

Best Brands College 2026

25 February, from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm



Main theme: #ExperienceUnlimited:
How brand experience gives brands stability and strength.

From global upheaval to technological disruption and a changing understanding of consumption and values – brands need to respond to this unprecedented pace of change with unwavering innovative strength and resilience. What sets successful brands apart these days is their ability to create unmistakable experiences that resonate with people and maintain a strong sense of relevance. With #ExperienceUnlimited as its central theme, the 2026 Best Brands College will provide inspiration and expertise on this topic.

8:30 am
Get-together

9:30 – 9:40 am
Welcome
Benedikt Faerber, Managing Director & CSO Media Impact

09:45 – 10:10 am
The power of memory: How experiences make brands unforgettable
Dr Julia Shaw, bestselling author & criminal psychologist

Teaser: A little caution is advisable when you meet Dr Julia Shaw: in a groundbreaking study, the bestselling author and criminal psychologist was able to implant memories in people of things that they have never actually experienced. Based on the latest findings from neurosciences and psychology, the ‘memory hacker’ will show in her talk that memories are not set in stone. On the contrary: remembering is a creative process in which our brain repeatedly forms a new image from individual fragments – our identity. How can brands use this knowledge to communicate their message better and make their products unforgettable? In her fascinating talk, Julia Shaw will encourage the audience to examine the connection between identity and successful storytelling – and show just how valuable memories can be for brands.

Speaker: Dr Julia Shaw, who was born in Cologne in 1987 and grew up in Canada, is a bestselling author and international speaker. After receiving her doctorate in criminal psychology, she became a researcher at University College London. As a specialist in false memories, she advises the police, the military, law enforcement, the judiciary and businesses in German and English-speaking countries. She also works as a true crime expert for the BBC and numerous TV productions. Her books ‘The Memory Illusion: Remembering, Forgetting, and the Science of False Memory’ and ‘Making Evil: The Science Behind Humanity’s Dark Side’ were bestsellers. She recently published her latest book ‘GREEN CRIME. Inside the Minds of the People Destroying the Planet and How to Stop Them’.

10:15 – 10:35 am
‘Experience’, but with ‘impact’ - How brand experiences make the difference
Stephan Betz, Brand & Media Expert – Strategic Analytics & Insights at NielsenIQ
Sandra Haberstroh, Team Lead Mobility DACH at NielsenIQ

Teaser: The demands being placed on brand management are huge and classic differentiation by product or price is no longer enough. In a time in which brands are battling it out for attention and loyalty, experiences are the key to success. Yet brand experiences are so much more than individual touchpoints: they are the sum of all interactions that result in a consistent, relevant and emotional overall picture. And they shouldn’t just surprise – they also need to be recognisable, align with the brand’s identity and deliver real, tangible value. But what makes brand experiences

Best Brands College 2026

25 February, from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm



powerful? And how can they be strategically designed and successfully used in your own brand management.

Speakers: Stephan Betz explores the conflicting priorities between social and technological developments, brand impact and consumer psychology. As a brand and media expert, he has many years of experience in brand and consumer research in a variety of industries. In his current role, he helps companies to maximise their brand impact with databased insights.

Sandra Haberstroh is a passionate market researcher with a focus on the connection between consumer behaviour, brand impact and strategic decision support. In her role as Team Lead Mobility D-A-CH, she empowers companies to achieve lasting impact and make informed market and brand decisions through well-founded insights.

10:40 - 11:10 am

Top 10 in the spotlight: Three brands, three recipes for success

Adrian Eck, Senior Brand Activation Manager DE/AT at Weber-Stephen

Alina Enache, Senior Marketing Director at Coca-Cola Europe

Stijn Mentrop, Vice President & CMO at McDonald's Germany

Teaser: What makes a brand a Best Brand? Three of this year's top 10 brands - Coca-Cola, Weber-Stephen and McDonald's - will be taking to the stage to provide insights. The marketing specialists will outline what makes their brands strong today, as well as the principles that contribute to relevance, community and growth. This will be followed by a lively discussion with sharp theories, precise questions, clear answers and plenty of opportunities for input from the audience. And at the end you will take away tangible lessons and useful input that can be applied directly to your own roadmap.

