



FUTURE FORUM

NETWORKING, TREACHEROUS CHATS & INTERPERSONAL COMMS

Da Vinci once said, "The noblest pleasure is the joy of understanding." Welp, easier said than done, Leonardo!

Join a conversation about hard conversations, and learn how to turn those dreadful moments into breakthroughs for better relationships. Sit down with senior leaders from The Cheesecake Factory, LA Rams, Edelman and DICE as they share stories and best practices from their illustrious careers on navigating difficult relationships and conversations that have helped launch them to new heights both professionally and personally. Get ready, to get real - without killing your vibe.

Featured Mentors:

Jennifer Prince // Chief Commercial Officer // **LA Rams**

Katie Soo // Global Chief Business Officer // **DICE**

Donald Evans // Chief Marketing Officer // **The Cheesecake Factory**

Melle Hock // U.S. Chief Strategy Officer // **Edelman**

JENNIFER PRINCE *Chief Commercial Officer*

As the Chief Commercial Officer of the Los Angeles Rams, Jennifer is responsible for overseeing all partnerships — including sales, activation, and strategy — as well as the commercialization of the media business, including owned-and-operated channels, social media accounts and media partnerships.

Jennifer previously spent over eight years at Twitter as the Global Vice President and Head of Content Partnerships and Managing Director of Global Media & Entertainment Partnerships.

Prior to joining Twitter in August of 2013, Jennifer was Head of Industry for Film & Television at Google and Head of YouTube Media & Entertainment. She has worked at other notable companies such as American Greetings, Ziff Davis and TBWA/Chiat Day.

Jennifer has spent over 25 years in digital advertising, content, and partnerships. She earned a BA Communications degree from University of California, Santa Barbara.

In addition to her role at the Los Angeles Rams, Jennifer serves on various boards such as Hershey Entertainment & Resorts, System1 and Versus Systems. She lives in Los Angeles and keeps busy with her husband and three daughters.

KATIE SOO *Global Chief Business Officer*

Katie Soo is an award-winning global media and tech CMO with a proven track record for leading transformations, breaking trends, forging new technology partnerships, and launching large-scale, disruptive business models and brands. As Global Chief Business Officer at DICE, Soo is responsible for driving forward the ticketing platform's strategic growth propositions and marketing, building the brand globally and supporting the company's ambitions to disrupt and lead a fairer live entertainment industry.

Soo is Senior Advisor to Newbury Street (NASDAQ: NBST) and Advisor to KiwiCo, after serving as the company's first CMO, overseeing global consumer marketing across 40+ markets.

She is the former SVP of Growth Marketing at HBO Max, overseeing growth and marketing across brand, originals, and performance media. Prior to that, she held executive roles at Warner Bros. Digital Networks, DC Universe, Fullscreen, Hulu, and was an early employee at Dollar Shave Club.

Soo is actively involved in startups, serving both as an advisor and mentor to founders and companies. She has received numerous accolades from Ad Age, Adweek, Promax, Webby's, Digiday and the Shorty Awards for her work in both creative storytelling and digital products. Most recently she was recognized on Ad Age's "40 Under 40," Business Insider's CMOs to Watch, Media Play's 40 Under 40, PR Week's "The Innovation 50," and was also named on Goldhouse's A100 list honoring the most impactful Asians in culture.



DONALD EVANS *Chief Marketing Officer*

Donald Evans is a global marketing and strategy executive who has worked across film, TV, restaurant, real estate and gaming businesses, with some of the world's biggest brands. Before joining The Cheesecake Factory, Donald worked for The Walt Disney Company and Warner Bros. as well as consulted for companies such as Activision, Wieden + Kennedy and The World Trade Center. Additionally, he has partnered with many Fortune 500 Companies including McDonald's, Volvo, Coca-Cola, Nestle, Kellogg's and Virgin Atlantic.

Since August 2011, he has held the position of Chief Marketing Officer for all brands – The Cheesecake Factory, Grand Lux Cafe, North Italia and Social Monk Asian Kitchen. Donald is responsible for overseeing Marketing, Public Relations, Crisis Media Relations, Licensed Products, Social Media, Gift Cards, Websites and Delivery.

Responsibilities include oversight of The Cheesecake Factory's grocery business as well as directing the company's partnership with DoorDash. Previously, he spent more than 15 years in the entertainment industry, including Senior Vice President of Animation Marketing for Pixar Animation and Walt Disney Studios Animation. While there, he oversaw worldwide marketing campaigns for films including Academy Award® winners Up and WALL-E. Donald graduated college from Northwestern University's School of Communication and received an MBA in Marketing from Northwestern University's Kellogg Graduate School of Management.

