

HOT TOPICS, TECH & BEYOND

WAVEMAKER @SXSWI 2018

FUN FACT: In 1987, the first year of the conference, there were 700 attendees. In 1994, there were 4,550 registrants, with 300 of those attending the first Film and Multimedia Conference. In 2017, there were 167,800 participants for the music festival, 70,574 for film, and 70,696 for the unified conference.





A GLOBAL STAGE FOR INNOVATION

The annual SXSW Interactive Festival (SXSWi) is an exciting incubator of creativity featuring the best and brightest minds, companies, technologies, and emerging startups from around the world and across industries. Designed to spark conversation of what's next, the power of SXSWi rests in the serendipity of experiences: you never know who you'll run into between sessions and within brand activations, or what kind of inspiration you will find from people outside of your industry, to spark new connections.

A fascinating aspect of SXSW is that it constantly works to keep pace with the topics driving conversation and culture, making every year a little bit different. This year, conference tracks ranged in topics from Intelligent Future and the role of Brands to Experiential Storytelling, Female Empowerment, and Government Policies, among others. It is important to note that SXSW and its wide array of keynotes, experiences and session formats is designed to provoke, educate, and empower action. Some of this year's speakers included former presidential nominee Sen. Bernie Sanders, philanthropist Melinda Gates, mayor of London Sadiq Khan, and singer Keith Urban, among many others.

Also among the additions this year was Cities Summit, an opportunity for civic leaders, creative citizens, and urbanists to connect and create more equitable, resilient, and livable cities. We also loved this year's increased operational efficiency: for those who have previously spent hours in line for a panel or session, only to be denied entrance because it was full, everyone appreciated the new Red/Yellow/Green indicators in the "SXSW Go" app and SXSW.com website telling you whether a panel room was full or not.



WAVEMAKER@SXSW INTERACTIVE

Launching our time at SXSWi, Wavemaker embraced Austin and the food and music that makes it so great, by partnering with Pinterest to kick things off with the 'Pin Your Way Through Austin' cocktail party, including an interactive bingo game driven by Pinterest's latest technology innovations.

We didn't stop there. A valuable part of SXSWi are the brand activations and trade show exhibitions. To go beyond the ordinary and provide a view into what is trending and what lessons can be gleaned from hands-on experience, Wavemaker featured two exclusive tours designed to ignite new ideas and opportunities.

ACTIVATIONS COME ALIVE (CURATED BRAND EXPERIENCES)

Among other things, SXSWi is best known for the brand activations -- ranging from local venue takeovers to freestanding structures. Noah Mallin, Head of Content, Experience and Sponsorships, took us on a tour of a few of the must-see brand activations, providing insight into how they work, what makes each unique, and how live activations are being used to amplify brand stories.

TECH, TACOS & MAYBE TEQUILA (CURATED TECH/INNOVATION TOUR)

SXSWi is a breeding ground for new tech and cool innovations, which can be seen in the many different experiences offered throughout the city. Whitney Fishman Zember, Managing Partner, Innovation & Consumer Tech, took us on a curated journey of the must-see exhibits and innovations across the convention floor. Clients got the chance to check out the latest in health, experiential, beauty and socially-driven startups designed to change opportunities to educate and engage.

HEARD @ SXSWi

"If you went to a company 10 years ago and said, 'hey, what's technology?' They would say that's the IT department. If you go to a company today and say, 'what's technology?' -- that's actually how we make our products and services better. That's how we interact with our customers -- everything that we do is about technology." - *Michael Dell, CEO, Dell Technologies*

"I feel like everything I do is an extended beta test. And honestly, not everything has worked out." - *Stylist/Fashion Entrepreneur Rachel Zoe*

"It's about transparency. Everyone is going to be skeptical if they don't know what's happening. It's about communicating what we're doing in a way that people understand." - *Bozoma Saint John, Chief Brand Officer, Uber*

"I do not believe that in Texas, or any place else, that most people who supported Trump are racists or sexists or xenophobes. I think they are people who are hurting, who want real change in the way our government works." - *Bernie Sanders, Senator*

"We will always put our values before our bottom line. End of story." - *Whitney Wolfe Herd, Founder & CEO, Bumble*

"The future of work 10 years from now: you can be in 2 places at once through holographic screens; we'll have a bot with us" - *Faith Popcorn, Futurist & Author*

