

# Jessica Williams Transcript

**Jessica - 00:00:01:** We've really seen a good writing of athletes, celebrities, creators spending their time and building in the design rooms, in the supply chains, in the testing beds, these products, and actually showcasing those stories. I mean, we tell everyone you should always build in public because your fans want to see that. Then they will feel like you really put your blood, sweat, and tears into it and want to purchase it.

**Matt - 00:00:25:** To thrive in a rapidly evolving landscape. Brands must move in an ever-increasing pace. I'm Matt Britton, founder and CEO of Suzy. Join me and key industry leaders as we dive deep into the shifting consumer trends within their industry, why it matters now, and how you can keep up. Welcome to The Speed of Culture. We're here live at the POSSIBLE Conference in Miami, and today I'm thrilled to welcome Jessica Williams, who's the head of brand and partnerships at Shopify. Jessica is at the forefront of one of the most dynamic shifts in modern commerce as she leads Shopify's efforts to deepen cultural relevance and support the next generation of creators and entrepreneurs. Jessica, so great to see you.

**Jessica - 00:01:03:** Thanks so much for having me. This is so fun.

**Matt - 00:01:05:** Yeah, I'm a huge fan of Shopify, and I had been for quite a long time, and I was excited when you joined. Tell me a little bit about your role and what you're focused on here in 2025.

**Jessica - 00:01:14:** Sure. Well, you've said it. Our job as a brand team is to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs. When you think about what Shopify does best is it's the right hand to any entrepreneur from day one to midsize. Now we have a very fruitful enterprise business, and so we really want to make entrepreneurship attractive to anyone who's thinking about a change. So the next generation of entrepreneurs, many think about Gen Z, but we're also talking about over 50 who's thinking about the next phase of their life, someone who got laid off, someone who's always got a side hustle. But wants to turn it in the main hustle. So we do this a lot through partnerships. So many exciting brands on the platform, and we love to tell their stories, founder stories, brand stories. And just a really fun, exciting role. You said it. Shopify is at the forefront of commerce everywhere from all of the platforms to AI to many other places. And so it's really fun to be sort of the backbone of everything that's happening.

**Matt - 00:02:09:** So let's say I'm 47 years old. I just got laid off my job, and I've always made T-shirts that people love.

**Jessica - 00:02:14:** Yeah.

**Matt - 00:02:15:** What should I know about Shopify in terms of the features and benefits that maybe most people wouldn't know?

**Jessica - 00:02:21:** I mean, I think the reality is, is that Shopify is for everyone, and it is so easy. I mean, the stories that you'll hear from the team, not our internal team, but the many founders on Shopify, is that they had no idea what they're doing. And if they can do it, anyone can do it.



**Matt - 00:02:36:** Right.

**Jessica - 00:02:36:** And that really is the message is that Shopify will do all the hard work for you. We've got so many amazing AI features built into the platform that it really is a choose-your-own-adventure, but a choose-your-own-adventure where we are with you every step of the way. We like to say we're your chief of staff, we're your head marketer, we're your head ops person, your head of finance, your head of accounting, like we'll do it all. And so really all you have to bring is the ideas, and we'll-

**Matt - 00:02:57:** Even the sourcing of the product.

**Jessica - 00:02:59:** We'll help with the sourcing. Sure. We've got a million partners.

**Matt - 00:03:01:** You have a marketplace too, right?

**Jessica - 00:03:02:** Yeah. A marketplace. We've got a million partners. We've got the freight all worked out. We've got the supply chain. You can do all of your B2B, so all of your wholesale inside Shopify, as well as your B2C commerce. We've got a million-

**Matt - 00:03:13:** Marketing as well.

**Jessica - 00:03:14:** Yes. A hundred million people on the Shop App. So you can buy new customers through marketing on the Shop App. I mean, it really is like an all-in-one platform in a way where you still get to own your own data. So you're not giving up your data to a third party. You can still own your entire ecosystem, but then you're a part of the Shopify ecosystem. And so we really love to also present that. You get the number one converting checkout in the world. Like the benefits are really endless, but the reality is, is that we try to be the team for you. And so we do, we are the best commerce platform. So we have large, large businesses on there, but many of them started as day one entrepreneurs.