MELLE HOCK *U.S. Chief Strategy Officer*

Melle has a passion for bold ideas that tap into culture and build the bottom line. At Edelman, she advances research innovation and planning processes that are data-rich, action-oriented, and culturally inspired. She specializes in helping brand marketers illuminate insights, act strategically and challenge their creative boundaries.

Melle has over 15 years experience partnering with clients across FMCG, retail and technology sectors, including Samsung, TJX, and Unilever. Under her leadership as CSO, Edelman secured its greatest number of shortlists and medals ever at Cannes, the 4As Jay Chiat Award for Most Awarded Independent Agency in 25 years, and a coveted listing to Contagious Pioneers 2023.

Prior to this role, Melle oversaw the U.S. Dove portfolio, leading an integrated team to history-making work on the CROWN Act, COVID relief, the Dove Self-Esteem Project, and Dove Men+Care. She continues to guide global strategy across Unilever and its brands.

Melle is the local chair of Griot, Edelman's Black employee network. She is a fierce advocate for cultural inclusion and advancing careers for people of color in media and advertising. Outside the office, Melle is co-founder of the nonprofit organization ARTNOIR, a creative collective whose mission is to cultivate and connect a diverse new generation of artists, appreciators and collectors of color.

Melle is a proud alumni of Columbia University and member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.



KEY LEARNINGS

Jennifer

1. TRUST, GRACE, & DELIVERY

- It is imperative to understand your audience first, then formulate how to deliver your messaging in a thoughtful light.
 - Every individual in your organization will process feedback differently from one another. Before jumping straight into constructive criticism, first check in to see if they are in the right space to receive feedback.
 - When appropriate, channel empathy by relating with a similar situation in your career.
 - Bookend the conversation by reminding the individual how valuable they are to you and the overall team.
- Difficult talks prove to be exponentially more difficult when you haven't built your relationship on trust.
 - You must prioritize building a solid foundation of trust across your team first and foremost.

2. TEAMWORK & CROSS FUNCTIONAL COLLABORATION

- Every team needs a designated lead that makes final decisions and sometimes it can prove beneficial to have this lead outside of the immediate working group.
 - As the marketing team, you're most often the "last line of defense" to make a decision.
- When working with other departments or teams, consistently set a tone that "everyone is in this together".

Katie

1. PURPOSE HAS POWER

- You have to decide what kind of leader you will be.
 - Create an open space where it doesn't matter what your title is, or who you are, the best idea should always win regardless.
 - Whether or not you're in a leadership position, you must lead from a place of vulnerability and empathy.
- If you don't put your team at the center of everything, these conversations become much more treacherous.
 - No leader is successful without the support of the team.
 - When you manage expectations and are open with your team, they will mirror the example.

2. THE APPROACH TO FEEDBACK

- Use this rule of thumb: if you can't say what you're thinking to the person directly, you shouldn't say it.
- When having this kind of discussion, especially with a younger team member, it can often feel targeted.

KEY LEARNINGS

Katie (Continued)

- Be open and honest in what the concern is. From there only they can make the decision to grow or to leave. If we don't continue to have these conversations, the opportunity for growth is stifled.
- In these difficult conversations: defuse, be personal, and address what the goal of the conversation is.
 - When conversation involves a c-suite executive, you may need to frame your delivery with how the issue affects the state of the business.
 - Start with a personal note and consider what this person really cares about and how you can connect this.
- Conversations rooted in a lack of understanding in DEI principles can be difficult for everyone.
 - Under no circumstances should something inappropriate be swept under the rug, it's imperative that you address these situations from the get go, otherwise it can have a snowball effect.
 - Remember that there's no perfect way to address different situations. All you can do is come from a place of good intent and open communication.

Donald

1. SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE

- Feedback needs to happen on a daily basis but you must tailor feedback based on various communication styles. When it comes to interpersonal comms., most individuals aren't willing to change, which means you'll have to navigate a conversation within their world instead of your own.
 - Understand who you're speaking with, their personality, their approach to conflict and how they might respond.
 - Be confident, say what's on your mind, and don't be afraid of being vulnerable. How is someone supposed to grow if you're not being honest?
 - Learn how to be okay with being told no and that you're wrong. The example starts from the top and must trickle down.
- No one will advocate for yourself but yourself. If you have something you want to advocate for, you just have to go for it.

2. STAYING ACCOUNTABLE

- As a leader it can be difficult to fight the urge of wanting to be liked vs respected.
 - However, if you don't have these conversations you'll end up internalizing everything, becoming stressed/anxious, and ultimately resentful.
- Be open and learn about other cultures to avoid inadvertently causing microaggressions..
 - If someone calls you out on something, receive it, be vulnerable, and learn from the situation.

READY TO WATCH THE REPLAY?

PTTOW! NEXT
FUTURE FORUM

DON'T KILL YOUR Vibe

TRECHEROUS CHATS & INTERPERSONAL COMMS

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ICA

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