

For Immediate Release

Cult Brands Come Together at The Gathering

Inaugural event in Banff to honour handful of brands that have achieved cult status.

December 15, 2013

Calgary, AB – Senior executives behind eight of North America’s most successful brands will come together in Banff this February at an exclusive event recognizing their achievement of “cult status”.

The Gathering, a business conference and awards gala, will take place at the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel on February 20, 2014. There, leaders behind such notable brands as Harley-Davidson, NHL, Madden (EA Sports), Saskatchewan Roughriders, Red Bull, GoPro, Las Vegas and Urban Outfitters will meet, as two hundred of their marketing contemporaries pay homage to their success. Through a series of closed-door sessions, attendees can learn the secrets and unconventional techniques they’ve used to cultivate thriving brand cultures that have won the hearts and minds of consumers across the globe.

“It’s about time that the real heroes are recognized and rewarded,” explained Chris Kneeland, CEO of Cult Collective and co-founder of The Gathering. “The ad industry tends to reward and recognize short-term success and celebrate creativity for creativity’s sake. The Gathering honours those enlightened individuals and brands who truly engage consumers and enjoy a true cult-like status as a result.”

Organizers of The Gathering considered more than 100 brands from across North America, then evaluated nominees against eighteen criteria to determine various cult-like attributes. Leadership teams from the eight winning brands will attend The Gathering in Banff to share ideas and bestow their knowledge and wisdom on privileged attendees.

“We conceived The Gathering as a bit of a ‘secret society’ for brands that have built fanatical followings and connected with consumers by making impressions, not buying impressions,” added Kneeland. “The leaders behind those brands have succeeded in not only getting customers to buy, but to buy in to something bigger than just what they sell.”

Organizers behind other successful events such as South by Southwest (SXSW), AppNation, and the Banff World Media Festival are contributing their expertise and oversight to The Gathering. The event has also attracted the support of the Canadian Marketing Association, The Globe & Mail, and other marketing thought leaders. Chris Malone, author of *The Human Brand*, and Jordan Berg, co-producer of *The Naked Brand*, are also confirmed to speak at The Gathering.

Recent reports by Forbes, CNBC and Interbrand on the world’s most successful brands indicate that brand affinity and customer loyalty have been fundamental to their prosperity in the face of the economic turmoil of recent years. “Clearly, the brands who dominate are those who win the allegiance and advocacy of customers who’ll shop them over competitors, and pay more for their products and services,” described Kneeland.

The Gathering takes place February 20, 2014 at the Fairmont Banff Springs, Banff, Alberta. Full details and registration information are available at: <http://www.cultgathering.com/>

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About Cult Collective:

The Cult Collective is an organization comprised of nearly 20 different marketing agencies, research and media firms who have catered to hundreds of notable brands across North America. While our disciplines vary, we share a passion for creating cult-like followings. We believe the marketing / advertising industry has done a poor job recognizing the brands (and leaders behind them) who have accomplished remarkable results employing cult-like principles. Cult Collective funds The Gathering to recognize and reward the organizations that operate differently, build amazing cultures, and connect with consumers in really compelling ways.

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