Speakers: Adrian Eck, who has worked at Weber-Stephen since summer 2024, is responsible for marketing for the D-A-CH region. With several years of experience in marketing and product management for barbecues and other consumer goods, he combines an in-depth knowledge of the industry with a strong passion for innovative brand management. Merging technological innovations with emotional benefits, he creates brand experiences that help build trust and create a lasting wow factor. His expertise and inspiring approach make him a driving force for successful, forward-looking brand development.

Alina Enache a senior leader at Coca-Cola Europe with a strong passion for building business strategy and high-performing teams. She has 20 years of experience in delivering excellent results across different industries and business sizes - in local, regional and global roles, both in brand and trade marketing. Her colleagues describe her as strategic, long-term thinking, purposeful, humble and caring.

Stijn Mentrop, who was born in the Netherlands, has over 20 years of marketing experience, gained during management roles at Unilever, L'Oréal and Philips, as well as from his time as an entrepreneur. He joined McDonald's in 2022 and was awarded CMO of the Year for his work in the Netherlands. On 1 July 2025, he was appointed Vice President and CMO of McDonald's Germany, where he is responsible for strategic brand development. In his free time, he enjoys beekeeping.

11:15 - 11:35 am

Trust as a currency: How strong brands create stability in turbulent times

Ramona Jaeckle, Brand Manager at the Handelsblatt Media Group

Teaser: In order to make business journalism truly tangible as a brand, it is crucial to establish a clear positioning, deliver a consistent brand experience and authentically embody your own values. Ramona Jaeckle, Brand Manager at the Handelsblatt Media Group, will provide fascinating insights

Best Brands College 2026

25 February, from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm



into the branding of German newspaper Handelsblatt and WirtschaftsWoche magazine, showing how strong media brands can build trust and provide orientation in times of change. In practical terms, she will demonstrate how targeted branding forges a deeper connection between brand and audience and therefore lays the foundation for long-term relevance.

Speaker: Ramona Jaeckle is Brand Manager at the Handelsblatt Media Group where she leads the strategic brand development for German newspaper Handelsblatt and WirtschaftsWoche magazine. Before that she was Strategy & Business Development Manager at the ZEIT publishing house group and worked in online marketing at public-service radio and television broadcaster Bayerischer Rundfunk. In her current role, she is responsible for the strategic expansion of Handelsblatt and WirtschaftsWoche, regularly working on the concept development and realisation of image campaigns, overseeing brand initiatives to raise the publications' profiles and accompanying the development of personal brands.

11:40 am - 12:00 pm

Genuine experiences: How BVB is defining its brand through experiences and taking it global
Alexander Mühl, Director of Marketing & Digitalisation at Borussia Dortmund

Teaser: There aren't many other football clubs that define themselves by their stadium experience as much as Borussia Dortmund (BVB). The club profits from a fan culture that has grown over decades and is based on exceptionally strong loyalty. But how are they dealing with a rapidly changing sports and event culture? How can marketing and digital services contribute to maintaining the unparalleled BVB experience? And how can they convey this special experience to people around the globe who will probably never set foot inside the Signal Iduna Park stadium?

Speaker: Alexander Mühl has worked at Borussia Dortmund since 2021. As its Director of Marketing & Digitalisation and a driving force behind the digital transformation of the first division club, he is responsible for upholding BVB's brand identity and taking its marketing to the next level. Before combining his professional expertise and personal passion in his current position, the qualified user experience designer and digital strategist worked for various international agency networks including Havas and TBWA as Managing Director and Chief Digital Officer.

