



BLUESCAPE[®]

Executive Summit: Future of Work

by Kitt Doucette, Contributing Editor at Men's Journal Magazine



The Spirit of Sharing

Our paddleboards glide across the smooth ocean in silence. It's one of those beautiful Hawaiian magnifying-glass mornings. When the ocean is so still and clear that the reef and colorful fish below seem to rise above the sea's surface and sliding on top of the water feels more like soaring than swimming. The sky and wispy clouds high above are a delicate shade of pink as the sun crests the 13,000-foot volcano Mauna Kea, turning everything the new light touches into a soft gold.

My paddling companion, Dan McInerney looks over and laughs, shaking his head in appreciation and awe. He takes a deep breath and whistles, saying softly, "what an amazing place." As a founding partner of the Hawaiian footwear brand Olukai and Executive Director of the Ama Olukai Foundation, Dan is a longtime student, friend and humble devotee of the history, culture and language of the Hawaiian Islands. His extensive and deeply respectful relationship with Hawaii imbues every aspect of his work with Olukai and his life in general.

We paddle out to the middle of the bay and sit down on our boards, feet dangling in the warm blue water. Appreciating the stillness and quiet of dawn while admiring the gorgeous view. "My first time on these islands was over forty years ago," Dan says with a wide smile, "and they still take my breath away every time I return." After a brief silence, he continues, explaining what the true meaning of Aloha is. "Lots of people think it means hello and goodbye," he starts, "but it's way more than that. Ha is the Hawaiian word for breath of life, our very essence of being. Alo means to share. So Alo-Ha literally means to share our breath of life." He let that sink in for a moment. "Beautiful in its vibrant simplicity. To share our breath we must come together on a physical, emotional and spiritual level. We must understand each other, respect one another and recognize our commonality as humans. It's really all about this spirit of sharing."

Aloha. A powerful word that resonates far beyond its island home and as I've come to discover, actually has a lot to do with why we're here at the legendary Mauna Kea Resort. Sitting on our paddleboards in the crystal clear ocean looking back across the water at the stunning white sand beach and volcano above, talking about human connectivity and the Hawaiian spirit.

Besides enjoying paradise, we're both here to participate in an executive summit focused on the future of the workplace. A future that, at its very core, has everything to do with increased human communication, connectivity and collaboration on a global scale. Hosted by the technology company Bluescape, Dan is joined by top executives from a large variety of companies representing a diverse group of industries.