"Young people are bursting out of the confines of their culture, of their context, of their religious morays, particularly young women,. While the #MeToo movement in the west is happening, it's quietly been happening around the rest of the world. Not defined by #MeToo, but by education and economic empowerment. The future of these countries will be built on the backs of women." - *Christiane Amapour, CNN Correspondent*



HOT TOPICS

SXSWI 2018

1 AI & MORALITY

AI was one of the hottest topics this year, whether discussed overtly or as a silent enabler of creativity, health & wellness, marketing or the many facets of work and play. SXSWi was proof AI plays a major role behind the scenes, making the machines used to make these technologies and opportunities a un-ignorable reality.

As SXSW participant Ray Kurzweil, Google futurist, put it, AI can “intensify human intelligence in the way that a lens can intensify the power of the sun.”

Within the AI buzz, a theme that became prevalent was the notion of morality. As AI becomes increasingly embedded within the platforms and everyday tools consumers, brands and governments lean on, we must ask - what happens when AI faces an ethical dilemma? The notion of “value alignment,” i.e. the belief that AI will make ethical decisions that represent the values of the human population it serves, was a hot topic of debate, especially when it came to figuring out how to determine the morality of any specific group.

Unanimous AI and MIT Moral Machine Lab spoke about the MIT Moral Machine, a project focused on capturing the ethical views of human drivers to build those ethical views into self-driving cars, as well as Swarm AI, Unanimous’ tech that enables networked groups to think together (i.e. “Hive Mind”) and converge on solutions to problems. The debate around whether technology like swarm-based tech can help solve for AI “value alignment,” or other governing forces are required, will likely be tested and determined over time as machine and deep learning drive advances in rapid decision making.

As Elon Musk warned, “mark my words. AI is far more dangerous than nukes. So why do we have no regulatory oversight?” Whether he’s correct or not, it’s clear that AI poses both opportunity and risk; it’s critical to understand them both to harness them for humanity’s sake.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MARKETERS

Ethics are a sensitive subject; they can vary from country to country, city to city, community to community, and even home to home.

As marketers it's critical to understand how you can glean insights into your consumers' ethics and values to make better business decisions, especially at a time when consumers demand brand transparency into functionality investment, political alignment and or societal support. Being neutral on politics or cultural and ethical topics is increasingly less of an option for brands.

Understanding your consumers' ethical systems helps determine how, when and where to engage, but also how to leverage the power of tech like AI to provide faster and more relevant responses that can support and drive what consumers care about.

When it comes to AI specifically, ethics is the responsibility of marketers. As we test and find new ways to leverage the power of AI, and Machine and Deep Learning into both our consumer-facing and backend tools and products, there's a responsibility to behave in an ethical and moral way when it comes to data collection, usage, privacy, and overall consumer trust. As new ways of interacting with interfaces and technologies evolve, ethics will continue to be a heated topic.

2 EXTENDED REALITY

There's been plenty of talk in previous years about augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR) and mixed reality (MR), including the opportunities they could unlock and the roadblocks they've faced while trying to scale. But this year the focus was on extended reality (XR) -- considered to be a superset of different types of reality. Wikipedia defines it as **"technology-mediated experiences that combine digital and biological realities"**. It encompasses a wide spectrum of hardware and software, including sensory interfaces, applications, and infrastructures that enable content creation for VR, MR, AR, cinematic reality (CR), and more. With these tools, users generate new forms of reality by bringing digital objects into the physical world and bringing physical world objects into the digital world." XR is different; it requires mental effort, as well as often physical effort, to engage in the experiences it offers.

What's also different about XR than any other previously hyped technology is its ability to eliminate physical distance/barriers between people without impacting the sense of real-world interpersonal activity. The intimate, personal connection remains intact while the technology removes frictions caused by physical distance/blocker limitations. While some tech can be dismissed as 'technology for technology's sake', discussions at SXSWi made a strong case that XR, driven by the right data, presents previously unimaginable business benefits, eliminating the notion of space to reinvent what an experience is and could be. **By unlocking access to any location, eliminating the notion of space between people/places/things, and removing any roadblocks to interactivity, XR offers the chance to change the role of communications.**

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MARKETERS

It's not about replacing a medium (i.e. XR being the new 'future of TV'); **extended reality is its own tool for breaking through physical and digital barriers to create a sense of intimacy and connectivity**, using a variety of known and emerging media technologies.