12:00 - 1:00 pm

Lunch break

1:00 - 1:20 pm

Making brands memorable: How the Seven.One Media is constantly rethinking branding - and heralding a new era for 'Miss Germany'

Jil Andert, Director Brand & Events at Miss Germany

Max Klemmer, Managing Partner at Miss Germany

Tom Schwarz, Managing Director of Seven.One AdFactory

Teaser: In a world in which we are constantly bombarded with information, brands need to do more than just get noticed: they need to leave a lasting mark on people. But how? Seven.OneAdFactory's Managing Director Tom Schwarz knows the answer: brands need to become emotional experiences. At the College, he will present some of the most spectacular ad campaigns and content cooperations from recent months and explain what is required of brands. Together with Max Klemmer and Jil Andert from 'Miss Germany', he will also present one of the most exciting brand developments of the past few years: the transformation from a traditional beauty contest into a modern platform for female empowerment, activism and social relevance. They will talk about why the transformation was necessary, the new self-image that defines the

Best Brands College 2026

25 February, from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm



brand today, how this realignment is reflected in this year's 'Miss Germany' contest - and what makes it attractive for brand integrations.

Speakers: Jil Andert is Director Brand & Events at Miss Germany and instrumental in the radical transformation of the brand's culture. She began her career as an event trainee at Miss Germany over ten years ago - back when it was still a conventional beauty contest with a focus on celebrity. After studying media and journalism, she returned to the company - won over by its new vision: recognising women not for their looks, but for their attitude, responsibility and social commitment.

Max Klemmer is a third-generation entrepreneur and the initiator of the radical transformation of the Miss Germany brand. In 2014, he joined the family-run company (which was established in 1927) as an event manager. A few years later he realised that it was time for a radical new start - and systematically realigned the brand to focus on the future, social commitment and relevance. In 2019, Max Klemmer was in charge of the transition from a traditional beauty contest and turned Miss Germany into a platform for women who are shaping the future. Since 2022, he holds all shares in the company that currently operates under the name Miss Germany Studios.

Since June 2016, Tom Schwarz has been Managing Director of Seven.One AdFactory, the creative marketer of ProSiebenSat.1. Prior to that, the design graduate worked at Ogilvy & Mather in Düsseldorf for almost five years - as the agency's Executive Creative Director. His previous roles include Executive Creative Director at Jung von Matt/Spree and Jung von Matt/Donau. To date, his campaigns have won over 700 creative and media awards, both national and international. He is also an active jury member in the Art Directors Club.

1:25 - 1:45 pm

The human frequency: When brands resonate, people listen

Filiz de Campos Oliveira, radio presenter at bigFM

York Stempel, Lead Audio Experience at RMS

Teaser: Audio reaches people in ways that other media cannot. It creates resonance - between brands and people, between voices and emotions. In a digitalised world full of distractions, audio is the medium that turns attention into genuine relationships and relevance. Listening builds a sense of closeness and trust and brands that are a part of this connection will stay in people's minds and hearts. York Stempel, Lead Audio Experience

at RMS, and Filiz de Campos Oliveira, radio presenter and digital creator, will talk about the emotional power of listening and explain why the proximity to real people makes the medium of audio so unique and effective for brand communication.

Speaker: Filiz de Campos Oliveira, Portuguese-Turkish newcomer at bigFM, a private radio station for young people, began her career in the banking sector. After seven years, however, she realised that she wanted to fulfil her childhood dream of becoming a radio host. She started working at bigFM as an intern in 2021, followed by a traineeship, which paved the way to her own show. Filiz currently hosts the daily afternoon show on bigFM and impresses her listeners with fresh content and her unique personality. In 2024, she won the Deutscher Radiopreis (German Radio Award) in the category 'Best Newcomer'.

York Stempel is a creative go-getter who lives and breathes radio culture, shapes brands and inspires people. For over 20 years now, the founder, presenter and creative thinker has been making his mark on the German radio scene - as the former programme director of KISS FM, for example. He transforms ideas into audio experiences, blending contents, emotion and attitude into strong brand communication. As Lead Audio Experience at RMS since October 2025, he designs new storytelling and brand experience formats and comes up with cross-media ideas to make

Best Brands College 2026

25 February, from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm



audio a tangible experience as a media of the future. In this role he acts as a link between radio stations, market partners and advertising clients.