**Matt - 00:03:46:** So you had mentioned you already have some AI features in the platform. What are some of the ways it's helping your users make their lives easier?

**Jessica - 00:03:53:** Yeah. I think really we've seen so many use cases, but product descriptions, if you have hundreds of SKUs, you don't want to be writing products.

**Matt - 00:03:59:** That's laborious. Right.

**Jessica - 00:04:00:** Exactly.

**Matt - 00:04:00:** You want to spend time doing that.

**Jessica - 00:04:01:** Exactly. Product photos, if you've got just the picture of the product, but you need a better background. I mean, we've got-

**Matt - 00:04:08:** Lighting.

**Jessica - 00:04:08:** Yeah. All of the features to do that. We're really sort of rebuilding the platform from the ground up to be AI for everything. And that is chat features. That is helping



you understand the tax implications of shipping internationally in a way that's like just talking back to you.

**Matt - 00:04:24:** Right.

**Jessica - 00:04:24:** Hey, here's what you need to do in order to lower your prices here. So we really want to make it as easy as possible and for you to be optimized from day one.

**Matt - 00:04:32:** Yeah. I mean, that makes sense. People are interacting with technology like humans. So the more that you can humanize the experience, where if you have a question, you can talk to a chatbot, you have ways where you can get things easily done, it reduces friction. And one thing you said that I completely agree with, and I wrote about my book, is that this world is now going to be for people who are creative. But at the same time, it's going to create a lot of pressure to upskill for people who are not, because there's so many different skill sets that people have learned that AI can or will be able to in the future do better. Right. So when you think about, I guess, your organization and maybe your team, what are some of the important places you think upskilling is needed?

**Jessica - 00:05:13:** Well, I mean, I'm sure everyone read Tobin's Letter about like AI being an absolute necessity.

**Matt - 00:05:18:** Yeah.

**Jessica - 00:05:19:** So I think the first one is-

**Matt - 00:05:20:** That is amazing. Like, maybe we should talk. I mean, what was the letter in your words? Because for people who have it.

**Jessica - 00:05:24:** Oh, sure.

**Matt - 00:05:25:** Yeah.

**Jessica - 00:05:25:** We had already heard it so many times internally. So it wasn't shocking at all. But he basically said like AI is the baseline now. Like you must, as an employee of Shopify, be using AI in your everyday life and continuing to learn. So if you're just using ChatGPT now, we need you in all of the other places in Perplexity, in our own internal tools, to be creating images, to be creating AI agents, like optimize your life through these. Take all the tasks that you don't want to do anymore. That way, you can focus on building the things that you are uniquely positioned to build.

**Matt - 00:05:57:** How did you feel when you got that email?

**Jessica - 00:05:58:** I mean, like I said-

**Matt - 00:05:59:** You're already there.

**Jessica - 00:06:01:** We're already there-

**Matt - 00:06:01:** You're there. Right.



**Jessica - 00:06:01:** I mean, there's so many things that we're already signaling that, including there's a question on our yearly review now about your use of AI. And while it's still very new, and so the scale on that, but I already have team members that have built AI agents to help them with contract writing. We do all of our own internal creator partnerships. And so we have hundreds and hundreds of creators on our roster. And you can imagine that's a lot of contract work. So I have guys that were sick of doing that. So they just built an AI agent to help them read contracts, to flag.

**Matt - 00:06:28:** Your legal team is okay with that.

**Jessica - 00:06:30:** Yeah, because they're still doing the final look.

**Matt - 00:06:32:** Right.

**Jessica - 00:06:32:** But it's pretty standardized, but this way can catch red lines that are problematic, that can input the finalized contract into our SIP Pro. I mean, it's just, you know, stuff that like was really wrote, and kind of mind-numbing for them. And now they can focus on building better partnerships, finding new creators, building relationships with them, which is much more useful to us anyway. I think internally, like it's been such a useful tool for us to better brainstorm. We are mostly doing our brand marketing through the lens of partnerships. And so we're whipping through sort of like what a brand looks like, together with Shopify, whether it's Fenty or Siegelman Stables or Eastside Golf, or we just did something with Serena Williams' brand and win all the way up to like the biggest brands in the world. And each one of those needs to feel unique and interesting and fun. And Shopify sort of has to fit into theirs. And so it's helped with a lot of creative brainstorming and certainly, I mean, has optimized everyone's life.

