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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American Marketing Association-Chicago Announces Brand Smart 2018 *Leading Innovators to Discuss Brand Reinvention in the Age of Disruption*

CHICAGO, March 26, 2018—The American Marketing Association-Chicago (AMAC) has lined up leading futurists, researchers, and branding experts to discuss *Brand Reinvention in the Age of Disruption* at the annual Brand Smart conference, April 26, 2018 from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Blue Cross Blue Shield, 300 E. Randolph Street, Chicago.

"Chicago is a technology and marketing epicenter, and Brand Smart 2018 panelists include CEOs, CMOs and marketing experts who are the driving forces behind brands shaping digital era marketing," said Sherry Duda, AMAC Board Director and Brand Smart event designer.

At the one-day conference, AMAC will announce the first Brand Visionary Award recipient and a series of eight facilitated panel discussions will engage participants in a dialogue about emerging technologies, innovation and brand transformation in the digital era.

"Disruptions are not only coming from your traditional competitors, increasingly it is coming from entrepreneurs and various digital leaders, including the digital giants," added Jens Ulrik Hansen, Founder of Future Associates. "Brand Smart 2018 is a great forum for participants to become inspired and curious, to challenge conventional thinking, unleash new ideas and share new approaches to win in the marketplace."

Brand Smart 2018 Highlights

Leading experts will discuss the *dynamics and opportunities presented by the digital shift and sharing economy*:

- Switzerland-based Jens Ulrik Hansen of Future Associates will open the conference and discuss "The Impact of the Digital Shift on Brands"
- Dr. Erich Joachimsthaler of Vivaldi will close the conference discussing "A New Era for Brand Building"

Artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning and block chain technology are transforming the marketing industry, and panelists include:

- Susan Etlinger of Altimeter Group, an internationally recognized researcher and analyst whose TED Talk "What to do with all this Big Data" has received 1.2 million views and has been featured globally in newspapers, NPR radio and the BBC, will discuss how AI is transforming brands
- Carolyn Heller Baird of the IBM Institute for Business Value will present research defining the dynamics and opportunities of existing and emerging technologies, and David Haucke will present a live IBM Watson demonstration
- Melvin Petties of Blockhive.org and Sherry Duda of Alex Reidy & Company will discuss strategies to leverage blockchain to build brand trust

Innovative brands are shaping the future of digital age marketing with strategies like seg-ME-tation and design thinking, and panelists are:

- AMAC President Bonnie Massa will join Elizabeth Ehrhardt of IRI and Michon Ellis of LimeGreen Moroch to discuss Seg-ME-tation and brand personalization with Carrie Bienkowski of Peapod and Sanjiv Gajiwala of Mike's Hard Lemonade
- AMAC Board Director Pamela Wedgeworth will join Erin Huizenga of Borough & Block to explain the design thinking process, and Margo Kahnrose of SpotHero will share real-world applications and outcomes

Industry disruptors are integrating emerging technologies and innovation to transform brands and panelists are:

- Jeffrey Moss of Parker Dewey and visionaries Chris Ruder and Nicholas Gonzalez of Spikeball, and Kurt Seidensticker and Caryn Johnson of Vital Proteins will share the inspiring stories behind their innovative craft brands
- Dan Fietsam of Laughlin Constable, Dean Petruklakis of Fuse Print Chicago and Bob Armour of Jellyvision will discuss "What do Chickens Have to do with Branding?" and share unexpected outcomes from their unconventional strategies to 'humanize' online benefit systems and automated call centers, and humor consumers during wait times

About Brand Smart & AMA Chicago

Brand Smart is among the largest branding conferences in the Midwest, providing a forum for business leaders and marketing executives to showcase innovative brands, share insights and discuss proven strategies. To register, visit chicagoama.org and for more information, see [speakers' biographies](#) and the [Brand Smart 2018 agenda](#). AMA Chicago is a professional chapter of the American Marketing Association. Now in its 75th year, AMA Chicago provides over 1,000 Chicago area marketers cutting edge experiences, professional connections and career advancement opportunities.



Brand Smart 2018 Agenda

Thursday, April 26th from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Blue Cross Blue Shield, 300 E. Randolph Street, Chicago

Register online: chicagoama.org/brand-smart

For media credentials, please contact AMAC Board Director [Pam Wedgeworth](#)

Brand Smart 2018 is a unique experience to challenge conventional thinking, unleash new ideas, and share new approaches to win in the marketplace. This year, the American Marketing Association-Chicago (AMAC) will announce the first recipient of the AMAC Brand Visionary Award, and has lined up leading futurists, researchers, and branding experts to discuss *Brand Reinvention in the Age of Disruption*. ([See biographies](#))

Our agenda is subject to change. Check back frequently to view updates at <http://chicagoama.org/brand-smart/brand-smart-2018-agenda/>

7:30 – 8:45 Registration / Breakfast

8:00 – 8:45 Speed Networking – Making Valuable Connections
Optional

9:00 – 9:10 Introduction & Welcome
AMAC President Bonnie Massa, Massa & Company

9:10 – 9:20 Overview of the Day
Sherry J. Duda – Alex Reidy & Company

9:20 – 9:40 The Impact of the Digital Shift on Brands
Jens Ulrik Hansen – Future Associates

In 2018, most major brands have become serious about digital transformation. They know that what they are today and what they have been known for during the past decade or more is creating serious friction on their journey to fully embracing the digital age. As part of this journey, they are making fundamental shifts to their brand strategy. In this discussion, you will see examples of what this shift can look like and what you may be able to do about it, before it is too late.