1:50 - 2:10 pm

WallDecaux - The city as a stage: How urban spaces are becoming a platform for vibrant brands

Mike Bödger, Director Strategic Business Development at WallDecaux

Teaser: Out-of-home campaigns provide more than just reach: if they are properly orchestrated, they can become an experience space in the middle of the city. Programmatic targeting, creative technologies and special formats are turning (digital) advertising media into dynamic brand experiences. Out-of-home advertising is visible, relevant and scalable - and surprises, activates and connects people. Based on real-life examples, OOH expert Mike Bödger will show how it's done.

Speaker: Mike Bödger is an experienced media expert with a vast industry knowledge of TV, print, digital and (digital) out-of-home advertising. As a digital trailblazer of the 2000s, he was instrumental in the development of rtl.de into a leading marketing platform and established successful cross-media formats such as Big Brother and Wer wird Millionär? (Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?). In senior roles at Condé Nast and the Handelsblatt Media Group, he was responsible for innovative projects, digital transformation and driving sustainable sales growth. With his strong C-level network, in-depth OOH expertise and clear focus on strategic business development, he handles key accounts for JCDecaux / Wall GmbH in the FMCG, automotive, tech and luxury sectors with passion and vision and is actively driving the development of the media landscape.

2:15 - 2:35 pm

A relatable brand: How German newspaper BILD is redefining approachability, emotion and relevance

Nikolaus Glasmacher, Chief Business Officer at BILD

Teaser: Strong brands need approachability, emotion and relevance - and they also need to play their part in shaping change, especially in times of technological disruption. Nikolaus Glasmacher, Chief Business Officer at German newspaper BILD, will take you behind the scenes of Germany's biggest media brand and explain how technology, emotion and brand identity can be combined to create an unmistakable brand experience. Learn more about how to turn reach into real experiences, how to accompany users in all situations, and with which formats - from an emotional live event to a platform for interaction and discussion to a buying guide - you can offer users genuine added value and further grow existing business models.

Speaker: Nikolaus Glasmacher is Chief Business Officer at the BILD Group. As a member of its management board, he is responsible for the strategic and commercial development of the brand portfolio. He began his career at BILD in the sports department, where, as Managing Director, he acquired exclusive rights and opened up new digital growth areas with innovation and investment projects at the intersection of sports, technology and media. Recently, as Chief Digital Officer, he was instrumental in the transformation of the BILD Group into a 'digital-only' company.

2:40 - 3:00 pm

Brand experience without limits - From a sheep farm in Löhne to the New York runway

Michael Stücke, shepherd and owner of the Schäfererei Stücke sheep farm

Nadia Leytes, Client Strategy Director at Serviceplan Cologne

Andy Wyeth, Creative Lead at Serviceplan Cologne

Best Brands College 2026

25 February, from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm



Teaser: When New York celebrates a shepherd from the north-west of Germany: with an innovative idea, queer wool label Rainbow Wool managed to get Tokio Hotel singer Bill Kaulitz on board as a testimonial and attract the attention of the international press. This was followed by a cooperation with dating app Grindr and a spectacular fashion collection by designer Michael Schmidt – who has created outfits for Lady Gaga and Rihanna – on a catwalk in New York. This success story shows how a unique brand experience can catapult a brand with local roots to global relevance. Prepare to be inspired!

Speakers: Michael Stücker is a shepherd and the owner of the Schäfererei Stücker sheep farm in Löhne, in the north-west of Germany. At his family-run business, he keeps over 500 sheep, practises sustainable landscape management and is committed to preserving traditional sheep farming while taking a modern approach. His work combines farming with social concerns and he is a vocal supporter of animal protection, the visibility of the LGBTQ+ community and innovation in the use of agricultural resources. With this outlook, Michael is showing how today's agriculture can take responsibility while also shaping the future.