**Matt - 00:07:28:** Yeah.

**Jessica - 00:07:28:** But I really do think the partnerships piece, like Shopify, is a relationship business. We are helping you with the tools, but also with the people. So, to me, having people spend more time with people is where I want them to spend their time, not on the road tasks.

**Matt - 00:07:42:** That's well said.

**Jessica - 00:07:42:** Yeah.

**Matt - 00:07:42:** And I do think, as I hear you talk, like Tobi is a founder operator. And I think in a lot of ways, those are the people are saying what everybody else is thinking.

**Jessica - 00:07:50:** Yes.

**Matt - 00:07:51:** So like if you are a hired CEO that maybe doesn't want to rock the boat and wants a golden parachute, like you may know what's happening, but you'd be worried about saying out, a no, like that, because you don't want to piss, where it's like, he built this business.

**Jessica - 00:08:02:** Yeah.



**Matt - 00:08:02:** And I've spent a lot of time studying, like how he pivoted Shopify from selling skateboards or whatever. And start to where it is. It's an incredible story.

**Jessica - 00:08:09:** Yeah.

**Matt - 00:08:09:** But he's saying what everybody else is thinking. He's saying what everyone else will eventually say.

**Jessica - 00:08:13:** Yeah.

**Matt - 00:08:13:** Down the line. But for a lot of companies, it could be too late. And also what dawned on me as I hear you speak is that the contract example is an example where when he sends a note like that from the top, it kind of gives you guys air cover to do things where if that didn't come from the top, you may have your general accounts be like, why are you doing this? This is my territory. And that's what's happening in a lot of companies right now, is people worry about their own fiefdoms at the expense of what's best for the company launcher.

**Jessica - 00:08:38:** Right. And that, I think, is the wrong way to think about it. I heard from a friend recently that their company actually bans AI use inside.

**Matt - 00:08:46:** Might as well ban the Internet.

**Jessica - 00:08:47:** I literally was like shocked because I feel like it's a detriment to the employees.

**Matt - 00:08:51:** Of course.

**Jessica - 00:08:52:** Because how will you upskill if you're not thinking about these things?

**Matt - 00:08:55:** What if they leave somewhere else? They're going to be unhireable.

**Jessica - 00:08:58:** Exactly. And just why would you want people spending their time on these tasks, on writing emails, on calendaring, on things that you literally now can automate? That to me was such a freedom builder. So now you have the time to do all the stuff that was always on the back burner.

**Matt - 00:09:14:** Yeah.

**Jessica - 00:09:14:** It's such an exciting time for me. The thing about founders, this is my second founder-led company that I've worked for. The first one was Coinbase. So, Brian Armstrong.

**Matt - 00:09:22:** Who really like stuff he wrote during COVID? Like what he said was, this is a company. This is not a place. And this is what I personally believe other people on the podcast might disagree. But a company is not a place to push social issues. We're here. Our constituents are shareholders. This is what we're doing.

**Jessica - 00:09:39:** Yeah.



**Matt - 00:09:39:** And that's another perfect example. In fact, like I conflated the two when you brought it up because I'm like, oh, but Tobi didn't write that. Brian did. But yeah. Tell me about that.

**Jessica - 00:09:47:** Well, it just, I think to your point, it is this sort of go direct, like founder-led, and they don't need to worry about the consensus of everyone. And I love working for founder-led companies because there's only one opinion that matters versus the consensus of a hundred people.

**Matt - 00:10:04:** Which gets nothing done.

**Jessica - 00:10:05:** Nothing done. And then the people that work there really, like we're all sort of in it together. You really understand because it is coming from the top. Like this is it. And I hate saying this because I don't feel this way. But if you're not on board, like you've got to leave. And so it really is a very tight-knit around the things that are most important. And you know, crystal clear, what is most important.

