

## Convene Podcast Transcript

### Season 3 Episode 5 with Shawn Kanungo, Innovation Strategist | Bestselling Author

*\*Note: the transcript is AI generated, excuse typos and inaccuracies*

[00:06] **Shawn Kanungo:** Just by putting in text or simply by narrating our ideas, that that actually becomes the most dangerous skill in the world. Like, just learning a language is the most dangerous skill in the world.

[00:23] **Magdalina Atanassova:** Welcome to the Convene podcast. I'm excited to welcome you to another episode of season three as we offer an exclusive behind the scenes glimpse into convening leaders 2024 held in San Diego this January. This is a special episode which first appeared as part of the mashup studio program. Enjoy the episode.

[00:49] **Magdalina Atanassova:** Hello to the online audience. My name is Magdalina Atanassova, digital media editor at Convene. I'm happy to be joined by Shawn Kanungo, who is our main stage speaker, whose presentation is titled The Great Reimagination: Think Boulder. Shawn is an innovative strategist and a best selling author, and he will share with us simple and elegant hacks to help us make our client experiences more delightful, meaningful, and magical. So, hello, Shawn. It's a pleasure having you here.

[01:20] **Shawn Kanungo:** Hello to you and hello to everybody that's watching this virtually. I'm super excited to be here. And actually, I'm like a fanboy. Your podcast, the piece.

[01:29] **Magdalina Atanassova:** Thank you.

[01:30] **Shawn Kanungo:** So if you haven't, like, you know, listen to the podcast. It's incredible. Rate, ride, follow, subscribe, whatever you got to do.

[01:36] **Magdalina Atanassova:** I know some of the most significant ways which AI will give us an opportunity to transform and reimagine our industry.

[01:44] **Shawn Kanungo:** Yeah, you know, I'm super bullish when it comes to AI, particularly around generative AI. To me, it's about how do we make things faster, more optimized, more standardized. There's so many things that as event organizers that we're doing in the background that are maintained, that are redundant, that we're doing over and over and over again. And I believe that AI is the potential for us to make that more seamless so that we can double down on our clients and our stakeholders at the end of the day. And although I'm a huge proponent of AI, I'm playing with all the different AI tools and working with leaders when it comes to AI. I also believe that events is actually about humans, humans at the end of the day. So I'm incredibly bullish about AI because it's going to help us double down on the humans.

[02:27] **Magdalina Atanassova:** And you yourself have your own GPT.

[02:29] **Shawn Kanungo:** Yes, I did. Something really interesting was that Magdalena? I can't, like, there's, I can't cook. I can't, I can't dry while, I can't paint. I can't put, I can barely put together an Ikea set. But the one thing that I can do is think and speak, and that's what I spent my entire career on working within managed consulting. And what I did was I took all my research, all my writing, my entire book, all the speeches that I've done throughout my entire career, and I trained it, and I created this GPT called Kanungo GPT, so available to Chat GPT subscribers today. The GPT story is rolling next week. And so what you can do is actually, you don't have to ask me any questions. You could just go to Kanungo GPT and ask it all sorts of questions, questions around innovation. It's an innovation copilot, a really interesting experiment that I ran. And I just think that every single event, every single organization is either going to have their own LLM or their version, their own GPT. And so I'm just a use case of what everyone is going to do in the future. That's, that's my belief, and I'm sure.

[03:29] **Magdalina Atanassova:** Many people in our online audience will be wondering that. But aren't you afraid you're going to be displaced that GPT?

[03:37] **Shawn Kanungo:** Absolutely. And actually, I will be displaced by the GPT in some sense. The low hanging fruit. Absolutely. But we have to recognize when it comes to AI, is that AI is optimizing the past. We are the future. To me, AI is the ability to scale your influence. At the end of the day, people are still going to hire me for my energy. People are going to still hire me for the future, future insights. This is all about the past. So if you want ideas based on the past, that's where you can go. You can go to the GPT. So I just think it's incredible.

[04:10] **Magdalina Atanassova:** And that perfectly lies with my next question. So what do you think is the next big leap that we can expect in the events industry?

[04:18] **Shawn Kanungo:** In the events industry, when it comes to events, I thought there's a massive leap. I don't believe in massive leaps. Even though I wrote the book called the bold ones, I don't

believe in massive leaps. What I do believe is actually putting in the work every single day and acting boldly every single day, which is interesting because, you know, my session is called thinking boldly, or think boldly. And I'm going to say this on stage tomorrow, but I don't believe in thinking boldly. I believe in acting boldly. And to me, where we're going to get to when it comes to events is experimenting every single day, whether it's trying out all these AI tools that might help standardize our process or whether it's leveraging social media to see, okay, how do we leverage the media that we're creating within their event for afterwards so that we can innovate that more within sales and marketing? So at the end of the day, I believe that events is going to be a credible channel for every single organization, for every industry, for lead generation, for community, for brand building. And so to me, events needs a seat at the table. And that is, to me, is the future of events.

