



Tim Leberecht

“Now is the time for a humanist perspective on technology, business and society.”

Abstracts

The New Romantic Age in Business and Beyond

Tim believes that in a world of algorithms, Big Data, and Quantified Selves, we are at risk of engineering inherently human qualities out of our lives. Observing an emerging counter-movement, he argues that we are shifting from a smart age to a new romantic era in which only organizations comfortable with ambiguity and emotion will thrive. When everything is seamlessly connected, convenient, and predictable, we must find meaning through mystery, friction, and the beauty of the unexpected. When everyone maximizes and optimizes, romance becomes the ultimate differentiator. Illustrated through examples that include hermits and secret societies, talking to strangers, and “Thick Days,” he presents Rules of Enchantment that will help you find and create more meaning in business and create companies that are truly loved.

Based on my TEDx Talk, [“Romantics, Our Time is Now”](#)

Building a Human Company in the Age of Machines

Half of the human workforce is expected to be replaced by robots and software in the next twenty years. Tim believes that, as machines take our jobs and do them more efficiently, soon, the only work left for us humans will be the kind of work that must be done *beautifully*, rather than *efficiently*. In fact, to maintain our humanity in this second machine age, we may have no other choice but to create beauty. In this talk, he explores beauty as a critical quality for organizations striving to attract and retain the best talent as well as create meaningful relationships with their customers and society. Drawing from the arts, liberal arts, and philosophy, Tim makes a passionate case for a new radical humanism and proposes six surprising principles that you can use to build more human-centered companies.

Based on my TED Talk, [“4 Ways to Build a Human Company on the Age of Machines”](#)

Data and Delight: What It Really Means To Be Customer-Centric

Customer-centricity is an overused buzzword. Every can agree on its importance—but what does it really mean? In this talk, Tim explores four principles of what he calls culture-based customer-centricity, at least one of which might be counter-intuitive: 1) Understand your customers as human beings; 2) Make them suffer (a little); 3) The journey is the destination; 4) Empower your employees. Citing several case studies and stories—from Airbnb to Airbus, from Apple, Deutsche Bank, Disney, GE, Lego, Nike, SNCF, to Soul Cycle—he makes the case that brands are facing “experiential competitors” from outside their industries, and in order to create long-term customer loyalty, they must

create a culture that smartly connects the desires and needs of employees with those of their customers.

Bio

Strategy artist, author, and business romantic

- Tim is the author of the international bestseller *The Business Romantic* (HarperCollins); translated into eight languages to date; an “Inc. Top 10 Motivational Book of 2015” and “Forbes Top 10 Creative Leadership Book of 2015”
- “A humanist in Silicon Valley, Tim is the rare business leader who understands both tech and enchantment, AI and EQ.” (Navi Radjou, author of *Frugal Innovation*)
- “Tim reminds us of the critical importance of reconnecting our economies with our emotional and spiritual needs. He encourages us in a playful yet reflective way to find beauty and meaning in our work lives and shows us how small, everyday actions can help us build a more humane economy.” (Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman, World Economic Forum)
- Former CMO of Frog Design, NBBJ, and Aricent
- Three-time TED speaker; prolific writer and speaker
- Founder of Leberecht & Partners, a firm that helps leaders create high-performing and beautiful brands, cultures, and organizations

Tim Leberecht is a Berlin and San Francisco-based German-American author, entrepreneur, and consultant with 20 years’ experience in marketing leadership roles in the design, software, telecommunications, and entertainment industries in the US and Europe. He is the founder of Leberecht & Partners, a consulting firm that helps leaders and organizations build beautiful, humanist brands, cultures, and organizations. Tim is the author of the international bestseller, *The Business Romantic: Give Everything, Quantify Nothing, and Create Something Greater Than Yourself* (HarperCollins, 2015), that has been translated into eight languages to date.

