



ROLE PROFILE

What I *Actually* Did

Putting On a New (Media) Lens, at





JOINING THE CIRCUS

The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) Show isn't a conference.

It's a small city.

In Las Vegas each spring, more than 90,000 people descend on a convention center the size of an airport, with exhibitors ranging from scrappy startups to Sony, Avid, and Apple. It's loud, chaotic, political, and relentless.

When I joined NAB Show, I thought I was just signing on for event marketing. What I walked into was closer to crisis management.

Everything mattered at once: contracts with exhibitors, floor layouts, signage, programming, sponsorship deals, keynote speakers, media relations. Each department had its own urgent demands. My days blurred from morning scrambles into midnight planning sessions. It felt like a treadmill set permanently on sprint mode (and based on the loss of 12 pounds each show cycle, it doubled as an actual treadmill, as well).

But there's something freeing about chaos. When the old playbooks are breaking down, you can either drown in the mess or invent new ones. I chose the latter.

The cliché may say if you love what you're doing it will never feel like work, and for a role and project that was filled with so much work... the love was real.

BIG SWINGS

The core challenge was this: NAB Show had a stodgier reputation problem. To insiders, it was the must-attend event of the broadcast and media world. To outsiders, and even many attendees, it was just another massive trade show. Exhibitors cared about floor space; attendees cared about keynotes. Nobody remembered the brand in between.

We needed to transform NAB Show from *event logistics* into a *media experience*.

Building a Video Platform Before It Was Normal

This was 2008 to 2010, before "content marketing" had become an industry buzzword and when YouTube was barely out of adolescence. But... I believed video could be the conversation bridge between exhibitors, attendees, and the broader media world.

So I turned the NAB Show into a media company.

Turning Attendees Into Advocates

Instead of flooding inboxes with generic promotions, we focused on stories. Exhibitors weren't just companies renting booths; they were innovators with something to say. Attendees weren't just bodies through turnstiles; they were voices in an evolving industry.

We highlighted them, gave them platforms, and in return, they gave us reach. We brought them to life... onscreen.

FILM SCHOOL BACKGROUND, SHOE-HORNED IN

Infusing variety into the onsite video coverage of the NAB Show meant expanding beyond a “daily highlight” video with non-stop shots of people waving or a time-lapse view of exhibits being built (though we had those, too). Below is a sample of the different forms of content I created for capture and distribution over the course of several show cycles.



Above: Examples and still frames of the breadth and depth of video content that was executive produced in 2009 and 2010.

WHERE ON THE FLOOR IS PATRICK FLYNN?

Key sales leader for NAB, Patrick Flynn, brought his unique charm and dry humor to one-on-one “journeyman” interview segments as he met with key customers around the show floor, with appearances from industry leaders... and Smokey the Bear.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

The requisite updates from Hall of Fame events, keynotes, and special programming (a live feed from space, included!) were compiled into a daily show reel that sent the message to those who stayed home: you’re missing out, and we’ll see you next show.

NAB RADIO SHOW

Having negotiated for music rights with the manager of up-and-coming band Passion Pit, a series of broadcasters, musicians, and consumers shared what they loved about over-the-air radio broadcasting.

WAR ON THE FLOOR

The “Amazing Race” style of frantic, breakneck scavenger hunts came to NAB, as two groups of students faced off to solve clues, traverse the event, and expand their foundational broadcasting knowledge (and take viewers along the ride for meetings with Canon, Accuweather, and more) in a race against the other. In the end, the sights and sounds of the event were taken in a little bit faster by the girls’ team. Go Team Blue!

FLIP CAMERA ATTENDEE DIARIES

Armed with a “Flip” camera, attendees from all stages of the industry lifecycle – from college student to internal chiefs of staff – captured their journeys to and at the show... including from as far away as Nigeria.

GABZEBO

Stationed in a key location outside of the exhibit hall, this photo-booth style station allowed attendees to weigh in on what new and exciting experiences they were having, and a daily compilation went across the sites each night.

TAXI CONFESSIONAL

When you hire one of your best friends to be a cameraman, you find a way to bring your subversive humor to the table. This clip never aired and we deny its existence.

PROOF OF IMPACT

It worked.

“Working with you on two successful show cycles, you proved that you’re adept with driving both traditional marketing campaigns and innovative experiential and award-winning video,” shared **Jessica Olympia**, my former tag-team partner in the marketing team who moved on to Yahoo! and Twitter before becoming the Principal and a marketing consultant with Olympia Strategies, Inc. “You pushed the envelope for our show.”

Web traffic doubled year-over-year.

Video views beat every benchmark we set in each preceding show season.

NAB Show won Telly Awards for video excellence, alongside entertainment brands with 50x our budget.

Sponsors started inquiring about not just floor space, but for content packages.

Attendees came back talking about the *experience*, not just the booths.

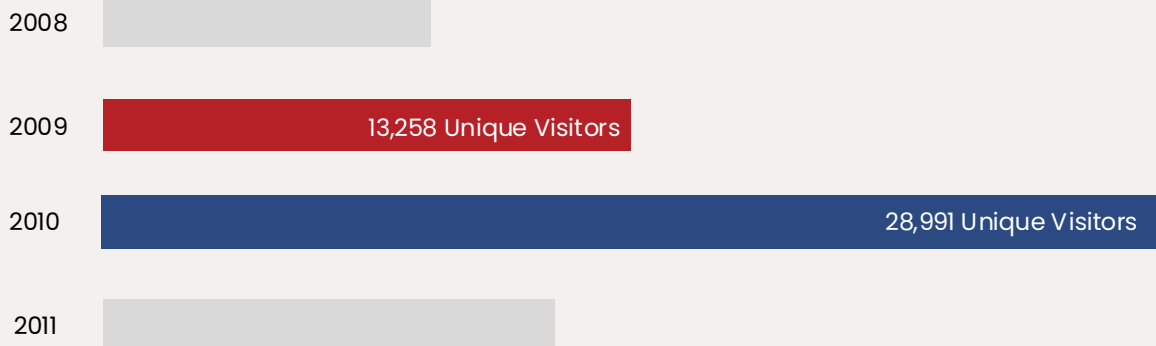
And the most telling metric: executives and exhibitors stopped asking “why are we doing this?” and started asking “what’s next?”