[05:28] **Magdalina Atanassova:** Awesome. Connects to what you've said in other talks about the narrator economy. So I'm not sure everybody's familiar, so can you explain a little bit what you mean by narrator?

[05:38] **Shawn Kanungo:** So the narrator economy is essentially the idea that just by putting in text or simply by narrating our ideas, that actually becomes the most dangerous skill in the world. Like, just learning a language is the most dangerous skill in the world. You know, many event organizers and beyond, they're like, well, Shawn, I'm not like a, I'm not a technologist. I'm not tech savvy. I don't understand this AI thing. I can't be part of this new paradigm shift. I'm like, can you speak? Can you put a sentence together? I do not think that people understand the scale and the democratization of this technology and how easy it is, how accessible it is. It's incredible. And I believe that it's getting so easy that anybody around the world will be able to create their own applications using AI. Like, we were just chatting. You're like, you know what? With that PCMA app, I want to make that better. I just believe that you don't have to hire \$100,000 worth of developers and designers to make that happen. You will be the designer. You will be the developer at the end of the day because of AI. And I think that's incredibly empowering. That, to me, is the narrator economy. Come up with ideas. That's it.

[06:59] **Magdalina Atanassova:** And do you think that will change the role of creatives and strategists in the events industry? Because, as you say, now they can just input the prompt and have different results. So how will these jobs change?

[07:14] **Shawn Kanungo:** I believe that not only is it going to enable more people to be creative within the events industry, I believe that every single person will have a creative arm because of AI at their fingertips. But also I believe that it is actually rewiring our creative process. So many of us think of AI as you put something in and you get a deliverable back. But I believe that the end is now the beginning. What do I mean by that? I believe that you can start with 100 different creative ideas, 100 different apps, 100 different websites, 100 different run of shows to start. Then you go through your creative process to get the final result, you know, so we are changing how we look at work because of artificial intelligence and I think that's going to be a game changer.

[08:02] **Magdalina Atanassova:** That's very interesting. You know, working for the magazine, we work with actual designers to do our covers and it's just a different work. You know, there's a human being behind. We're not buying art, you know, stock art to just slam on the COVID. There's a lot of work involved in communicating with the artists and getting this final result. And, you know, the job of event planners is also very creative. There should be a human behind coming with all these ideas. Like you said, looking into the future, how do you see them? Like creating our future.

[08:36] **Shawn Kanungo:** I agree. I think it could be very intimidating in the fact that, you know, now you can get incredible designs, you know, at your fingertips. But I believe that you still need a designer at the end of the day because the designer understands where you want to go. The AI is just understanding and modeling what's happening in the past. So although you can get incredible designs and you can get 100 designs to start, you still need a designer to take some of those ideas and say, hey, this is what AI is saying. How do we add our 3% remix to what this is? To create something that's customized for what we are doing? You still need the designer in the loop. It's just the tools that the designer is using has changed. Right now the designer is using Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom and all these graphical tools. Well, now you have AI to the mix, which is making their job ten times easier and it's allowing us to do things faster and become more creative. So I'm bullish. I'm not going to lie to you. I'm an optimist. You can see it come through. I'm an optimist when it comes to this technology. Of course there's like a downside to it. Of course we need to be concerned about data privacy and security and confidentiality. And I think over this next decade, we're gonna be talking a lot about the impact of copyright infringement. So that is going to be a huge issue. Absolutely. But I think as event leaders, we need to say how do we start experimenting with this and how does everybody on our team start doing that?

[09:59] **Magdalina Atanassova:** Yeah, I have so many more questions, but I'm mindful of the time. Follow us on PCMA, convene, podcast and all other channels, because we're going to.

[10:09] **Shawn Kanungo:** No, not just fault. No, no, no. You got to rate, you got to review, you got to subscribe. That's what you got to do. Five stars, please. Maggie's putting in the work.

[10:18] **Magdalina Atanassova:** Thank you so much, Shawn.

[10:19] **Shawn Kanungo:** Thank you.

[10:20] **Magdalina Atanassova:** We're going to continue this conversation.

[10:21] **Shawn Kanungo:** It was a pleasure.

[10:25] **Magdalina Atanassova:** Tune in and subscribe wherever you listen to podcasts so you never miss an episode. For more industry insights, visit [pcma.org/convene](https://pcma.org/convene). Until next time.