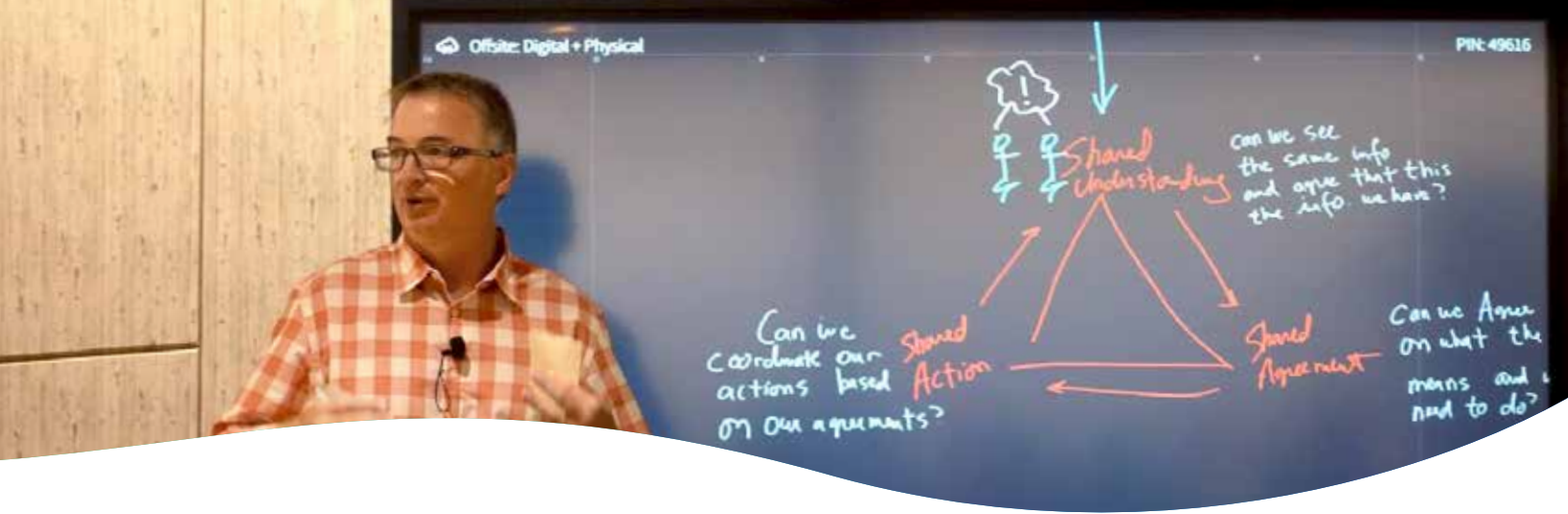
Spark Discussion and Insight

Tom Waller, the SVP of Whitespace (Innovation and R&D) at Lululemon, is here. So is Chris Duffey, the head of AI Innovation & Strategy at Adobe. They're part of a group that also includes thought and workplace culture leaders from Nike, Paramount Pictures, Intel and Wacom along with an assortment of high-level analysts, technology think tank and commercial real estate professionals. The goal? To share ideas that spark discussion and insight about how the workplace is changing and what needs to happen to make it better. Addressing questions like, has the over-use of technology impacted our quality of work? And, how important is the human element and team building to innovation? Finally, how can we work together to solve these problems in an increasingly digital and virtual workplace?

The group is small enough that, by the end of the three days, we all know each other's first names, along with their respective partners. A few even brought their kids. The family-friendly vibe takes a page out of Allen & Company's famed Sun Valley Conference's book and succeeds in keeping the gathering light-hearted and comfortable with none of the awkwardness that purely professional conferences can sometimes have.

After the morning paddleboard session and a light breakfast of tropical fruit and delicious local Kona coffee the presentations begin. While each speaker sheds light on different aspects of the workplace's future, the subtle star of the show is how they're giving the presentations. Standing at the front of the room, two giant Dell touch screens equipped with Bluescape transform into a dynamic 21st-century version of the traditional whiteboard. Presenters draw on them using a stylus pen or their fingers. They upload and display their presentations, videos and documents, while working in any number of software platforms. Most importantly, they can share and collaborate in real time anywhere in the world.

Every presentation for the entire conference is kept in the same space, or on the same board. Swiping and finger commands allow users to zoom in and out, change slides and navigate around the workspace as if it were a giant ocean and each document, presentation or freehand jam is an island. Connected yet separate. This is the magic of Bluescape's proprietary technology and why some of the most forward-thinking and creative brands in the world are starting to embrace it.



Warp Speed

"Bluescape is essentially a container," Demian Entreken, Bluescape's Chief Technology Officer, explains, "Our main goal is to defragment the communication systems that currently cause so much inefficiency in the growing virtual workplace by providing a visual and spatial digital workspace to collaborate within." Bluescape does this by getting rid of the outdated file cabinet system, where identical icons with similar titles must be established and then constantly sifted through to find and store data...also called files. Which then must be uploaded, sent and downloaded over and over again. The confusion and inefficiency expand quickly when working in shared digital spaces. How many times have we asked ourselves, what file did I put that in? Or flat-out forget what we named it? Now we also need to know what John from marketing in New York named the file where the document with the images that Jackie from design in California needs to adjust for Jane from production in Hong Kong.

