

POSSIBLE
2026 

VIP 
ACADEMY

Fontainebleau, Miami Beach
Splash 5-6

VIP

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2026 Agenda

Salon Style Conversations for Senior Leaders

The VIP Academy sessions create a space for strategic dialogue, peer connection, and leadership insight — all in a curated, private environment that blends meaningful exchange and high-impact conversations on leadership, innovation, and global trends shaping marketing and business. This is your invitation to be a part of the marketing industry’s insider “Davos” track.

Each session concludes with open networking, where you can continue the conversation with peers.

No panels. No presentations. Just honest, thought-provoking conversations led by thought leaders and guided by Chatham House Rules.

Why Attend?

- Engage in meaningful discussions with fellow leaders in a focused, interactive environment.
- Gain new perspectives on emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities across the industry.
- Build connections that extend beyond the session during the networking opportunity that follows.

Host:



David Sable
Vice Chair
Stagwell



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/dsable/>

Future-Proofing the Human Marketer

AI is transforming marketing faster than any technology before it, but the next era won't be won by tools, it will be defined by how people adapt. The real transformation is cultural: how teams learn, create, and make decisions as technology takes on more of the work. With over two decades of experience helping Fortune 50 organizations and global brands build human-centered digital experiences, Howard Pyle, Founder of XF and Chief Innovation Officer of co:collective will lead this interactive discussion on where AI can amplify, or erode, human expertise, creativity, and judgment, and how to design the right guardrails to protect your brand, people, and career. Together, participants will discuss a practical framework for aligning values, outcomes, and roles so marketing leaders and brands can scale AI responsibly, empower talent, and stay future-ready.

Facilitator:



Howard Pyle

Founder
xfutures.org

Pre-reads:

- <https://xf.works/possible-2026-vip-pre-read>
- <https://xf.works/personal-ip>



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/howardpyle/>

Questions being discussed:

These sessions thrive on active participation and open dialogue. Here are some of the questions we'll dive into:

1. What does "future-proofing" actually mean in the AI era, and why isn't it just about learning new tools?
2. If AI can handle the analytical skills and knowledge work, what does "upskilling" your team really mean?
3. How does your team know when AI gets it wrong, how do you develop that skill, and are they empowered to pull the emergency stop?
4. Career development used to be about people, skills, relationships, and opportunity. What changes when a personal AI toolkit is part of that equation?

Session 2

Monday, April 27, 4:00pm–5:00pm

Are Advertising Agencies Dead?

AI is collapsing content, media, and commerce. The pendulum is swinging back to brand — even as agentic commerce reshapes how purchase decisions get made. And underneath all of it, one imperative stays constant: sustainable growth. These shifts raise a fundamental question: if growth is the goal, where do agencies still add irreplaceable value? As brands harness AI to build new capabilities, the calculus on what to outsource versus own is changing fast — and where have agencies become a legacy habit that’s quietly slowing us down? Drawing on decades of growing global brands and partnering with agencies, Esi Eggleston Bracey will facilitate a candid, off-the-record conversation about what we should be asking, building, or walking away from with our agencies — and how to make that call with growth as your north star.

Facilitator:



Esi Eggleston Bracey

Chief Growth and Marketing Officer

Pre-reads:

- [Forrester: “Predictions 2026: Marketing Agencies Resign Their Agency”](#)
- [Hall & Partners: “Brand Is Back, Back Again: 5 Brand Growth Trends Shaping Every CMO Agenda in 2026”](#)
- [Acalytica: “The Real Marketing Challenges of 2026”](#)

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/esiegglestonbracey/>

Questions being discussed:

These sessions thrive on active participation and open dialogue. Here are some of the questions we’ll dive into:

1. 60% of senior marketing leaders say they're spending less on agencies because of AI. Is that a strategy — or are we just cutting without a plan?
2. If your best agency relationship — creative, media, or commerce — ended tomorrow, what would you actually miss? And what would you quietly be relieved to own yourself?
3. Your creative agency sees impressions. Your media agency sees clicks. Your commerce or shopper agency — if you even have one — sees something else entirely. Who in your model connects those views into a single growth picture? And are they actually connected to the brief?
4. How close are your marketers to the actual work — the content, the media, the commerce optimization? Are they directing it, or watching it happen? And what is that distance costing you in speed, relevance, and conversion?

Session 3

Tuesday, April 28, 2:20pm-3:20pm

Leading in the Age of AI:

The Hidden Signals That Shape Great Leadership

AI promises faster decisions and greater productivity, yet recent research suggests it can also expand workloads and leave teams cognitively overloaded. In this facilitated discussion, neuroscientist and Wharton professor Dr. Michael Platt will explore how leaders can extract the best from AI without eroding the human focus, judgment and social connection that make teams effective. Drawing on neuroscience research into attention, trust and brain synchrony, the session will explore how AI can reveal hidden patterns in how people respond, helping leaders reduce bias and make better decisions while keeping humans firmly in control.

Facilitator:



Michael Platt, PhD

Professor of Marketing,
Neuroscience, and Psychology
University of Pennsylvania

Pre-reads:

- Microsoft Worklab: [How AI Can Reveal the Neural Secrets Behind Great Leadership](#)
- HBR: [The Neuroscience of Trust](#)
- HBR: [AI Doesn't Reduce Work—It Intensifies It](#)



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/michael-platt-21767539/>

Questions being discussed:

These sessions thrive on active participation and open dialogue. Here are some of the questions we'll dive into:

1. As AI becomes more embedded in decision-making, how do you determine which decisions should be data-led and which require human intuition and experience?
2. Neuroscience research shows that trust and collaboration increase when people feel socially aligned with one another. What practical steps can leaders take to create this sense of alignment within teams, especially as work becomes more AI-assisted?
3. AI can surface behavioral patterns humans often miss, from attention signals to emotional responses. How can leaders leverage AI to better understand team performance?
4. Many employees report that AI tools speed up work, but also expand the volume of it. How can leaders design workflows and expectations that capture AI's productivity gains without pushing teams into cognitive overload?

Session 4

Tuesday, April 28, 3:50pm- 4:50pm

Overcome vs. Output:

What Still Makes Brands Matter

AI is accelerating output across every part of marketing. But volume is not the same as value, and speed is not the same as substance. In a world optimized for production, what still creates originality, emotional resonance, and brand meaning? This off-the-record VIP discussion explores the growing tension between efficiency and depth, automation and judgment, output and overcome — and why the future advantage may belong not to those who make the most, but to those who still know how to make it matter.

Facilitator:



David "Shingy" Shing

Digital Prophet

Pre-reads:

- [SHINGY, *Unqualified*](#)
- [SHINGY, *Intelligence Isn't Interesting*](#)
- [David Sable, *What If Creativity Never Changed... Only the Canvas and Tools Did?*](#)
- [Adobe, *Adobe Summit 2025: Adobe AI Platform Unites Creativity and Marketing*](#)

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/shingy/>

Questions being discussed:

These sessions thrive on active participation and open dialogue. Here are some of the questions we'll dive into:

1. As AI makes output easier, what forms of struggle or overcoming still matter in the creation of meaningful work?
2. Have we confused productivity with progress, especially in creative and marketing organizations?
3. What do brands lose when they optimize for scale and sameness instead of tension and distinctiveness?
4. In a world of infinite content, what makes something feel culturally alive rather than merely generated?