

Should you go to SxSW 2013?

 By [trigger/isobar goes to SxSW](#)

26 Mar 2012

Uno de Waal: [SxSW](#) is a crazy place - it's a jam-packed time filled with an insane amount of information and you won't take in everything within five days. The day starts at 9.30am and, if you find yourself hopping from event to event after the talks, you may very well end up getting very little sleep. All in the name of networking, right?

That being said, it might not be for everyone - many talks might not be for your industry or you could find yourself in a hit-and-miss panel-hopping escapade trying to find relevancy.

Here are some tips to decide if it's worth your going:

- **If you work in advertising**

If in digital, it's a yes - the talks are highly relevant to all digital advertising and marketing. The talks cover a wide range of topics, including branding, technology platforms and emerging trends in digital. There is a lot to learn here; the trick is to filter through the ones that are relevant.

If you are in a traditional advertising agency, the areas become a bit unclear. There are certainly talks that you would get value out of but, as it's mainly an interactive conference, I would suggest that you first understand a little bit of digital. People who are comfortable with only creating print, TV and radio ads will find themselves laughed at quite often.

You are part of an agency

I know this sounds the same as if you work in advertising, but this is where the suits and creatives can be split. For the suits, there is certainly a clear value proposition by attending some of the more strategic talks. While quite a few dealt with the nuts and bolts of creativity and technology, talks such as how to run the agency using start-up methods and business models behind content and social, as well as bigger strategic talks on the future, are perfectly applicable to the more business-minded folk.

You work in a start-up

A resounding "Yes!" - there is an immense amount to learn from other start-ups. There is an entire track dedicated to start-ups, plus a bucket-load of inspiration to get from the numerous apps that are launched at SxSW. It might be quite a sobering moment - you'll realise the steep competition you are facing!

Content is your bread and butter

Content is certainly king at SxSW. Some of the greatest minds in journalism and content are there, and the talks are inspiring. Some of the content panels might be a bit of a hit-and-miss (I found this in most of the tracks, though), but there are some gems.

You want to learn more about African usage of technology

Most certainly not. The talks on Africa were thin and weak; however, this is to be expected in a conference dominated by American attendees. Even European-centric ideas had very little presence. SxSW is definitely a place that is focused on American technology and trends. This might open the doors for a more developmental conference...

So, should you fork out cash for ticket, expensive plane flights and overpriced accommodation? I'd say, "Most certainly!"

One of the most important things to do when you are at SxSW is to constantly apply the thinking. It certainly helped to have a colleague attend with me as a sounding board, as well - plus we got to attend twice the amount of talks.

But book your accommodation early - it flies fast!

For more:

- Bizcommunity: [Top five things learned at SxSW 2012](#) by Karin Botta
- Bizcommunity Blog: [trigger/isobar goes to SxSW](#)

ABOUT TRIGGER/ISOBAR GOES TO SXSW

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