



## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL

### THE ART OF ENGAGEMENT

May 15, 2013 | InterContinental Mark Hopkins Hotel

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### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ Engagement is a hot topic, and rightfully so, but we're overusing and misusing the term.
- ▶ We frequently use "engagement" to refer to our customers' levels of activity or interaction. Those are good things, but they don't tell you what's going on inside of people on a deeper level. *They don't help you understand why your customers are your customers.*
- ▶ Think instead in terms of resonance.
- ▶ Resonant brands exhibit *purpose*, *personality* and *passion*. They stand for something that matters, they articulate their values clearly and persuasively, and they aren't afraid of polarizing people.
- ▶ Resonant conferences do the same, and are also great at two other things: building active, vibrant communities that people are drawn to, and delivering adult learning that's experiential (and therefore more memorable).
- ▶ Flip the model—don't be a meeting that's trying to layer on a community, be a community that holds in-person meetings.
- ▶ The conference planner's role in this is crucial. Find your passion and put it at the heart of your work. Be willing to put yourself out there. Be a catalyst. Lead.
- ▶ You won't create something engaging unless you're deeply engaged.



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#### RECOMMENDED READING

[Resonate: Present Visual Stories that Transform Audiences](#) by Nancy Duarte

Although this book was written to help presenters, it's also rich with application to conference design. It changed the way I think about both the planning of program content and the staging of logistics and décor. And, if you do any presenting (even just to internal teams), it's an invaluable resource for how to do it more persuasively.

[We Are All Weird](#) by Seth Godin

If you want to understand why mass markets are shrinking and smaller, specialized, tribe-like markets are on the rise, read this book. Plus it will help give you the courage to inject more weirdness (i.e., personality and character) into your offerings, because without them, Godin argues, you recede into mediocrity.

[Ignore Everybody: and 39 Other Keys to Creativity](#) by Hugh MacLeod

Hugh MacLeod has written (and cleverly illustrated) a manifesto on how to bring more art, creativity and humanity to your work—in spite of a risk-averse business culture that tends to squash those very traits. It's a book about finding and unleashing your unique brilliance, and yet it's also grounded in practical advice about how to navigate the realities of organizations. In other words, how to nurture your artistry without becoming so precious about it that you can't get stuff done.

[Steal Like an Artist: 10 Things Nobody Told You About Being Creative](#) by Austin Kleon

A rich and engaging book that Austin Kleon has penned—in words and playful illustrations—to his 19-year-old self, sharing practical wisdom about creativity and creative processes that he wishes he'd known when first starting out. (And, bonus points, you can read it in a single sitting.)

[How to Be Interesting \(In 10 Simple Steps\)](#) by Jessica Hagy

Jessica Hagy has a remarkable gift for capturing deep insights in simple, elegant diagrams, posted daily on her blog [Indexed](#). Here she's bundled those insights into a "small and quirky book with a large and universal message" about being courageous, taking risks, enriching yourself and putting your creativity on display.

[Different: Escaping the Competitive Herd](#) by Youngme Moon

A fascinating (and sobering) exploration of what it takes to create meaningful differentiation in your products—that is, difference that's in any way discernible to the average customer. In many cases, it turns out, competition actually results in greater sameness between products, not difference.

[The Art of Non-Conformity: Set Your Own Rules, Live the Life You Want, and Change the World](#) by Chris Guillebeau

Based on his popular online manifesto, [A Brief Guide to World Domination](#), Chris shares his own story and those of others who have successfully revamped their lives and careers—pursuing their passion (and making money doing it) rather than following a path prescribed by someone else. Even if "creative self-employment" isn't what you're after, this is still a great resource for helping you embrace adventure and break out of convention. And make the world a better place in the process.

[Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action](#) by Simon Sinek

Sinek makes a powerful case for using your organization's purpose to lead, inspire and build a loyal following. Most companies sell the "what" of their products. Great companies instead sell the "why." You can also get an 18-minute version of his ideas in his [TED Talk](#).

[The Chairs Are Where the People Go](#) by Misha Glouberman and Sheila Heti

This is an intriguing, sometimes meandering but always insightful book that touches on a wide range of topics, from urban planning to group behavior to the physical and social dynamics of meetings. Misha Glouberman is a gifted facilitator and a fascinating thinker. (He is also—by his own claim, as yet unchallenged—Canada's foremost charades instructor.)