This is about going beyond tech-fueled, utility-driven experiences to delivering emotional connections via experiences. **XR has the ability to bring consumers closer to everything** – brands, content, information, each other – in ways never before imagined via digital experiences.

Think of what XR could mean when applied to information delivery throughout the Purchase Journey; XR can manipulate data to become immediate, reduce errors, and drive contextually-driven decision making, which could have major impact on triggering the Active Stage. The ability to drive better understanding of the world around us has implications throughout the Purchase Journey that could enable brands to influence consumer behavior.

FACT: 52% of businesses are developing an XR strategy, and 79% believe XR will have a widespread, cross-industry impact over the next three years. (Source: Accenture "Technology Vision 2018). Are you one of them?

3

EXPERIENCE ABOVE ALL ELSE

A theme that emerged from many of the panels, whether marketing focused or not, was the notion of **humanity before technology**. No matter the brief, it is critical to put the consumer's needs before the desire to leverage technology. This was most apparent when it came to the topic of experiences and direct engagement with consumers that can result in connections and loyalty-based relationships. When leveraging these new forms of media, the process and execution needs to be treated with respect and approached as a privilege, but most importantly, with the consumer's needs at the core.

A few examples that span the spectrum include:

- **The Starz 'Sensory House'** promoting the network's two new shows, *Sweetbitter* and *Vida* (which are both female-led), focused on the five senses (each vendor was also led by women). For example, the "Smell" section included scents inspired by the main characters of *Sweetbitter* and was created by Krista Lacey, owner of Austin perfumery Roux Saint James. The desire to target young female viewers is in line both with the shows plots as well as the SXSW demographic.
- Austin-born clothing company **Outdoor Voices** took a different take on experience by encouraging festival goers to use a festival-only AR app to leave SXSWi indoors and get outside to enjoy the fresh air. The reward for "Doing Things" (the company's slogan) by going outside and exploring Austin? Exclusive apparel. It made a natural, experience-driven connection between Outdoor Voices' desire to get people moving and finding ways to disrupt the traditional retail experience.
- Meanwhile, **Westworld** brought fans' dreams to life by giving them a chance to do what seems impossible: experience Westworld firsthand. This installation to top all other installations required a 40-person crew over 5 weeks to build the science fiction Westworld park along with a cast of robotic hosts that had to remember a script 444 pages long. This commitment to the show's plot, its relentless pursuit of continuity and genuine experience and overall marketing efforts, is bound to be a case study for years to come in delivering on consumer desire.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MARKETERS

Experiences are powerful because they have the ability to impact a consumer no matter where they are on the Purchase Journey - particularly in the Priming Stage when consumers are not actively looking or ready to make a purchase. An unexpected experience can develop brand affinity and excitement, triggering consumers to the Active Stage, and even inspiring loyalty.

It's important to remember that **experiences are complex**. You need to consider things like scale, technical needs, the story you're trying to tell, the necessary touchpoints for consistency and replication, etc. For example, had Westworld simply replicated the Mariposa Saloon on the show, it wouldn't have been so impressive.

Detail is everything. Not every experience or activation needs to be a massive, million-dollar investment. However, taking the consumer lens to determine which details they'll notice or be engaged by is vital. Be on the look-out to ensure your experience feels authentic, on-brand and aligned with consumer expectations.

4

YOU'VE GOT TO FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT(S INCLUSION)

The current political climate and movements like #MeToo drove and inspired plenty of conversation around women's rights. Kicking off with a keynote from Melinda Gates, countless panels discussed and debated how to work with women, market to women, and most formidable, how to support women. Overall, **gender roles took center stage as well, with more than 50 panels and events** focused on topics like sexual harassment or gender parity. While some addressed gender constructs, others focused on specific industries, such as venture capital.

Whitney Wolfe Herd, Founder of Bumble, spoke about how she started Bumble after experiencing extreme sexist attacks online after leaving her role at Tinder. She also spoke about Bumble's recent decision to add the logo on the NBA's Los Angeles Clippers basketball team uniform, explaining that while it may seem odd to outsiders, the team's commitment to gender diversity (the Clippers have the largest female leadership team in the NBA) attracted her, noting that she "heard a lot of people say basketball is such a misogynistic culture...why would you go into an industry like that. But we want to make an impact where impact still needs to be made."

