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Monday April 7th, 2014
Crystal Pavillion Ballroom
Pan Pacific Vancouver Hotel

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CALGARY AGENCY HOSTS CONFERENCE FOR "CULT" BRANDS

February 20, 2014 | Russ Martin | Comments

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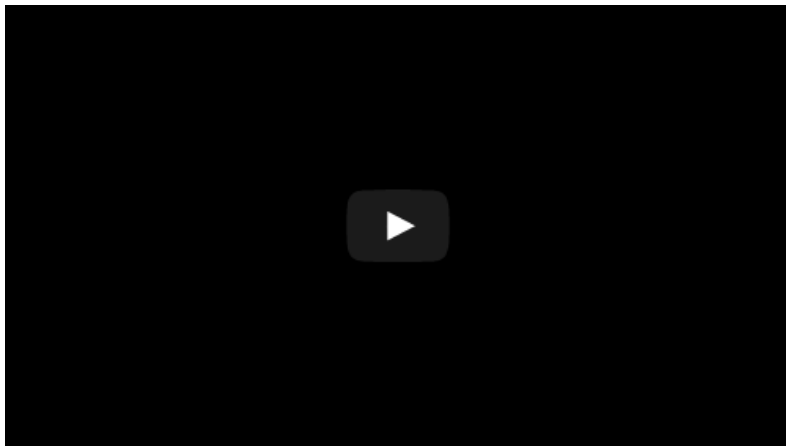


More than 300 marketers met in Banff Thursday to discuss the tactics of "cult" brands that forgo traditional mass advertising in favour of customer engagement.

Called The Gathering, the inaugural event was hosted by the Calgary-based engagement agency **Cult**.

At the conference, the agency also presented trophies to eight brands that best engaged with consumers in 2013 using what it refers to as "cult-like" tactics.

Monday April 7th, 2014
7:30 a.m. - 12:00
Crystal Pavillion Ballroom
The Pan Pacific Vancouver Hotel



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NHL, Madden, Saskatchewan Roughriders, GoPro, Red Bull, the city of Las Vegas, Urban Outfitters and Cult client Harley-Davidson were awarded that honour following a six month selection process. Executives from each of the winning brands also spoke at the conference, including Red Bull's vice-president of marketing **Arun Hozack** and NHL CMO **Brian Jennings**.

Two other agency clients, Big Rock and Pita Pit, also gave presentations.

According to agency founder and CEO **Chris Kneeland**, the conference was designed to "share secrets" about customer engagement from brands that have cult-like followings and explain to marketers how non-traditional engagement tactics can result in big business results.

Kneeland said "cult" brands are ones that have an "irrationally loyal following" of customers who will purchase without discount, don't require advertising and forgive brands for making mistakes. Though some brands that fit the cult criteria have had their marketing well documented, like Starbucks and Apple, Kneeland said Cult's aim was to showcase brands whose stories were less familiar, including upstarts that have turned into big businesses, like Frank and Oak and GoPro.

The conference sold out in mid-January. Next year Kneeland said he expects to grow to about 500

attendees, though he said The Gathering will remain an intimate affair. "It will likely be larger next year, but we don't want this to become a multi-thousand person conference where you sit in an auditorium and listen. There's a great interactivity when you keep it small," he said.

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So like who were the hitters attending? AH and BJ...that's it?
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Rob

In addition to Arun Hozack from Red Bull and Brian Jennings from NHL, other brand leaders who presented included:

- Saskatchewan Roughriders: Greg Sauter, VP Marketing & Bus. Dev.
- Frank & Oak: Ethan Song, CEO
- GoPro: Todd Ballard, Director Sports Marketing
- FremantleMedia: David Luner, President of Brand Partnerships
- Urban Outfitters: Steve Hartman, Managing Director
- Las Vegas: Cathy Tull, SVP Marketing
- Calgary Stampede: Jackie McAtee, Dir. Consumer Marketing
- Harley-Davidson Canada: Taso Mascalidis, Sr. Mgr., Advertising & Promotions
- Sport Chek: Frederick Lecoq, VP Marketing
- Pita Pit: Chris Fountain, CEO
- Big Rock Brewery: Bob Sartor, CEO
- WestJet Airlines: Greg Plata, Team Lead, Sponsorship

PLUS other guest speakers:

- Chris Malone, author of The Human Brand
- Denise Lee Yohn, author of What Great Brands Do
- Jordan Berg, co-producer of The Naked Brand

Saturday, February 22 @ 7:20 pm

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