**Matt - 00:10:28:** Yeah. I mean, I think in times of swirl and uncertainty, people just need a leader to say, go this way. Take my hand. And even if it's not exactly the right way, going in a direction is better than just flailing. And there's another saying, in all your towns and all your cities, there are no statutes of committees. And that's for a reason, right? There's no statutes of committees. And I've seen it. I mean, consensus building is really hard. And ultimately, you'll have some people that want to kind of lean in, not because it's what's best for the company, but it's best for them, or they're scared. And I think you're seeing that a lot right now. And the companies that don't move fast and pivot quickly, there might not be companies anymore in three years.

**Jessica - 00:11:04:** Amen.

**Matt - 00:11:05:** Yeah.

**Jessica - 00:11:05:** I really do feel like the founders, and you've already seen it, Duolingo came out with the same thing today about the AI piece.

**Matt - 00:11:10:** Well, them especially, because you could translate anything on.

**Jessica - 00:11:13:** Exactly. Yeah. We have two things internally, the disagree and commit, which we all may have our opinion, but if this is the way, you're going to say it, and then you're going to commit.

**Matt - 00:11:22:** Right.

**Jessica - 00:11:22:** And then strong opinions loosely held. Like, you've got to be able to get on board and we're here to hear it and we're here to think about it, but you've got to get on board no matter what.

**Matt - 00:11:31:** The other thing I hear a lot in AI is, like, I had somebody send me a message the other day, like, well, you should address the fact that AI is bad for the environment. I'm like, and it's like, well, okay, well, nobody having a job will probably be better for the environment



too, because you won't have to travel to work. Should we just fire it? But I'm like, there's always a reason. The reality is like I'm not responsible for AI. I wish I invented it, but I didn't. But the reality is it's here. And whether it's good or bad, or it's going to add jobs or lose jobs, it doesn't matter.

**Jessica - 00:11:58:** Right.

**Matt - 00:11:58:** Like, this is the world we're in, and you just have to adapt it. This is not something that you can fight. Right. And people don't really understand that.

**Jessica - 00:12:04:** Right. And what I believe is that AI will accelerate innovations in other places. 100%. Like, I do believe that the AI acceleration will help with innovations and sustainability. And in all of the climate technology that we need in order to-

**Matt - 00:12:19:** And maybe curing cancer.

**Jessica - 00:12:20:** Yes. 100%. Like, there are so many things that will come from this. So I'm hoping that the environmental protection will be part of that.

**Matt - 00:12:28:** We'll be right back with The Speed of Culture after a few words from our sponsors. So you mentioned creators. I'm just curious to hear, like, what does it mean to have a creator partnership with Shopify?

**Jessica - 00:12:37:** Yeah.

**Matt - 00:12:38:** And I can imagine, but why has it been such a successful channel for Shopify?

**Jessica - 00:12:43:** I came onto Shopify almost two years ago now, and they had already the most sophisticated creator program I had seen. And I think they were way ahead of their time in that they saw that creators were the next big brand. And so they had partnered with Mr. Beast when he just had 3 million fans. I mean, he's got over 150 million fans worldwide.

**Matt - 00:13:00:** Yeah.

**Jessica - 00:13:01:** It's insane. But understood the power of the creator brand and understood that the world was really moving into social channels and YouTube. And so we have now probably 250 YouTube creators that we work with who are niche creators. They work in gardening or in DIY car repair.

**Matt - 00:13:20:** So they have an audience around their content.

**Jessica - 00:13:22:** And so they have a niche community audience, but that community listens to them. They watch their YouTube channels every day, and they want to buy their stuff. And so each and every one of them has built a store on Shopify. And through the YouTube integrations or the TikTok integrations or the Instagram integrations, they're telling their story of entrepreneurship and how they built their brand on Shopify. And we've seen over the last two years that our number of 18 to 35 on the platform has almost doubled. And that is coming straight from the creator program. They're saying, Oh, I joined Shopify because my favorite influencer or YouTube creator uses it. And I just think we're moving into a place where it's



harder and harder to find distribution that isn't fully paid. And creators have built a distribution across hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of people.

**Matt - 00:14:10:** Hundreds of millions in the case of Mr. Beast.

**Jessica - 00:14:13:** Yeah. And they will be the most successful brands. And we've seen it over and over again. I mean, we've launched so many creator brands at this point. And people will line up around the block to come see them. They will sell them out almost immediately. And it is truly, I think, the funnest part and the most interesting sort of like shift in commerce.

