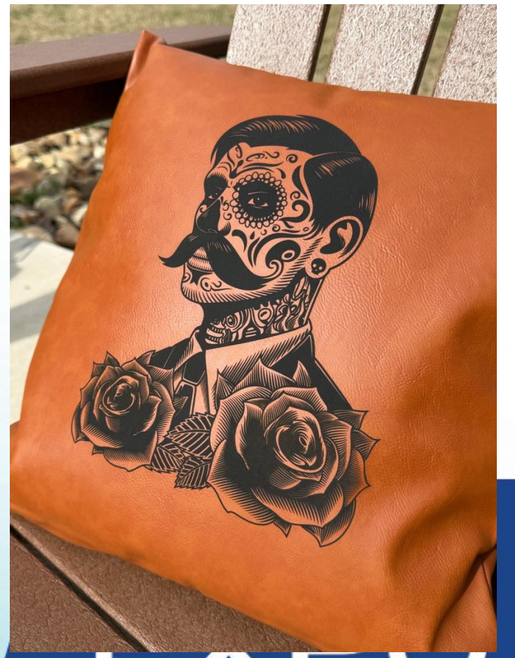
# Niche Is Not a Tool

- Your Tools Are Not Your Niche
  - CO2 laser, UV printing, leather patches are not niches.
- A niche is:
  - A specific buyer/audience with a specific problem or need.
  - Specialized skill or trade
- My niche is _____ for _____ audience.







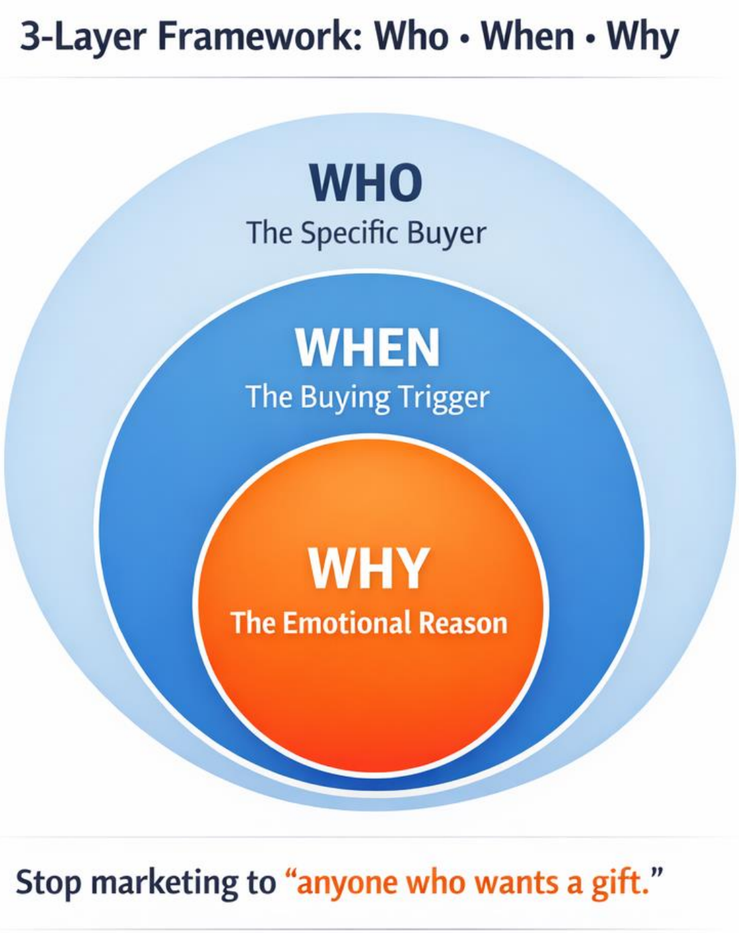



Corporate awards is broad.
Focus: Luxury executive retirement gifts for oil and gas firms.

# The 3-Layer Framework

- Who / When / Why
  - Who — exactly who has money and buys repeatedly?
  - When — what trigger event forces them to purchase?
  - Why — what emotional driver matters to them?

- Folds of Honor / Texas A&M Example




Who is your most profitable customer right now?



# Why Niches Make More Money

- Specific Buyers Pay Premium
- Specificity multiplies value
  - Generic corporate award: $75
  - Specialized executive award for licensed university: $200
- When you niche:
  - You’re solving your customer’s problems
  - You design products around their values and get into solution mode
  - You stop competing with hobby sellers









The Riches are in the Niches

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# When Everyone is your Customer because you make EVERYTHING…

- Too much busy work
- Your messaging gets vague.
- Your products get generic.
- Your pricing gets pressured.
- Your marketing gets noisy.



# The Power of Saying No

- No Protects your shop Margin
- A $40 custom job that took 2 hours and killed a production day + opportunity cost
- See website for what you make – your website is your window into your shop
- Example:
  - Ornament award story – Lost time & stress

Every yes shapes your brand. Even the small ones.



# Curating Your Product Line

If you removed your logo from your booth, could someone still identify your specialty?









