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## GigaOm Roadmap Conference

The GigaOm Roadmap conference in San Francisco this week was awesome and an excellent experience and rich with insights delivered by many great presenters including Jack Dorsey (Square), John Maeda (RISD), Tony Fadel (Nest Labs) and Franz Von Holzhausen (Tesla Motors). While they are certainly with “hot” organizations, I genuinely felt they were speaking authentically and not from a script.



By [Blink Staff](#)

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## The theme of the conference

The Intersection of Design and Experience—As data and connectivity shape our world, experience design is now as important as the technology itself.

What doesn't overtly come through in this title is the importance of people/humans/users. Each and every one of the speakers described how they are human centric and thinking people first.

More specifically, it was a human problem that inspired the creation of their business. For me, this continues to inspire as we work with you to find better ways of serving your customers/clients in a way considerate of all the influencing factors of your business.

Next, I'm going to share a few highlights from the four speakers I found most interesting and inspiring.

## **Jack Dorsey - Co-Founder and CEO of Square (Chairman of twitter)**

First, I have to say that I was impressed that the guy was on stage and seemingly egoless given that Twitter went public today. The highlight of his talk was how he's focused on meeting customers where they are. He suggests that it is impossible to know what it is like to be a small business owner without being a small business owner. I like to say, you can't just look at a situation from someone else's shoes until you have taken off your own shoes first. His solution: he started SightGlass coffee and became a small business owner.

## **John Maeda - President of the Rhode Island School of Design**

I've been fascinated by John Maeda for years, my main exposure coming through two of his books: *The Laws of Simplicity* and *Redefining Leadership*. On stage he is magical and I suspect a true genius in everyday life. Most interesting in his presentation was how he broke down Experience Design into three components: Emotions - the world of the mind, Actions - the world of the body, and Relations - the world of people. Such a holistic view that I absolutely loved. Interestingly, I returned home last night to attend a presentation at a Waldorf School and could draw parallels. His parting quote came from the recently passed Red Burns: "Think of technology as a verb, not a noun. It provides the tools, creative people provide the imagination."

## **Tony Fadell - Founder of Nest Labs**

I had been familiar with the Nest Thermostat but was unaware of the latest Nest product, a smoke and carbon monoxide alarm. It was really interesting to hear of Tony's focus on consumer products that have not been re-imaged in decades. In our business we see a version of this, software that had been created in a different era and has not adapted to the changing circumstances of the world. My big take away from Tony was his point of view that magical moments are created when you blend the rational and the emotional.

## **Franz Von Holzhausen - Tesla Motors Chief Designer**

I would self-describe as someone that loves nature, is concerned with the environmental challenges facing the planet, and generally interested in consuming less. This sets up an interesting paradox when you are fascinated by a new car that costs ,000 plus - the Tesla Model S - hard to miss as they are now visibly on the streets in Seattle. All this to say that I was excited to hear Franz and pre-disposed to accepting his message. He was interesting in that he is not just looking at designing a car but disrupting and designing a fully integrated ecosystem that gets the world off fossil fuels. He followed this up with an articulate description of how his cars are purpose built and refined, tuned and tweaked during the design process to maximize efficiency. Finally and most relevant to our business is his approach to creating prototypes. He does not believe in creating concept prototypes that won't become real. He believes that prototypes should be real and by working this way he can get cars to market faster. And that they did by getting the model S to market in 4 years.

I was inspired and learned a lot in San Francisco this week.