

David Polinchock

Accomplished Innovator in Media, Technology and Experience

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Topics

- Branding / Marketing
- Consumer Trends
- Employee Engagement
- Futurists / Trends
- Innovation / Creativity
- Moderator / Facilitator
- Retail and Consumerism
- Storytelling
- Technology / Alternate Technology
- Television



About David Polinchock

Over the years, David has been involved in a wide range of experiential advertising programs, the introduction of virtual reality as a marketing tool and city festivals. He was even a Disney performer. He brings all of those experiences to his speaking engagements, which allow him bring his presentations to life.

With over 20 years of professional speaking engagements, David has challenged marketers to create better stories and to understand how consumers want to hear and be engaged by those stories. He has given presentations for a wide range of companies, including Razorfish, Microsoft, msnbc.com, MTV Networks, the Newspaper Association of America, Nokia, GSK, Pepsi, Nike and Ogilvy, among many others.

He demonstrates through selected case studies and his early VR experiences, that it is not enough today to simply play with the latest technologies. One must also understand their role in creating compelling, authentic and relevant brand experiences.

David is also a pioneer in the use of VR for advertising and marketing, starting in 1991. His work has won a Cannes Lion, 2 Gold Pencils, a Best Trade Show award and his AudienceGames work for Volvo was called *"one of the best marketing ideas in the world."* He also produced many of the early promotions that used VR. He has spoken extensively on how VR would impact advertising and over the years and has put tens of thousands of people through VR experiences. This has given him an excellent understanding of what makes a great experience, which he brings to life with his stories.

With his previous roles as the Director of the AT&T AdWorks Lab and the Director at the PwC Experience Center, David is able to combine the skills needed to present within those corporate environments with his theatrical training to create engaging and memorable experiences for his audiences.

Select Keynotes

- **Third Places: Putting People and Experience First**

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, our interaction with the physical world has undergone a profound transformation. In the realm of community building, the concept of the "third place" has gained significance. This term refers to social environments distinct from the home ("first place") and the workplace ("second place"). Examples of third places include churches, cafes, clubs, public libraries, bookstores, and parks. Ray Oldenburg, in his influential book "The Great Good Place" (1989), emphasizes the importance of third places for civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and fostering a sense of place.

Consider the innovative office spaces created by companies like Google and Facebook, seemingly designed to blend the second and third places. For younger generations, social life often revolves around work environments, blurring the lines between professional and personal spaces.

Reflecting on my own experiences, I recall frequenting a Burger King with my daughter Sydney when she was young. The indoor playground was not just about the physical space but the social aspect, providing Sydney, as an only child, the opportunity to interact with her peers. This Burger King became a "Third Place" for Sydney, highlighting the social significance of spaces beyond home and work.

In the evolving landscape of retail, the value of real estate is being reevaluated. With the rise of online shopping and the comfort people now have with delayed gratification, the traditional emphasis on merchandise space is shifting. The question arises: If we reduce the need for inventory in retail spaces, what alternative purpose can these spaces serve? The potential lies in transforming retail environments into social hubs rather than purely commercial spaces.

As our work structures undergo significant changes, an opportunity emerges to socialize retail spaces. The trend seems to be moving towards creating a more engaging and community-driven experience. Rather than focusing solely on our purposes, we should consider the needs and desires of our guests, as prioritizing their experience encourages their continued engagement.

In this context, incorporating familiar amenities like coffee bars and DJ booths becomes vital. These additions draw from hospitality, personalizing the retail experience and increasing the "dwell time," as noted by Gensler's Kathleen Jordan. The right amenities complement the products being sold, offering a respite that allows consumers to recharge and extend their time within the space.

Furthermore, the universal need for fun becomes apparent. Fun is a powerful tool to foster understanding and peace. Hate struggles to thrive in an atmosphere of fun. To create meaningful experiences, we should focus on bringing people together to share joyous activities. The challenge is to celebrate the joy we create and continue exploring ways to unite people through shared, positive experiences.

Retail can be the new (old) *third place*. As Ray Oldenberg said, *third places are important for civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and establishing feelings of a sense of place*. Today, more than ever perhaps, we need our third places as a society and what better way for retailers to help than to be our gathering places.

• GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

Relying on his own experience and experts in technology, retail, branding, this is a look into the future. Where might VR/AR/AI go in the future? Are the other technologies that we should be exploring in the coming years? How will the role of experience change over the next ten years? We'll look into the crystal ball and see if we can help you with some predictions you can use.

• GENERATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

While there are common elements across all experiences, there are also ways that different generations engage with experiences. Understanding those differences are key to ensuring that you're delivering the right experience to the right audience.

1. Boomers Bring Hospitality to Healthcare
2. Millennials and the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)
3. Gen Z, Experience Over Things

• Experience Walkabout

Over the years, David has developed several unique learning experiences that take place out of the traditional meeting rooms. One of his most popular sessions has been the Experience Walkabout, using the streets and stores of the city to create learning sessions.

These smaller group experiences are designed to enhance the learning opportunities by allowing participants to see how experiences are delivered in physical environments (additional modules looking at online experiences can be developed as well). During these sessions, participants use an experience report card to rate the experiences on a variety of learning areas. In the past, they have included:

- The physical space. Does the space deliver on the brand messaging and promise?
- Guest/staff interaction. Is it forced? Am I able to get the information I need? Is it sufficiently staffed?
- Personalization. Is there anything about the experience that gets customized for me? Are there areas that should be personalized?
- Tech enablement. Would tech be a useful addition to the experience or a distraction? Is the tech in the space used to create a better experience or simply to save costs?
- Total over all experience. Did they deliver across all touchpoints? Would I come back? Did the experience speak to me?

These full day sessions include:

- A pre-tour briefing to discuss the overall objectives
- The tour itself. We usually visit 6 – 10 locations before lunch, take a lunch break and continue after lunch.
- A tour debrief. What were their observations? Most importantly, how can they relate the learnings from the tours into what they do? The debrief is done as an interactive whiteboard session so that actionable steps can be created giving immediate opportunities to be key learnings into practice.

David works with you to determine the key learnings from the walking tours and picks location based on the desired outcome. Prep days are used to do a pre-walk and make sure that the sites selected work from both a timing and learning point of view and multiple day sessions are available. One tour host is needed for each 20 people taking the tour.

- **Hype or real? A look into emerging tech**

With my experience in emerging tech, I can help you:

1. Separate what's real from what's hype;
2. Understand these new technologies and where they're going in the future;
3. Understand where to put your time for immediate ROI and you can walk out with a strategy road-map that you can start to execute right away.

I've put together a half-day and full-day program to help you understand what's out there and how you can use it to better engage your audience.

I've been following these trends for years and through these sessions, you get immediate access to my knowledge base. These programs are an extremely cost-effective way to learn about the technologies that will have a significant impact on your business.

The **half-day program** will introduce you to the current state of emerging tech, virtual reality, augmented reality and location-based services. I'll bring hands on demonstrations, so this won't be just another talking-head program. We'll deep-dive, giving you a chance to understand where these technologies are today and where they might be heading in the near future.

The **full-day program** includes an opportunity to dive a little deeper and adds an ideation session about how you could bring these technologies to your brand marketing. It's not enough to just know what's out there, knowing how to use it is critical to doing it right. At the end of the day, **you'll leave with actionable ideas to use these technologies and bring location-based experiences to your marketing programs.**

For almost 20 years, companies have come to me for my expertise and strategic thinking about how emerging technologies will impact marketing. With all of the knowledge available to the consumer, it's critical for brands to understand both the tools available and how to use them.

- **Storytelling**

Every day, consumers have choices to make about where to shop, where to buy and what companies to do business with. While there are times consumers buy solely on price, they always buy on value. And that value is created by the stories the brands tell.

Stories are what differentiates one brand from another. It's what connects us together. During this interactive session, David talks about brand stories from brands around the world, and how they relate to business.

Is there a narrative story that the audience understands? Is there a narrative at all? What is the story that you tell to your customers every day? Can you define it? More importantly, can your audience?

Here's a hint: your story is not the facts of your company—how many employees, when you started, etc. It is the soul and the why of your company. A few key points to consider:

- ◆ Do you know your story and your audiences?
- ◆ Are you telling the same story with your employees?
- ◆ Are they telling the same story to your customers? Is your story authentic?
- ◆ Is your story engaging your audience?
- ◆ Do your actions deliver on your message?

I'm always amazed at how very good companies can miss some of these key items and turn what should be a great story into either a neutral or worse, a negative story. In the end, there are three things about a great story:

- ◆ People want to hear it.
- ◆ People want to tell it.
- ◆ People want to participate in it.

