19 Ex-McDonald's Workers Returned to Their Old Restaurant for a 'Class of 1975' Reunion Almost 50 Years After Working Together

This article originally appeared on Business Insider.

A group of former McDonald's workers went back to their old restaurant in Missouri for a "Class of 1975" reunion to mark nearly 50 years since they worked together.

Nineteen former workers returned to the restaurant in Hazelwood, eastern Missouri, in March, with some traveling in from Arkansas, Florida, Ohio, and Tennessee, Joan Elhoffer, one of former McDonald's workers who helped organize the reunion, told Business Insider over email.

"I was reminiscing with a few friends earlier this year about how special it is that we've all kept in touch over five decades — and decided we were overdue for a celebration," Elhoffer said. "We had celebrated a 10-year reunion long ago and we did a 40-year reunion 10 years ago, but we wanted to do it even bigger for the 50."

Some of the attendees brought in old photos and their McDonald's softball jerseys, Elhoffer said. They ate together, spoke to the restaurant's current workers, and even signed yearbooks they'd made for the occasion.

Including those who work for franchises, McDonald's is one of the largest employers in the U.S., and says that one in eight Americans has worked at the chain. Its network of over 40,000 corporate and franchise restaurants globally has more than 2

million workers.

In October 2023, McDonald’s celebrated its claim that over 12% of people in the US have worked at the fast-food giant by hosting a lavish party and highlighting notable former crew members, like Michelin-starred chefs, astronauts, and Peloton instructors.

Courtesy of McDonald’s via BI

Elhoffer was 16 when she started working at the Hazelwood restaurant, she told BI. Most of the other former workers who attended the reunion were aged between 16 and 19 when they started there, with many continuing with their jobs throughout high school and while attending local colleges, she said.

“For almost all of us, this was our first job,” Elhoffer said.

They became close friends while working at the restaurant, Elhoffer said, with some of them playing on the restaurant’s softball team. She said “several” of them — herself included — met their spouses while working at McDonald’s.

Courtesy of McDonald’s via BI

“There is such a strong sense of family and friends within this group,” Elhoffer told BI. “We went to each other’s school dances, weddings, and parents’ funerals. We raised our children together, celebrated holidays, vacationed together, and continued for 50 years to enjoy strong friendships.”

Elhoffer said that she started her career at McDonald’s by managing the grill area. She was later promoted to second

assistant manager in 1978. She went on to attend Hamburger University, and McDonald’s training school, and become a store manager.

Elhoffer said she bought her first restaurant in 1991. She now owns seven McDonald’s restaurants around St Louis. Seven of the 19 people at the reunion went on to become franchisees, while the others pursued different career paths, such as becoming teachers and accountants, she said.

Courtesy of McDonald’s via BI

The biggest change since she started working at McDonald’s has been the introduction of drive-thrus, Elhoffer said. She added that when she first started at the chain, orders had to be rung up by hand, and workers needed to manually add tax.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/mcdonalds-coworkers-host-reunion-half-a-century-later/472500

Yes, You Can Buy a Foldable Tiny Home on Amazon — And Now It’s Selling for Less Than $12,000

A home in an Amazon box?

An Amazon tiny home that measures 19 feet by 20 feet is now

selling for $23,000 less than its asking price in January, per data pulled by *Entrepreneur* from third-party price tracker Keepa. The Jaxenor prefabricated home was priced at around $35,000 earlier this year but dropped to $11,550 as of Thursday.

The tiny home, which comes folded neatly in a box and expands outward, weighs nearly 8,000 pounds and requires that the buyer prepare a crane to unload it.

Related: Barbara Corcoran Says ‘Now Is the Best Time’ to Buy as Home Prices Will Soon Go ‘Through the Roof’

Advertised as a possible backyard guest house, office, or workshop, the home was listed at the time of writing as Amazon’s No. 1 bestseller in garden houses.

Jaxenor Tiny Home. Credit: Amazon

The tiny home is made out of a steel frame and flameproof wallboard, with waterproofing and thermal insulation. The seller claims that the home is earthquake-resistant (grade 8), wind-resistant (grade 10), and able to withstand a heavy snow load of up to 6.6 feet.

The house includes a small restroom with a shower, sink, and toilet that is ready to be hooked up to water, but it does not include electrical circuits, furnishings, or installation. The design incorporates multiple windows and folds back up if the buyer wants to move the unit.

With home prices on the rise and inflation increasing faster than expected, potential home buyers are expressing interest in tiny homes.