**Matt - 00:14:28:** And are they selling their own products? Are they selling in some cases, like they're getting affiliate fees for selling other people's products, or both?

**Jessica - 00:14:35:** There's a ton of different ways. It's definitely affiliate fees. A lot of them have launched their own products. Now, it's hard. Like most start with merch for your face on a t-shirt.

**Matt - 00:14:43:** Easy, right?

**Jessica - 00:14:44:** Like, do the thing that's right. Easy. But then they've graduated into other products. And we've seen this a lot. I mean, Jimmy, obviously with Feastables, we just had a pop-up with Ashley Alexander a few weeks ago. She sells matcha. She was obsessed with matcha. She built her own matcha brand. I'm not kidding. There were people lined up for six hours to meet her and get a matcha drink from her, buy her matcha. Mikayla on TikTok just launched her beauty brand. It's a primer brand before you put on makeup. She's a makeup creator. Sold out immediately. Will sell out again. The second she goes back online with it. Now she'll Sell It in Ulta. It'll sell out.

**Matt - 00:15:16:** Right.

**Jessica - 00:15:16:** So I think there's a stepping stone of let's test the waters. Let's do affiliate. Let's do merch. And then it's sort of like the aha. And what we love to see is that it's authentic to who they are. We've seen plenty of brands that have gone kaput because they were just sort of slapping their name on something. But we really see creators understand their audiences. And they know that if they don't choose the right product and just try to hawk something, like they'll lose the fan base that they have carefully crafted over the years. And so we really see that they spend a lot of time and effort, energy, putting out products that they truly love and care about.

**Matt - 00:15:49:** Yeah, I mean, if you think about it, we've seen it with George Clooney and Casamigos. We saw it with Dr. Dre and Beats, right? We see it more recently with Kim Kardashian and Skims, and Kylie Jenner and what she did with... So you're seeing it everywhere. So it starts there, right? We're just celebrities. And now it's kind of pushing down. And it really does call in the question, like, is that sort of the cost of entry to create a new product? Because not only do they have reach, but they have tremendous influence. Like four out of the five last places I took my family on vacation has been because my wife follows somebody on Instagram. That's an influencer. And she's there and she's there with her family. And my wife envisioned our family being there. And because of that, she's like, we're going to go there. And I'm not going to say no, right? So it's like, ultimately, that's where I think the whole world is headed.



And I think empowering these people, I also think... So, do you know Ryan Serhant? He's like a big realist. So he launched a software platform in the real estate industry. And it's doing incredibly well. The functionality of that software it's called Sell It, right? The functionality of that software exists in 50 other products. But he's selling because his name's on it.

**Jessica - 00:16:47:** Of course.

**Matt - 00:16:47:** So I think one of the next big evolutions we're going to start to see in a world where it doesn't require a lot of funding to build a software product is celebrities actually being attached to tech products.

**Jessica - 00:16:57:** Yeah.

**Matt - 00:16:57:** Right? Because I think that they have the distribution and they don't really need a big engineering team to build it anymore. Just like how Kim Kardashian might not know how to knit the clothing, right?

**Jessica - 00:17:06:** Right.

**Matt - 00:17:06:** A creator doesn't have to know how to coat.

**Jessica - 00:17:08:** Yeah. Totally agree. I think to be seen the impact of tariffs on supply chain.

**Matt - 00:17:12:** Yeah.

**Jessica - 00:17:12:** But certainly, technology is easier to build.

**Matt - 00:17:14:** Who knows what it'll be. Can't predict that.

**Jessica - 00:17:16:** Technology is certainly easier to build.

**Matt - 00:17:18:** Yeah.

**Jessica - 00:17:18:** I think the other interesting shift is that they won't need to build it themselves, but they'll be on the cap tables. They'll be funding it from the background. They'll be helping to distribute it. Even if it's not. Yeah. Exactly. But I think the difference, and we also have so many celebrity brands that launch on Shopify, and we love also supporting those. Like, again, hundreds and hundreds. And we love that. I think the thing that we've found with creators that celebrities are now moving into is that sort of two-way engagement.

