

## A Remarkably Purple Conversation with the American Marketing Association



DALLAS / FORT WORTH  
AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION

If anyone knows how to market purple besides BrightBlue Marketing, these guys do. Introducing Jim David and Reagan Cook.

Jim David is President of Dallas Fort Worth American Marketing Association (AMA) 500+ members. Reagan Cook is Executive Vice President of Events on the AMA Board of Directors.

Below is a BrightBlue interview with Jim and Reagan on their perspective of a remarkable event. Why focus on events? Because Jim and Reagan agree that nothing is more effective in marketing than face-to-face marketing.

### **BrightBlue: What makes a company purple?**

**Jim:** They go in with attitude. They say, "I don't want to be an inch ahead of competition, I want to be miles ahead."

### **BrightBlue: What is the most remarkable event you have ever experienced?**

**Jim:** I would say the Deutsche Bank Branding/Customer Appreciation event in the dodgy warehouse district in London. Here was a bank that had a stuffy image with German roots. They decided to have an event for their customers to show that they can be as fun, creative, and hip as the other modern banks.

The event took place in an abandoned bus garage. You were led to a golf cart and whisked up several floors through the garage filled with smoky dry ice, past a bar made of ice, jugglers, musicians. As you approached the top of the circular ramp, the music got louder. On the top floor there was a paper airplane-building workshop. After you made your paper airplane, you threw it off the seven story building. Branding was achieved with logo placement throughout and a quick speech expressing their appreciation for the business.

Why Purple? This falls into the purple category because it was a memorable, unexpected and a unique event.

**Reagan:** The Drum Café. At our internal sales meeting at Staubach Company attended by 650 employees, we hired a company that handed out drums to everyone. Our objective was to energize the attendees, celebrate our success during the past year, and raise excitement for the goals this year. Everyone was involved and instructed on different beats performed on the drums. They caught on quickly and everyone came together, performing as a group. We drummed up energy and excitement in a new way.

### **BrightBlue: Why do so many people end up having unremarkable events?**

**Jim:** The majority of company leaders look at their competitors and say to their employees, "Why can't we do this?" That is the wrong question. You should be asking "What could we be doing that is much more innovative and ahead of our competitor's activities and events that will make us stand out?"

Starbucks, for example, sells an environment, not coffee. Starbucks had the insight into their target market enough to figure out they wanted a special atmosphere. They now have a huge lead over the competitors.

**BrightBlue: What is one critical success typically ignored in event planning?**

**Jim:** Getting the entire team energized, involved, and delivering the same consistent message and brand.

**Reagan:** Consider who should be on the team, involving a broad spectrum of talent. Ask yourself, too, can outside vendors contribute to this event in a positive, energetic, innovative way?

**BrightBlue: What is the best event marketing advice you ever received?**

**Jim:** Don't listen to what people say they need or want unless they are in the actual setting. Focus groups and panels tend to create an artificial environment. Yet it really comes to finding something purple they didn't know they wanted. Don't always take what they say literally. Create a balance in the backend.

**Reagan:** Remind yourself of the original event objective and stay on track. Purple Cows do it better because these companies are always stretching boundaries and finding new ideas. Brew a purple cow environment and you will consistently deliver a lot of valuable services and products. Look at trends. Listen to clients and prospects. Learn from other businesses by maintaining an open mind first. The CEO and Board should build this open and innovative environment, which grows a purple herd, and not discourage open thinking, which squashes the purple cow.

**BrightBlue: What does “Business-smart-leisure-casual dress” really mean?**

**Jim:** We are all stumped on this; maybe the readers of this newsletter can shed some light.

**BrightBlue: What are the signs of an event turning anything but purple or where the end result is average?**

**Reagan:** The very first sign is non-purple thinking during the planning. The team should hold each other accountable to raise the performance level from the very beginning. It's best to change that “same old thing” thinking as quickly as you can. During the event, you can feel it in the room if your event is not a success. It's almost as if the energy in the room evaporates. A truly purple cow speaker will have both powerful content *and* a captivating delivery.

**If you want to remain a boring Black & White, be sure to:**

- Provide hand outs before you talk
- Deliver a PowerPoint driven event
- Keep your clients in a dark room (especially after a meal)
- Cram your presentations with too much information and many complex graphics
- Go back to how everyone else is doing things