Youtuber Unspeakable, who has 17.2 million subscribers, posted a video two months ago where he and his friends unboxed an Amazon tiny home.

[embedded content]

Last week, he documented spending 24 hours in the tiny home and found that even when a tree fell on the house, the house still stood, though the tree created a dent in the roof. The house did not seem to be fully waterproof though, with leaks forming when the Unspeakable team blasted it with snow.

Unspeakable's unboxing video of the home also received over 13.6 million views on both YouTube and X, now Twitter, inspiring reactions such as, "This is just about the only house I will ever be able to afford."

Their home, which is listed as the Chery Industrial Expandable Prefab House, was $18,000 with a $1,000 coupon on Amazon at the time of writing – a drop from its $40,000 price tag in January, according to Keepa statistics pulled by *Entrepreneur*.

Related: These Are the 5 Most Unaffordable U.S. States to Buy a House, According to a New Report

The prefab home market size is an estimated $22.87 billion this year according to Mordor Intelligence, with North America being the largest market.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/amazons-bestselling-tiny-home-is-more-than-half-off/472557

Fanatics Wants to Create the 'Comic-Con of Sports' with

Tom Brady, Derek Jeter, and More Hall of Famers at Its Inaugural ‘Fanatics Fest’

It’s impossible to be a sports fan without seeing a Fanatics product. After all, the company is a licensed sportswear retailer for almost every league you can imagine: MLB, MLS, NBA, NCAA, NFL, NHL, NASCAR, Formula 1, WWE, and more.

Now, in an effort to give fans an immersive experience in the industry that it dominates, Fanatics announced on Thursday that it will be hosting “Fanatics Fest,” a three-day ticketed event filled with activations, athletes, and more at the Javits Center in Manhattan from August 16 through the 18.

Fans can meet and mingle with their favorite current and former athletes, including Tom Brady, Derek Jeter, and Peyton Manning. There will also be merchandise and product drops, live podcasts and other “bespoke content,” and the promise of some “major announcements” in the world of sports, according to a company release.

CEO of Fanatics Michael Rubin. Photo Provided by Fanatics

Related: Kelce Jersey Sales Spike After Taylor Swift Attends NFL Game

Fanatics began as a sporting goods retailer in 1995 and has since become a global sports behemoth featuring merchandise, trading cards, online sports betting, live commerce, live events, and more, thanks to serial entrepreneur and CEO Michael Rubin.

In 2011, Rubin purchased Fanatics and merged it with his e-commerce platform, GSI Commerce, before selling the two together to eBay for $2.4 billion.

EBay, however, only wanted the commerce operations and agreed

to sell Fanatics back to Rubin for $330 million.

Now, the company is worth an estimated $31 billion as of December 2023.

Related: From the Archives: How Michael Rubin Went From Bankrupt to Billionaire

“Sports fans deserve a place to gather, celebrate their passions, and foster new ones, and Fanatics Fest NYC aims to do just that,” said the CEO of Fanatics Events, Lance Fensterman. “Unlike any other events in the world of sports fandom, Fanatics Fest NYC will reside at the intersection of sports, culture, entertainment, and collecting, and we couldn’t be more excited to welcome fans into part of what will become a yearlong calendar of premium live experiences.”

Fanatics Fest will also hold an on-site “trading pit” for sports card collecting, trading, and training, as well as feature some of the rarest, most coveted cards and memorabilia in the world.

Tickets are on sale through the event’s official website, with prices ranging from $30 for one-day kids tickets, $50 for one-day adult tickets, $65 for a three-day kids pass, $130 for a three-day adult pass, and $400 for a three-day VIP pass.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/fanatics-fest-will-bring-tom-brady-derek-jeter-to-new-york/472555

This One Word Is a Giveaway

That You Used ChatGPT to Write an Email, According to an Expert

As AI infuses its way into the mainstream, people who write a lot (emails, pitches, papers) are trying out chatbots like ChatGPT to assist.

But although the technology has advanced, it still has a long way to go – and sometimes, certain words and sentence structures just don't feel quite right.

And according to an AI expert, there's one word that's a dead giveaway your email was written by ChatGPT.

Related: ChatGPT: What Is It and How Does It Work?

Paul Graham, the co-founder of startup accelerator company Y Combinator, posted on X this week that using the word "delve" is a red flag that the work was most likely written by ChatGPT.