**Matt - 00:17:48:** Yeah, of course.

**Jessica - 00:17:48:** It really feels like they are with their friends. And we do a lot of pop-ups with them. They will stay for six, seven hours, meet everyone, take pictures with everyone, because they really feel this connection to the community that they have very carefully built over years and years of content production.

**Matt - 00:18:05:** They're scaled beyond scalable.



**Jessica - 00:18:06:** Yeah. And these people have been with them for years and years. And so it truly feels like family-

**Matt - 00:18:10:** You know them. And they know you.

**Jessica - 00:18:11:** Yeah, exactly. And that feels really different from, like, showing up because you want to take a picture with a celeb that you love.

**Matt - 00:18:16:** Now, to be fair, somebody like Taylor Swift, I mean, I got interviewed in her Time's Ark on 2012, saying she's building a community.

**Jessica - 00:18:22:** Oh, yeah.

**Matt - 00:18:22:** In the right way. And she is one of the most famous people in the world. But she actually did it through Scaling Unscalable. She has people that will run through a wall for her.

**Jessica - 00:18:31:** Without question. But she was the one in the comments from day one. She was the one. It's the same thing with Selena Gomez and Rare Beauty. Like, I mean, you need Selena because she's amazing, but you don't need her anymore. Like, the community runs itself because she was in there, sort of engaging with them, doing Zooms, doing all of the things to cultivate this brand love that now lives on without her. But you're absolutely right. Like, Taylor Swift was the OG of this stuff, doing all of the Easter eggs and the comments and the one-on-ones. I mean, that can't be replaced.

**Matt - 00:18:59:** Having fans at her house for April 13th or whatever it is. It's like, yeah.

**Jessica - 00:19:02:** Yeah.

**Matt - 00:19:02:** You can tell I have a daughter.

**Jessica - 00:19:04:** My big Swiftie.

**Matt - 00:19:05:** Yeah, me too. And the other interesting thing is, like, I think the lines are being blurred. Like, what is a celebrity? What is it? Especially in a world where now with AI, people are going to be able to put themselves in video games, in movies. The Hollywood industrial complex where you have to get the Hollywood, you have to get a studio in order to actually to make lifelike content that is at the Hollywood level, doesn't really exist. So, Mr. Beast can literally create an acting film with him in it.

**Jessica - 00:19:30:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Matt - 00:19:31:** Or you or I could. But, like, that's going to be crazy in terms of how I think it's going to literally, like, melt the lines even further. Because the difference between a celebrity and a creator is a creator is kind of, like, bottoms up, so to speak.

**Jessica - 00:19:42:** Yeah.



**Matt - 00:19:42:** Right? And a celebrity is top-down. Hollywood pushed by big corporations. But the only reason you need those big corporations is they have the production capability.

**Jessica - 00:19:49:** Right.

**Matt - 00:19:49:** And that production capability actually is accessible to everybody.

**Jessica - 00:19:52:** Absolutely. I have a creator partnerships team and a celebrity partnerships team. And we talk all the time how they're going to just melt into one at some point.

**Matt - 00:19:59:** Yeah.

**Jessica - 00:20:00:** Because they're one and the same at this point. But you're right. I do like what you said about, like, one is built from the bottom up, like, brick by brick, versus sort of, like, getting the scale that you need almost immediately. Because at some point, television or movies or whatever did it. But even podcasters now, I mean, we're in this whole journey now where podcasters are the biggest creators in the world. And they are the biggest celebrities. And they have the biggest distribution. Exactly. But, you know, the Theo Von and the Alex Cooper and the Alix Earle, like, they are the new age celebrities. They are the most influential people in the world. I mean, look at Joe Rogan and his influence over the course of the past two years. So, again, like, where does that sit? Is that a creator? Is that a celebrity? But it's all coming together as just multi-platform creator and thinking about where do you have the most influence in it?

**Matt - 00:20:45:** Yeah. I think ultimately, and we saw this with, like, the advent of reality TV in the 90s, like, Real World TV. Is that people are more interesting than scripted characters? And people love people.