Nadia Leytes is Client Strategy Director at Serviceplan Cologne. As the Project Lead for Rainbow Wool, she was responsible for the strategic development and international communication of the multi-award-winning campaign. Alongside her work at Serviceplan, she volunteers for schools, NGOs and the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. In view of the globally rising anti-LGBTQ sentiment, intolerance and marginalisation, which she has experienced herself, the international and social aspects of this project were particularly close to her heart.

Andy Wyeth is Creative Lead at Serviceplan Cologne and was responsible for the creative development of Rainbow Wool. To do this, he brought together creative people and production partners who are deeply committed to diversity and who helped to bring the idea to life. Born in Nairobi, raised in New Zealand and now based in Germany, he blends a global outlook with in-depth expertise in local brand building. For 14 years now, he has played a key role in shaping some of Germany's most innovative omnichannel campaigns, consistently delivering bold and culturally relevant ideas that make an undeniable impact.

3:05 – 3:35 pm

Values, risk, impact: Brand experience from the stadium to brand management

Oke Göttlich, President of FC St. Pauli

Felicia Mutterer, co-founder and Managing Director of FC Viktoria Berlin

Jasmine Robinson, Managing Partner at Monarch Collective

Teaser: In a time of constant disruption, how do brands stay relevant? Two perspectives – the values-driven approach of FC St. Pauli and the progressive model of FC Viktoria Berlin in women's football – will demonstrate how social commitment, working closely with the community and showing courage can strengthen brands in the long term. Felicia Mutterer and Oke Göttlich will show examples of diversified investor structures, effective community building and successful initiatives such as Kiezhelden (Neighbourhood Heroes), FC St. Pauli's social initiative that supports marginalised groups in the local area. Plus: Jasmine Robinson from Monarch Collective will reveal international insights from a global investor perspective. Monarch recently became the first global investor specialising in women's sports to invest in FC Viktoria Berlin – a first in the German Women's Bundesliga. In the panel, you will be able to ask her questions directly and find out how leadership, empathy and business courage can make today's brands resilient and desirable.

Speakers: Oke Göttlich, who holds a degree in sports science, has been President of professional German football club FC St. Pauli since 2014. For many years, Göttlich worked as a sports and music journalist for numerous newspapers and magazines. After working as Managing Editor of German newspaper taz, he made the move to the music industry. In the early 2000s he founded finetunes, one of the first European digital service providers for music labels and artists. He has more than 20

Best Brands College 2026

25 February, from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm



years of experience in the music industry, as well as in the management and analysis of digital music content by independent record labels. After selling the company to Sony, Göttlich took on the position of Managing Director of Music at Zebralution, a digital, all-audio distribution company, which GEMA (the German association for the protection of musical performance and recording rights) holds a majority interest in. He continues to support the development of young start-ups and promotes cultural venues.

Felicia Mutterer, co-founder and Managing Director of FC Viktoria Berlin, is regarded as a thought leader when it comes to modern sports business and strategic brand management. The award-winning journalist knows exactly what it takes to translate social relevance into viable business models. With her start-ups, she connects sport, business and pop culture, proving that brands can generate resonance and become effective through social commitment and innovative spirit. Together with her co-founders and partner Monarch Collective, she is defining new standards for entrepreneurial risk in professional sport.

Jasmine Robinson is a Managing Partner at Monarch Collective, a fund investing in women's sports teams, leagues, and rights. Prior to Monarch, Jasmine was a Partner at Causeway, a growth stage fund investing in sports, media, gaming and fitness. While at Causeway, Jasmine partnered with companies including Tracksmith, Niantic, Volley, FloSports, and QuintEvents. Prior to Causeway, Jasmine held investing and strategy roles at the San Francisco 49ers, Bain & Company, and The Raine Group. Jasmine received her BA from Harvard University, graduating Magna Cum Laude, and her MBA from Stanford University where she was an Arjay Miller Scholar.

3:35 - 5:00 pm

Coffee and conversations at the Experience Lab