The key learning here is simple: If people want to hear, tell or participate in your story, then you are sharing your brand conviction with them; brand conviction means brand customers.

In addition to a presentation, David can also facilitate a storytelling workshop, helping you understand and articulate your unique, brand story. Using a variety of exercises, David helps your team break down the key elements of your story and facilitates the building of a narrative that can inspire both employees and customers. This program features both small group exercises as well as large group experiences, all designed to give you practical steps you can take to better engage your audiences.

- **Conversations with Digital Natives: Teens Talk**

Gen Z is set to be one of the largest segments of the population and is very different than previous generations. They've grown up with tech & a very different media world. They've come off a recession, changing their view of work & money. They're more connected than ever before, but in smaller circles. They are the DIY generation, coding, using 3D printers and not afraid of what tech can do. Traveling with his teenage daughter and a classmate, you'll hear first-hand what this generation of teens, is doing, thinking and making. What are the trends they're seeing and what do they think the future holds? How do they feel about the pressing tech issues of the day? Do they share the same concerns of tech that older generations have? It's your chance to ask questions and get answers unfiltered and direct from the source.

Select Articles

- [AR Portals, The Metaverse and NFTs, Oh My!](#)

David was actively involved in VR in the 90's and coined the phrase Experiential Advertising to talk about the use of VR as a marketing tool in 1993. Now, almost 30 years later, he's back working with the technology of today and once again exploring ways that brands and retailers can use this tech to create immersive experiences that allow the consumer to enter and interact with brand messaging.

- [Advertising Week with David Polinchock](#)

A few months back, I had coffee with Mari Kim Novak, who was about to start as president of Advertising Week, the annual celebration of the advertising industry that happens in NYC. She wanted to create a new experience for Advertising Week, something that focused on the emerging technologies everyone's talking about, like VR, AR, AI, voice and others.

- [Are You Just Hunting](#)

It's not just a cliché, it is a new world. The problem is, if you listen to the language of marketing, it sounds a lot like the language of a hunt. It's about capturing the audience, capturing "eyeballs." Capture audiences everywhere and claim that as success. I know it's not a pretty image, but I keep seeing the pictures that were used years ago to protest seal hunts—except that now the marketing community is holding the clubs and the consumers are the seals.

- [Brand Experience Lab Opens Up Playroom](#)

Article on the launch of Brand Experience Lab and the work that I did to help brands better understand how to communicate with their audiences.

- [Conversations with Digital Natives](#)

A variety of posts from our presentations with Sydney and her classmates on how teens view the media, content and the digital world they live in today.

- [VR Isn't Just About Technology](#)

Some reflections on 20+ years in the VR space. The first lesson for using any technology in marketing is to make the technology invisible and work on the content, not forgetting that people like to have fun.

- [You Need to Captivate, Not Capture Your Audience](#)

People in captivity always revolt – you can take that to the bank. If we don't start looking for ways to captivate rather than capture, then we need to start fortifying the barricades. For the revolt will come. And sadly, many people in this biz will be yelling, "Let them watch commercials" as they're led to the guillotine.

- [Ahead of the Curve](#)

A host of emerging technologies are being enthusiastically embraced by rapidly growing numbers of digitally savvy consumers. Leading brands and retailers should be harnessing these technologies to create engaging experiences and practical tools that enrich consumers' lifestyles. If they are to stay ahead of the game, brands must explore and integrate these new developments. How are you looking at innovation today?

Select Testimonials

David is a masterful catalyst for innovation in marketing and storytelling using technology as a vehicle to connecting with customers.

— Jason Friedman

David's presentations engage the crowd whether they are playing an audience participation game on screen or hearing about new technologies that will help their business. He's always on the cutting edge and he doesn't just deliver a speech - he lives his message

— Marcia Tabler, Retail Advertising & Marketing Association

These days, many of us are so focused on the day to day that we lose sight of the incredible need to focus on future possibilities. David Polinchock makes you see the world through a different set of lenses and imagine new ways to think and grow. The endless opportunities for business growth spew from this man's incredible creative mind in unimaginable ways. He is a talent you simply have to experience.

— *Mort Goldstrom, Newspaper Association of America*

This was the best presentation of the course. Very engaging and enthusiastic. I loved his energy and openness. I will remember this session for life. I loved his storytelling. He was confident and knowledgeable.

— *Student, Rutgers Mini MBA program*