**Jessica - 00:20:55:** Yeah.

**Matt - 00:20:55:** And if the person on the creative side is really authentic, revealing, and they really care about their audience, to your point, you're just going to want to follow their life and root for them and through the ups and downs. And then if they really believe in something, that's also why it's important that a creator, like, doesn't just have fly-by-night deals. That they can't just push one vitamin gummy one day and something else the next. They have to really believe in something so that they maintain that authenticity.

**Jessica - 00:21:18:** And that's hard, I think. And really, we have seen, I think, a good slowing down of creators really choosing wisely. Celebrities, too, on where they put their energy, what products they're going to. Because you don't want to be hawking products that you don't believe in. And really, any audience now will see right through that. So we've really seen a good writing of athletes, celebrities, creators spending their time and building in the design rooms, in the supply chains, in the testing beds, these products, and actually showcasing those stories. I mean, we tell everyone you should always build in public because your fans want to see that. And then they will feel like you really put your blood, sweat, and tears into it and want to purchase it, versus, like, all of a sudden, you have a product that came out. And they, like, where did that come from?



**Matt - 00:22:02:** Yeah. Are you privy to, like, what channels are driving the most sell-through in conversion? Like, is there channels that are better or maybe ones that aren't as much anymore for creators in terms of driving messaging and drives commerce?

**Jessica - 00:22:15:** I mean, I think TikTok Shop has totally changed the game.

**Matt - 00:22:17:** Isn't that a competitor to Shopify, though?

**Jessica - 00:22:19:** Not really. Certainly, TikTok is building their own commerce ecosystem, but so much of TikTok Shop is leading back to Shopify because people don't want to have two different e-commerce systems.

**Matt - 00:22:30:** Oh, their data's there-

**Jessica - 00:22:31:** Yeah, and TikTok's a great partner of ours. Same thing with Meta. We just integrated into Roblox so that there's a native commerce experience inside Roblox. We're really building into everywhere. Same thing with StockX. Like, we just want to be everywhere that commerce is and allow people to purchase and engage with commerce wherever they want. But I think TikTok Shop has really changed the game because it's pretty immediate. It's very natively integrated. And you're seeing something and it's got a great sale.

**Matt - 00:22:58:** Modern day QVC.

**Jessica - 00:22:58:** Yeah, exactly. It really is the modern-day QVC. And we've just seen so many creators like really test into it, doing lives, doing sales, doing bundles. And it has seemed to work over and over again.

**Matt - 00:23:09:** Absolutely.

**Jessica - 00:23:09:** Yeah.

**Matt - 00:23:10:** So shifting gears a little bit here as we wrap up here, Jessica, I'd love to hear, like, what a week in the life is for you, where you're focused. What are the things that you love doing, and where do you think you're driving the biggest impact at Shopify?

**Jessica - 00:23:20:** Oh, I love that question. Well, we spend a lot of time on creators and partnerships. That's where a lot of our brand marketing is going. I think we like to tell the stories of those. I think we want to tell better product stories inside Shopify. So again, how entrepreneurs can use our products, use the new products coming out. We've got so many amazing things in there. So we're really working on our product storytelling. And we have an addition. It's sort of our big product release coming up. And I'm super excited about all the products that will be released there. We continue to build big partnerships with creators.

**Matt - 00:23:54:** Is that hard to get to the creators?

**Jessica - 00:23:56:** No, I mean, most of the time they know Shopify. We have a pretty good reputation in the industry that, like, if you're going to do business, you want to do it with Shopify. So instead of just buying ad integrations on, we'll say Theo or the Giggly Squad or others, like we really want to build these partnerships because we want to help them build their



brands. And we have a unique set of skills, website optimization. We have a store in SoHo where we can throw pop-ups for them. We've got a huge media buying team, like really things that we can support them on, versus just cutting them a check. And so we like to spend a lot of time there growing internationally. We've seen a lot of hockey sticking happening in EMEA. So we're growing our brand marketing team there. And then I think just really supporting entrepreneurs as they go through this tough time. There's a lot of uncertainty. And so I know Tobi's been doing a lot. Harley's been doing a lot to really help understand what are you worried about? And then, how can we build our products best to support them?