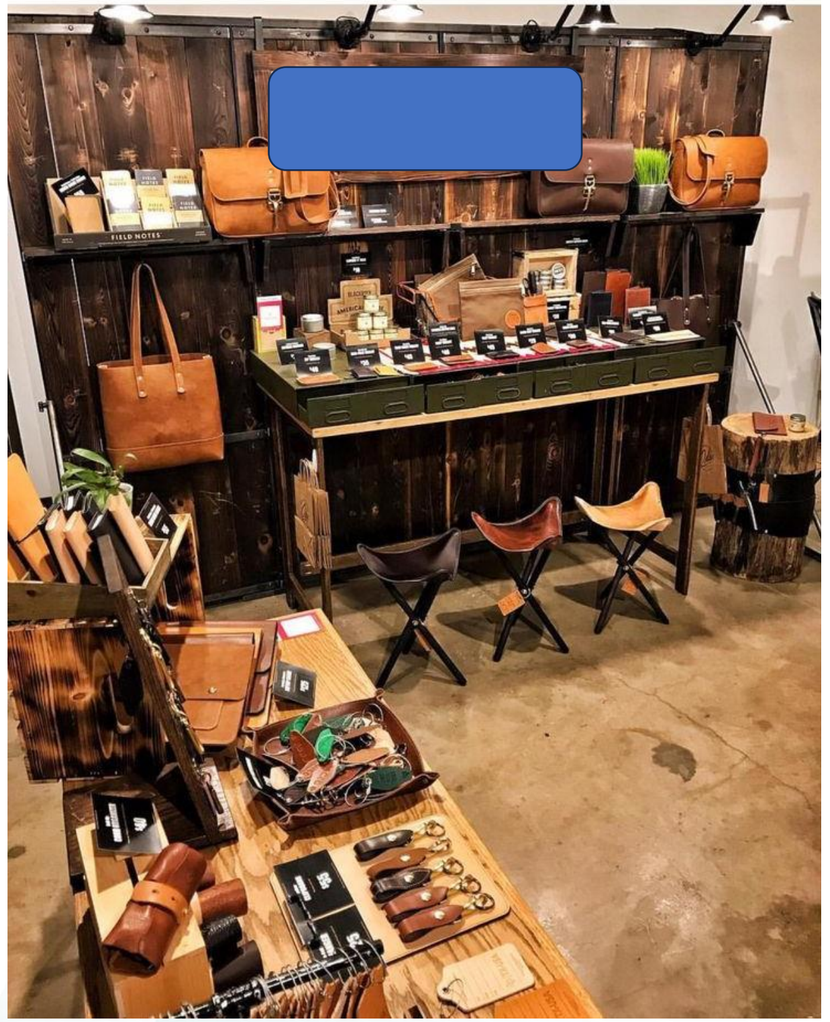












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# Pricing Confidence

- Underpricing is usually a clarity problem
- When you know your niche deeply, you price with confidence
- Premium buyers want special products
- Overhead needs to be included

