



By [Karen Clark Cole](#)

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I'm so proud of so many things that it's hard to know where to start. Mostly I am proud of every single Blink employee for really taking ownership of our company this year. Below are some of the fruits of our labor...



The Seahawks Super Bowl victory parade happened right in the middle of Blink's "What's Next in UX" conference, ConveyUX, but we kept the show on the road. Karen gives a welcome speech to attendees.

1. Our second year of hosting our **conference**, [ConveyUX](#) was a huge success, with attendees from all around the world, and UX guru Don Norman as our keynote speaker.
2. We conducted **field User Research around the world** in Brazil, India, Spain, China, Japan, Canada, England, France, Germany, and in most major cities across the United States.
3. We **opened an office** with a high tech [usability lab](#) in [San Francisco](#).
4. Our subsidiary recruiting and market research company, [Insight Space](#) had its best year ever.
5. We **formed new relationships and supported existing ones with clients** at Moen, Nike, NASA, Fluke, Shure, Starbucks, Boeing, Amazon, Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard, Holland America Line, Hawaiian Airlines, Disney, Wizards of the Coast, LogRhythm, McGraw-Hill, Coinstar, Swedish Hospital, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, and Fidelity Financial Services — **Hugging our clients certainly is good business!**
6. We collectively authored **64 blog postings**. That's a 700% growth rate from 2013 and is paving the way for Blink's international thought leadership, thanks to our new marketing efforts lead by Amy Dickson. We also launched a new website to host them all.
7. We innovated, designed, and built a new video capture, input, and communication tool for our research projects called the **Feedback Panel**, lead by our CXO, Kelly Franznick.
8. We hired **11 new employees** covering research, interaction design, visual design, and new for us, two developers to ensure we are delivering the most usable and useful prototypes to our clients.
9. Blink employees **presented at 11 conferences** and events. Kudos to Kelly, John, Jake, Claire, Tom, Geoff, Brigitt, Sarah, Michi, and Valentina for taking extra time to make this happen.
10. We had **four interviews published** on radio and in blogs featuring Sarah, Jonathan, and myself, as well as a bylined article published in [User Experience Magazine](#) by Tom and John.

11. We won three “**fastest growing**” company awards, were selected as a semi-finalist for a UX award, and won a silver design award. While we’re happy to be recognized as a rapidly growing company, **our strategy continues to be to focus on slow, steady, and mindful growth** in the future.
12. We were **profitable for the 13<sup>th</sup> year** of our 14.5-year history.
13. We have an **active community service program** in place, including donating to local charities during special times of the year, volunteering during community days, and working hard to have our office green. We donated time and money to five charities in 2014 including **Treehouse foster kids program**, Puget Sound Blood Bank, Solid Ground, **Girls Can Do**, and **Earth Corps**.
14. There were **three Blinker babies born** with one more coming in the New Year. This means we have new parents who are in-tune to what it means to be fully present with their babies, and then with the others around them. Another way to make Blink a great place to work.
15. We have a **new style of leading**. People leading projects, leading company initiatives, leading our clients, the broader UX community, and most excitingly, leading each other. As a result we are also **collaborating like crazy**. Researchers, designers, and developers all sharing ideas and expertise — it’s magic.
16. I also grew into a new style of leading the company that I call “**solutions by the people.**” Gone are the days of me and the exec team coming up with a solution, and then months of consensus building. Now we spend months brainstorming and getting input and ideas from the entire company, making consensus building and rollout a “non-event” and my burn out rate reduced to nil.
17. Blink’s shareholders unanimously nominated **one new partner, Robin Martin-Emerson** because of her dedication to Blink, our employees, and our clients’ success.
18. **People say thank you a lot.** There is genuine gratitude around the office for everyone. We are all working together, **being fully present and having real conversations with each other**, and are truly helping each other grow and succeed.
19. **I get less email.** Really, it’s great. Employees come and find me, call me, or text if they need something urgent. It saves them writing and waiting, and saves me sorting through mounds of mail, reading, and (not getting a chance to) respond. The day is more efficient for everyone and much, much more enjoyable to actually **talk to people face to face** instead of through a computer.
20. The **employees of Blink are collectively leading our great company**, and I get to sit and watch the magic unfold. We not only survived, but are thriving in our **one-year-old management and title-free company structure**. People understand that reporting to themselves means they need to have a good sense of self-awareness and get feedback from peers, clients, and themselves about how they are doing. This matrix of giving and getting feedback is contagious and it’s been fun to watch it spread.

## Happy New Year!

I look forward, with my seatbelt on, to another great year in the history of Blink.

**Thank you, everyone, for making me so proud.**

— Karen

*When not serving as CEO of Blink UX, you can find Karen organizing events to inspire young girls or training to become a professional kiteboarder.*