



PRESS RELEASE

SEVEN RISING STARS TO TACKLE HOT TOPICS AND SPARK INSPIRATION AT MFA EX

26 July 2023: Topics as diverse as deploying the power of improvisation to better respond to our industry's time pressures, embracing risk to create weird partnerships that cut through, and applying lessons from the Spice Girls to tackle talent turnover will be dissected by seven future industry leaders, selected to present **Inspiration X** sessions at **MFA EX** in Melbourne and Sydney.

The successful presenters were selected in a competitive process by the MFA EX panel of curators, after employees of MFA member agencies with less than 15 years' experience in the industry were invited to submit Inspiration X proposals.

The aim of the four-minute presentations is to present a new or provocative perspective, inspire our industry to change its thinking or behaviour, and address the wide theme of the MFA EX conference: delivering greater effectiveness.

Taking to the stage in Melbourne on 5 September will be:

Jennifer Lohan, Communications Executive, Match & Wood

Eat risk for breakfast: Weird partnerships and why they work

Diesel and Durex? KFC and Crocs? In this inspiring session, Jennifer Lohan will celebrate marketing's weirdest partnerships that work and share three principles for partnerships that cut through – inspiring media planners across the country to try something different next time they pick up a media plan.

Toby Maclachlan, Head of Creative Strategy, Initiative

[GOOD CHAT] how ai can [prompt] a more inclusive media industry_

Toby Maclachlan believes we have an opportunity to co-create a future that's more cheerful than fearful of ai innovation and re</write> the modern media script for good_ So at MFA EX Melbourne, he'll be inviting everyone in the audience to join the conversation via the bots to demonstrate our industry's purpose of We Are The Changers in the room in real-time_

Brad Szmerling, Associate Investment Director, Media, CHEP Network

What can we learn from Ginger Spice leaving the Spice Girls?

Can exploring the reasons Gerri "Ginger Spice" Halliwell left the Spice Girls help us understand why people leave their media roles, allowing us to draw lessons from this cultural milestone to avoid burnout and minimise



turnover? On the 25th anniversary of Ginger's exit, Brad Szmerling transforms his devastation into an enlightening presentation on one of our industry's biggest pain points: talent turnover.

And in Sydney on 21 September, the Inspiration X presenters will be:

Sophie Gallagher, Senior Strategist, Slingshot Media

Business Walrus: The key to supercharging your staff

We know that employee retention is increased through participation and employees feeling excited and engaged about their work. To get people thinking creatively and to ensure everyone feels valued, you too must think outside of the box. In this engaging presentation, Sophie Gallagher will introduce the audience to Business Walrus, an entrepreneurial, well-dressed mammal capable of supercharging creative thinking and elevating every voice in the workplace.

Elizabeth Gulliver, Connections Planning Associate Director, Mindshare

OK Boomer, maybe we are ageist

From the average age of media agency employees (32) to client briefs wanting to target people aged 25-54 (but no one 55 and over), you might say our industry has an ageism problem. Through audience participation and posing provocative questions, Elizabeth Gulliver will help attendees visualise the impact of ageism and personalise the outcome of not acting now.

Kate O'Loughlin, Associate Strategy Director, Initiative & Leah Franco, Strategy Manager, Initiative

Planning for the unplannable: Lessons in improv

As an inherently fast-paced industry, we need to move quickly – which ultimately means we need to think quickly. How do we do that while avoiding the stress of time pressures and last-minute changes? Presented by Initiative's rising stars Leah Franco and Kate O'Loughlin, two NIDA-trained presenters who undertake improv lessons in their spare time, this high-energy interactive session will walk the audience through tools and improv exercises to increase their quick thinking.

MFA CEO Sophie Madden said: "The Inspiration X presentations have consistently been cited by MFA EX attendees as some of the most compelling and engaging content of the day, showcasing the innovative thinking and presentation skills of our industry's future leaders. We received a huge number of impressive submissions, which made the process of selecting only six sessions a challenge, but the topics that made the cut are relevant and meaningful, with a good dose of humour and provocation thrown in. We can't wait to be challenged and inspired by these seven talented individuals in September."

MFA EX is designed to educate and inspire people working in the Australian media and communications industry, from newcomers to the most experienced media professionals. More than 2,500 people attended MFA EX in Melbourne and Sydney in 2022.

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About the MFA

The Media Federation of Australia (MFA) is the peak body representing media communication companies. The MFA is a non-for-profit organisation established in 1997 with a current membership base that represents over 90% of all media billings placed by media agencies in Australia. The MFA's vision is to encourage operational excellence in the field of media communication connections and to define and develop best practice standards to support its members and the role they play in servicing their clients.