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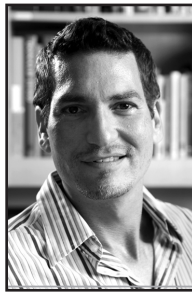
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2010 HD Summit: 'infectious'

Infection is not the typical term one uses to discuss innovation, change and motivation. However, this year my peers and I were infected by a stunning panel of speakers that lead the cutting edge of innovation at the recent Hospitality Design Magazine's HD Summit in Pebble Beach, Calif. HD Summit is an invite-only hospitality industry conference that gathers the best and brightest in the hospitality industry and delivers a provocative, mind-churning program that is meant to energize and infuse the industry with new strategies, motivating tactics and renewed enthusiasm.

This year's HD Summit featured a wide range of speakers from diverse, unrelated industry sectors covering change – from how to weather the economic storm to using genetic code in finding solutions and ideas for the new decade. Below is a list of key speakers and topics that I felt were worthy of sharing.

Jeremy Gutsche, author of "Exploiting Chaos: 150 Ways to Spark Innovation During Times of Change," emphasized the necessity to see opportunity in times of crisis. He showcased examples of companies that have thrived during economic uncertainty and provided customers with new products and services that changed the world. His term "infectious marketing" made everyone in the audience sit up straight and take note on how they will infect their own marketing strategies. Gutsche states that infection begins from



Jason E. Goldberg

Designer and project development, Rowland+Broughton Architecture & Urban Design, Denver

within an organization. He advised that companies should remove the walls that separate people and ideas. I was happy to hear that our firm is already infected. Our two offices are open studios with no walls or barriers to sharing ideas and information. He also suggested that companies go after the market that needs to change, create the demand for that change and infect everyone with your product and service.

Learning about cutting-edge genetic advancements from Juan Enriquez, founder and chief executive officer of Biotechnology, opened my eyes on how technological advances in biology have created some dramatic new approaches and solutions that changed the world. Enriquez presented several examples of how the manipulation of genetic code has been used to regenerate human skin for burn victims and how prosthetics have been developed for athletes and runners. Simply stated, technology has created an innovative market, and with this comes change. Technology is a major force in our firm. We are constantly upgrading our technology to

meet the needs of our clients and be accessible so we can provide better service. We will take it to the next level by creating demand for our high-level service by differentiating our capabilities from other firms.

How to turn good ideas into great results was presented by Peter Sheahan, author of "Flip: How to Turn Everything You Know on Its Head – and Succeed Beyond Your Wildest Imaginings." Sheahan explained that consumers require more tangible evidence that products and services are worth the money and investment. All consumers regardless of generation now require more viable results that prove a product or service is of value. This is especially true in the architecture and design world. It is the leading reason that we test new design concepts and products on ourselves first. We then become our own case study and are the tangibility in the value equation.

In conclusion, Gutsche really drove home the "infectious marketing" concept by discussing everyone's No. 1 marketing tool – word of mouth. Gutsche is taking the "word of mouth" concept one step further by encouraging firms to be "supercharged" and relentlessly obsess about their "story," who you are, what you do and how you do it.

What will you be doing to become infectious and stay above the rest? I encourage you to share this review with others in the hospitality industry and elsewhere.▲