**Matt - 00:24:47:** Yeah, just a partnership-driven approach. Awesome. So obviously, this isn't your first rodeo, so to speak, here at Shopify. And as you mentioned earlier, you spent some time in Coinbase. And of course, spent seven years at Visa, where we first met. As you look back at your time at Visa, which obviously, and we're talking about it, it was a great platform and very much connected to your world today. What are some of your learnings from your time at Visa? And what gives you the conviction, whether it's when you exit your time at Visa or Coinbase, to make the leap to go somewhere new? How do you know it's time to actually try a new adventure?

**Jessica - 00:25:17:** That's a great question. At Visa, I knew I needed to leave because there was so much more marketing to learn. Visa is an amazing brand, but it's almost got 100% awareness everywhere. And everyone knows how to use it. And so it's really about they're trying to work on feelings and big brand stuff. I wanted to learn more about direct response marketing, performance marketing. Yeah, because I do think those things work together and need to. I mean, at Coinbase, the same with Shopify, almost all performance marketing, and then shifted to a lot more brand. And I see the beauty of the two working together. So those things excite me. We've got a consumer app at Shopify, the Shop App, a lot of amazing innovations happening there. And so, really wanting to push people to use that more. It's a lot of fun challenges with getting people to download an app and start to shop in a place they're not used to shopping in. And so I love the marketing challenges that come with a new company. I don't know. I feel like it's always just a feeling around, are you really learning everything? Are you as useful as you once were? Coinbase was in a downtime when I left. And you know, those things where it's like, hey, I want younger leaders to be able to take some of the ownership here. I think there are other challenges out there that I, as a marketing lead, want to take on. So those are the decisions. Truly, Shopify's brand promise was what brought me here to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs. I just saw so much opportunity in that. And so I know it's time to come here.

**Matt - 00:26:38:** Awesome. So lastly, we were here at the POSSIBLE Conference of Miami. Why do you come to conferences like this? What do you hope to get out of it? And how's your experience been here?

**Jessica - 00:26:45:** Experience has been great. It's a little crazy down there. First of all, it's like a yearly reunion here where you get to see a lot of the folks that you may not at some of the other places, like at Super Bowl or others where I might see, but like all of the marketing leaders and the people in the ecosystem that I know and love are here. There's definitely a few meetings that I wanted to take that I thought would be interesting, a couple of new advertising platforms that we want to be on. And so what better place to do it than here? So yeah, I think it's just a good sort of melding of the minds and getting to hear the speakers. There's so many



good ones. I'm excited to join your book launch tonight. So yeah, I think it's just a fun reunion, but also, you know, I come away inspired on so many different fronts.

**Matt - 00:27:23:** Fantastic. Lastly, we ask our guests always wrapping up the podcast is just saying your mantra that comes to mind that drives a professional journey. What comes to mind for you?

**Jessica - 00:27:32:** My personal one, and I feel like is more prevalent today than any other time, is a rising tide lifts all boats. Like, I really don't believe in competition. I think there's room for everyone. I think there's room for every platform. I think there's room for every person. And really, I feel like doing the right thing and sort of lifting everyone up together is better and will prevail in the long run.

**Matt - 00:27:51:** Yeah, I love that. And I do think so many people persevere over what the competitors are doing. And ultimately, you're usually in control of your own destiny.

**Jessica - 00:27:57:** Without question.

**Matt - 00:27:58:** Yeah, so awesome. Well, thank you so much for taking the time. That is great conversation and flew by, but so many incredible insights. I'm excited for our audience to hear it.

**Jessica - 00:28:05:** Thank you so much.

**Matt - 00:28:06:** On behalf of Suzy and Adweek team. Thanks again to Jessica Williams, Head of Brand and Partnerships at Shopify, for joining us today. Be sure to subscribe, rate, and view to The Speed of Culture Podcast on your favorite podcast platform. We're here live in Miami at the POSSIBLE Conference. See you soon. Bye-bye. The Speed of Culture is brought to you by Suzy as part of the Adweek Podcast Network and Acast Creator Network. You can listen and subscribe to all Adweek's podcasts by visiting [adweek.com/podcasts](https://adweek.com/podcasts). To find out more about Suzy, head to [suzy.com](https://suzy.com). And make sure to search for The Speed of Culture at Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or anywhere else podcasts are found. Click follow so you don't miss out on any future episodes. On behalf of the team here at Suzy, thanks for listening.