Above: With NAB VP and long-time collaborator, Mike Khatcheressian

YOY WEBSITE TRAFFIC

During the week of the event, visibility of the web performance of www.nabshow.com was a highly sought after success metric. Visitors to the site engaged with daily show updates, on-the-floor news and highlights, and the breadth of the embedded NAB Show video content. Source, time on site, and video completion rates were all monitored intently, but the unique visitors and page visits were subject to an astronomical increase of 2x in 2010 against an entire new benchmark set with the 2009 event.



INDUSTRY ATTENTION

Multiple press outlets covered the event, and a handful included attributed quotes and feedback from me on the scope and shape of the video program. However, one IEEE Young Professionals member shadowed the 2010 event, and call-outs from her coverage having witnessed the engine in motion are below.



A WINNING MATCH: INDUSTRY NEWCOMER SHADOWS VETERAN AT NAB SHOW

...Michelle introduces me to her staff and asks them to bring me up to speed or what they do and how it impacts the NAB Show. First up is **Aaron Cullers**, Manager of Convention Marketing. Aaron has been with NAB for 18 months.

Within 15 minutes of talking with him, I can see why Michelle can depend on him. While relatively new with NAB, **he is transformational** and has a lot of really good ideas, which are being implemented at this year's show.

I ask Aaron how he's going to gauge the success of these new ventures and he shares with me exactly what will spell success.

[Link to Article](#)



AWARDS & RECOGNITION

2009 Silver Telly Award

2009 Bronze Telly Award

2009 Bronze Telly Award

2010 Silver Telly Award, Online
Video – Reality Series

Aegis Award

W3 Award

WHAT THE NAB SHOW TAUGHT ME

Looking back, NAB Show was my bootcamp in three enduring truths.

Chaos is a Petri Dish for Creativity

The sheer scale and stress could have flattened me. Instead, it forced me to think bigger, faster, braver.

“You were one of the most creative and passionate people I have had the fortune to work with,” offered **Heather Shuster**, now Senior Strategy Director with the Freeman Company and former leader of sponsorship sales with NAB. “You were extremely dedicated to taking every idea in any context and making it a reality. Driven, even.”

Content Isn’t Fluff: It’s Currency

Long before LinkedIn carousels and TikTok shorts, I

showed that stories and video drive engagement, trust, and dollars. Testing the length and tone of different styles of content allowed for hyper-specific content for targeted (and engaged) audiences.

Revenue Is the Only Scoreboard That Matters

Awards were nice. Praise was really nice, and my tail wagged for it. But... when we could point to doubled traffic, sponsor ROI, and exhibitor renewals, that’s when we knew we’d actually moved the needle.

“Tradeshows are always chaotic,” recalls **Taryn Porter**, former Senior Director of Convention Sales with the NAB Show, now in a similar capacity with AVIXA. “But they are run by small, mighty teams.”

WHY IT STILL MATTERS

NAB Show wasn’t just an event gig. It was a crucible that turned me from a marketer who could execute campaigns into a marketer obsessed with proving business impact, even in – especially in – creative and envelope-pushing ways.

Without it, I wouldn’t have built **Dell’s** global support & deployment demand center and the first-of-its-kind direct ABM programming..

Without it, I wouldn’t have subscribed so wholeheartedly to the frameworks and best practices of **SiriusDecisions**.

Without it, I wouldn’t have built **Tomorrow CMO**, building out how marketing impact is at the heart of every marketing leader.

For three years, I lived inside an event circus. I learned how to juggle exhibitors, sponsors, keynotes, and content. I learned how to keep a team sane in chaos. And I learned that marketing’s job isn’t to make noise... It’s to create momentum that compounds into revenue.

If my superpower at NAB was to inspire with creativity, it was countered with an ultimately resounding flaw: “Championing for too much change at once,” said Taryn Porter.

In a city where all my best effort was left on the show floor and in a world where complacency kills... pushing for change wasn’t the worst sin.



WHAT THE COLLEAGUES SAY

"In working closely with Aaron I was very impressed with his vision, creativity, skill and technique in taking coverage of the NAB Show - the world's preeminent broadcasting and media show - to heights never before reached in terms of video coverage. His work garnered rave reviews both within NAB and in the industry."

Gagan Nirula

Chief Creative Officer and SVP
Digital
National Association of
Broadcasters

"Aaron brought immense creativity, fresh perspective, the initiative and desire to improve current practices and try new things, and the skill to perform his role to the highest standards to NAB every day. As the driving force behind the video coverage of both the 2009 and 2010 NAB Shows, Aaron conceptualized, wrote, coordinated and directed the production of these widely-viewed and critically-acclaimed projects. Aaron's positive disposition and insight made him a valuable member of our team and a good person to be around."

Robert Blau

Drupal Developer
Booz Allen Hamilton

"Aaron is one of the most creative people I have ever met. Not only does he have the ideas, but he has the strategic plans and solutions to carry the idea to reality - beyond original expectations, on time and under budget. Aside from his professional qualifications and natural talent, he is a fantastic person and always a pleasure to work with even under the most stressful (pre-show, in our case) situations."

Kathy Hartness

Director, Meetings & Events
Association of Old Crows

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