> *My point here is not that I dislike "delve," though I do, but that it's a sign that text was written by ChatGPT. pic.twitter.com/2i3GUgynuL*
>
> *— Paul Graham (@paulg) April 7, 2024*

He referenced a chart by researcher Philip Shapira, which shows the usage of the word "delve" from 1990 to 2024 in published papers and articles jumps to nearly 18,000 instances in the last four years.

Another data tool, AI Phrase Finder, put "delve" as the No. 9

(out of 10) most common word used by ChatGPT.

“If you make demands for a piece of text to be comprehensive in coverage, then you can’t exactly blame ChatGPT for using a word like ‘delve,’ which carries connotations of pulling your sleeves up and digging into the depths of a subject matter,” AI Phrase Finder said. “Still, it’s undoubtedly a word that’s overused by AI.”

Related: The 7-Step ChatGPT Formula for Peak Productivity and Profit

According to Merriam-Webster, delve is a verb that means “to make a careful or detailed search for information” and “to dig or labor with.”

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/delve-is-a-giveaway-chatgpt-wrote-that-email-expert/472566

Side Hustles Are Soaring as Entrepreneurs Start Businesses Working Part- or Full-Time Elsewhere, According to a New Report

The number of small businesses created by founders who already had a job nearly doubled from 2022 to last year.

A new survey of 1,345 business owners from payroll company Gusto found that 44% of new businesses in the US started as side hustles in 2023, a jump from 27% in 2022.

A quarter of respondents said they were working full-time day jobs while starting their companies, and 19% were working part-time jobs.

“Uncertainty around which way the economy’s going made people a little skittish to give up something they’ve got in order to go for something that they want,” Gusto’s principal economist Liz Wilke explained to Bloomberg.

Hybrid and remote work could give employees the space, and time with the lack of a commute, to explore their entrepreneurial potential, according to Wilke.

Related: How to Get the Most Money Out of Your Side Hustle During Tax Season, From an Expert Who Raised $75.2 Million to Make Filing Easier

Generative AI, like OpenAI’s ChatGPT, which came on the scene in November 2022, could have also helped business owners set up their ventures and develop products faster last year.

The survey showed that more than 20% of new companies are using generative AI tools, and 76% of them are using them for marketing. A smaller number (41%) are using AI to better communicate with sales leads, and 26% are using it for customer service.

“I don’t think [AI is] accounting for all of the jump,” Wilke told FOX Business. “But I wouldn’t be surprised if side hustlers weren’t really using some generative AI tools to cut a lot of the time commitment that’s required at the very start of a business when they’re really just trying to their brand out, get a reputation, build some revenue streams.”

Related: This Insurance Agent Started a Side Hustle Inspired

By Nostalgia for His Home State – Now It Earns Nearly $40,000 a Month

The younger the worker, the more likely they were to start a business as a side hustle. The survey showed that nearly half (49%) of founders 25 to 34 years old were working for someone else while starting their own businesses. Over half (51%) of that age group was still working for that company at the time of the survey.

In comparison, 42% of the 35-44 age group, 43% of the 45-54 age range, and 38% of the 55 or older age group said they had a job while starting their companies.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/side-hustles-are-driving-new-businesses-entrepreneurship/472507

Scrabble Makes First Change to Its Board in Over 75 Years

The beloved game of Scrabble is a favorite pastime for grammar buffs and gameplay strategists who like to show off their skills in creating and remembering words.

But market research conducted by maker, Mattel, found that Gen Z favors collaboration over competition and that the game can be a bit intimidating, especially for people not well-versed in the English language or for those who haven't played in a while – now that's about to change.

After more than 75 years, there will be a new version of the

classic Scrabble game that's more "collaborative."

Related: Gap Hires Mattel Exec as CEO

The game, called "Scrabble Together," will feature a double-sided board – one side is a standard Scrabble board, and the other side is a "collaborative and faster-paced" game to make gameplay "more accessible for anyone who finds word games intimidating."

When players opt-in to play Scrabble Together, they will compete in different challenges as a team in addition to having access to using "helper cards" if the game gets too difficult.

"Scrabble has truly stood the test of time as one of the most popular board games in history, and we want to ensure the game continues to be inclusive for all players," said Global Head of Games at Mattel, Ray Adler, *per CNN*. "For anyone who's ever thought, 'word games aren't for me', or felt a little intimidated by the Classic game, Scrabble Together Mode is an ideal option."

Related: Mattel Is Hiring a 'Chief Uno Player' to Play Uno Quatro as a Side Hustle and Earn $17,000

However, as of now, the new version of the game is only available in Europe. A company representative told the *Associated Press*, that there are no plans to bring the new version of the game to the U.S.

