ACROSS THE TABLE

BUSINESS CONSULTING

BUSINESS JOB 04 · EPISODE 4

HeyGen vs Synthesia vs Descript

Getting your business on video without standing in front of a camera every time

Knowledge Article 04

AI Stack Series · acrossthetable.biz

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THE JOB THESE THREE DO

Video works. Customers watch it, it explains things words cannot, and it makes a small business look like a real one.

The problem is that making it means standing in front of a camera, getting the lighting right, saying it four times, and then editing. Most owners do it twice and stop.

These three solve different parts of that. Two of them create video without you being filmed at all. The third makes editing what you did film far less painful.

> **ONE RULE BEFORE YOU START**
> If you create a presenter who is not really there, say so. And never use a real person’s face or voice — an employee, a customer, anyone — without written permission. Both tools that do this make it easy; the responsibility for using it properly is yours.

WHO EACH ONE IS

HeyGen — the AI presenter

What it is: AI presenters and avatars that speak your script in many languages.

Best for: Training, onboarding and updates you don’t want to film every time.

Watch out for: Disclose synthetic presenters. Get consent for any real likeness.

You type a script and a presenter delivers it on camera. The presenter is generated. It can speak many languages, which matters if your customers do not all speak English.

Synthesia — the training one

What it is: Enterprise-grade AI video with avatars, templates and localization.

Best for: Companies producing training at volume.

Watch out for: Heavier process, heavier price.

Synthesia does the same job built for companies producing training at volume — more process, more cost, more control. For a small business this is usually more than you need.

Descript — the editor

What it is: Edit recordings by editing the transcript.

Best for: Podcasts, webinar cutdowns, cleaning up filler words.

Watch out for: Big files, real learning curve.

Descript is different from the other two. You record yourself normally, then edit the video by editing the text of what you said. Delete a sentence from the transcript and it vanishes from the video.

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HOW THEY COMPARE

	HeyGen	Synthesia	Descript
Best for	AI presenters	Business training	Editing recorded video
Ease of use	Beginner	Beginner / Intermediate	Beginner / Intermediate
Small-business fit	High	Medium	High
Larger-business fit	High	High	High
Its main job	Generate presenter-led video	Training and instructional video	Edit and repurpose content
Choose this if	You want an AI presenter	You produce structured training	You already record content
Price	Paid per month by video minutes.	Paid per seat/month.	Free tier; paid per user/month.

Note the small-business fit row. Synthesia is marked Medium rather than High — it is built for organisations producing training in volume, and a one-person business will feel that.

HOW A BUSINESS ACTUALLY USES EACH ONE

A franchise onboarding new staff

The same induction video, in English and Spanish, without filming twice. When the process changes, the script changes and the video is remade in an hour rather than a filming day.

A company with a real training department

Synthesia, because there are forty videos to keep current and a brand standard to hold across all of them. Below that volume the heavier process is not worth it.

An owner who already records

A weekly video already gets filmed on a phone. Descript strips out the ums, cuts the dead air, and turns one recording into a long version and three short clips. No new filming, far less editing.

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WHAT IT COSTS

Descript has a free tier. HeyGen and Synthesia are paid — HeyGen by video minutes, Synthesia per seat.

If you are testing whether video helps at all, start with Descript and your phone. That costs nothing and tells you whether anyone watches before you pay for a presenter.

WHERE THIS SITS IN YOUR STACK

Here's how we can build a complete AI video production stack. Start with ChatGPT or Claude to help develop the script. Create the video using HeyGen, Synthesia or your normal camera and edit it with Descript. Canva creates the thumbnail and promotional graphics. If specialized AI voice is needed, ElevenLabs can support that part of production. Then a social-management platform can distribute the finished content. AI has now helped with the process from idea to published video.

The pieces around it:

- ChatGPT / Claude — scripts
- Canva — graphics and thumbnails
- ElevenLabs — specialized voice production
- Buffer or Hootsuite — social publishing
- Zapier — automation

THE CEO DECISION

- Do you already record yourself? If yes, start with Descript — the cheapest improvement is editing what you already make.
- Do you need the same message repeated in several languages? That is the one job an AI presenter does far better than filming.
- Will you disclose that a presenter is generated? Decide this now, not after someone asks.
- How much video do you actually need a month? Under four, none of this is urgent.

APPLY IT TO YOUR BUSINESS

Count how many videos you made in the last six months and how many you meant to make. The gap between those two numbers is what this is for.

If the gap is small, you do not have a video problem. If you meant to make twenty and made three, work out which part stopped you — filming or editing — because that decides which of these three you need.

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YOUR QUICK REVIEW

- ☐ How many videos did I mean to make, and how many exist?
- ☐ Is filming the barrier, or is editing?
- ☐ Do I need more than one language?
- ☐ If I use a generated presenter, where will I say so?
- ☐ Do I have written permission for any real person's face or voice?
- ☐ What happens to the video once it exists — where does it go?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Tool	Where to find it	What it is for
HeyGen	www.heygen.com	Training, onboarding and updates you don't want to film every time.
Synthesia	www.synthesia.io	Companies producing training at volume.
Descript	www.descript.com	Podcasts, webinar cutdowns, cleaning up filler words.
Across the Table AI Assessment	acrossthetable.biz/#assessment	Fifteen minutes. Tells you which of the twenty jobs to start with.
The Scaling Edge	acrossthetablebiz.substack.com	Weekly newsletter for owners without a business background.

CONTINUE LEARNING

This is Business Job 04 of twenty. Episode 5 is Connect the Tools — Zapier, Make and n8n — which is about getting your software to talk to itself.

Explore The Scaling Edge and the Across the Table Business Learning library for the rest of the series.

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Across the Table website: https://acrossthetable.biz

The Scaling Edge newsletter: https://acrossthetablebiz.substack.com

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@AcrossTheTableConnie

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