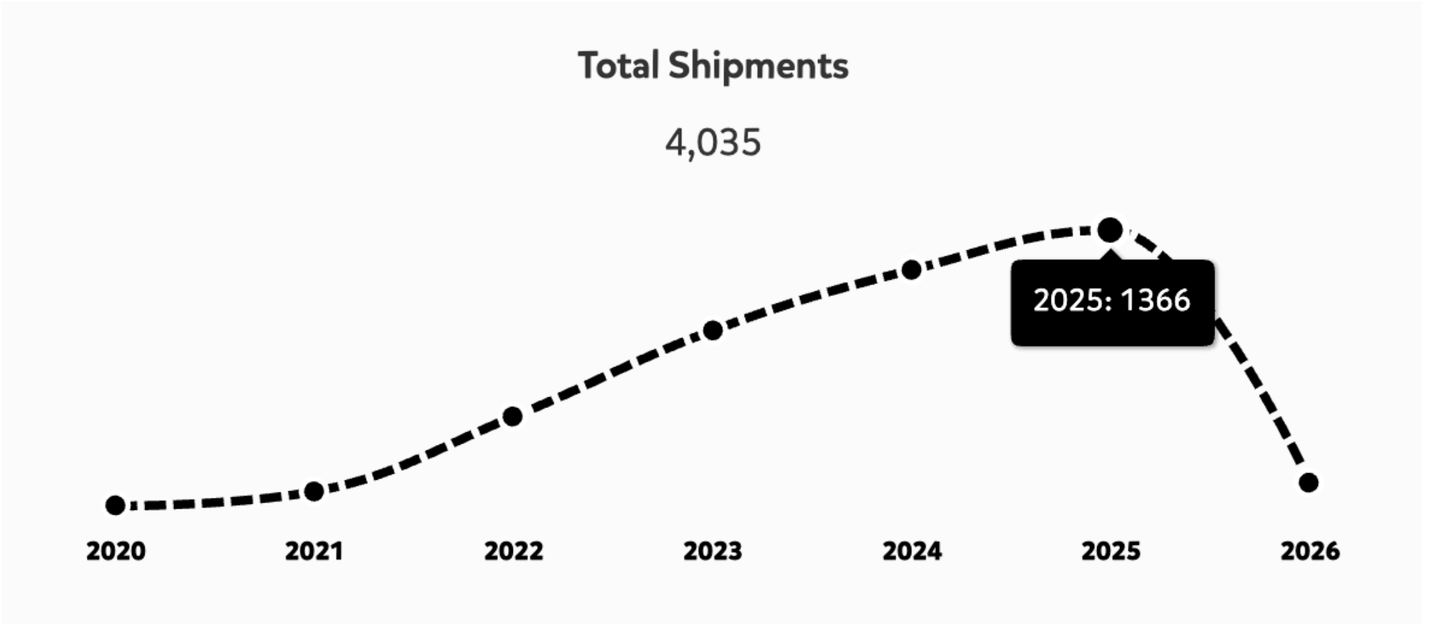



If you are constantly discounting, you do not have clarity.

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# What Happens When You Commit

- Focus Creates:
  - Easier marketing
  - Repeat buyers
  - Word of mouth improves
  - Fewer chaotic days
  - Supports scaling and higher margins




The right buyer should feel seen and heard. The wrong buyer should feel uncomfortable.

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# Find Your Niche. Then Fund It.




Equipment Should Follow Strategy

- Clear buyer → Clear production needs
- Clear production → Clear equipment choice
- Clear equipment → Clear ROI

The Rule

- Don’t buy equipment to figure out your niche. Buy equipment to dominate the niche you’ve already chose.



Every tool has its own job – Pro-strategy



# Examples


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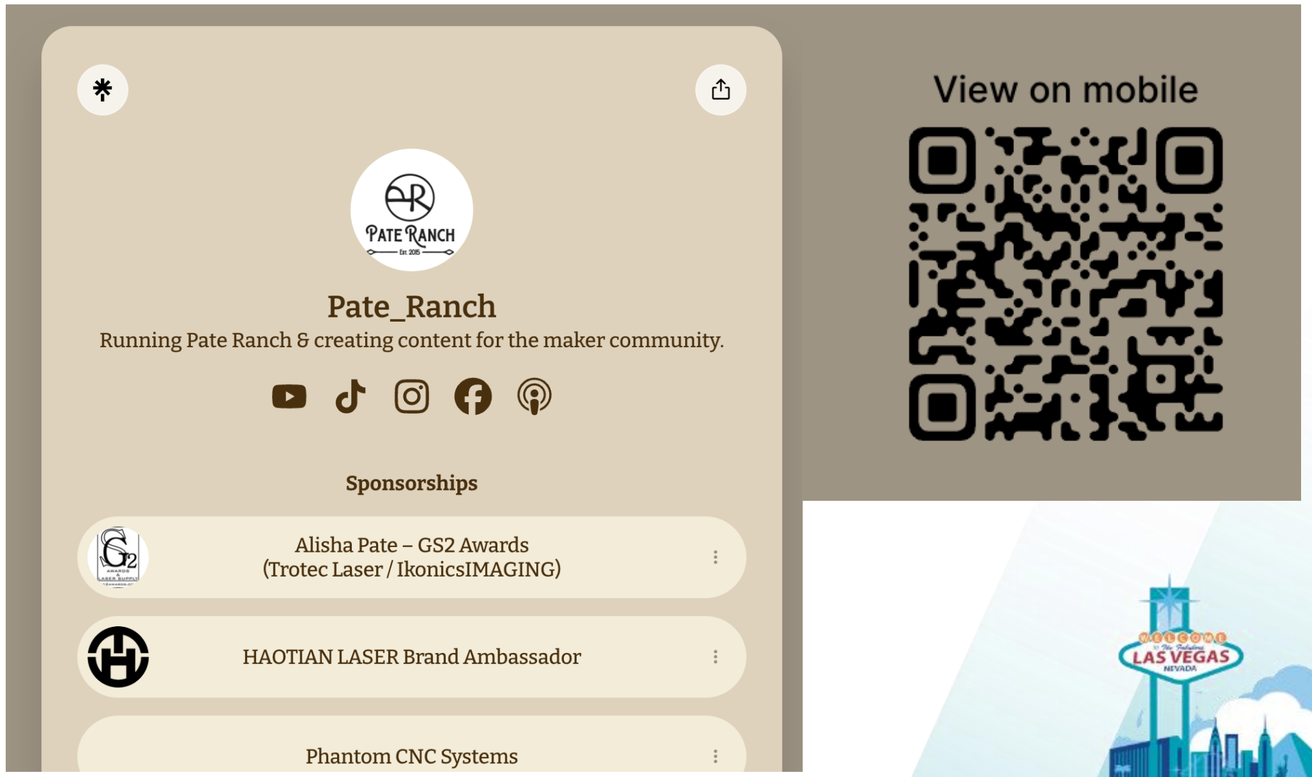
# Action Steps

- Identify most profitable customer – what should you being next to nurture it?
- Analyze low margin products
- Ask a friend/maker to review your page
- If its on your site and not selling, get it off
- Webpage & Catalogs




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# The Biggest Risk you have is Not taking enough risk for the life you want.






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