CNN correspondent Christiane Amapour spoke about the shift in gender relationships on a global scale, noting that she's optimistic of the changes she's seeing while filming her new show "Sex & Love Around the World," noting that **younger generations are demonstrating a desire for and support of respect, acceptance and consent that previous generations failed to deliver on.**

Transparency and trust were also a major focus for brands looking to provide consumers with confidence in their work – both for employees and for their product. As Uber's Chief Brand Officer Bozoma Saint John explained, for Uber users to regain trust in the brand, she believes showing Uber's "inner workings" and focusing on transparency is a critical step, ranging from company culture changes to product development. She also highlighted that fixing gender issues within both the workplace and general culture isn't simply on women, noting ""Everyone else needs to make the noise; white men need to make the noise. It makes me so angry. Why do I as the black woman have to come and fix it? It makes no sense."

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MARKETERS

The heightened attention around bias is starting to drive real change. Whether the topic is about working with/for women or marketing to women, ongoing, inclusive dialogue - and action - is the only way to ensure gender association, age, ethnicity, skin color, sexuality, or any other facet of a person is celebrated and not used against them.

The future is bound to be imperfect and a work in progress; One panel, “Don’t Sweat The Tech: Mom Can Use Blockchain Too” came under fire before the festival even started due to its sexist connotations. Two (yes two) name changes later, and a lot of heated tweets calling the panel name (and SXSW organizers) out, it was changed to a more neutral title, “Don’t Sweat the Tech: Trade Explanation for UX.”

However, nothing will change until those with the power to inspire change – e.g. politicians, influencers, and yes, even brands – make strong, loud statements through their actions (both internally and externally) and proof of ethics in how they support and treat all employees, colleagues, friends, and humans. **These actions (or, in some cases, inactions) have the ability to reverberate amongst consumers, and can result in both protest and support, pending the behavior.**

5

HEALTH & HAPPINESS

Wellness has become such a hot topic that this year SXSW added the new Wellness Expo, designed to bring together "thousands of SXSW attendees interested in healthy living and companies in the continually growing health and wellness industry." Focused on everything from lifestyle bonds to CBD products to specialty diets to energy healers, Wellness Expo tapped into a larger conversation around how to care for ourselves and communities, no matter our state of health.

Many of the conversations for both startups and major companies/VCs was around collaboration for the greater good to drive healthcare capabilities and efficiencies with the consumer at the core. Plenty also focused on the **notion of technology to foster empathy**, a critical component of healthcare that impacts everyone from the patient to the caretaker to the family and friends. For example, "Connect to End Cancer" focused on treatment advances fueled by more thoughtful use of tech.

An interesting trend we saw was the shift of major investors, including companies like Dell technologies, moving towards investing in the medical field, be it health & wellness, private sector investments, public hospital technologies, etc. When talking about larger partnerships, like the Amazon/JP Morgan Chase/Berkshire Hathaway independent healthcare company project, Michael Dell noted that **collaboration could be critical to unlocking the future of healthcare**, noting "I don't think they will have a problem with other large companies joining up with them if they actually come up with something interesting. There isn't going to be one answer here." NASA is even getting in on the healthcare game, launching Collaborative Health Innovation Platform (CHIP), a NASA-funded AI-powered healthcare innovation platform, at SXSW, designed to connect the global health and med tech startup communities.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MARKETERS

Health & wellness has never been a hotter topic amongst consumers, both for chronic sufferers and those seeking to maintain or improve their current state of physical, mental and emotional health. The major focuses on empowering people to better understand, access and leverage their own health data, as well as the desire to drive empathy via technological advances, impact everyone from the patient to the caretakers to the healthcare system to the pharma companies, and everyone in between.