[You Are Not So Smart: Why You Have Too Many Friends on Facebook, Why Your Memory Is Mostly Fiction, and 46 Other Ways You're Deluding Yourself](#) by David McRaney

This is a book worth reading if for no other reason than it will make you more interesting at cocktail parties. It's an illuminating, entertaining and sometimes cringe-inducing glimpse into how and why we form (and then rationalize) our decisions. In the rapidly growing field of behavioral science and economics books, this is one of the most accessible and well written.

#### ARTICLE LINKS

[An Invitation to Engage](#), Convene magazine, February 2013

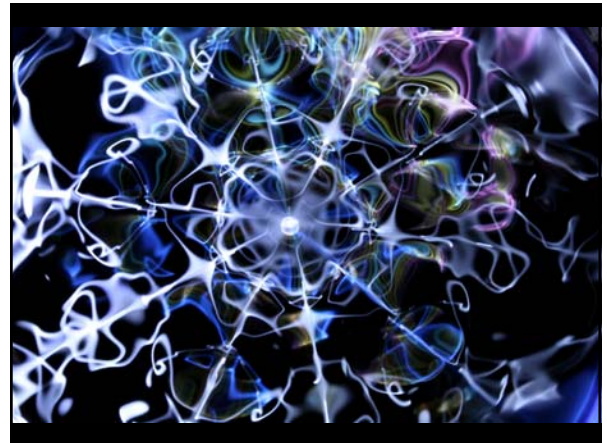
[Emotionally Engaging Events by Design](#), MPI Perspectives, Summer 2012

[Innovation Starts with Empathy](#): The importance of developing deep connections with the people you serve, by Dev Patnaik, Founder and Principal, Jump Associates

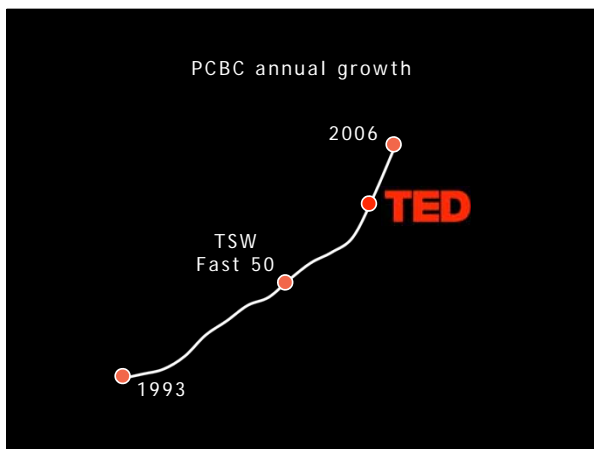
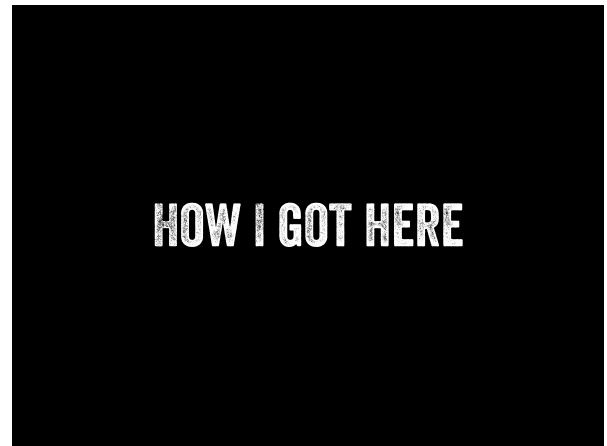
## THE ART OF **ENGAGEMENT**

**PURPOSE**  
**PERSONALITY**  
**PASSION**

## RESONANCE



**WHAT **RESONATES****  
**WITH YOU?**



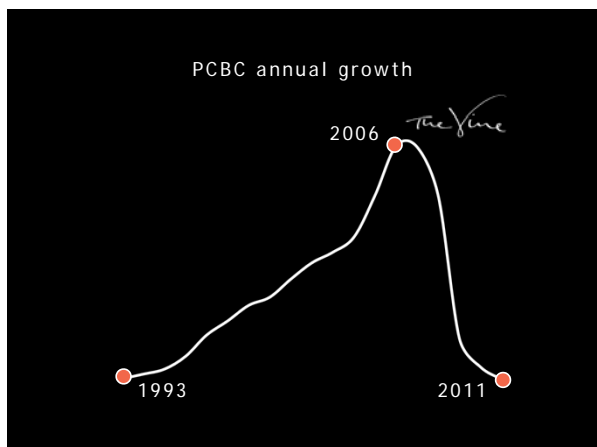






“Creativity occurs at the intersection of previously unconnected planes of thought.”