This rat's nest of inefficiency along with the advent of the cloud has led to a boom in work sharing applications and technologies. Platforms like Slack, Zoom, GoTo Meeting, Blue Jeans, Asana, ClientHub, RingCentral, etc., all aim to solve these problems with varying degrees of success. None are compatible with each other. So inevitably more questions and delays ensue. What platform are we using for this meeting? Wait. Jill from sourcing in South America needs to download that one. Hold on. Jack from materials in Vancouver doesn't have the latest version. Sometimes whole departments are using one app while management works with a frazzled IT officer to implement another one that nobody else has heard of.

Bluescape turns this rabbit hole of time sucks into the Starship Enterprise and makes the user feel like Captain Kirk. Able to point in any direction, say something cool like warp speed and...engage, before being jettisoned to any planet or location in the entire galaxy. Not to mention the transporter, able to beam down to the surface of any particular planet or ship by standing in a shaft of psychedelic light and saying...energize.



Radically Different

Soon to be voice-enabled, with Bluescape, anyone from any department will be able to log in, say the project's name, and zap! There they are. Now go to that cool beam of light in the transporter room, or don't, it doesn't matter. State the name of the document they want to view, edit, work on, share, critique, and so many other etcetera's. Zing! That she blows! They didn't even have to say energize (but that doesn't mean that they shouldn't). Oh, and if whoever from whatever department needs to work on the same project at the same time, all the changes, notes, edits, adjustments, etc., they make will appear on every user's screen engaged in that particular project in real time, or whenever they beam themselves down to view the project.

At first, working outside of the established file cabinet system can be awkward, it's been around a long time and in many ways we're accustomed to the inherent inefficiency. Bluescape is radically different and that takes some getting used to. Unlearning how we've done it for all these years in order to appreciate the potential of the new technology. The sheer size of Bluescape can also be daunting, such a limitless expanse of blank space where entire animated films can exist next to hand-drawn Venn Diagrams, budget spreadsheets and Powerpoint presentations, is definitely overwhelming at first. Zoom far enough out and all that work looks like tiny specs on a giant blue ocean. The benefits, however, are astronomical. "Once I got all my different teams spread around the world on board with Bluescape," says Scott McPhail, the Executive Director for International Creative Services at Paramount Pictures, "and they became familiar with how it works and realized its potential, our collaborative review process and creative capacity increased dramatically."

Anyone who's felt the collaborative and innovative magic of a successful whiteboard session can identify with Scott's excitement. While Bluescape will never replace the value of in-person meetings, it does a far better job of replicating that experience and capturing its potency than any other digital workspace technology currently available.



Working Together

Following the presentations, there's an incredible hike into a sacred valley led by a local Hawaiian guide, then a sunset sail aboard a beautiful catamaran. Aloha is everywhere. Engaged. Excited. Respectful. Honest. Hawaii's unique brand of cosmic energy, called mana, has taken hold of the group. Conversations are jovial as friendships form and everyone imagines how they, their teams and organizations, can use Bluescape's technology to help find that holy grail of creativity and collaboration; shared understanding. Which ultimately brings us back to the idea and spirit of Aloha.

At dinner that evening I find myself sitting next to Dan, discussing another Hawaiian word, *Laulima*. "It means working together and teamwork," Dan explains, "*Laulima* is based on giving without expectation, along with thoughtful guidance, inclusion of the entire group and empowering the next generation."

"That's it!" I shout. "That's the future of the workplace captured in a single, two-syllable Hawaiian word." "I certainly think so," Dan says with a look that conveys he's known this for quite some time. "The challenge is getting corporations to act responsibly and getting them to see that the future has to be about more than just profit. We need to establish and create purpose, community, and respect as well."

I agree with Dan. While the future of the workplace will be a vastly digital one, we must not forget about the human element and strive to create that purpose, community and respect on every level of the organization. When human creativity and collaboration are encouraged and activated upon, there's no stopping them.