Remember: **It's about technology for the sake of humanity, and humanity before technology.** To enable the future of healthcare and to connect consumers to real-time solutions, it's critical to connect all industries, companies and stakeholders within the healthcare space, from VCs to startups to pharma to hospitals to medical caretakers, and make sure all are aligned on both mission and plan of action. As "Duke Clinical Research Institute's Bray Patrick-Lake Patrick-Lake explained, "We can have meetings at SXSW and talk about how great this all is, but it's not reaching the people who are suffering right now...Good, solid, rigorous research takes time." While we saw plenty of startups at SXSW offering short-term solutions, the longer-term focus is where we will see rapid change for both patient care, patient empathy, and , ideally, cures.

6

BLOCKCHAIN MEANS (& IS GOING AFTER) BUSINESS

Driven by the popularity of Bitcoin and cryptocurrencies, blockchain was a hot topic this year, reflected in the over 38 official panels focused on the topic, with some great names, too, like "New Kids on the Blockchain" "and "Initial Taco Offering."

Joseph Lubin, a co-founder of Ethereum who also started ConsenSys, a company that builds applications for Ethereum, spoke about **the value of cutting out value-draining middlemen across various industries**. If these platforms for decentralized products continue to grow, he noted, "we are going to be able to squeeze out delays and frictions" in many different industries. Amongst those industries he listed was the music industry, explaining that "unlike the traditional music industry where there are lots of people with law degrees who serve as intermediaries and extract a tremendous amount of value from the ecosystem, this new blockchain architecture enables content providers and resource providers to more directly access their fan bases or consumers with much less mediation." The theory could be applied to a slew of industries, potentially even yours.

Other meetups and panels that focused on both cryptocurrency and blockchain included personal data and the opportunities blockchain provides to protect civil liberties, the way a machine economy could impact the future of cryptocurrencies, and, as a result, implementations of blockchain.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MARKETERS

Blockchain is a great example of how SXSW has evolved, topically. Years ago it was all about breaking consumer technologies that could be used immediately – platforms like Foursquare and Twitter debuted at previous SXSW events – giving attendees an immediate demo and taste of the future. With tech like blockchain, the experience isn't exactly immediate and hands-on; there's no cryptocurrency exchange to get into these panels, pay for tacos or acquire a start-up. Surprising, but **also indicative of SXSW's shift from purely in-the-now experiences and technologies to being increasingly future-forward.**

This is also a lesson for brands interested in blockchain; while the potential future applications could, in fact, be valuable in driving efficiencies, as with any new technology, it's critical not to look potential problems through the lens of technology, but to look at problems or inefficiencies within your business first, then determine what tools (including potentially blockchain) can be used to solve for them.

As the conversations at SXSW clearly indicated, blockchain, like any emerging technology with a lot of buzz, holds plenty of potential, whether it's to share the eCommerce process, consumer data privacy, fiscal security for both brands and consumers, and more. We're in the 101 stage; tracking the crypto ecosystem as it develops is critical for learning, understanding and gleaning confidence when it comes to determining your potential challenges and what blockchain could eventually solve for.

7

AUDIENCE AS INFLUENCER

Storytelling is a major component of SXSW (the Film festival always overlaps with Interactive), making it a compelling conversation for broadening the dialogue from our everyday marketing lens to one that includes filmmakers, advocates, and more.

Ali Weiss, SVO of Marketing at Glossier spoke about the notion of influencers at the panel 'The Secrets Of Cult Brands', noting that the beauty brand views all consumers as influencers, no matter the size of their Twitter or Instagram followers, and treats them accordingly. **The brand recognizes that no matter your social circle, everyone has the ability to influence someone.**

At the panel 'Theatrical vs. Streaming', they didn't just debate the merits of finding distribution across various channels, but also the need to focus on finding an audience. Whether a storyteller chooses to tell their story in a movie theater, via Netflix, via YouTube, or another channel, Sundance Institute's Liz Manashil spoke about how audience is key; if brands/distributors don't see an audience, they don't see a film.

If you consider your audience to be the same as your influencer, it's critical you connect with them beyond utility. As Ira Glass, American public radio personality and the host and producer of the radio and television show This American Life, explained, **"if you are in the story business you are in the feelings business..."** Our job as journalists is to describe the world. Funny moments make the world more interesting." Focusing on the need to tell stories that reach, reflect and resonate with consumers (and ultimately influencers) of all ages, he noted that plurality of voices is critical to success, as "great stories happen to those who can tell them."