Since its rollout in 1948, it's estimated that over 165 million Scrabble boards have been sold throughout 120 countries.

Mattel was up just over 5% in a one-year period as of Wednesday afternoon.

Related: 5 Boardgames That Teach Us About Entrepreneurial Leadership

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/mattel-rolls-out-first-change-to-scrabble-in-over-75-years/472506

CPI Report: Inflation Rose More Than Expected in March, Driven By Housing and Energy Costs

The U.S. consumer price index, which measures the cost of goods and services, increased faster than expected in March at an annual inflation rate of 3.5%, according to a March CPI report released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) on Wednesday.

The prices for necessities have gone up, with the average U.S. household paying $227 more per month for goods compared to one year ago.

The annual inflation rate recorded in February was lower, at 3.2%.

The agency attributed more than half of the monthly increase in inflation to rising energy and housing prices. Housing costs rose 5.7% from last year, while gasoline rose 1.7% (or 6.4% before seasonal adjustments).

Transportation services rose the highest out of all categories, at a 10.7% year-over-year increase.

Related: More Than Half of Americans Are Now Living Paycheck to Paycheck

Shelter costs are weighed as one-third of the CPI; CNBC reports that the expectations for costs in that category to decrease throughout the year have been crucial to possible interest rate cuts.

Food prices also increased, according to the CPI, but not across the board: Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs prices rose 0.9% over the year, while fruit and vegetable prices rose 2%.

Dairy product prices dropped 1.9% over the same period.

Related: Cardi B Goes On Rant Slamming Grocery Prices, Inflation

Meanwhile, a separate BLS real earnings summary from March shows that average hourly earnings for workers increased by just 0.6% in the past year.

U.S. households are spending more than a thousand dollars more on goods per month on average than they did three years ago, according to ABC News.

Will the Federal Reserve Cut Interest Rates?

The CPI report decreases the chance that the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates in June.

Economist Paul Ashworth of Capital Economics wrote to clients in a note obtained by USA TODAY that the rise in inflation "pretty much kills off hopes of a June rate cut."

Related: Americans Aren't Saving Money Right Now – and It's Not Just Because of Inflation

"That means mortgage rates, car loans, those credit card APRs,

they all stay higher for longer," ABC News' Rebecca Jarvis stated.

Inflation has decreased from its 9.1% peak in June 2022 but is still above the Fed's target of 2%.

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/cpi-report-shows-higher-than-expected-inflation-in-march/472499

Google's 'Find My Device' Will Finally Roll Out to Android Phones. Here's Why It Was Delayed.

The Google Android equivalent of Apple's Find My network has officially arrived.

Google published a blog post on Monday revealing the new, crowdsourced Find My Device network that can help Android users find their devices, including phones and tablets, even offline.

The network includes over a billion devices, according to Google, and started rolling out to Android users in the U.S. and Canada on Monday on devices running Android 9+. Google plans a global rollout.

Google Pixel 8 and Pixel 8 Pro Android phones. Photo by ED JONES/AFP via Getty Images

Next month, users will be able to tap into the Find My Device network to locate tracker tags, which can be attached to easily misplaced items like their keys or luggage. Google will start supporting Bluetooth tags from Chipolo and Pebblebee in May, with additional support for tags from companies such as Motorola and Eufy later this year.

The Find My Device network also works with Google Nest smart home devices by showing users how close their lost devices are to any Google smart home products.

The network matches Apple’s AirTag technology by allowing users to share tagged devices with friends and family.

Related: Google Is Reportedly Considering a Subscription Fee for AI-Enhanced Internet Searches

Google's Find My network was a long time coming – the company first revealed plans for the feature last year. Apple announced its Find My network for iOS in 2019.

"We took our time when designing the new Find My Device," Google acknowledged in the blog post but stated that it used the time to consider data security and user safety while using the network.

Google and Apple teamed up in May 2023 on a cross-platform standard to alert users if they were being tracked – without them knowing,

Google's release on Monday incorporated the joint industry standard developed by the two tech giants, which means that both Android and iPhones will now get notifications about unknown trackers traveling with them.

Related: Best Buy, Mercedes, ADT Choose Google AI for Chatbots

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/googles-find-my-device-for-android-network-rolls-out/472437

Elon Musk Says AI Technology Will Be Smarter Than 'Any Human' By 'Next Year'

Powerful tech leaders and other public figures have been sounding the alarm on the potential dangers of AI technology for years, including Elon Musk, who has never been silent about the issue.