Before launching his own consulting practice, Leberecht & Partners, Tim most recently served as the chief marketing officer of NBBJ, a global design and architecture firm specialized in healthcare and workplace design, with clients from Amazon, Google, Samsung, to Tencent. From 2006 to 2013, he was the chief marketing officer for product design and innovation consultancy Frog Design. Frog became famous for its work with Apple, Disney, GE, and many other Fortune 500 brands, and Tim was instrumental in establishing Frog as one of the most admired creative brands worldwide. In addition to his role at Frog, he also served as chief marketing officer for Frog’s parent, software engineering firm Aricent Group, from 2011 to 2013. Previously, he held marketing positions at mind-mapping software firm Mindjet and 3D-Internet firm Echtzeit, and was a consultant for the 2004 Athens Olympic Torch Relay and Deutsche Telekom.

Tim’s writing on marketing, design, and innovation appears in publications such as Harvard Business Review, Entrepreneur, Fast Company, Forbes, Fortune, Psychology Today, Washington Post, and Wired. He has spoken at venues including TED, The Economist Big Rethink, DLD, SXSW, Thinking Digital, Next, the Silicon Valley CEO Summit, Commonwealth Club, Carnegie Mellon, Yale University, and the World Economic Forum. He has given talks or run workshops at companies including Airbus, Akbank, Blue State Digital, BBVA, DHL, Ford Motors, Huga, IBM, NEC, Pfizer, Thjnk, UPS, Vitra, Wolff Olins, and Ziba Design. His TED Talks “3 Ways to (Usefully) Lose Control of Your Brand” and “4 Ways to Create A Human Company in the Age of Machines” have been viewed by almost two million people to date. Tim served on the World Economic Forum’s Global Agenda Council on Values from 2011-2016, he is a member of the NationSwell Council, and on the Board of Advisors of Jump Associates, a strategy and innovation consultancy. He is the co-founder and co-curator of the 15

Toasts dinner series and the House of Beautiful Business, a pop-up community devoted to strengthening human technology.

Tim holds a masters' degree in applied cultural studies from the University of Luneburg in Germany and a masters' degree in communication management from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. He lives in Berlin and San Francisco with his wife and daughter.

Testimonials

"I was blown away after hearing Tim speak at the TED 2015 conference in Vancouver—and thrilled when he accepted our invite to present at UPS. Tim is not only a captivating speaker, but his message is a timely and much-needed antidote to current management thinking. Tim realizes the degree to which the leadership-by-measurement movement has left a generation of workers disaffected, and offers ideas for bringing romance back to the office. I highly recommend you bring Tim in to speak at your organization."

Dean Foust, Director of Executive Communications, UPS, Atlanta

"One of the most inspiring discussions our extended team of strategists, designers, and engineers has hosted. We discussed, both formally and in the hallways, about the thought-provoking (and passion-provoking!) ideas and examples that Tim shared with us for days, weeks, and months after his talk. We still do."

Reena Jana, Editor-in-Chief, THINK Leaders, Global Program Lead, IBM

"With an invitation-only audience of 600 CEOs, CTOs, and strategy directors from the digital industry, Tim's talk was received as one of the best of the two-day event. He understands the art of storytelling—he presented his ideas about work and the changing relation between people and their work life, with historical quotes, personal anecdotes, and topical industry developments. He has a compelling stage presence and took the audience along in his tale, and you could see how people stopped checking their phone and starting to pay attention. Everyone truly enjoyed his talk, and I can warmly recommend him."

Monique van Dusseldorp, Curator, NEXT conference, Hamburg

"Tim Leberecht's terrific presentation at Thinking Digital 2015 was a huge hit. Because of his track record Tim brings a ton of credibility as a marketer and businessperson, but it is his passion, humor, and flawless delivery that completely won over the seasoned audience at Thinking Digital. I'd happily recommend Tim equally for conferences or private events especially if you're seeking to understand how organizations can connect with their stakeholders, customers, and employees in a deeper and more meaningful way."

Herb Kim, Curator, Thinking Digital, Newcastle, UK

"Thoughtful and intellectual, yet provoking and relevant. Tim brings a perspective to business that is much needed today. The most common word when we asked the audience to reflect after two days of conferencing: romance."

Martin Thörnkvist, Curator, The Conference, Malmo, Sweden

"Tim is an outstanding speaker who brings a much needed dose of creative and inspiring fresh air to an industry too obsessed with data and the quantification of everything. With his experience working with world-leading business organizations, Tim brings balance, emotion, and mystery to confront a world that risks to become too dull, automated, and predictable."

Gianfranco Chicco, Executive Director, Social Media Week London

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