9:40 – 10:00 The Age of AI: How Artificial Intelligence is Transforming Brands
Susan Etlinger – The Altimeter Group

The idea of AI – of machines that can sense, classify, learn, reason, predict and interact – has been around for decades. So why is it so inescapable now? Artificial intelligence is the driving force behind digital era marketing, and we will discuss risks, organizational considerations and opportunities to transform brands and the consumer experience in the Age of AI.

10:00 – 10:30 Panel Discussion
Jens Ulrik Hansen – Future Associates
Susan Etlinger – The Altimeter Group
Sherry Duda – Alex Reidy & Company

10:30 – 10:45 Break

10:45 – 11:30 If My Fridge Could Order Food: Leveraging AI to Create Next Gen Customer Experiences
David Haucke – IBM
Carolyn Heller Baird – IBM Institute for Business Value
Pam Wedgeworth – Wedgeworth Communications

The IBM Watson team is at the forefront of the next generation of cognitive assistants and machine learning, empowering marketers to create incredible next gen customer experiences. The team will present the latest findings from IBM's recent study on how AI is impacting customer experience strategy, design and development; and will conduct a live IBM Watson demonstration.

11:30 – 12:00 What Do Chickens Have to do with Branding?
Dan Fietsam – Laughlin Constable
Bob Armour – Jellyvision
Dean Petrulakis – Fuse Print Chicago

Since the dawn of humankind, voice has arguably been one of the most impactful, yet also one of the more underrated, methods to transmit and share information. With the recent launch and rapid development of a multitude of intelligent personal assistant applications, we're witnessing a "back to the future" appreciation of the power of the human voice – even when the voice is spoken by a machine. Further, marketers are realizing that voice-enabled / voice-incorporating solutions aren't merely useful as convenient, hands-free input and output mechanisms: when combined with machine learning and human traits like sense of humor, empathy, humility or encouragement, voice-based applications can establish, extend or reinforce a brand's identity and build "more human" relationships with users that go much deeper – and potentially last much longer – than more established alternatives. However, the promise of deeper relationships with users brings with it users' expectations of much higher levels of personal interaction and nuance. In this interactive panel discussion, Dan Fietsam, chief creative officer of [Laughlin Constable](#), and Bob Armour, chief marketing officer of [Jellyvision](#), will share their observations, learnings and surprises marketing voice-incorporating applications and products that solve real-life problems.

12:00 – 1:15 Lunch

AMA Chicago Brand Visionary Award 2018
Recipient to be announced April 26, 2018 by:
Sherry Duda – Alex Reidy & Company
Pam Wedgeworth – Wedgeworth Communications



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1:15 – 1:45

Craft Brands Innovate

Chris Ruder – Spikeball
Nicholas Gonzalez – Spikeball
Kurt Seidensticker – Vital Proteins
Caryn Johnson – Vital Proteins
Jeffrey Moss – Parker Dewey

How did a NASA flight instructor and an advertising executive become the CEOs of two of Chicago's most innovative craft brands? They followed their hearts, and weren't afraid of making mistakes. Hear the inspiring stories behind the creation of Vital Proteins and Spikeball, and learn how their CMOs' perseverance, innovation and unconventional partnerships turned two Chicago businesses into internationally recognized brands.

1:45 – 2:30

Seg-ME-Tation: Understanding Why Customers Buy Brands

Elizabeth Ehrhardt – IRI
Carrie Bienkowski – Peapod
Michon Ellis – LimeGreen Moroch
Sanjiv Gajiwala – Mike's Hard Lemonade Co.
Bonnie Massa – Massa & Co.

Personalization is one of the hottest buzzwords in marketing. As e-commerce shifts to ME-commerce, personalization has gone from a nice-to-have to a must-do. But what does that mean to your brand strategy? How do attributes, demographics, behavior, beliefs, values, lifestyle, culture and channel impact how your brand voice is heard? This interdisciplinary panel will have a laser focus on what personalization means to targeting, media, retail and innovation strategies.

2:30 – 2:45

Break

2:45 – 3:15

Design Thinking

Margo Kahnrose – SpotHero
Erin Huizenga – Borough & Block
Pam Wedgeworth – Wedgeworth Communications

Design thinking is ingrained in the culture of SpotHero, and empathising with urban drivers paved the way for the Chicago startup to transform public parking experiences in major cities. Popularized by IDEO founder David Kelly and Stanford's d.school, design thinking is proving to be a catalyst for brand innovation. Panelists will discuss how direct customer and employee feedback empowers brands to innovate, test, pivot and win in the marketplace.

3:15 – 3:45

Leveraging the Blockchain

Melvin Petties – Blockhive.org
Sherry Duda – Alex Reidy & Company

According to Juniper Research Blockchain Enterprise Survey, two-thirds of large corporations (defined as having at least 20,000 employees) expect to integrate blockchain by the end of 2018. During this panel, we'll define blockchain and discuss its potential to revolutionize the world of branding. You'll discover unique insights into the scale of current and planned blockchain brand use cases, and the key benefits that companies hope to achieve by incorporating it as an artisan lever to impact brand trust.

3:45 – 4:20

A New Era for Brand Building

Erich Joachimsthaler, PhD – Vivaldi

The world of building brands has forever changed. To succeed in this age of disruption, brands and businesses need a new roadmap, one that harnesses technology and data to connect more deeply with customers and rethink how to work within the larger ecosystem. Those that survive and thrive will be the brands that leverage the global infrastructure of connectivity to solve the problems that matter most to their customers. Brands that connect to it, interact with it, and create and exchange value will be set up for success. Discover your brand strength and how you can reinvent your brand vision to deliver greater value.

4:20 – 4:30

It's a Wrap

Sherry Duda - Alex Reidy & Company
Bonnie Massa – Massa & Company

4:30 – 5:30

Happy Hour