Now, the multi-CEO is alleging that the technology will soon be able to outsmart even the most intelligent of humans.

In a livestream interview on Monday on X, which he owns, the billionaire spoke with Nicolai Tangen, the CEO of Norges Bank Investment Management, about the potential advancement of AI technology.

Related: Elon Musk Releases the AI Model Behind Grok, a Competitor to OpenAI's ChatGPT

"AI is the fastest advancing technology I've seen of any kind, and I've seen a lot of technology," Musk said. "My guess is we'll have AI smarter than any one human around the end of next year."

However, the demand for chips and electricity could limit progress, he said.

> *https://t.co/FVVaXTdewz*
>
> *— Nicolai Tangen (@NicolaiTang1) April 8, 2024*

In 2023, Musk predicted a five- to six-year timeline before superintelligence, but followed up with a growth chart of how the technology has advanced over the last two-plus decades, saying that the visual depiction "says it all."

> *The AI compute growth chart says it all https://t.co/Lj2o4CfVN8*
>
> *— Elon Musk (@elonmusk) April 8, 2024*

Musk co-founded OpenAI (the creator of ChatGPT) with Sam

Altman and Greg Brockman, but sued the pair last month alleging that they “breached the founding agreement” of the company by working towards commercial success instead of using the company technology to “benefit humanity.”

Related: Elon Musk Sues ChatGPT-Maker OpenAI, Sam Altman

Musk also stood alongside fellow tech titans including Google CEO Sundar Pichai and Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg last September at a U.S. government AI summit to discuss the need for regulation.

“There’s some chance – above zero – that AI will kill us all. I think it’s low but there’s some chance,” Musk told reporters following the session. “The consequences of getting AI wrong are severe.”

Whether or not this comes to fruition in the next year will remain to be seen.

A recent survey by Tata Consultancy Services of 21 corporate futurists shows that superintelligence is not where most see AI going.

Futurist and author Bernard Marr told CNBC earlier this week that, while we are “a very long way from AI becoming sentient, if ever,” AI technology has become “very, very good at doing things that in the past only humans could do.”

https://www.entrepreneur.com/business-news/elon-musk-ai-could-outsmart-humanity-by-next-year/472439

Best Buy, Mercedes Benz, and ADT Are All Making Custom AI Chatbots With Technology from the Same Company

Google announced on Tuesday that household name companies, including Best Buy, Mercedes Benz, and ADT, are now using its Gemini AI technology to build custom chatbots – meaning that Google's AI will soon play a part in everything from troubleshooting problems with a Best Buy purchase to setting up an ADT home security system.

Google revealed the news at its ongoing Google Cloud Next conference in Las Vegas, per Engadget.

Best Buy confirmed Google's statements with an announcement on Tuesday about its forthcoming AI tools.

Related: Klarna Says Its AI Assistant Does the Work of 700 People. The Company Laid Off the Same Number of Employees 2 Years Ago.

According to Bloomberg, Best Buy's AI chatbots will handle customer inquiries for basic requests, like order delivery and scheduling. The bots will take some of the workload from human Best Buy employees working in stores and at call centers, though it's unclear if jobs will be impacted. The AI will start rolling out "in the coming months."

Mercedes, meanwhile, is working on an AI chatbot to add to its smart sales assistant, while IHG Hotels & Resorts is developing a vacation planning bot to enhance its mobile app,

according to Engadget.

Home security company ADT is also building an AI customer service agent to help customers set up its products, per the same report.

AI has already impacted a variety of industries, with buy-now-pay-later company Klarna stating in February that its AI chatbot "is doing the equivalent work of 700 full-time [customer service] agents."

On the financial side, JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon mentioned in a letter to shareholders on Monday that AI could augment "virtually every job."

Related: A New AI Startup from Unicorn Founders Wants Businesses to Know Their 'Worth'

AI-centered startups have seen an interest in funding, with a February report showing that 44% of all the new billion-dollar-plus valued companies that came on the scene last year focused on AI and machine learning.

However, it hasn't been all positive news for Google's AI efforts. In February, the tech giant took down its Gemini AI image generator after users noted that the AI placed people of color in historically inaccurate contexts.

The image generator is still not back up.

In March, news leaked of private talks between Google and Apple about bringing Google's AI features to the iPhone.

Google's Cloud Next conference runs until Thursday.

Related: Apple Is Reportedly in Negotiations to Build Google's Gemini AI Into iPhone Features

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