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MARKETERS

No matter where they are in the Purchase Journey, whether actively seeking to make a purchase or having just completed one, consumers are our main audience, our core influencers, and where brands should put focus. As Spike Jones, VP of Strategy at Spreadfast, explained, for brands trying to move into 'cult brand' status, it's critical to **"Highlight your tribe. Don't shine the light on you - shine it on your fans."**

The same goes for all facets of your marketing strategy. For example, the NFL's Alissa Lieppman preached that, "when it comes to content, it's not about getting likes or loves or angries... it's about getting people to share ... so it's exposed to more people than you could ever share with."

For brands that leverage influencer relationships to drive the consumer through the Purchase Journey, it's critical that content be authentic. Donna Mirus Bates, Universal Orlando Resort's SVP of Marketing explained that influencer partners creative control has driven a more "authentic" connection and appearance of all content amongst its Millennial target. For example, Bates shared how Universal asked 17 influencers to create videos about their Universal Orlando Resort experiences in their own unique voices and styles; those 28 videos resulted in 40 million impressions for the brand. As she explained, **"We wanted them to say the things that we didn't think we could say about ourselves."**

Putting the consumer at the core and in the driver's seat helps brands better understand the complexities of their personal Purchase Journeys, and find real ways to deliver value and eliminate frictions, whether it's in the Active Stage, Priming Stage, and anywhere in-between.



A TREND WORTH NOTING: POLITICS @ SXSWI

It has been fascinating to see the year-to-year rise in the number of politicians, lawmakers and policy experts coming to SXSW to discuss, debate and learn about the technology sector and discuss how innovation could/should/must be balanced with regulation. Everyone from Bernie Sanders and Senator Mark Warner to representative Darrell Issa and even former FDA commissioner Robert Califf joined in on the discussions around climate change, immigration, gun violence, smart cities, legislating innovation, and more.

This year nearly 40 mayors from around the country, joined in for the same reason other attendees do – to broaden their thinking on issues outside their everyday focus and remit to think bigger picture and longer term.

OUR FAVORITE 2018 BRAND ACTIVATIONS



HBO/WESTWORLD

To hype people up about Season 2, HBO built Westworld's entire (yes, entire) town of Sweetwater, offering an immersive and interactive adventure. Most likely the most expensive (and intensive) SXSW brand execution ever, The "Live Without Limits Weekend" two-hour experience shuttled guests via a "Delos shuttle" to the location where they were released into Sweetwater to explore, complete with locations made famous in the show (i.e. Mariposa Saloon) and heavily-commuted actors playing "hosts" (i.e. the name for Westworld's robotic characters). For those exceptionally dedicated, HBO hid clues about the upcoming season throughout the town. Besides this epically detailed execution, HBO also offered Westworld-themed Lyft rides around Austin, as well as an invite-only flight.



HBO/SILICON VALLEY

Attendees had the chance to preview the VR experience Silicon Valley: Inside the Hacker Hostel, which lets them to do everything from take a meeting at Hooli to Instagram the Not Hot Dog Room.

GOOGLE

Google turned an Austin home into a connected Fun House designed to show how Google Assistant can be a part of everyday life, from appliances to litter boxes. Featuring 12 different rooms with various activations highlighting Google Assistant's capabilities, the goal was to highlight how much Google already powers our lives in ways we don't think about, and how Google Assistant can help power even more in the future.

OUR FAVORITE 2018 BRAND ACTIVATIONS



WARNER BROS./READY PLAYER ONE/VIVE VR

Steven Spielberg's action adventure based on Ernest Cline's bestseller "Ready Player One" came to life via an interactive experience that allowed attendees to utilize Vive VR to immerse themselves into hero Wade Watt's world, experience the OASIS, enjoy live artist performances and more. All eight pieces of VR content designed for the experience can also be viewed via the Vive headset at home (free to download on Viveport and Steam before the release of the film) or at AR arcades nationwide



ABC/ROSEANNE

To celebrate the revival of 'Roseanne', ABC hosted a pop-up re-creation of Lanford Lunch Box, as well as the resurrection of the Conner family's living room, kitchen and garage. Lanford Lunch Box served dishes from the show, including the fictional root beer featured on the show, Canoga Beer. Cast member meet & greets, as well as trivia events, were hosted throughout the pop-up.