[ Dorothy Leonard ]



**ARE YOU OKAY WITH  
FEWER, BUT MORE **ENGAGED**,  
CUSTOMERS?**

**RESONANT CONFERENCES  
DO TWO THINGS**

**1.  
CREATE VIBRANT,  
ACTIVE COMMUNITIES**



MEETING → COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY → MEETING



COMMUNITY CHANGES THE  
SELLING PROPOSITION



**PURPOSE**  
**PERSONALITY**  
**PASSION**

# CONSUMER CHOICE AS A VALUES STATEMENT



**STAND FOR SOMETHING**  
**ARTICULATE VALUES**  
**BE WILLING TO POLARIZE**

“I don’t know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody.”

[ Bill Cosby ]

ideas that  
do not risk  
offense, aren't.



PURPOSE  
**PERSONALITY**  
PASSION



PUT YOUR**SELF** OUT THERE



“A good product is not enough;  
consumers today are also  
looking for soul — and soul is  
one thing you cannot invent.  
**It has to be authentic.**”

[ Laurie Coots, TBWA\Chiat\Day ]

2.  
MAKE LEARNING **STICKY**  
**EXPERIENTIAL**

EMOTION  
ENTERTAINMENT  
SURPRISE



“People will forget what you said.  
People will forget what you did.  
But people will never forget  
how you **made them feel.**”

[ Maya Angelou ]



WHAT'S **EXCITING**  
ABOUT THIS?  
WHAT'S **DAUNTING?**

**WINNING  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
SUPPORT**

**DEFINE SUCCESS EARLY  
( AND THOUGHTFULLY )**

**WIN NEW  
CLIENTS**  
**SOLIDIFY EXISTING  
CLIENTS**  
**ATTRACT TALENT**  
**MEDIA EXPOSURE**  
**START A  
MOVEMENT**  
**INCREASE  
BOOK SALES**

**DON'T DEFINE SUCCESS  
BY **DOLLARS** ALONE**

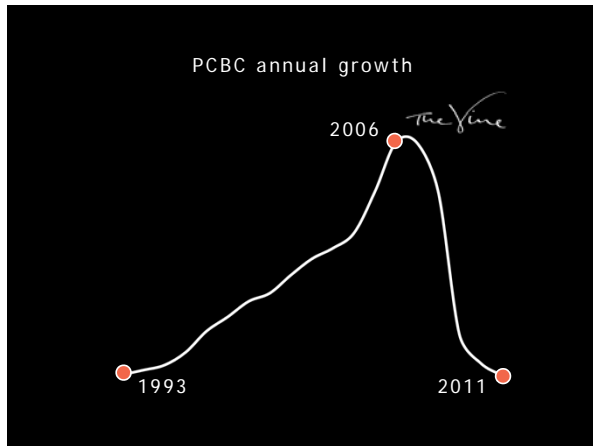
**IDENTIFY **INTANGIBLE**  
INDICATORS OF SUCCESS**

**CELEBRATE WHO JOINS  
THE PARTY**



**EDGY CONTENT IS  
ORGANIZATIONAL R&D**

**DOING THIS  
ON A BUDGET**



**FIXED COSTS VS.  
VARIABLE COSTS**

**FIXED COSTS**  
**MARKETING**  
**VENUE**  
**SPEAKERS**

{ announcing }

# THE VINE SALON

at IDEO

User-Based Design Solutions to Meet the Challenges of Community

Tuesday • November 17, 2009 • Palo Alto  
11:00 AM – 5:00 PM A day of workshops and collaborative “design thinking” led by IDEO’s Smart Space practice, followed by drinks, wine tasting and dinner at 6:00 PM. At IDEO HEADQUARTERS, 100 Forest Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94301

**WHAT RESONATES  
WITH YOU?**



PURPOSE  
PERSONALITY  
PASSION

BE ENGAGING

BE ENGAGED