UNDER ARMOUR'S HOVR HOUSE

Named after their new smart running shoe, Under Armour's Hovr House featured the chance to try the shoes, as well as a wall dedicated to Austin's popular running routes via MapMyRun. Visitors could also, thanks to workout gaming company Zwift, try on the sneakers and run virtually via a treadmill and app.

OUR FAVORITE 2018 BRAND ACTIVATIONS

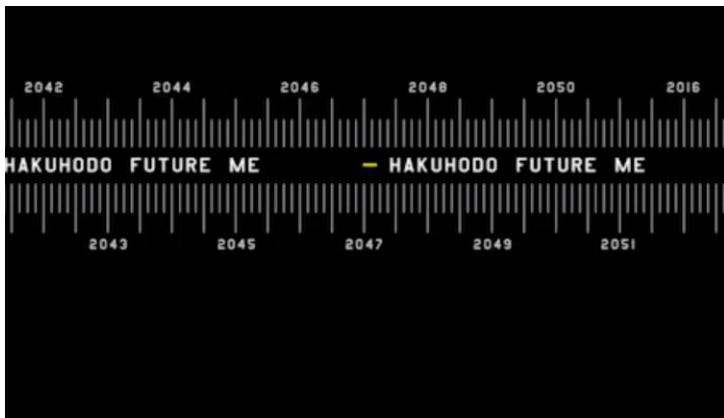


nFANT Labs

A finalist in SWSW's Impact Pediatric Health Competition, nFANT Labs developed nFANT Feeding Solution, the first FDA-cleared IoT device for the NICU and nFANT Analytics, a machine learning and reporting platform that leverages IoT data to help infants struggling to feed.

HAKUHODO i-studio

HAKUHODO i-studio, in collaboration with Yamaha Corporation, demo'd a "Duet with Yoo," experiential installation equipped with the Yamaha AI Music Ensemble System. The installation highlighted a new role for musical instruments via AI, offering the joy of playing in a music ensemble and learning how AI can enhance their performances.



THEA

ChooseATL, the Metro Atlanta Chamber's initiative to get more Millennials living/working in Atlanta, launched THEA, its own OTT video streaming platform. Designed to give local brands and content creators the chance to build their own channels to promote their own content, the Atlanta-focused platform is geared to sway Millennials to move to Atlanta.

Nix

Nix, a diagnostic company taking a materials science approach to develop single-use biosensing wearable technologies focused on hydration, was at SXSW. Their hydration biosensor were on display which can be used to inform athletes, soldiers and other laborers when to drink, what to drink and how much to drink, based on sweat biomarkers – providing actionable information in real-time.



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM SXSWI 2018

- 1 AI & Morality** – Understanding your consumers' belief systems and ethics can help brands determine the best way to showcase their own values and initiatives (both internal and external) supporting them, as well as leverage the power of AI to better understand and activate against that value system.
- 2 Extended Reality** – As emerging technologies test the boundaries of what physical and digital interaction could be, now is the time to understand how integrating realities could be used to showcase your brands offerings and the value they provide consumers.
- 3 Experience Above All Else** – Every brand interaction is an experience; how are you ensuring consumers are both surprised and delighted by what you share with them, as well as fine unique, unconventional ways to drive connectivity and brand messaging?
- 4 You've Got To Fight For Your Right(s Inclusion)** – Supporting your consumers can't just be in what you say; it must be in what you do, both within your own company and in the world. Taking a stand for the matters that matter most to your company, and championing the people and stories that may have been previously marginalized, are critical to elevating the dialogue for everyone.
- 5 Health & Happiness** – No matter your state of health, health & wellness will continue to drive consumer interest and investment, which means it will also drive corporate and VC investment as well. While there's plenty to consider (e.g. patient privacy/HIPPA), finding new ways to give consumers a sense of empowerment and control over their health benefits all involved.
- 6 Blockchain Means (& Is Going After) Business** – With any rapidly growing technology, it's critical to understand not only how, but why, it's gaining traction to move beyond buzzword and understand the true value it could offer your business. Not everything has immediate applications, but staying abreast of backend technology like this may unlock efficiencies across the spectrum.
- 7 Audience As Influencer** – No matter how many Twitter or Instagram followers someone has, every consumer has the ability to influence someone in their life and serve as your brand advocate. How are you empowering them to embrace and share your brand?

QUESTIONS?

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